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The Role of the Sacred and the Profane in Shaping Contemporary Knowledge Management

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Abstract

This article analyses the perspectives of lay individuals actively engaged in the development of the Catholic Church, with particular attention to the construction of relationships between religion and contemporary science. In discussing matters of faith, the authors focus on their interpretation in the context of knowledge disseminated to society through the media. The inquiry is conducted using an original methodology—the Method of Innovative Solution Seeking (MISS)—which facilitates the acquisition of information on the studied issues from various focus groups. These data form the basis for further analysis aimed at identifying the process of shaping a secular society in Poland and defining the principles for applying phenomenology in research on religion. The analysis also makes it possible to examine the relationship between science and truth, the meaning of the concept of zero in scientific discourse, the evolution of ideas, and the mechanisms of temporal manipulation. The study may be applied within the framework of pastoral theology.

Keywords

knowledge, religion, sacred, profane, knowledge management, pastoral theology

The primary objective of this article is to emphasise the need to distinguish between *sacrum* — understood as the existence of a higher order and moral good, manifested in spiritual experience and evoking a sense of communion with God — and *profanum*, understood as the sphere of information and practices derived from civilisational achievements. By directing attention to what eludes purely sensory cognition, the *sacrum* foregrounds the spiritual dimension of human existence (Tomalski 2001). The *profanum*, by contrast, is encountered in everyday life as that which is tangible, measurable, and empirically accessible.

As a sublime category, the *sacrum* is frequently marginalised by the *profanum*, which concerns itself primarily with what is considered necessary for existence under particular sociocultural conditions. The erosion of the *sacrum* is experienced acutely, especially by older people. As Pope Francis observed during the general audience of 4 March 2015, ‘a culture of profit insists on casting off the old like a “weight”’ (Francis 2015).

The main research question addressed by the authors is how believers may acquire the knowledge necessary for constructive dialogue with atheists and with those who interpret the world primarily through secular categories. These considerations contribute to pastoral theology, which seeks to formulate criteria for Christian conduct and practical guidelines for church ministry (Kamiński 1992).

The faith community, traditionally oriented towards the reception of divine revelation on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural levels (Wojacek 2001), must now engage with broader phenomena — including developments in physics, psychology, and information technology — that shape and modernise the behavioural models of contemporary generations (Oberröder 1977). These developments suggest that the Church, in fulfilling its mission under increasingly complex conditions, must seek appropriate strategies for adapting the transmission of theological knowledge to the expectations of twenty-first-century believers.

This adaptation is not without difficulty, particularly in light of changing mentalities and interests that do not always foster religious development (Kamiński 1983). A renewed perspective must therefore emerge from a deeper understanding of the relationship between contemporary processes of acquiring and transmitting knowledge and the spiritual experiences of individuals. More precisely, this entails shaping a reality that Catholic reflection should illuminate

and interpret, thereby generating innovative directions for ecclesial engagement (Schoonenberg 1970).

Such reflection concerns the Church as a spiritual community endowed with knowledge of the relationship between faith and scientific discovery. This knowledge should help its members address fundamental existential questions: ‘Where is humanity headed? What is the meaning of life?’ (van Caster 1969). It should also facilitate dialogue between two seemingly opposing educational paradigms: materialist science and divine revelation as presented in the Old and New Testaments. Through deepened reflection, a new interpretation of contemporary phenomena may enable believers to understand scientific discoveries within the framework of the Christian vision of the New Evangelisation (van Caster 1969).

This article is based on research conducted using the Method of Innovative Solution Seeking (MISS), developed by Janusz Dworak and Henryk Kretek (Dworak and Kretek 2022). The principles of this method derive from a modified version of grounded theory, as presented in the works of Anselm Strauss, Barney Glaser, Kathy Charmaz, and Tadeusz Konecki. As suggested in the grounded-theory literature, researchers may adapt this approach to their specific investigative needs (Bryant and Charmaz 2007), including by proposing new ways of integrating knowledge across disciplines.

The MISS methodology was implemented through in-depth interviews designed to provide respondents with a comfortable environment for sharing personal reflections on the relationship between religion and science. The authors adopted the following methodological principles:

- simultaneous engagement in data collection, analysis, and implementation within the thematic scope of each section;
- a cautious approach to hypotheses derived from inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning;
- identification of respondents’ cognitive frameworks and formulation of practical conclusions for evangelisation efforts.

In simplified terms, MISS is directly linked to the recognition of existing realities through intellectual deliberation and to the extraction of the essential dimensions of a problem by researchers with expertise in the relevant field. Focus groups formed the basis for developing a coherent conceptual framework for shaping the relationship between *sacrum* and *profanum*. These groups generated both concrete and abstract hypotheses, the verification of which may challenge entrenched stereotypes. Traditional inquiry often confines researchers to existing problems and conventional solutions; MISS, by contrast, seeks

to uncover unforeseen phenomena and limits reliance on existing literature where that literature may unduly influence the researcher's perspective and findings (Urquhart, Lehmann, and Myers 2010).

This approach is particularly valuable for practitioners who, drawing on personal experience, select diverse research techniques to analyse complex issues efficiently and effectively (Charmaz 2009). MISS may also be defined as a form of intellectual provocation that compels the transformation of acquired information into actionable knowledge and thereby facilitates paradigm shifts.

Within MISS, a distinction is made between *facts* — serving as central reference points — and *truth*, which requires the examination of events from multiple perspectives. For instance, the existence of the sun, the Earth, and humanity constitutes a factual observation. Truth, however, relates to the interpretation of these phenomena, such as their emergence through evolutionary processes. Fiction, by contrast, encompasses poetic expressions such as 'the sun shines to illuminate our existence' or 'the Earth is the mother of all people.' Only by differentiating between fact, truth, and fiction can researchers formulate hypotheses that reveal paradoxes inherent in established scientific paradigms (Garfinkel 2007).

The principal research tool employed is the intellectual experiment, which addresses issues situated not in the empirical world but in the researcher's imagination (Brown 2001; Grabarczyk 2009). The article includes commentary on the application of MISS to the thematic scope under investigation.

No reference or introduction to this — what is the doctrine of the Church? How do the authors understand it?

1. The Process of Shaping a Secular Society

Deprived of the means to critically assess information disseminated by mass media, many ordinary citizens remain unaware that their minds are gradually being imprinted with a set of ritualistic or symbolic actions designed to instil specific values and behavioural norms through continuous repetition — implicitly suggesting the perpetuation of the past (Hobsbawm 2008, 10). This phenomenon pertains to individual memory, which is closely linked to formative experiences in childhood, adolescence, and family life. It encompasses emotionally charged

events such as memories of the home environment, conversations with parents, and religious rituals associated with major feasts.

Today, however, the memory of younger generations is increasingly shaped by fictional and fabricated characters, often making it difficult to distinguish between timeless values that provide guidance in moments of crisis and illusions crafted by organisations pursuing commercial gain. Unable to differentiate clearly between the truths conveyed by religion and secular ceremonies, many individuals perceive both as artificial constructs promoted by the media to elevate the significance of particular events.

A similar transformation is occurring in the realm of *historical memory*—knowledge of past events such as wars, uprisings, and periods of national glory and decline, often embodied in the lives of monarchs, military leaders, scientists, and saints. Historical memory also includes religious texts and hymns, the architectural heritage of churches, centuries-old cemeteries, monuments to national heroes, and roadside shrines. Traditionally, this memory was shaped through references to the Gospel narrative; today, however, it is increasingly supplanted by shifting political doctrines propagated by organisations competing for power.

Religious events are now frequently treated as instruments of historical memory and repurposed to reconstruct the past in accordance with the ideologies of consumerism (Hobsbawm 2008, 7), as exemplified by the commodification of Christmas. Consequently, the members of a society may begin to identify with fictional media characters, while real individuals whose lives do not align with corporate narratives are consigned to oblivion. Examples include Pope St John Paul II, Blessed Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Blessed Jerzy Popiełuszko, and the Blessed Ulma family.

There is also a discernible tendency to omit the contributions of individuals and institutions whose efforts helped shape contemporary freedoms, such as:

- the role of the Church during the communist period in Poland;
- the sacrifice of St Maximilian Kolbe, who gave his life to save a fellow prisoner;
- the election and pontificate of Karol Wojtyła as Pope John Paul II, which fostered a sense of national unity.

Maurice Halbwachs argued that ‘it is within society that individuals normally acquire, recognise, and situate their memories’ (Halbwachs 2008, 4). He further asserted that ‘each person possesses a memory that is not identical to anyone else’s, yet it remains a component and aspect of the group’s collective memory’ (Halbwachs 2008, 215).

The process of remembering is hindered by successive reinterpretations of archival documents, library holdings, and museum exhibits, which often generate intergenerational conflict. As Halbwachs observed, ‘the essential task is to locate memory within a specific domain of the past’ (Halbwachs 2008, 211). Frequently, individuals are compelled to recall traumatic historical events they would prefer to forget, including the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime and widely represented in literature and film. Yet such narratives often overlook the conciliatory gesture made on 18 November 1965, when the Polish bishops issued a letter to the German bishops containing the words: ‘we forgive and ask for forgiveness.’ This event marked the beginning of a long process of Polish–German reconciliation grounded in the Gospel message (Polak and Przeworski 2013).

Collective memory related to religion is perceived by believers as the roots from which they have grown, while others regard it as a collection of trivial tales, legends, or quotations. This dualism creates barriers to mutual understanding, since the meaning of events varies depending on the context in which they are recalled — as objects of reverence (*sacrum*) or ridicule (*profanum*).

2. Secular Ceremonials as Substitutes for Liturgy

Secular rituals increasingly function as substitutes for traditional values, although they remain detached from any relationship with Divine Providence. These practices fill the existential void left by numerous, often impulsive acts of apostasy, in which a two-thousand-year-old religious tradition is judged through the lens of morally compromised individuals. That tradition, however, has historically shaped statehood, fostered a sense of belonging, and formed individual identity through communion with ancestral heritage.

This condition is reinforced by educational systems that prioritise secular ceremonials and deliver knowledge in the form of pre-structured solutions to practical problems, without sufficiently encouraging independent thought. In many higher education institutions, philosophy has been removed from curricula, despite its role in providing general, foundational, rational, and critical knowledge about existence (Encyclopaedia PWN n.d.). Philosophy once compelled students not only to ask profound questions but also to seek answers grounded in existential experience.

In primary and secondary education, religious instruction has been introduced, yet there is now a growing movement to replace it with ethics — a proposition

that reflects a conceptual misunderstanding. Religion is rooted in spiritual experience and the recognition of transcendental phenomena, whereas ethics focuses on behavioural norms developed to support specific social and political orders. Religion interprets revealed truths; ethics promotes conduct conducive to the functioning of the state. Religion evaluates good and evil within a Gospel framework; ethics identifies behaviours that facilitate social cohesion and economic development within a given sociopolitical order.

Religious principles are not synonymous with ethical principles, and the reverse is also true. For instance, hedonism may be considered ethically acceptable in some philosophical traditions, yet it remains incompatible with Christian doctrine. Religion encompasses knowledge of forgiveness, sacrifice, and human conduct in relation to the sacred. It is doctrinally grounded, enacted through religious practices, organised within community structures, and experienced in the realm of transcendence. Ethical theories, by contrast, often frame happiness, social utility, or human flourishing as central goods, but they do not necessarily provide a theological account of forgiveness, sacrifice, or salvation.

Religion points to the activity of the human person in experiencing the sacred—an encounter that fosters closeness to the *sacrum*, unity with it, and a posture of reverence, awe, and even fear (Eliade 1999). These brief reflections, derived from focus group research, lead to a clear conclusion: by analogy, replacing religion with ethics is akin to substituting chemistry with physics or mathematics. Each discipline has its own domain, methodology, and epistemological framework; conflating them undermines their distinct contributions to human understanding.

3. Science and Truth

In pursuit of their research objectives, scientists employ various methods to present the truths they uncover. These methods often lead to divergent interpretations of research findings, which may be understood through several epistemological frameworks:

- Coherentist—truth is accepted if the information presented is logically consistent and internally justified;
- Subjectivist—truth is defined by its practical utility in the daily lives of individuals;

- Pragmatist — truth is validated by its capacity to generate material or immaterial benefits;
- Consensus-based — truth is affirmed when the majority adheres to a particular pattern of thought or behaviour;
- Materialist — truth is recognised only when it yields measurable, tangible outcomes.

When the existence of a Higher Intelligence is examined through these lenses, it becomes evident that such a concept remains consistent across all dimensions:

- Coherentist — it offers a logically structured explanation of observed phenomena;
- Subjectivist — it represents a deeply personal experience, self-evident to the individual;
- Pragmatist — it fosters psychological stability and social integration;
- Consensus-based — it reflects a widely held belief that a transcendent entity has guided, and continues to guide, the world;
- Materialist — it manifests in the societal benefits derived from promoting honesty, integrity, and morally respected behaviour.

A neglected yet profound theological claim is that the presence of God is often experienced through peace, beauty, and love, whereas His absence may be associated with conflict and war — understood here as manifestations of human failure.

Truth cannot be inferred solely through inductive reasoning, which generalises from specific observations or experiments and proceeds from particular cases to broader claims (Naukowiec.org n.d.-b). Many phenomena are singular in nature and resist simple generalisation. For example, the misconduct of one member of an organisation does not justify the assumption that all members are culpable.

Similarly, deductive reasoning, which draws conclusions from general premises to particular cases, may lead to flawed generalisations if the premises are incomplete or incorrectly formulated (Naukowiec.org n.d.-a).

The Church is not merely a community of believers. In Christian theology, it is understood as a community of believers in Jesus Christ united by faith, the sacraments, and apostolic teaching, and possessing a defined structure, ecclesiastical law, doctrine, and tradition.

Abductive reasoning seeks the most plausible explanation for a set of observations (Czakon 2014), but it may also result in provisional and schematic interpretations (Thagard 1978). For instance, condemning a person solely on the

basis of a media report, without considering the context of the action, illustrates the limitations of abductive logic.

Through the application of the PIR method (Dworak and Kretek 2022; Kretek and Dworak 2022), the authors advocate for a more nuanced scientific approach, urging researchers to:

- clearly distinguish between *fact*, *truth*, and *fiction*, recognising their epistemological differences;
- extend inquiry beyond sensory data and technological instrumentation to include *immaterial dimensions* such as loneliness, exclusion, and existential burnout — conditions often alleviated through spirituality;
- acknowledge the *transience of scientific theories*, which are frequently replaced by newer paradigms and therefore should not be treated as secular axioms;
- recognise that the human being is not merely a mechanistic entity governed by physical laws, but a complex synthesis of *body and soul*;
- reconsider the *materialist worldview* and the plausibility of divine involvement in creation, not as a scientific conclusion, but as a philosophical and theological interpretation of the origin of the universe;
- accept that the theological premise according to which God initiated creation and entrusted the Earth to humanity, in accordance with the biblical command to ‘subdue’ it, allows the development of socio-economic systems to be interpreted as a dynamic process with both benefits and significant limitations;
- from a theological and philosophical perspective, recognise that the Big Bang should not be reduced to a purely spontaneous event without deeper metaphysical questions. Such reflection is characteristic of theological and philosophical discourse, where the aim is critical interpretation rather than the description of empirical facts alone.

In contemporary Catholic teaching, there is a pressing need for publications that systematically and logically demonstrate the limitations of purely empirical scientific reasoning. Such works should inform society about the significance of spiritual experience in the context of rapid civilisational change and increasing globalisation (Bauman 2000).

In articulating its worldview amid growing material prosperity, the Church must strive to assign meaning to suffering and evil so that human existence may be understood in all its dimensions: health, illness, exclusion, depression,

anxiety, and bereavement. These reflections, crystallised through conversations with individuals grappling with concerns about evolution, the interpretation of surrounding phenomena, and the Church's role in shaping personal identity, have been framed — using the PIR method (Dworak and Kretek 2023) — within a narrative of personality formation, in which spiritual guidance is often essential.

4. The Phenomenology of Religion

Since the dawn of civilisation, religion has served as a constructive force in the development of knowledge, emerging from humanity's profound desire to explore freely and personally the origins of the cosmos and the mystery of existence (John Paul II 1983). Fundamental questions — Who am I? Where am I going? What do I seek to achieve? — have accompanied humankind throughout history. In the contemporary era, marked by globalisation and artificial intelligence, these questions acquire renewed significance because of the scale of new challenges, circumstances, and decisions confronting modern generations.

One of the main challenges confronting the modern Church is to define the relationship between nature, technology, and morality. In this context, morality is understood not as a mere social consensus, but as an order of values that enables individuals to live in accordance with the universal principles of the Decalogue (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2005, 16).

Persistent philosophical dilemmas concerning the existence of a higher being — referred to as Rational Intelligence, Providence, or God — remain unresolved. Attempts to provide a purely rational explanation for this issue have produced limited results. The authors therefore propose an alternative thought experiment: how might the history of civilisation have unfolded if God had not made a covenant with Abraham?

Such a reframing, devoid of emotional bias, leads to a series of interpretive propositions:

- civilisation, in its known historical forms, might have developed differently, since the concept of God provided one of the earliest abstract frameworks for philosophy and other sciences;
- without the concept of God, the formation of stable societies may have lacked a shared symbolic framework for governance, organisation, and hierarchy;

- individuals might have lacked a transcendent framework for moral guidance and for distinguishing between virtuous and harmful behaviour;
- humanity might have lacked a common vocabulary for defining the mental frameworks of tribes, states, and nations;
- the worship of God facilitated the creation of distinct, integrated, and coherent organisational structures with unique identities;
- even primitive tribes might have been unable to cultivate rituals and traditions in the forms known from historical and anthropological research.

From this perspective, civilisations such as Western, Latin American, Orthodox, Byzantine, African, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese may be seen as cultural spaces in which societies construct timeless metaphysical entities that enable their development. One may argue that what human beings perceive — events, objects, and ideas — can be interpreted as the work of *Someone* rather than *something*, insofar as the concept of God as Creator has catalysed the emergence and evolution of numerous societies.

Historically, the shared recognition of a Higher Power within a community has fostered the development of culture and art. Religion has played a significant role in shaping civilisation and has served as an inspiration for the emergence of diverse ideas. As Pope Benedict XVI noted, ‘if man’s first, fundamental relationship — his relationship with God — is disturbed, then nothing else can be truly in order’ (Benedict XVI 2012).

In this context, the Phenomenological Interpretive Research (PIR) method was employed using a question-reversal technique inspired by defectology (Martyniak 1997). This approach enabled researchers to analyse the problem and uncover an alternative dimension of the issue under study, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between spiritual experience and sociocultural development.

5. Zero in Deliberations on the Big Bang and the Evaluation of Social Behaviour

Contemporary scientists generally interpret the biblical account of creation symbolically or treat it as a theological text rather than a scientific description. In scientific discourse, the Big Bang model describes the evolution of the

observable universe from an extremely hot and dense state; it does not, by itself, resolve metaphysical questions concerning why there is something rather than nothing. According to the standard scientific view, the universe evolved from this early state, leading to the formation of galaxies, stars, planets, the Earth, its geological structures, water, flora, and fauna. This process ultimately made possible the emergence of consciousness and the development of human beings as highly complex forms of life on Earth.

When this process is examined through the lens of algebraic reasoning, the concept of *nothingness* preceding the Big Bang may be symbolically represented by *zero* (0) — a sum of equal and opposite values, expressed as:

$$0 = (+1) + (+2) + \dots + (+n) + (-1) + (-2) + \dots + (-n) \\ 0 = (+1) + (+2) + \dots + (+n) + (-1) + (-2) + \dots + (-n)$$

This formulation implies that *zero*, or *nothing*, may be interpreted symbolically as bifurcating into two domains: the *material*, represented by positive numbers, and the *immaterial*, potentially represented by negative numbers. Such a representation invites speculative reflection — perhaps, provocatively, suggesting that alongside matter something else emerged at the moment of creation, such as the metaphysical realm or even angelic beings, as proponents of *creatio ex nihilo* might argue.

In algebra, it is permissible to transform the values in an equation by changing signs or rearranging terms. In religious discourse, however, changes in belief — for example, from faith to atheism or from atheism to faith — are often dismissed or ridiculed, despite numerous historical examples of profound spiritual transformation, such as Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, and Saint Raphael Kalinowski.

This discrepancy invites reflection on the words of Pope Leo XIII: ‘In no case can science be permitted to serve the interests of a single citizen or a select few, since it was established for the common good of all’ (Leo XIII 1888). This quote emphasises the importance of responsible use of knowledge and on openness to changing views in social and spiritual life.

The symbolic significance of *zero* in societal discourse is illustrated by a compelling example. In Poland, a substantial majority of citizens identify with Roman Catholicism; according to the 2021 National Census, 71.3% of the population declared membership in the Roman Catholic Church (Statistics Poland 2023). The remaining population, including secular or non-religious persons, may

be symbolically associated with *zero* (0), representing neutrality or the absence of religious affiliation. In a democratic society, both groups seek to assert their symbols in the public space. This raises a complex issue: if crosses are displayed universally, this may be perceived as the dominance of the religious majority; conversely, the removal of all symbols may — including both the cross and zero — would paradoxically privilege the secular minority by erasing religious presence from the public sphere.

This paradox shows that zero, symbolically speaking, can represent a lack of religious identity and may falsely suggest that no religious believers exist. In a democratic context, a minority can therefore exert disproportionate influence over a majority. Philosophically, this illustrates that the absence of information may itself constitute a form of information.

The PIR method has enabled the identification of the symbolic and epistemological significance of zero in social relations. A lack of understanding of its conceptual depth may lead to misinterpretations of truths espoused by various communities. Recognising the layered meanings of zero — mathematical, philosophical, and cultural — is essential for fostering informed dialogue in pluralistic societies.

6. Deliberations on Evolution

Some researchers and members of the public enthusiastically embrace the theory of evolution, recognising that complex biological structures may emerge through long-term processes operating at both the macro level (species) and the micro level (cells and genes). From a philosophical and theological perspective, this invites reflection on the limits of scientific knowledge and its relationship to questions about meaning, causality, and humanity's role in the universe. The following analogies are therefore presented not as scientific arguments against evolutionary biology, but as heuristic images intended to raise philosophical questions concerning order, purpose, and interpretation:

- a palace cannot emerge from steel rods, cement, and sand without the deliberate effort of architects, engineers, and labourers;
- a particleboard will not form spontaneously from water, sand, glue, and sawdust, even if these materials are stored together for centuries;
- a modern car will not assemble itself from a scrapyard of old vehicles, tyres, and components, regardless of their abundance.

While the accumulation of vehicles may eventually result in a traffic jam on a motorway, this phenomenon does not equate to the spontaneous construction of new roads, although it may prompt their development.

Speculations concerning spontaneous generation or the emergence of complex structures should be treated as hypothetical constructions used primarily for theoretical reflection. No human-created theory should be regarded as sacred. This point resonates with Leo XIII's warning that false convictions can distort reason and public life (Leo XIII 1888). In both scientific knowledge and moral practice, true value stems from the harmony between reason and ethics rather than from the uncritical acceptance of theories or ideas.

These examples invite reflection on whether some scientific methods of analysing phenomena offer only a *subjective representation of reality*, shaped by institutional agendas. In response to the question — why do many scientists refine the work of theologians whose views they do not share? — one may answer that *theology*, as discourse about God, humanity, and the world, interprets reality through the lens of divine revelation and thereby challenges the propagation of purely personal doctrines and ideologies (Jann 2017).

Where God is absent from scientific discourse, researchers — though endowed with free will — may inadvertently contribute to outcomes more destructive than warfare. Buckle observed: 'Wars have not wrought such devastation upon nations as the erroneous views of scientists' (Buckle 1873).

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences seeks to integrate contemporary scientific advancements with responses to pressing global challenges. This mission is crucial because scientific discoveries reveal the beauty and complexity of nature, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary research that also remains open to theological reflection. Within a theological context, such an approach must consider God's revelation, which addresses humanity's fundamental questions: 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?' These questions remain vital for younger generations grappling with existential uncertainty (Ołdakowski 2022).

The concept of spontaneous generation is often regarded by scientists as a counterpoint to theological explanations. Nevertheless, it remains a theory that requires empirical validation.

7. The Embedding of Grammatical Tenses in Scientific Discourse

In many scholarly works, the concept of tradition is interpreted as a hidden form of the past, sometimes implying an ‘invented’ aspect (Hobsbawm 2008, 20). According to Hobsbawm’s definition, however, tradition is essentially ‘a set of ritual or symbolic practices, usually initiated on the basis of general principles, intended to instil certain values and norms of behaviour through constant repetition — suggesting a continuation of the past’ (Hobsbawm 2008, 10).

The purpose of such *invented traditions* is to construct secular communities rooted in a *fabricated past*, where history becomes a sociological construct — often disconnected from factual reality, emerging rapidly in unspecified contexts and prone to swift consolidation within society. Another method of establishing new traditions involves the adoption of borrowed ceremonies, folklore, and rituals from diverse cultural domains (Hobsbawm 2008, 10–21).

By treating invented traditions as authentic, historical events can be reinterpreted to form a *coherent narrative* that supports the strategic objectives of various organisations. For instance, claiming to be heirs of Enlightenment values and therefore advocating a critical stance towards religion allows such a theory to be applied universally, while conveniently omitting crucial facts, such as the number and education of individuals involved in its propagation, the specific conditions under which it arose, and its societal role at the time.

The *present tense*, in scientific discourse, often reflects a form of *temporal relativism*, suggesting a static reality. Statements such as ‘I am Polish,’ ‘I am married,’ or ‘I am a teacher’ imply a lack of change within a given domain. This interpretation may foster a perception that time has ceased to progress, leading to the illusion of permanence. Consequently, individuals may become passive, conforming to socially accepted norms without recognising the transience of life or the importance of living according to timeless religious principles.

Preoccupied with material concerns and transient pleasures, many people fail to perceive God’s presence and thus risk losing sight of eternal life. Blaise Pascal famously argued that living as if God did not exist permits one to indulge in earthly pleasures; however, if God exists, one risks losing something infinitely more valuable. Pascal therefore advocated belief in God, warning that neglecting the passage of time may lead to spiritual alienation without any guarantee of return (Pascal 1983, 232–236).

When scientists rely exclusively on the present tense, they may foster an atmosphere devoid of existential reflection, stripping life of its evaluative dimension. In such contexts, *implants* emerge to replace:

- knowledge of God with artificially induced emotional constructs;
- transcendental experience with the accumulation of material wealth;
- moral discernment with ideologies promoting experimental medical practices.

These implanted worldviews may become a source of pride for those who adopt them, while those who resist are often stigmatised with labels such as *conservative*, *clericalist*, or *eccentric*. In such scenarios, avant-garde initiatives may devolve into psychological coercion, where individuals consumed by a distorted notion of modernity exert pressure on those seeking to live in accordance with Gospel values.

Examples include:

- feature films containing obscene scenes that undermine parental efforts to raise children;
- street and square names referencing violent events;
- television programmes repeatedly highlighting the sins of individuals who succumbed to personal weaknesses.

In these cases, actors deliver scripted lines under the direction of a ‘director,’ conveying a carefully constructed ‘truth’ to the audience. This results in a *consensual truth* — a narrative accepted by the majority because alternative information is absent or marginalised.

In this type of marketing strategy, corporations use methods such as induction, deduction, and analogy to design advertisements embedded in fictional narratives that influence real-world consumer behaviour. For example, a marketing slogan may suggest that owning a particular item is common among fans of a given novel, thereby encouraging consumers to purchase it.

The *future tense* in scientific and technocratic discourse functions as a promise of experiences to be enjoyed once organisational goals are fulfilled. Its strategic use may compel communities towards specific behaviours, often through emotionally charged appeals from authoritative figures. Promoted lifestyles include prosperity, freedom from suffering, and unrestricted choice. Framed in future-oriented terms, some scientific and technological narratives encourage the abandonment of traditional religious perspectives by suggesting that such concerns will soon become obsolete.

According to such narratives, daily existence will be managed by engineers and computer scientists, offering products born of meticulous laboratory research. Emotional fulfilment will be provided by cinemas and theatres whose programming reflects market demand. Logistics firms will handle distribution, while advertising will dictate consumption patterns designed to maximise happiness and satisfaction.

In such a reality, concepts such as sacrifice, vocation, and suffering become difficult to reconcile with dominant cultural expectations, while Gospel truths — including the Samaritan's compassion, the stewardship of divine gifts, and the father's forgiveness of the prodigal son — are easily forgotten.

The use of the PIR method has enabled the identification of mechanisms of temporal manipulation employed by sociologists and psychologists. These mechanisms include:

- reinterpreting the past for marketing purposes;
- prolonging the perception of the present indefinitely;
- depicting the future as a domain of intensive consumption.

Conclusions

The pyramids were built by the Egyptians, monumental structures by the Mayans, and abandoned termite mounds were once inhabited by their builders. Analogously, one may argue that the universe bears observable traces of creation. These reflections point to the possibility of Intelligence — a transcendent initiator of creation, sometimes described as the source of the impulse behind the Big Bang.

This Intelligence endowed humanity with free will, and the way human beings choose to perceive reality — what they designate as *sacrum* or *profanum* — is ultimately a reflection of that freedom. Religion, by appealing to truth, justice, goodness, and beauty, shapes individuals who are accountable for their actions in both private and professional spheres.

As Adam Chmielewski has noted, 'the world in which we live and act is a system of interconnected elements; there are no isolated structures in it' (Chmielecki 1999, 10). Values transmitted to future generations should therefore be free from unnecessary social tensions and anxieties, and they should clearly distinguish between good and evil according to Gospel teaching.

A young person lacking a well-defined value system is vulnerable to the disorienting effects of modern scientific achievements and free-market mechanisms. Faced with competing ideologies and options, such a person may struggle to determine which path to follow and which values to uphold. It is therefore essential to provide young people with knowledge that enables a critical analysis of the events unfolding around them and empowers them to defend their convictions in public discourse through logical and reasoned argumentation.

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