

# Hypothesis on the Supreme Value Criteria of the Global Civilization

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## ABSTRACT

There are three sets of premises that imply the most general hypothesis about the supreme criteria of the value of global civilization. This hypothesis can be defined more concretely, but to ignore it would be to consent to self-destruction at our own request. Such a prospect is real in a much shorter time frame than the most optimistic (in fact naive) predictions of those trusting that humans *en bloc* will not allow this to happen. The first set (pessimistic) contains tragic experiences from the micro to the macro scale related to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since February 24, 2022; also the history of mankind, the shortest description of which contains a multi-page list of dates and names of wars. The second (optimistic) contains the wisdom recorded in the Holy Books, philosophical writings, and constantly handed down in the distinguished departments of all arts; heritage of the so-called 'higher culture'; groundbreaking scientific discoveries related to the protection of health and life. The third one (seemingly neutral, since tools in the ethical sense are intrinsically neutral, and the way they will be used is ultimately decided by man): technology that actually enables real-time communication of the entire human population, but the effective use of this technology – while respecting the guiding criteria of universal human values – requires competent and therefore responsible coordination. The hypothesis is: survival of humans and nature in a non-degenerate form and responsibility for coming generations. The open problem is to train and elect suitable coordinators and assign them with the mission of coordinating elements that, from the micro- to the macro scale, will form a whole, worthy of the name 'safe civilization of wisdom' (wisdom includes responsibility). In a sense, paradoxically, it makes sense to reverse the direction from macro to micro, according to the principle of 'the example comes from the top'. While Innovative Agonology (in fact the first experts in this new science) provides a methodological basis, many detailed methods and recommendations, it is far from pointing to a way of imminently dealing with a phenomenon that Albert North Whitehead described 97 years ago in simple terms: "significant fact of the modern world is the discovery of a method of training professionals who specialize in particular areas of thought and progressively increase the sum of knowledge within their own limited research topics." His words justify the caution expressed above about indicating a way to deal with the phenomenon of necessary coordination, precisely in the context of the hypothesis formulated: "The tasks of coordination are left to those who lack the strength or character to be successful in a particular field".

**Keywords:** Innovative agonology, Mental health, Generation alpha

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nearly half a century ago Jarosław Rudniański broadly defined the supreme criterion of value from two joint perspectives (Rudniański, 1989). The first perspective is filled by his own experience of suffering and fighting against two totalitarian regimes: communist and fascist, and then again the Soviet one. The second perspective is extensive interdisciplinary knowledge. Rudniański, after the liberation of Italy and the fall of fascism, studied the philosophy of Buddhism and Hinduism at the University of Rome. After returning to Poland, he studied psychology at Warsaw University and, as a U.S. Department of State scholarship recipient in the 1968/1969 academic year, he studied issues of scientific creativity. He was a student and collaborator of Tadeusz Kotarbiński, the creator of agonology (Kotarbiński, 1938), among other things.

Rudniański not only knew what he was writing about and why, but did it so skillfully (following the example of his Master, Kotarbinski) that the censors could not stop the humanistic depth of his message about hope and ways to overcome totalitarian expansion aimed at the ultimate enslavement of many nations. After the Soviet invasion of Poland on September 17, 1937, already engulfed in Nazi aggression, he experienced the violence of Stalin's Gulag. As a soldier of the 2nd Polish Corps of General Władysław Anders, he participated in the Battle of Monte Cassino (one of the toughest and bloodiest battles of World War II), which ended in victory by the Allies on May 18, 1944.

One proof of his dealing with communist censorship is that Rudniański did not include the essay "The Moral Dimension of Good and Evil Beauty" in the first edition of his book "Between Good and Evil" (1985), but did so in the third edition (Rudniański, 1989). It was only four years later, although Soviet troops were still stationed in Poland. The social pressure towards liberation from the communist dictatorship was already strong, so that Rudniański was able to annotate this very third edition with the words of John Paul II: "A human being today seems to be constantly threatened by what is his own creation, what is the result of the work of his hands, and at the same time – and even more so – the work of his mind, the aspirations of his will." A direct evidence that the Polish Pope was one of the most hated enemies by the Communists at the time is the attempt on his life on May 13, 1981, during a general audience in St. Peter's Square in Rome.

The purpose of this paper is a general hypothesis about the supreme value criteria of global civilization based primarily on premises inspired by the arguments of Jarosław Rudniański nearly forty years ago.

## **THE SUPREME CRITERION OF VALUE IN RELATION TO THE OUTLINE OF THE HUMAN BEING'S MENTAL STRUCTURE IN THE UNIVERSAL PERSPECTIVE OF JAROSŁAW RUDNIAŃSKI**

Rudniański understands the supreme criterion of value as "such an imaginable or presently existing state of affairs that a human being believes without justification to be the most desirable of all. At the same time, it is the ultimate measure used to determine the degree of value that real or imaginable things

or states of affairs have for a human being. Then, norms and judgments of a moral nature are deductively derived from the supreme criterion of value, adopted consciously or subconsciously,” (Rudniański, 1989, p. 119).

The high level of generality of the statements formulated by Rudniański is based on the assumption that the addressees are people who can think independently; and in the conclusion of “Between Good and Evil” he explicitly emphasizes – mainly young people. Therefore, he avoids references to specific works and only exceptionally refers to authors or only their works, and even quotes, without providing bibliographic details.

He also does so when referring to the definition of the word “moral”. Due to the fact that he was writing behind the Iron Curtain at the time, he stated that in the Polish-language literature the sociologist Maria Ossowska defines what is moral in a particularly exhaustive way: “it is such a human conduct that concerns the Good of other people, understood in a general sense, as well as the Good of any particular human being.”

Accepting this general, but at the same time universal, model of the ‘criterion of value’ requires exploring not only justifications from various sources (especially science, art, religion, education), regardless of whether a person is a believer (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.) or an atheist, or whether he or she is educated at the university level or only at the elementary level.

Here we enter the difficult area of how people communicate with words. Hence Rudniański’s justifiable concern to use colloquial language (appropriate for praxeology and contemporary innovative agonology), but sufficiently understandable (Kalina, 2020). Thus, before formulating value criteria at a lower level, he reasonably stated that both ‘value’ and ‘value criteria’ are sometimes replaced by the word ‘need’. He goes on to stress that when considering the issue of value criteria, the question of human needs cannot be avoided. Before referring to Maslow’s most well-known hierarchy of needs, he made the most general synthesis of the views of Froude, Murray, Young, Peak, McClland, Rogers, before stopping at a particularly apt generalization by motivation theory researchers, Ch. Cofer and M. Appley: “human nature is constructive, trustworthy, rational, unique and individual. In order for these qualities to manifest themselves, the right set of conditions is necessary, but **modern society cannot provide it... [and] is inclined to impose conformity and illusion on the individual**. Achieving self-actualization requires courage, because it involves overcoming strong fear and a sense of threat” – (bolding by Authors).

Since we are talking about fear, it is impossible to avoid the hypothesis of localizing the psychological layer of the human being from which this fear can be generated (we stick to probabilistic reasoning and therefore we have not used the verb ‘is’). It was Rudniański’s reasoning, outlined most generally above, that led him to the necessity of drawing a general sketch of the human being’s mental structure. He based this sketch on the assumption of the existence of a natural moral order.

Parallel to this assumption, he also formulates another supreme criteria of value, perhaps even more momentous. He unequivocally asserts that the fact of God’s existence or non-existence is irrelevant to science, and that it

is possible to disregard the existence of God, deeming the issue unsolvable by science. However, from the perspective of contemporary events (the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the global energy crisis linked to Russian aggression and, above all, the crisis of values that has been deepening for decades – unfortunately ignored in the mainstream media), the assumption that it is possible to accurately analyze what the great religious systems say not about God but about humans, would be considered groundbreaking. Stating it this way he emphasizes that many of the words used in these systems need to be translated into the language of modern science. Since almost forty have passed from the formulation of these assumptions, many new sciences have been created in the meantime, and the threat of total annihilation to human civilization has not been reduced, but has increased in real terms, it is not enough just to reflect on Rudniański's concept and on the consequences already experienced (from micro to macro scale) of ignoring most relevant recommendations also of many other visionaries.

It is from the perspective of these perceptible consequences from micro to macro scales of ignoring the social mission of science that the perspicacity of Rudniański's reasoning catches the eye anew. This sober-minded scientist and visionary pointed out that the religion of ancient Egypt spoke not only of a moral order in nature, but also of a moral order in the universe. According to the languages of the ancient religions of the East, human being is connected to the entire universe through the deepest psychic layer (in which moral order is encoded). However, this is described in different terms. This phenomenon is conventionally called Reason in the Sankhya system of Indian philosophy (as well as in the sixth book of the "Mahabharata"), and in Sanskrit - *buddhi* (more precisely: the Differentiating Reason). Its property is to distinguish between what is right (good) and what is wrong (bad) for human development. The existence of this very layer (albeit implicitly) is pointed out by Buddhist philosophy in the "Abhidhamma," while analogies to Plato, Aristotle and Christian philosophy are legitimate when it comes to Conscience and Soul.

In conclusion, Rudniański hypothesizes the existence of the deepest, hitherto unrecognized psychic layer in a human being, in which knowledge of a moral nature is encoded. He conventionally calls this layer: **the first mental system**.

He considers **kindness** to be fundamental of the four value criteria highlighted by him. **Kindness**: "both for people and for all life. It is necessary in every profession, in every relationship between people, if these are to be good relationships,... it is expressed in the desire to help" and can be "also defined as the need to help... of various kinds: help in recovery, help in poverty, misfortune, as well as help in individual development."

Rudniański links kindness with **truth** and argues that it can be "defined as the need to live the truth, the need to 'be true'." He briefly, but convincingly, justifies that kindness and truth are connected with **courage**: "For if I am afraid, I will not help someone when my own interests are at stake, compromised, when I fear for them. If I am afraid, I will often not tell the truth either - I will lie." To reinforce the importance of fear, he cites the words of Antoni Kępiński, a prominent Polish psychiatrist, scientist, humanist, philosopher:

fear is “a warning signal against chaos,... a signal against the loss of one’s individuality.” He further reasons that courage “can be expressed as a need: the need for strength. It is a force that serves kindness and truth.”

The fourth criterion of value is, in a sense, a synthesis of the realization of kindness, truth and courage (i.e., needs flowing from the deepest mental layer of a human being, from the first mental system). This criterion is **wisdom**, “which also constitutes a need, namely the need for understanding.” Rudniański’s summary of this element does not diminish its meaning even today. On the contrary, it enhances it, despite the prevailing chaos in interpersonal relations in the modern world and the increased sense of danger from micro to macro scales: “One should try to see” - Rudniański concludes - “that the complexity of the modern world is often an apparent complexity. So I will try to see the issues that are most relevant regardless of what I do. If I can see - I will be able to actually help to the maximum possible extent.”

### **ABOUT THE SECOND MENTAL SYSTEM IN BRIEF**

Rudniański supposes that in the conceptual second mental system two laws are encoded, inherent in any living system. The first is the ‘homeostatic law,’ expressed in the languages of cybernetics and psychology, it refers to the maintenance of a given system precisely as a system. The second is the pursuit of expansion of a given system. With regard to humans, the first of these laws is not only that they do not perish as an organism (the first biological law), but that they maintain a basic balance in their own psyche. In extreme cases lack of such balance in the intellectual and emotional sense can lead to mental disorders or mental illness. The consequence of advanced mental illness can be damage to the entire body. Thus, in these cases, the second mental system defends itself against change. However, the second mental system expresses the opposite tendency (the second law of): the expansion of the whole system. At the biological level, this expansion is expressed through reproduction, while at the mental level, it is expressed through the pursuit of various kinds of power over people and over things, over animate and inanimate nature (Rudniański, 1989).

In the essay cited above, dedicated to the second mental system, Rudniański partly refers to the issues of human struggle with himself and struggle with elements of the external environment, and therefore with other people. However, these motifs, although very important, not merely from the perspective of innovative agonology, exceed the purpose of this paper.

### **THREE COMPLEMENTARY PREMISES AND A HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THE SUPREME VALUE CRITERIA OF GLOBAL CIVILIZATION**

The most important premises for the hypothesis formulated here, about the supreme value criteria of global civilization, is the content of everything we have written above. This content does not exhaust the argumentation that could focus the attention of at least some of the people on whom the fate of the world depends now and will depend in the near future. Therefore, we draw attention to three sets of premises, ignorance of which would be an

outright acceptance of actions that herald the realization of the pessimistic competing hypothesis.

The first set (pessimistic) contains tragic experiences from the micro to the macro scale related to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since February 24, 2022; also the history of mankind, the shortest description of which contains a multi-page list of dates and names of wars. The second (optimistic) contains the wisdom recorded in the Holy Books, philosophical writings, and constantly handed down in the distinguished departments of all arts; heritage of the so-called 'higher culture'; groundbreaking scientific discoveries related to the protection of health and life. The third one (seemingly neutral, since tools in the ethical sense are intrinsically neutral, and the way they will be used is ultimately decided by man): technology that actually enables real-time communication of the entire human population, but the effective use of this technology - while respecting the guiding criteria of universal human values - requires competent and therefore responsible coordination.

*The main hypothesis is: survival of humans and nature in a non-degenerate form and responsibility for coming generations.*

Fairness, especially to the generations of the future and those covered by the latest classification according to scientific criteria (about which further), dictates the formulation of a competing hypothesis: in the near future there will either be a thermonuclear annihilation of human civilization (dynamic variant) or by a global pandemic (slower variant). The main cause will be ignoring supreme value criteria from micro to macro scales, among which the central place is the responsibility for future generations.

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM AND SEVERAL THREADS**

The open problem is to train and elect suitable coordinators and assign them with the mission of coordinating elements that, from the micro- to the macro scale, will form a whole, worthy of the name 'safe civilization of wisdom' (wisdom includes responsibility). Paradoxically, it makes sense to reverse the direction from macro to micro, according to the principle of 'the example comes from the top'.

Determining the goal, tasks and choice of means is not easy, but overcoming this dilemma is not impossible. While it is not difficult to find evidence pointing to the negative effects of society's long-standing tendency to impose conformity and belief in illusions on the individual, the creations of science (more precisely, of scientists) are not censored in democratic states and can be reached by anyone (except those with a confidentiality clause). The example of Jarosław Rudniański, cited in the introduction of this work, illustrates that it is possible to break through the barriers of censorship even by posing issues (questions), the solution of which threatens totalitarian power. A separate issue is the responsibility of the subjects of power for the legitimacy and quality of the implementation of things and states of affairs recommended by science, which would serve the general public and not only selected groups. We also equate it with the concept of states of affairs ideas, educational

systems, health care systems and any other that serve to strengthen personal and collective security, etc.

There is no alternative field that has the tools to also ensure the establishment of the truth about negative phenomena - those mentioned in the second sentence of the previous paragraph and every other. Since only science has the tools to prove the truth about any phenomenon (even one that is often difficult to describe with the words we know), it is all the more unacceptable for people in power to ignore the results of scientific diagnoses that protect human beings as individuals and humans in general. All the more reason for them to wrap such knowledge with confidentiality clauses.

An urgent global phenomenon that cannot be solved without science is the need to reverse the trend of burdening successive generations with digital dependence. Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, generational differences have begun to be defined by progress and access to modern technology. In today's education system, early childhood education includes *Generation Alpha*, which is the demographic successor to *Generation Z* (from the turn of the century). *Generation Alpha* are the first people born entirely in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after 2010. It is assumed to be the largest and richest generation, extremely culturally diverse, from birth with full access to information on a global scale. In other words, the *Generation Alpha* is coupled with technology by virtue of being born in the digital age. That's why they are also referred to differently: 'Google Kids', 'Always on', 'Net Gen', 'Digital Natives'. These children are raised by *Generation Y* (Williams, 2015).

Symptoms of digital addiction, as a consequence of growing up surrounded by tablets and smartphones, are, in particular: the large amount of time spent on social networks; the discomfort felt if the compulsion to disconnect from the network arises, exacerbated by the lost pleasure of navigating it perfectly (McCrindle, 2019).

The negative effects are extensive. Children hate boredom and like to be stimulated by digital channels. Influencers from network channels are the authorities for them. They replace typing with voice-recognition. They have a shorter attention span. They engage in fewer social interactions. Their fun and learning is based on apps. Through access to massive amounts of data, these children have earlier exposure to pornography and other forms of cyberbullying (Podolski et al. 2022). This is the result of pushing age limits by media (including public) authorities concerned with high viewership, not the other way around - it is not the children who are forcing the pressure on them. For example: the film 'Predator' in the 1980s was allowed in Poland from the age of 18. Recently, on one of the Polish channels, the film was broadcast at 8 pm with the category "from the age of 12." Society, under the pressure of constant technological progress, does not notice the permanently pushed boundaries of escalated and scrupulously camouflaged violence (intellectual, institutional, moral, etc.) (Brown, 2020).

The ineffectiveness of the methods, forms and measures developed over many generations and duplicated in the education of the *Generation Alpha* is cause for trepidation. It is estimated that around 2026 the era of the *Generation Beta* will begin (Pinsker, 2020). Since no methodology adequate for

educating the *Generation Alpha* has been developed so far, there is little time left for scientific verification that would precede legitimate recommendations and implementations.

Paradoxically, it is precisely the prospect of further technological **progress** and universal access from birth to global information that is an opportunity for SURVIVAL and DEVELOPMENT for the *Alpha and Beta Generations* and those to whom we symbolically assign boundary birth dates in the future: from 2036; from 2046 etc. Such a chance was not available to the generations whose best sons had to perish especially on the battlefields of World War II and the generations (from children to the elderly) of murdered civilians, in the so-called civilized world, precisely because of the incredible technological **leap**. Such a chance was not available to generations of the cruelest of mass murders - the Holocaust. It rises to the rank of an exceptional symbol that the then President of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt doubted the veracity of the report, among other things, about the crimes of the Germans not only against the Jewish people, when he met with the courier and emissary of the Polish Underground State Jan Karski on July 28, 1943. Today, information about the bestiality of Russian war criminals circulates throughout the world almost immediately.

We emphasize only two criteria of this opportunity. First, contrary to the rousing reports of Russian aggressors murdering Ukrainian citizens and wreaking havoc on civilian infrastructure, avoiding total annihilation with a laptop or smartphone in hand (sarcastic as it may sound) is possible. Secondly, the improved digital technology by the fact of its increasing reliability, attractiveness and widespread availability is a means that can serve to build common ground among a great variety of people, at a pace unattainable by generations of the 'pre-internet' era. It is for this reason, among others, that we emphasize the fact that we use the words 'progress' and 'leap' above, instead of 'development' when talking about the past and the prospect of further, inevitable technological innovations. In the language of the new science, innovative agonology, the term **development** is consistently used only to refer to phenomena with a positive connotation (Kalina, 2020). This, however, is a separate issue that requires further in-depth research and justification.

The use of these opportunities should not be tied to the pace of further technological modifications, but to the inevitability of using the mass communication technology already available, so as not to miss the opportunity to build this common ground. Humans have such potential on various levels, especially intellectual, emotional and ethical. Proof is the wisdom recorded in Holy Books up to the most outstanding works of modern scholars and thinkers. Generally speaking, the most difficult problem is to find the optimal way to unleash this potential with the power created by modern technology of mutual communication. One must first accept that in the inevitable, eternal struggle between Good and Evil, identical technology is available to both sides. Since this technology is widely available, so the power of argument comes to the fore. Perhaps it is this and future technology that is, as it were, the 'golden mean' to first show the momentousness of the responsibility for the development and survival of future generations and those who



have left testimonies of the realization of this criterion of the value of global civilization.

A synthetic example of such responsibility is Jaroslaw Rudniański's declaration of faith in the possibility of common ground by many different people. We would also add: belonging to many generations, many nations and representing many worldviews. The author of "Between Good and Evil" writes: "I believe that such a common ground exists, and I know that it is necessary throughout the world in order to save ourselves and others from Evil: from physical and mental cruelty, from selfishness and thoughtlessness, from violence and war worst of all, from hatred and exploitation, from falsehood, hypocrisy and injustice. I believe that it is the duty of those who perceive Evil - all without exception, regardless of their worldview, profession, education... then, when Evil is clearly perceived precisely as Evil - it is almost a natural human reflex to either flee or fight against it, to oppose it. The point, therefore, is not to run away, but to strive for the Good through worthy methods."

Rudniański reinforces this argument with a reference to Mahatma Gandhi's 1933 statement: "The most precise definition of the goal will never lead us to it if we do not know how to use the right means. I am convinced that our approach to the goal will depend most strongly on the purity of the means used. The pursuit of physical and economic prosperity, to the exclusion or disregard of morality and ethics, is opposed to divine law." Rudniański adds, "not only divine. But human, also in the broadest sense of the word."

One task is particularly difficult for those who strive and will strive in the future for global understanding with full respect for individual freedoms and rights, while respecting the supreme criteria of global civilization. This task is to learn to use the available digital technology effectively and with dignity to achieve this goal. The relevant methods, means and tools are proposed by innovative agonology. While innovative agonology (in fact the first experts in this new science) provides a methodological basis, many detailed methods and recommendations, it is far from pointing to a way of imminently dealing with a phenomenon that Albert North Whitehead described 97 years ago in simple terms: "significant fact of the modern world is the discovery of a method of training professionals who specialize in particular areas of thought and progressively increase the sum of knowledge within their own limited research topics". His words justify the caution expressed above about indicating a way to deal with the phenomenon of necessary coordination, precisely in the context of the main hypothesis formulated: "The tasks of coordination are left to those who lack the strength or character to be successful in a particular field" (Whitehead, 1925).

## CONCLUSION

The authors of this work are divided by an age difference that exceeds the encyclopedic standard measure of one generation, i.e. 30 years, but are united by the awareness that they serve the truth with kindness towards others and all life, with courage, and in accordance with the principals of the doctoral vow. In fulfilling the social mission of science in this way, the age difference

does not matter. In a sense, it is even a factor that facilitates understanding of the phenomena under consideration in this work. A research exploration of these phenomena based on a complementary approach is not enough either. It is necessary to believe in the sense of searching for paths that would lead to a common ground that is acceptable to a wide variety of people with the power to educate and democratically choose from among themselves the coordinators who will collectively make this optimistic hypothesis a reality.

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