

ROCZNIK TOMISTYCZNY
12 (2023) 1

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Konstanty Michalski (1879-1947) and His Philosophy of History

Keywords: Konstanty Michalski, historiosophy, perfectionism, metaphysical sublimation, psychological sublimation

Introduction

In our study on the historiosophical views of Konstanty Michalski, we need to sketch the philosophical area his philosophy of history referred to. Within the scope of the above research not only Michalski's philosophical erudition becomes evident, but also I will answer the question about his metaphysical or anthropological grounds.

The easiest method to settle the above matter would be a research on where and in what atmosphere Michalski gained his philosophical education. Michalski's views were influenced by philosophy (in its Thomistic version) studied in Louvain and he himself – as we may suggest – is a typical representative of the Louvanian Thomism¹. And although it will not

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¹ Characteristics of various kinds of Thomism allows to classify philosophical views of Michalski as the Louvanian Thomism. Its features are present in a characteristic style of philosophizing of Michalski: combining Thomism with other philosophical schools (above all with Christian Neoplatonism and chosen elements of modern philosophy) and with other scientific disciplines: historism and particular sciences; and also combining methods of particular sciences and methods of philosophy. See more on varieties of Thomism: M. Gogacz, *Elementarz metafizyki*, Wydawnictwo Navo, Warszawa 2008, p. 136-139 and Gogacz, *Współczesne interpretacje tomizmu*, „Znak” R 15 (1963) nr 113, 1342.

allow to trace a detailed genealogy of his views, conducted research may help explain a compilation of philosophical insights, including the area of historiosophy, worked out by him. Thus, in his historiosophical thought, he combines the views of St. Augustin, St. Thomas, and Dante, with the approaches of the modern philosophers: Leibniz², Condorcet or Hegel. Moreover, he drew from some contemporary historiosophical thinkers such as O. Spann, O. Spengler, or G. Simmel³.

The long list of authors who were an inspiration for historiosophy of Michalski, would raise doubts as to the integrity of a system he initiated. This, consequently, can raise a question of whether his philosophy of history is more of a worldview, and therefore, cannot be scientifically proved. It seems hence, that we would be able to explain this issue only after a deep analysis of the philosophy of history worked out and expressed by Michalski.

I. Initial characteristics of philosophy of history in Konstanty Michalski's approach

In his numerous articles, Michalski willingly turns to historiosophical issues⁴. His approaches seem to be interesting insofar as he places his thought in the context of theological eschatology and philosophical reasoning. Whereas phi-

losophy is only supplementary to theology which "illuminates" philosophical reflection on human history. Cooperation of these two disciplines occurs when philosophy "delves into the essence of a thing and builds the worldview"⁵, while

² Perfectionism in its shape presented by Michalski, is rooted in views of the 17th century philosopher Leibniz and his conception of perfectionism which claimed that in temporal life people are able to attain a state of perfection both in the individual and collective existence.

³ Michalski turns to views of these authors (commenting them) in his article: *Tomizm wobec współczesnej filozofii dziejów*, see: K. Michalski, *Filozofia wieków średnich*, Instytut Teologiczny Księży Misjonarzy, Kraków 1997, p. 321-342.

Georg Simmel (1859 - 1918) – German philosopher, sociologist and a theorist of culture; in his interests he implemented philosophy and sociology. Within the subject of his interest were mechanisms governing human communities. Simmel also created methodological fundamentals for distinguishing sociology as an independent science. I draw from: Marian Wolicki, *Simmel Georg*, [in:] *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, vol. 9, Polskie Towarzystwo św. Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2008, p. 48-49. Othmar Spann (1878 – 1950) – Austrian philosopher, economist and sociologist. His historiosophical views were coined within the frame of polemics with Hegel I follow: H. Jakuszek, *Spann Othmar*, *Ibid.*, p. 116-117. O. Spengler (1880 – 1936) – German philosopher of culture and historiosopher. Famous for his work *Zmierzch Zachodu*, in which he introduced a catastrophic vision of the end of the Western culture. I draw from: P. Skrzydlewski, *Spengler Oswald Arnold Gottfried*, *Ibid.*, p. 122-124.

⁴ The following texts can serve an example: *Duch a dzieje ludzkie*, *Rośnie młody las*, *Duszę dać, Dokąd idziemy*.

⁵ K. Michalski properly identifies historiosophy with the worldview – he claims that it regards that "what human thinks about the universe and his place in it". See: K. Michalski, *Dokąd idziemy*, „Znak” 1946 nr 1 (June), p. 9.

theology approaches reality from the perspective of its deepest causes following a divine content revealed. The very philosophy of history – as understood by Michalski – searches for causal relations which link various events and pose questions on their sense. Thus, the subject of historiosophy would be a question on the sense of history expressed in a formulation “where to?” This question, eschatological in its nature, should be understood in the context of temporality, or in the context of timelessness. The latter proposal suggests inquiring into reality from the perspective of the highest point of view which is a perspective of seeing the ultimate goal or first causes. God is the ultimate goal of the history of man in historiosophy, and it is toward Him that all processes in the world of human beings and animals proceed. It is God who gives meaning to the history of humanity. This, however, is accomplished in a particular way. Michalski shows the history of humanity as a process in which we may observe particular turning points, which cause a change understood as development. In his interpretation,

this phenomenon acquires an importance of events in the history of the world such as the Parousia of Christ or God’s judgement.

Michalski builds his historiosophy on the theory of sublimation – which draws upon his specific understanding of man. Noteworthy, this theory was worked out by himself (on the basis of texts of Thomas). Such order adopted in a reflection of Michalski flows from an interpretation of his texts concerning exactly the problem of the history of philosophy. Moreover, the order adopted by Michalski corresponds with a remark of Max Scheler, who observes that historiosophy flows from anthropology adopted by a particular author⁶. To analyse the spectrum of problems gathered in this paper we need to conduct research on the following components. Firstly, we need to show how Michalski understands the structure of man. Secondly – what, according to him, is sublimation itself. And finally – how the conception of sublimation can be adopted into perfectionism, understood as Michalski’s own approach to the history of philosophy.

2. Man as “spirit” and “soul”

K. Michalski understands man as a spiritual-body unity. He relies in his anthropology on the Aristotelian tradition. Nevertheless, in this unity Michalski indicates the following com-

ponents of a human being: soul, spirit, and body⁷. Two former elements – soul and spirit – are the same soul, but in a different approach. Soul as soul – is entelechy, a source of vegetative and sen-

⁶ In quoting the above stance I follow S. Kamiński. See: S. Kamiński, *Jak filozofować? Studia z metodologii filozofii klasycznej*, vol. 1, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1989, p. 355.

⁷ K. Michalski, *Dusza i duch*, [in:] K. Michalski, *Nova et vetera*, Papieska Akademia Teologiczna, Kraków 1998, p. 543.

sual life and psychic. In this approach, soul is intellectual, but related to soul as soul, and serves body as a source of information. Hence, spirit is soul approached in its own life, thoughts, and will (apart from the function of informing body). Spirit is soul in its aspect turning to God which is beyond body and above body⁸. To the same soul in its various aspects, Michalski even employs various terminology: when speaks of soul he willingly employs the term “*anima*”; when, on the other hand, speaks of spirit he uses the term “*spiritus*” or “*mens*”⁹. It seems that aforementioned stance shows that Michalski, among others, draws from the views of St. Augustine and Eckhart. It hence would mean for him that the fundamental understanding of the structure of human beings will finally be Christian Neoplatonism. We need however add that in the aforementioned composite of soul, spirit, and body there is no room for the human body and its structure analysed from the philosophical perspective. According to Michalski this issue remains beyond the scope of

philosophy. Therefore, our author solves the issues concerning body within the frame of other disciplines¹⁰. Hence, in explaining the structure of man he adopts a classical tripartite separation of powers of soul into parts: vegetative, sensual, and spiritual. Further consequence of that division is adopting a stance that there are different levels of love in a man functioning simultaneously. Within the former we classify natural love which following Michalski we may call Cosmic love or the internal attitude of each being. Such understanding of love is possible to be confirmed with the *connaturalitas* known from the texts of St. Thomas Aquinas, which is love in the version of connaturality of natures¹¹, or – what seems even more probable – to the Augustinian *pondus*. Mutual dependencies in the spiritual-bodily sphere of man are by Michalski analysed further in the psychological-educational context. He turns attention to the importance of insights in the cognitive activities of man (for example in the process of upbringing). They are hence the result of grasp-

⁸ With regard to the term “spirit” we should note that Michalski equates soul and spirit as the same sources of life. Spirit is the peak of soul, elevates above the body and in it there is a view of god. In the peak of soul he equates a soul with a spirit as the same sources of life. Spirit as a peak of soul elevates above body and in it there is the image of God. In a peak of soul on the supernatural is imposed on nature which is grace. See: Ibid.

⁹ The same approach is represented by Michalski in his book: “Man is not a pure spirit. Spirit joins in it with body in one living entity. We have already mentioned once that the same spirit that the same soul is in us called a soul on the one hand and the other hand a spirit while the same soul turns to a body with one of its poles to a body and with the other above a body. When it turns to body in order to make entelechy a source of its vegetative and life and sensitive psychic, it is called a soul. When it reaches above body and becomes a source of supersensual life, it is called a spirit (*spiritus*), mind (*mens*), or in some other way, even more beautiful”. See: K. Michalski, *Między heroizmem i bestialstwem*, Częstochowskie Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne „Regina Poloniae”, Częstochowa 1984, p. 62.

¹⁰ It seems that for Michalski a human body would be a subject of psychological, biological or medical science.

¹¹ Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, Editiones Paulinae, Roma 1962, I-II, q. 23, a.4 c. Further quoted: *S. th.*, ...

ing reality by man through the senses and they are reduced to the role of copies of these insights¹². We may suggest thus that the implication that, at least in the area of cognitive process, what becomes important is human sensuality and sensual experiences.

Therefore, it seems that finally, it is the spiritual component that is decisive for our humanity consisting of both, soul and body. Hence, Michalski's claims on adopting in his thought a spiritual-body unity are rather of a declarative character.

3. The essence of sublimation

In analysing the character of sublimation according to Michalski, we should notice that this process is diversified. Sublimation is a kind of elevation. He explains its essence in one of his papers¹³ where he indicates the phenomena of participation of lower parts of reality in the higher ones. The essence of this participation is that in each systematized collection of real factors lower elements can elevate themselves to the higher ones, in order to take part in their perfections¹⁴. Developed by Michalski this theory is a fruitful conception when placed in the context of characterology and morality¹⁵. According to him, Thomas Aquinas speaks of sublimation with regard to extasy in the context of elevating people by God¹⁶. In these views, we notice how Michalski, in his typical way, finds a kind of analogy of the very term [sublimation] with the one employed by S. Freud¹⁷. Finally, he

himself agrees that we may speak of a Thomistic sublimation in its metaphysical or psychological sense.

a. Metaphysical sublimation

– is possible if we accept two pre-suppositions: there is a hierarchy of beings in the world, in the entirety of the Cosmos and in each of its parts exists dynamic element thanks to which a change is possible. Hence, from the hierarchy of beings flows a hierarchy of values, and thus, out of the hierarchy of beings comes a hierarchy of values, and what follows is the possibility of establishing what level of existence reality achieved as a result of changes. In a structured composition of real beings metaphysical sublimation allows for lower units to elevate to higher ones by taking part in their perfections while

¹² K. Michalski, *Wyobrażenia*, [in:] K. Michalski, *Dilatatio corde*, Kraków 2002, p. 197.

¹³ K. Michalski, *Dusza i duch* [in:] K. Michalski, *Nova et vetera*, op. cit., p. 533.

¹⁴ K. Michalski, *ibid.*, p.359.

¹⁵ K. Michalski, *Duszę dać*, *ibid.*, p. 356.

¹⁶ *S. th.* I-II q. 28 a.3 c. and I q. 96, a.3 ad.3.

¹⁷ We should however give Michalski his due. He observes that the problem of sublimation is used by Freud in the context of his psychoanalysis. What is more, he also observes that in the Thomistic version there is hierarchy of numerous skills and dispositions of human being while Freud omits this diversity what would suggest that Freud adopts a sort of monism in this area.

higher ones descend to lower ones in order to serve as their support “from the above”. When applying this law to man – we may observe the cooperation of the higher and lower elements within the frame of the same substance. Lower elements gain their new perfection through coexistence. As an example here may serve human procreative ability, common to human beings and animals, nevertheless only when man is considered, it is able to work in “service of higher goals”.

b. Psychological sublimation – Michalski speaks within the frame of metaphysical sublimation and compares it to the state of ecstasy in which all human faculties are “lifted up” by the power of love. He introduces two levels of feel-

ings (differentiated, as he claims, by Thomas)¹⁸: sensual feelings, related to emotions (*passiones*); and higher feelings related to the will (*affectiones*). This division, as Michalski claims, is employed in the area of upbringing of man. It is *affectiones* that allow spirit to speak in man, what is possible through the human will¹⁹. The centre of reflection on feelings is love²⁰. In continuing the topic of love he shows two of its kinds: natural love and infused love. Depending on which love encompasses human powers man would develop (through elevation) or fall. Both these activities – in a simplified way – are by Michalski expressed by the term “ecstasy up and down”, or “sublimation”, and “animalisation”²¹. The essence of “ecstasy up” is the perfection of all human powers and skills so as to enable them to serve

¹⁸ It is necessary to turn attention to the fact that the problem of feelings in St. Thomas Aquinas is more complicated. According to him we may speak of two groups of feelings (*passiones*) in human being. They are a reaction of the sensual power: the concupiscible power (*vis concupiscibilis*) and the irascible power (*vis irascibilis*). With regard to *affectiones* – the issue is not so obvious as they (*affectiones*) cannot be explained directly as can be *passiones*. They are a reaction of the will on good or evil apprehended intellectually what shows that they cannot be identified with feelings, see: *S. th.*, I-II, q. 22, a. 3, ad 3 and I-II, q. 36, a. 1, arg. 3. What remains open is the question what Polish equivalent of the Latin term *affectiones* will serve the best. J. Salij for example, explains this term as “personal dynamism”. See: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Streszczenie Teologii*, [in:] *Dzieła wybrane*, tł. J. Salij, Poznań 1984, p. 11. The other suggestion to translate this term is “emotion”. See: A. Andrzejuk, *Św. Tomasz z Akwinu, Suma Teologiczna, Słownik terminów*, vol. 35, Wydawnictwo Navo, Warszawa-Londyn 1998, p. 150.

¹⁹ Michalski speaks about that problem in a rather vague explanation that *affectiones* expresses “our soul through the will”. See: K. Michalski, *Duszę dać* [in:] *Nova et vetera*, p. 357.

²⁰ [Love] “Is a fire which burns man through, it is a kind of soul which animates all other functions”. K. Michalski claims that such presentation of mutual dependencies between love and feelings can be explained on the ground of philosophy of Aquinas. See: *Ibid.*, p. 358.

²¹ We should note that similarly to the process of psychological sublimation, understood as development of man, there is possibility of “sublimation down” which in fact is a degradation of man. Then – according to Michalski – higher, more noble faculties and their functions begin to serve to the lower, more noble faculties. Such conduct leads to undermining an internal order in man and is replaced by disorganisation with elements of anarchy.

higher goals with enormous power (leaving beyond themselves). Obviously, the power which generates this motion is love²².

When Michalski speaks about the power of feelings and the power of sensual desire in the context of their upbringing he turns to Aristotle and Thomas. He says that feelings should be managed in a political and diplomatic manner, not with force and dictatorship. Emotional dynamics, however, should be directed instead of being poisoned or annihilated. Higher goals demand that man should sacrifice his life force and sacrificing the lower manifestations of life for higher ones transforms a scarification into sublimation of a higher degree²³.

In trying to conduct deeper research on two types of sublimation, it is worth mentioning that both of its domains are not equal. Psychological sublimation – as it seems – is included in metaphysical sublimation. The very explanation of metaphysical sublimation as that which allows that “in each systematic collection of real elements the lower ones can elevate to higher ones so as to participate in their perfections”²⁴, makes it to be some law of sublimation in general. By introducing such assignments within the area of varieties of sublimation, Michalski can apply his theory of sublimation to the entire human society. Thus society, in his opinion, would become a set of ordered “real elements”. It will be a ground on which sublimation

²² Thomas himself, upon whom Michalski draws, describes in *Summa teologiae* various kinds of ecstasy understood as “going out the self”. He introduces possibility of extasy on the part of cognitive and appetitive faculties. The latter is divided into two: under the influence of the will and the intellect and under the influence of feelings. Intellectual version – which is love to friend – emotions go beyond themselves – that is: we want good for our friend and we transform our desires to proper actions accordingly. Here, we go beyond our *appetite*. However, when led by sensual desire – we are interested in the good for ourselves – we close ourselves within frames of our own desire. When it comes to the order of cognition we may also speak of direction “down” and “up”. We may go down (below human state – such as insanity or madness) and we may lift up – when our faculties regard to things cognizable beyond reason and senses. See: *S. th.*, I-II, q. 28, a. 3 c.

²³ It is worth mentioning that not all Thomists shared Michalski’s enthusiasm concerning the role of sublimation in functioning of man. For example, F.W. Bednarski says: “Many Catholic authors seized upon this sublimation as main medicine for all difficulties with drives to pleasure, especially in domain of sexuality. We may however remain cautious with regard to this “medicine”. Freudian sublimation however is rooted in his view that neither the will nor reason drive our desires but are subordinated to them as, according to psychoanalysts man is directed by blind powers of desires and instincts while reason and the will are only a tool used by these powers to make human goals, to which man pursue subconsciously, real, and to justify that what man instinctively needs. The second, Freudian sublimation, whose essence lies in replacing one non-desired object by the other, more sophisticated, is often a failure which can be compared to an attempt to deceive a baby by replacing mother’s breast with a teat. Thomism is closer to sublimation in Max Scheler’s version which essence is to direct human drives to service of higher powers of spirit in creating values of culture. In general hence, Thomism demands not upbringing man through sublimation of drives but rather through perfecting himself in a reasonable conduct of desires by virtues, neither by suppressing or negating them, not by following them”. See: F.W. Bednarski, *Objaśnienia*, [in:] Św. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Suma Teologiczna*, vol. 10, *Uczucia*, Wydawnictwo Veritas, London 1976, p. 320-321.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

can take place. It seems that we may point out two factors initiating that social sublimation, which are love (*caritas*) and justice. At the same time, Michalski claims that both factors are virtues that cause the sophistication of functions of all further virtues in man.

The best example to illustrate the process of sublimation through love can be activities in which love reveals: benevolence and charity. Both of these activities, when accompanied by consent, in the texts of Aquinas can be the so-called works of friendship²⁵. They are manifestations of Christian love and there (in Christian love) they have their origin. For Michalski, the essence of both, benevolence and charity, is an exchange of goods on a wide scale in society- here thus, is a place for sublimation. It is primarily about providing help to people in worse conditions to enable them to recover from an area of human poverty. The attitude of a compassionate, empathetic guide on that path is a result of love *caritas*, of compassion expressed by the term *misericordia*. This kind of love allows to encompass all humans with regard to the relation of love with God.

Next, sublimation built on justice has a common goodness at its end. If,

in his life, man follows justice, which regulates our relations to society and its welfare, according to Michalski, already lifts soul up to its possibilities, as it contains something divine in itself. The common good is nevertheless more important than a particular good. Justice itself perfects and elevates acts of other virtues.

In formulating the theory of sublimation – as it seems – the essential role had been played by the “Dantean studies” of Michalski. It was an interest in Dante’s views that turned his attention to the anthropological issues, resulting in a search on “logos” and “eros” and their mutual relations. We cannot neglect the fact that remarks made by Michalski distinguishing three kinds of love in Dante (youthful and philosophical eros; Christian *caritas* and *agape*; and finally friendship) are concerned with the entire aforementioned problematics of ecstasy (as the act of elevating or bestiality). What is more, Michalski finally formulated a thesis that, according to Dante, “eros always seeks his logos”²⁶. This would be in agreement with Michalski’s stance on the natural inclination of each man toward his own perfection.

4. Implementation of the theory of sublimation in historiosophy

In historiosophical analysis, Michalski draws from his theory of sublimation

and sketches a theory of the history of philosophy as a process developing in

²⁵ The term “the work of love (of friendship)” is a direct translation of the phrase coined by Aquinas in his commentary to the Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* where he explores the aforementioned *opera amicitiae*, among which we find: consent, charity, benevolence. See: St. Thomas Aquinas, *In decem libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum expositio*, editio tertia, cura et studio R. Spiazzi, Marietti, Torino 1986, Lb. IX, l. 4 – 7.

²⁶ K. Michalski, *Eros i logos u Dantego*, [in:] K. Michalski, *Filozofia wieków średnich*, Kraków 1997, p. 528.

its steps. Thus he observes that in history there are turning points that cause a change understood as development, arriving at the higher level of sublimation that is particularly visible in two texts: *Dokąd idziemy* and *Rośnie młody las*²⁷.

Michalski pays attention to the fact that questions regarding historiography are within the area of interest for a historian of philosophy²⁸. This is when a historian of philosophy observes groundbreaking events in the history of the world and people. On such groundbreaking moments, he says: “around forests are burning, falling are monuments (...) of the centuries-old culture”. History is thus a process in which “old forces with new ones” join. A scholar who becomes to grasp the characteristics of this mechanism, overwhelmed with analysing, focuses his entire attention on the process of transformation pending in front of him. He particularly focuses on elements that drive changes. The changes while observed raise in an observer a question on the durability of that what had been functioning properly so far. Experience of past and present serve as a ground to which observer turns in searching for some firm

unchangeable laws, which could serve as a fundament for these groundbreaking changes. Turning points in history can awaken a reflection on the past. Here also arises a question addressed to God and His provenance concerning the causality of the aforementioned processes. The driving force of the aforementioned groundbreaking moments is love, which is also a propulsive mechanism of sublimation (as *both elevating and degradation* of man). Any activity or texts of philosophers throughout history show, according to Michalski, exactly this process of changes taking place due to love, perfecting, or degrading man. Love which degrades and diminishes man, love limited to fulfilling man's own desires, and most primitive feelings is by Michalski called hatred, whereas *caritas* is love, which perfects man. Both reactions relate to the sphere of human appetites (*appetitus naturalis*). Hatred – as the other side of love (driving force that pushes man to attain his goal by all means). Love “from the top” is Evangelical love while the “bottom-up love” – is the Old Greek *eros*. *Eros*, as being also created by God, demands union with Evangelical love²⁹. Consequently

²⁷ The second of the aforementioned article which also was an introduction to Michalski's book *Między heroizmem a bestialstwem*, contains information of the author himself on inspirations in building the conception of perfectionism. It seems that we may indicate in this place at *Summa teologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas and at the works of Danthe Alighieri: *Boską Komedję i Convivio*. See: K. Michalski, *Rośnie młody las*, [in:] *Dilatatio corde*, p. 535-538.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

²⁹ Astonishing is such approach toward love, mainly, for its inconsistency. It shows that there are two driving forces: love – as Evangelical love, and hatred – that is *eros*, which actually is love but only on a sensual level only which neglects goodness of others and desires goodness for himself only. We may hence assume that hatred as exclusively love of oneself is a work of God, because God created *eros* who needs to be supplemented by Evangelical love. What resounds here are insights of Augustine and of the Protestant theology of A. Nygren, which Michalski attempts to distance in saying that both kinds of love derive from God.

all changes in history – and thus perfectionism as transformation towards the better – imply the conception of sublimation. The common hierarchy of beings, and also the internal hierarchy of human faculties, demand that the very human activities be dictated by love *caritas*. Only such circumstances enable a chance for perfectionism to be accomplished as a gradual transformation of reality that surrounds us in a direction of the broadly understood process of perfecting. Thus, out of sublimation which takes place in a particular man Michalski goes on to the subject of sublimation of the entire societies (frequently known as “humanity”) – that is, to perfectionism. The main axis of this phenomenon is the idea that there is incremental development of humanity from a less perfect phase into a more perfect one, regardless of historical breakdowns, stagnations, and catastrophes. Transformations are motivated by love and justice. Development of man takes place, as claims Michalski, both in the domain of human thought, and also in social one. Persons who understand the law of this development, able to guess this mechanism and to grasp the approaching turning point properly, would sacrifice all their efforts and their entire life energy in order to maximize their chance to make reality perfect. Such an approach is expressed by

Michalski in a phrase (which is also a title of one of his papers) – “give one’s soul”³⁰. Elevating through Evangelical love is necessary to understand the demands of each coming epoch, and to effectively brought development understood positively³¹. The above mechanism of transforming from sublimation to perfectionism is by Michalski discovered in the texts of Aquinas. In this context, he quotes the formulation of Thomas: “*Genus humanum arte et ratione vivit*”³², where art should be understood as any work whose aim is to make the Earth the possession of man, including the surrounding world. Art is hence, a skillfully performed, process of transforming the Earth, including all its resources. Such labour liberates man from the power of nature understood in a biological sense as a vegetative-sensual sphere. Thus man becomes a master of nature. Hence *ratio* – as reason – when present in this work of liberating man fulfills the leading and superior role. Reason directs its activities, thus it is also present in art as an effect of the labour of human hands. *Ratio* hence has the leading role with regard to art. It is ratio that enables the aforementioned liberation of man from nature. Thus *ratio* and *ars* are mutually related to each other and activities of these two components indicate that man has a particular position on the Earth as a builder (*artifex*)³³.

³⁰ See: K. Michalski, *Rośnie młody las*, [in:] *Dilatatio corde*, s. 537 and *Duszę dać*, [in:] *Nova et vetera*, p. 354.

³¹ “Caring not for our own future but for the future of the beloved world to which one belonged with his body and soul makes the one to focus a spiritual sight into the future and resign from everything that is low and private so as to ensure a happy future to his community with this sacrifice”. K. Michalski, *Rośnie młody las*, [in:] *Dilatatio corde*, p. 540.

³² See: K. Michalski, *Dokąd idziemy*, [in:] *Nova et vetera*, p. 600.

³³ K. Michalski, *Ibid.*, p. 601.

This position can be easily explained by juxtaposing the one with the situation of a servant (*servus*). Whereas a builder transforms an external world and he himself (what is expressed by Michalski as “liberating of himself” and “liberating of spirit”), a servant is not able to creative activities. The position of man as a builder is also explained by Michalski when he speaks of man as a social being. A further consequence of the above is, according to the author, that a human entity attains its goal when living in a community which allows to become a man more. Culture is, in the approach of Michalski, both a creature and a goal of a human being (as a result of sublimation). Condition for human life on Earth is working to the degree of heroism in the domain of thought, art, and technology. Thus the very heroic attitude itself unveils spirit present in a human being which is his structural component turned to God and which distances the human body which, in a further consequence, expresses a super-human way of conduct.

It seems that the conception of perfectiorism expressed by Michalski is mostly grounded in Neoplatonic thought. Starting from the understanding of the structure of man in the spirit of anthropology of St. Augustine and finishing on historiosophy in the Hegelian spirit. The aim of perfectiorism is supposed to be the perfection of the entire human society in the image of

God. Man, according to Michalski, in his creative activity should follow God. Simplifying even further the understanding of a goal of historic changes, we may also say that it is God Himself. Next, means to achieve this goal would be activities undertaken by man, his *ars*, accomplished by the mean of *ratio*. We have thus a goal, and we have tools to achieve one. Nevertheless, there is something more. Michalski stresses hence that the entire process of perfecting of humanity is not without burden, but rather comes into existence in the atmosphere of tensions. They are an effect of confrontation of current laws of functioning of communities, expressed in the rules of law with changing conditions of life. Michalski himself claims that human societies should take advantage of these “tensions” and should become more perfect, which seems to be an optimistic view. He compares his view to the understanding of development represented by Jean Antoine Nicholas Caritat de Condorcet³⁴. From this conception of perfecting the social life of men Michalski draws particular consequences in the area of politics. According to him, persons who are in charge of state communities should be able to grasp the aforementioned states of tension and properly put them into practice. This skill – in his opinion – is one of the shapes of prudence (governory as a skill of governing a country).

³⁴ Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat de Condorcet, philosopher, mathematician, politician of the 18th century. Known as the author of a reform of education and a work titled *Szkic obrazu postępu ducha ludzkiego poprzez dzieje*. There Condorcet shows the history of humanity as the history of constant unlimited perfecting of human mind.

Summary

In trying to gather analyses on philosophy of history according to K. Michalski, we should turn attention to the context of shaping his own stance on the issue. What is striking, his own conception of philosophy was formulated within the frame of verification and polemics with the current popular historiosophical views. Michalski himself on the pages of his work *Tomizm wobec współczesnej filozofii dziejów*, argues with the views of Marx, Spengler, Lessing or Spann. In the Marxists historiosophy, he refuses to accept its materialistic dimension. On the other hand, in the analysis of the conception of Spann – who recognizes spirit as the motor of history – he disagrees with the theory of social tensions. According to Michalski, the solution for flaws in the understanding of history would be the application of the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas to it. However, when we analyse philosophical fundamentals adopted by Michalski in his historiosophy, we should agree that it rather represents one of the varieties of Thomism than the philosophy of Aquinas itself. The first example we find in anthropology. The structural components of man sketched above show inspiration by the Platonic thought (St. Augustin) and the Aristotelian. There also doubts arise concerning a thesis on the hierarchical system of reality (Michalski him-

self agrees that there, in reality exists a hierarchy of beings). From metaphysical hierarchy, he smoothly goes on to moral hierarchy (and even more and the ground of moral theology than on philosophical science on morality)³⁵. This latter hierarchy is the theory of sublimation – already presented in detail in his work *Między heroizmem a bestialstwem*.

Moreover, we need to turn attention to the fact that even though Michalski disagrees with the views of Spann, he remains under their influence. To some extent – as it seems – the views of this author are by Michalski adopted as some components of his own historiosophy. The understanding of human societies as some organic entities can serve as an example (there he even uses a specific language when employing the term “humanity”). He also appreciates, in the conceptions of Spann, that spiritual part which is a decisive element for changes pending throughout history, which corresponds with the views of St. Augustine – a philosopher particularly close to Michalski.

It is worth mentioning that the philosophy of history grounded in metaphysics according to Michalski. This fact has already been observed by Swieżawski, when signaled that Michalski’s conception of philosophy of history is an attempt to transfer the realist metaphysics of St. Thomas on the

³⁵ Michalski admits himself that heroism and bestiality are two extremes of human behaviour. Positive pole is expressed in activity – here gifts of Holy Spirit are shaped: regarding actions (piety, fortitude, filial fear of the Lord); and these regarding the process of thinking (gift of reason (intellect), wisdom, knowledge, counsel).

ground of philosophy of history applied in its Hegelian shape³⁶. Hegel understood historiosophy as a metaphysical theory of history that indicates sense, task, and laws of development of the entire human reality. Such historiosophy is grounded in the apriorist and idealistic philosophy and needs further sciences for explaining details of its own theory (it is not however able to inquire all details of the historical development of reality – as not all of them are available for human cognition). In this area, we may hence turn to a domain of particular science or theology (as a science independent from human experience). The idea of Michalski – to reconcile idealism and realism in one conception – seems to be rather a risky solution.

Finally, perfectionism itself, in claiming that societies develop as a result of tensions in the social area and get their perfection through tensions, seems to be an easy stance to undermine. Throughout history, we may indicate numerous tensions, which failed to bring any improvement within a given community of people. It seems that the only chance to implement perfectionism in the shape worked out by Michalski, would be a

serious (active) answer to his urge to a heroic work on themselves. Then – presumably – in each man, a psychological sublimation would take place, and love *caritas* growing in each human soul would cause that nobody would remain indifferent toward the misfortunes of another man. Such a system proves that the profound task of man – a creator of the culture – is to work on himself, that is, sublimation through justice and love. Consequently, the main goal of communities is “corporate sublimation” (perfectionism). In this process, there is an important role of God as the One toward Whom human spirit is directed and Who gives meaning to human history, as its goal.

Such a stance on a sense of history directs us more to the domain of theology rather than philosophy. Even though the historiosophy of Michalski contains philosophical elements, it finally has its justification in theology. As a result, the conception of perfection is closer to the structure of the worldview than to the philosophical one due to the compilation of numerous domains gathered by Michalski in his research.

Transl. Ewa Agnieszka Pichola

³⁶ We may follow a discussion on that topic in the aforementioned book of Swieżawski: S. Swieżawski, *Zagadnienie historii filozofii*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1966, p. 455-535.

Konstanty Michalski (1879-1947) i jego filozofia historii

Słowa kluczowe: Konstanty Michalski, historiozofia, perfekcjonizm, metafizyka, sublimacja, sublimacja psychologiczna

Perfekcjonizm Konstantego Michalskiego, jest jego własną próbą nakreślenia tomistycznej wersji filozofii dziejów. W zaproponowanej przez Michalskiego historiozofii pobrzmiewają poglądy nie tylko św. Tomasza z Akwinu, ale przede wszystkim św. Augustyna, Dantego Alighieri, niektórych filozofów oświecenia, Hegla i wreszcie XIX i XX-wiecznych historiozofów. Michalski formułując swoją koncepcję filozofii dziejów, osadza ją na wymyślonej przez siebie (w oparciu o teksty Tomasza) teorii sublimacji, a ta z kolei sięga korzeniami do neoplatonickiego rozumienia człowieka.

Teoria sublimacji jest osadzona w zaprezentowanym powyżej ujęciu człowieka i ma zasadniczo polegać na „uwznioślaniu”, doskonaleniu się człowieka tak, by dotarł do poziomu heroicznego posiadania cnót. Sublimacja zastosowana do całych społeczności ludzkich jest przez niego określana jako perfekcjonizm. W ten sposób Michalski uznaje, że cała ludzkość, poprzez rozmaite stany napięć i konfliktów, przechodzi z niższego etapu rozwoju do etapu wyższego, rozumianego właśnie jako uzyskiwanie doskonałości. Ostatecznym celem i sensem tych zmian jest Bóg.

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Jacek Woroniecki

*Państwo i szkoła.
Rozprawa z etatyzmem kulturalnym*

Kraków 2021

Pierwsze wydanie powstałego w 1943 r. dzieła o. Jacka Woronieckiego OP (1878-1949), w którym ten wybitny polski pedagog i tomista kreśli syntezę funkcji oraz zadań państwa, a następnie rozprawia się ze zjawiskiem etatyzmu w szkolnictwie. „Twierdzimy – pisze – że szkoła społeczna czy prywatna jest lepsza od państwowej czy publicznej, bo lepsza być musi z samego założenia, że należy do własnych zadań społeczeństwa, a nie państwa, a każdy dobrze robi tylko to, co do niego należy. Państwo może zastępczo tę funkcję spełniać wtedy, gdy społeczeństwo wypuściło ją z rąk lub została mu z rąk wytrącona, ale to nie sprawi, aby się ona stawała normalnym jego zadaniem, do którego z natury swojej jest przeznaczona”.



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Tomasz Pawlikowski – dr hab., pracownik naukowy w Bibliotece Publicznej m. st. Warszawy – Bibliotece Głównej Województwa Mazowieckiego. Członek Naukowego Towarzystwa Tomistycznego. Opublikował kilkadziesiąt tekstów naukowych w formie artykułów, recenzji lub monografii, głównie z zakresu filozofii, z których największe znaczenie ma książka *Prawda następstwem istnienia. Problem prawdy w interpretacji św. Tomasza z Akwinu* (2013). Jest ponadto autorem 127 haseł w *Powszechnej Encyklopedii Filozofii* i 32 w *Encyklopedii Filozofii Polskiej*. Podejmuje także tematy związane z historią księgozbiorów.
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Antoni B. Stępień – prof. zw. dr hab., emerytowany profesor Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. Głównym przedmiotem jego zainteresowań filozoficznych są trzy dyscypliny: teoria poznania, metafizyka i estetyka. W teorii poznania podejmował fenomenologiczną analizę deskrypcyjną, dyskusję ze sceptycyzmem oraz obronę możliwości wiedzy koniecznej dotyczącej świata. Jego teorię poznania należałoby określić mianem fundacjonalistycznej, maksymalistycznej i realistycznej. W metafizyce argumentuje za pochodnością świata od bytu absolutnego, osobowego, nieskończonego, wszechwiedzącego, wszechmocnego i nieskończenie dobrego; za odrębnością substancjalną człowieka w stosunku do innych bytów, w tym za niematerialnością najważniejszych działań umysłu ludzkiego oraz za istnieniem wolnej woli. Tezy te skłaniają go do uznania, że sens życia ludzkiego wykracza poza istnienie w świecie materialnym w takiej formie, w jakiej go teraz znamy. W stosunku do swego stanowiska filozoficznego używa określenia: „tomizm egzystencjalny w niektórych sprawach fenomenologizujący”. W estetyce podlega wpływowi fenomenologii w wydaniu Ingardena, a szczególnie aksjologii fenomenologicznej. Jest autorem takich prac jak: *Wstęp do filozofii* (5 wydań); *Wprowadzenie do metafizyki*

(Kraków 1964); *O metodzie teorii poznania* (Lublin 1966); *Elementy filozofii* (Lublin 1980); *Propedeutyka estetyki* (2 wydania); *Zagadnienie punktu wyjścia w filozofii. Teorie relacji: filozoficzne i logiczna* (Lublin 2005); *Studia i szkice filozoficzne* (3 tomy, Lublin 1999 – 2015).

Marian Szymonik – ks., dr hab. nauk humanistycznych w zakresie filozofii. Wykładowca Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego w Częstochowie; „profesor stały” i wykładowca w Wyższym Instytucie Teologicznym w Częstochowie. Członek Naukowego Towarzystwa Tomistycznego. Nr ORCID: 0000-0002-0796-8001

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