

Struggle: The Most Frequently Used Word in the Public Sphere Since the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Already Jarosław Rudniański, the originator of the theory of a non-armed struggle, underlined that a man uses most often the word ‘a struggle’ (and synonymic terms: combat, contest, grapple, fight, wrestle, etc.) when “a given action is distinguishable by a high level of difficulty and psychic suspense.” Therefore, in Rudniański’s opinion, ‘struggle’ could be, for instance, the formation of bacteria or viruses mutations to adjust to vaccinations and antibiotics as extreme cases of counteraction. The fact that living organisms do not have human consciousness has no vital meaning for those who fight them. Therefore, it is not surprising that the titles of many scientific publications dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the media coverage, include the word ‘struggle’ or its synonym. Paradoxically, the pandemic and the aggression against Ukraine are factors that can spark interest in innovative agonology which includes the theory of a non-armed struggle and the theory of compromise.

Keywords: Agonologists, Innovative agonology, Survival, Therapy

INTRODUCTION

Already Jarosław Rudniański, the originator of the theory of a non-armed struggle, underlined that a man uses most often the word ‘a struggle’ (and synonymic terms: combat, contest, grapple, fight, wrestle, etc.) when “a given action is distinguishable by a high level of difficulty and psychic suspense”. Therefore, in Rudniański’s opinion, ‘struggle’ could be, for instance, forming mutations by bacteria or viruses to adjust to vaccinations and antibiotics as extreme cases of counteraction. The fact that living organisms do not have human consciousness has no vital meaning for those who fight them (Rudniański, 1989). Therefore, it is not surprising that the titles of many scientific publications dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the media coverage, include the word ‘struggle’ or its synonym (Kumar and Morawska 2019, Singh 2020, Siriwardhana et al. 2020, Aman et al. 2021, Piccialli et al. 2021, Ruiz-Gómez and Fernández-Niño, 2022).

Paradoxically, these circumstances may make many scholars, together with the most responsible and influential coordinators of public life (not only in technologically developed democratic countries) aware of the elementary

truth that implies two main assumptions of this work. First of all, even before the pandemic people used the word 'struggle' and its synonyms when they meant overcoming extreme situations. Secondly, they will continue to do so, if only because violence (also camouflaged) and aggression are still used to achieve various goals from micro to macro scale, and the Internet and other electronic media are a widely available educator of sophisticated methods, means and tools of effective violence and effective aggression. Although it is often difficult (or even impossible) to determine the boundary between the two phenomena (violence and aggression), this difficulty is not only a methodological issue. Let us take as a simple example the fact that the culturally developed term 'aggressor' also means the one who uses violence, although he does not cross the border that would qualify his acts as aggressive.

The aim of this work is not to attempt to establish such a boundary but to draw attention to arguments that may have an impact on changing the social perception of the phenomenon of struggle.

AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE METHODOLOGY OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

Subtle Semantic Factors and Implications for Practical Action

Violence and aggression are not synonymous, and it should be obvious to anyone who uses these words in the public space that any aggression is also violence, but not vice versa. Controlled violence in a professional, but also intuitive way, is in many situations of threat an indispensable element of defense, to be precise: *defense struggle* to legally protected goods (especially life and health).

The fight against a disease, against fire, against poverty, and against any other threat to the individual up to the macro scale often also requires doing the necessary damage (amputation, clearing large areas of forest, armed intervention against entities deliberately destroying defenseless beings, etc.). But with respect to a broad class of potential threats, the most effective defense would be reasonable and complementary prevention. If so, there is no more appropriate elementary method than permanent education.

Unfortunately, the main obstacles are neither age-old nor recent paradigms of institutional education, but people who do not allow even the thought of such changes, of which they would be the greatest beneficiaries. If this diagnosis cannot be accused of falsity, then an extensive class of threats generated by man himself is revealed. And if this is so, then to all dangers of external origin one must add those that are within a human being.

Thus, an elementary question arises: do the same rules, methods and means recommended by the authors of the five struggle theories published so far - the general one (agonology) and the four specific ones - apply in man's struggle with himself?

The Missing Theory of Innovative Agonology of Fighting Oneself

An a priori answer to the question posed above is not possible until such a theory emerges. However, since Tadeusz Kotarbinski's agonology (1938) is superior to existing detailed theories (Koniczny 1970, Rudniański 1989, Kalina 1991, 2000), and the language of innovative agonology (Kalina 2016, 2020) is supposed to play the role of a guide to constations on the frontier with other sciences as well, it is legitimate to make assumptions and even hypotheses, if even their verification would be possible only in a hard-to-define perspective.

Thus, starting from the assumption that the necessity of permanent human (in the sense of an individual and en bloc) struggles against numerous threats of external nature (including aggressive people) and internal nature (concerning precisely the human being, for whom one of the most important, or the main threat is himself) is also associated with the necessity of educating people at least at the basic level of competence to counteract external and internal threats.

In the above assumption, the key word alongside 'struggle' is 'counteraction'. Counteraction is neither synonymous with struggle nor defense. But in a certain class of extreme threats, we will legitimately say that the only alternative to countering the threat is to engage in immediate struggle (exemplified by Canon's 'fight or flight' law). However, it does not follow from this law that it is only a matter of defense struggle. Thus, only in a certain class of evident threats, even if objectively the position of the threatened subject (individual or team) is hopeless, defense (defense struggle) is the only worthy option. For a theorem formulated in this way, it is difficult to invoke any moral imperative that is universally accepted, especially in a global civilization.

This dilemma (the inability to implement a universal moral imperative) is not only about the difficult choices that have emerged in the past few years. This dilemma has been going on since the formation of societies with separate states, and will continue to be relevant as long as the balanced relationship "right to a decent life - respect for social obligations" does not become a universal principle. Neither the great universalist religions nor philosophies distanced from any violence, nor atheist ideologies have coped with overcoming the barriers that prevent a moral order based on such a simple relationship. It is an open question whether the Alpha Generation coupled from birth with artificial intelligence will cope, and would there even be a point in using the plural in this question - future generations?

The problem is not the fear that the Alpha Generation in general will not understand the sense of respecting social obligations, the addressees of which may not only be citizens of their own country, but equally, of each of the other countries, since people live there too. The problem is the lack of a premise that even the most accessibly edited theory of self-fighting, which could become an important guide for such a mission, will break through into the consciousness of social affairs coordinators who still have a real influence on educating the Alpha Generation.

An exemplification of the complexity of the moral dilemma under consideration and the problems articulated in the last paragraph can be the first two sentences of the term *bushido* defined by Nitobe Inazo, the author of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*: “Bushido, then, is the **code of moral principles** which the knights were required or instructed to observe. It is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior or savant”. [Inazo 2008, pp. 29–31].

The original publication of this book in English took place in 1905 in New York. On the other hand, historical facts after 1905 and those initiated on February 24, 2022, leave no illusions that under the circumstances of time pressure to balance the relationship of “the right to live in dignity – obligations to a society composed of many states” will not help even the most careful revision of the “Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms” drawn up in Rome on November 4, 1950, as amended and supplemented.

A Hypothesis That Is Easy to Verify

Due to the specificity of the struggle against oneself, ‘counteraction’ takes on a strictly lexicon-like meaning and has to do with prevention (prophylaxis), and going much further, it also has to do with therapy. In the broadest sense, counteraction primarily includes a complex of necessary preparatory measures, among which the basic elements are scientific research and education based on the most valuable recommendations of science, thus fulfills its social mission in a better way.

Referring only to the most recent experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and relying on the knowledge of artificial intelligence already made available, we pose a hypothesis that is not at all difficult to verify.

If the actors (individuals, teams, states, coalitions of states) undertaking the numerous battles against external and internal threats (when it was not too late to stop suicidal deaths, etc.) had applied the scientific knowledge of combat in a complementary way, the results would have been much greater. The most important indicator of the negated effectiveness of these battles and countermeasures preceding the battle itself is the number of lives that could have been saved.

Estimating this number, and in fact verifying the above hypothesis, is possible. In the field of technology (including related disciplines of science), such a method is reverse engineering, also known as backward engineering or back engineering. To verify the hypothesis, the number of epidemiological reports and original works with documented effects of experiments in which unique methods, measures, and tools recommended by innovative agonology were applied is enough. Secondary analysis (as it is based on past data) of published experimental and epidemiological results with the capabilities of artificial intelligence and using modern simulation methods can be a breakthrough step in the clash (and therefore struggle) with an important part of science and education paradigms. And all this in

order not to multiply unnecessary casualties in the future, but to survive as human civilization in a non-degenerate form and with the prospect of real development.

Criteria (Algorithm) of Defense Struggle in Universal Terms

The basic premise of defense struggle is the absence of provocation on the part of the attacked subject (Kalina, 1991, 1997). Since the theorems of agonology and each of the detailed struggle theories can be applied to any diagnosis, analysis (argumentation in general), where some variety, some aspect of struggle is involved, for example, the struggle against obesity can be considered in at least two variants. The first would be a special case of defense struggle (the second criterion for this category of struggle is the priority of attack by the aggressor (Kalina, 1997)). The second, a destructive struggle consciously provoked by oneself and – paradoxically – directed against oneself. In the second variant, the justifications of the theory of struggle against oneself (which is lacking) on the borderline with psychology would be useful.

However, the main justifications for combating morbid congenital obesity (when the circumstances are not provoked by the affected person) already come from the field of medicine at the interface with detailed biological and other sciences (biochemistry, genetics, pharmacology, dietetics, physiology, etc.). The organic basis, in the case under consideration and diseases from the same cause, is not influenced by the people affected by such a fate. Necessary defense, however bizarre it may seem, is beyond discussion.

Each subsequent action during the struggle against unprovoked morbid obesity (of organic origin) qualifies for the third criterion of defense struggle - adequacy of countermeasures, which is not always the same as sufficiency (Kalina, 1997), and in such circumstances the conclusion is reduced to the statement “science and practice experience are helpless.” Among agonistic behavior (that is, having to do with struggle), defense struggle is further distinguished by a peculiar way (algorithm) of using methods, means, and available tools. In the case under consideration, the defense struggle with unprovoked obesity will involve methods, means and tools based on the best medical knowledge (in parentheses only the most general suggestions): 1) restraining the aggressor’s movements without destroying his tools of struggle (non-invasive therapies available); 2) restraining the aggressor’s movements by destroying his tools of struggle (destroying certain organic causes of the expansion of morbid obesity even by surgical methods); 3) mutilating the aggressor (necessary surgical interventions assisted by pharmacology, etc.); 4) physical destruction of the aggressor (using the most radical methods, means and tools, while minimizing the patient’s suffering, maintaining his safety and meeting other ethical standards).

In this symbolic algorithm, the ‘aggressor’ is the phenomenon Rudniański described so clearly, and we began this article with that description

(as an example of struggle in the broad sense). The suggestions inscribed in this defensive struggle algorithm have only a partial relationship with the scientific knowledge of struggle. What emerges as the dominant factor is the competence of those outside specialists who know how to fight this health-degrading and, in extreme cases, life-threatening phenomenon without having to learn the language of a new science of struggle using, moreover, the justifications of the five theories.

This is just a simple example to highlight two phenomena. First, in circumstances when it is a matter of defending not one but two people, twenty, two hundred, two thousand, two million, twenty million.... at a time, struggles of this magnitude involve multitudes of specialists, sometimes representing extremely distant fields. Secondly, no matter what phenomenon would be this symbolic 'aggressor' and no matter what its power of destruction, the most general laws, rules, principles and even the most general methods of defense are unchangeable.

TWO MORE FACTORS THAT MAKE SCIENCE ABOUT STRUGGLE AN ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE

The Language of Collective Science

The main barrier to the dissemination of knowledge about the science of struggle - identified with the general theory of struggle (agonology) and its four specific theories - in the global scientific sphere (dominated by the English language) relates primarily to the language in which they were published: all of them (since 1938 till 2000) were published in Polish. Admittedly agonology was included by its creator Tadeusz Kotarbiński into praxeology and translated into English, Czech, German, Japanese, Russian and Serbo-Croatian. In the fundamental lecture of praxeology by T. Kotarbiński "A Treatise on Good Work," (first edition in 1955), it is included in the chapter entitled "Technique of struggle".

The Political Aspect

The political factor was a fundamental obstacle to the dissemination of both praxeology and agonology when Poland was beyond the Iron Curtain. Jarosław Rudniański published the theory of a non-armed struggle in two steps. Admittedly, his "Elements of praxeological theory of struggle. From the issues of negative cooperation" (1983) was published during the martial law in Poland, but was not available for official sale. Its best recommendation would be the fact that for many Solidarity leaders, it was a kind of instruction manual for conducting the struggle against communist authorities in a nonviolent way and led to achievement of the ultimate result: the overthrow of those authorities. The second step: "A Compromise and a Struggle. The efficiency and ethics of positive and negative cooperation in a dense social environment" (1989) is at the same time the most complete development of agonology; unfortunately, available only to those familiar with the Polish language.

CONCLUSION

In our opinion, the reasoning is sufficient to admit that there is no need to educate a new group of professionals - agonologists - and to do so without a vision of their social use. There is also no need to entrust agonologists with the mission of coordinating activities identified with the struggle. What is needed is a global paradigm shift in precisely global education, a key element of which would be scientific knowledge not of any struggle, but of the struggle necessary to survive as a global civilization in a nondegenerate form.

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