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Organon 24, 245-259

1988

Artykuł umieszczony jest w kolekcji cyfrowej Bazhum, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych tworzonej przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego.

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie ze środków specjalnych MNiSW dzięki Wydziałowi Historycznemu Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.



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ROMAN RYBARSKI'S COPING WITH SCIENCE

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the appearance of many currents which slipped attempts to classify them on the ground of the customary and previously foolproof yardstick of basic philosophy. Marxism, pragmatism, historicism, psychologism, economism, vitalism, rationalism, empiriocriticism, scientism, relativism, nationalism, etc.—a medley of all kinds of varieties and combinations. Still, the eclecticism seen in many scholars resulted from the popularity of cursory truths of positivism rather than from their precipitate absorption of different schools' tenets. In the situation of that time, some people chose to abandon the study of metaphysical or axiological issues and to forget questions which were notoriously inconvenient for scientific research. What they wanted was to get a breathing spell, a compromise they reconciled themselves to in the hope to regain their peace of mind. Their avowed objectiveness relieved them from the need to take sides with one or another philosophical current, creating a dangerous illusion of being beyond and above the reality around them.

But the very first year of the 20th century brought with it yet another dramatic change, as Max Planck came forward with his quantum mechanics. Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty was soon to follow. Natural science began to nip at its Newtonian-Cartesian authority. Probabilism instead of determinism, the corpuscular and, at the same time, wave structure of matter, the noncontinuity of matter—all that shook an order of truths which had been established for two centuries before that. All of a sudden, people began to notice wrinkles on the scientific world outlook, indeed some thought they were seeing mythical features in it. Anti-scientism, an attitude which had been around in European culture since William Blake and Goethe, was gaining field.

All that academic cacophony reinforced the demand for some kind of order. Attitudes suggested by relativism or historicism were soon gaining in popularity among intellectuals. Each epoch has its own justifications and its own value systems, and that is why each epoch should be judged against its own frame of

reference—a truth which was emphasized by Dilthey and Durkheim alike. Le Bon studied crowd psychology, G. Sorel preached the gospel of universal strike, and J. G. Fraser studied superstitions. It was to those people that irrationalism owed its triumph, both as a social force and as a key to understanding the real world.

The dispute over what science essentially was had, apart from its philosophical dimension, a political aspect. As the myth of social engineering was having its heyday right after World War I, ideology took the place of science. That was as significant a breakthrough as the substitution of science for religion by the Enlightenment. The dispute about the future of the world was taken over by ideologies, above all socialism and nationalism. The socialists' romantic frame of mind made them want to change the world in the name of universal human ideals, and science was to be responsible for rationalizing those ideals. Nationalism, which underlined its specific character, was forced to reject the optimistic vision of science previously offered by liberalism and socialism.

The Polish dispute about science took the form of a discussion between the "Romantics" and the "Positivists." Poland's nationalists (Narodowa Demokracja) represented a positivist attitude, underlining the scarcity of available means and the overriding importance of the state's needs. Socialists, for their part, called for an unbridled development of science as a manifestation of man's creative mind. Those were mostly shallow discussions, confined as they were to a crude opposition between spontaneous creation and tough requirements of real life.

For the "Positivists," the most outspoken exposition was provided by Roman Rybarski, economist and historian, one of the chief ideologists and politicians of National Democracy.¹ In this contribution, I wish to outline Rybarski's scholarly studies in the context of the political dispute over the shape of doctrine. I begin with his attitude towards research activity as one of different kinds of social behaviour, to proceed to a discussion of his contributions to the disciplines in which he worked (political economy, economic history, history of

¹ Roman Rybarski was born in Zator on July 3, 1887. After graduation from the faculty of law at Cracow University, he went for a two-year sabbatical to England, France, Italy and the United States. In 1913, he finished his courses for an academic degree in political economy under Professor W. Czerkawski's supervision, and in 1916, at the age of only 29, he was appointed professor of Cracow University. He was a member of the Polish delegation to the 1919 peace conference. He served as Under Secretary of State with the Ministry for the Former Prussian-held Polish Territories, as Deputy Treasury Minister in W. Grabski's Cabinet, as deputy to the Polish parliament (the Sejm), and National Democratic caucus whip. From 1921 onwards he lectured at Warsaw Technical University, and in 1924 he was appointed professor of finance at Warsaw University. He held the last-named job till the outbreak of the war, while also serving as dean of his department. Apart from his scholarly books, he wrote several hundred articles on political issues (he had a weekly column in *Gazeta Warszawska*, for example). He was a first-rate speaker. He spoke seven languages. Arrested on May 18, 1941, and held in the Warsaw prison Pawiak, he died of typhoid fever at the Auschwitz concentration camp, probably on March 6, 1942 (the Germans gave pneumonia as the cause of death to his family).

economic ideas, sociology), and lastly to look at the relationship between his attitude as scholar and his political views.

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His 1926 book called *Nation, Individual, Class* is among his best. He attacked the Enlightenment concept of science but also presented his own views systematically. Rybarski regarded science as a process in history. That view of his was supported by his conviction about science's essential lack of autonomy. As he treated science instrumentally, Rybarski constantly cautioned against forgetting that judgements claiming to be scientific propositions are very limited in their validity. He watched the real world from the angle of the old opposition between tradition and rationalism which dated back to the epoch of Enlightenment. It was the 18th century that challenged tradition in favour of education, while the intellectual elite of the time, dominated by rationalists as it was, tried to make others similar to itself and, with time, also to tell the world to listen to reason. That was how the cult of science began, when science was regarded as a panacea for all human failings. But that aspiration led to a degeneration of science. Science increasingly became centered on itself, trying to box all the multifarious manifestations of the real world into its own rational categories.

Religious fanaticism was to be superseded by scientific fanaticism. Science's potential was overrated and abused. Science failed to supply answers to questions which are being answered by religion, and the perpetual metaphysical problems which have always faced man remained unresolved. The Enlightenment's optimistic equation of intellectual with moral progress proved to have been a mistake. Science cannot become mankind's guide, because it failed to prove itself in any of the roles assigned to it by the Enlightenment—as umpire, as benefactor, as adviser.

Rationalism, universalism, individualism—all these ideas propagated by liberalism and utilitarianism purport to use science in order to impose a unidimensional picture of civilization upon the world. Referring to natural laws, they set rigid abstractions against the living history and tradition of the particular societies. In the name of abstractions, they urge people to stand up against social institutions which embody the accomplishments and the wisdom of many generations. Says Rybarski, "It is difficult to do anything for the abstraction 'mankind,' because a brutal kind of egoism soon shows its ugly face from behind a pretence of humanitarianism."² Abstractions have no mobilizing power, requiring no heroism from those involved. Rationalism is fascinated with its vision of a completely mechanical world where "there is no moral ideal but only moral necessity, no creative policy-making but merely routine manipulation [...] in such conditions, isn't life going to lose all meaning when man is made to

² *Naród, jednostka, klasa* [*Nation, Individual, Class*], Warsaw, 1926, p. 190.

feel like little more than a tiny little wheel in a huge mill ?”³ If science is recognized as a creative force capable of subordinating the real world to itself, then we will try to create a rationalized Wellsian world without moral standards, without randomness, without mysteries.

Pointing at the constraints implicit in an idolatrous veneration of science, Rybarski contents himself with showing that such an attitude leads to nowhere. By that Rybarski did not mean to refute rationalism in general. Science cannot possibly cease to be rational, for otherwise it would lose its reason of existence. Rybarski attacks rationalism for the sake of rationalism, the former kind of rationalism being a vision of the real world and the latter just a method. A vision of the world—no, thank you. A vision of method—yes, by all means. Twentieth-century science must abdicate all its illegitimate claims, renounce its disposition to take control of all the world. Science should satisfy itself with its right to comment on events and facts, and a comment which should always be modest. Above all, science should satisfy itself with the provision of facts, and it should put up with the truth that the evaluation of facts is already a highly debatable exercise.

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Rybarski's attitude towards science was partly ambivalent. On the one hand, he lashed out against science regarded as a rationalized ideal, sometimes going as far as to deplore it as the number-one public enemy. On the other hand, though, he engaged in the particular disciplines with great passion, mostly in history and economics, but also in finance administration, sociology, or political science. He respected the autonomous status of those disciplines. What he sought to achieve was less a synthesis than a desire to get as much knowledge as possible. That attitude of his was one consequence of his instrumental approach towards science. Rybarski, toeing the positivists in that respect, attributed to science information and praxiological functions, saying that what the material science was using was contained in “facts.”

Rybarski's attitude towards economic science evolved as time went by. If he looked back at the 27 years which elapsed between his first book on economics (1912) and his last one (1939), he could see he did manage to do what he had set out to do right from the beginning, namely to find such a form of economic science which would set up a possibly close link between economic practice and economic theory.

During the stormy seven years between 1912 and 1919, Rybarski published three studies⁴ dealing with the model of *homo oeconomicus*, the notion of

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴ They were *Nauka o przedmiocie gospodarstwa społecznego* [*The Subject-matter of Economics*] of 1912, *Wartość wymienna jako miara bogactwa* [*Exchange Value as the Measure of Wealth*] of 1914, and *Idea gospodarstwa narodowego* [*The Idea of a National Economy*] of 1919, all published in Cracow.

“wealth” and that of „national economy.” In his fourth book,⁵ he gave expression to his own particular frame of mind as he tried to melt together the views propounded by the neoclassical and the psychological schools. Rybarski believed economic analysis should in the first place establish the given nation’s specific degree of development along with the specific formula of economic management, and only afterwards should economists concern themselves with practical matters. That particular study is perhaps a bit chaotically arranged, and the author repeatedly reminds readers that his remarks on such or other matters concern only one in many possible aspects. Nevertheless Rybarski does seem to have regarded the old classical and *laissez-faire* prescriptions as unquestionably one-sided and thought the historical and the psychological dimensions were at least as significant as those ones.

In 1924–1939, Rybarski’s fundamental work appears in print, the three-volume *System of Political Economy*. It is not a homogeneous work, and its final shape must undoubtedly have been influenced by his reflections to be found in the *Nation*.⁶ In the first volume of the work (of 1924), Rybarski still expounded the view—which was shared by the other “nationalistic” economists, i.e. Stanisław Grabski and Stanisław Głąbiński—that economic history and economic theory are mutually complementary. In the subsequent volumes he found there was no smooth passage from economic history to economic theory. Already in the second volume (called *Theory of National Economy* of 1930), Rybarski mentions “the narrow bounds of theory” several times. His acute analyses of categories proposed by theorists of the time could be underwritten by many a methodologist even today. He once more avowed that feeling about a “narrow interpretation of economic phenomena by theory” at the beginning of the third volume (*Socio-economic Psychology* of 1939). That evolution of his views can be sensed during a perusal of his fundamental trilogy. Volumes one and three are relatively easy to read, namely economic history and psychology, respectively. But the intervening volume is obviously tedious, and perhaps less to readers than the author himself. Rybarski had an easy style. He had a knack for conveying his enthusiasm on paper, writing with verve, and never forgetting that the argument should always be lucid. In the volume on economic theory, tellingly, his fervour obviously flags, the pace of his argument slows, and Rybarski again and again reminds his readers that all that is just theory.

⁵ *Wartość, kapitał, dochód* [Value, Capital, Income], Warsaw, 1922.

⁶ In 1924, he published the first volume of a trilogy on the development of the economy and of economic theories (*Rozwój życia gospodarczego i idei gospodarczych*) announcing his plan to publish soon thereafter a general theory of political economy and a book on national economic policy. However, it was only six years later—in 1930—that the *Theory of National Economy* [*Teoria gospodarstwa społecznego*] appeared, and it took another nine years for *Socio-Economic Psychology* to appear (1939). The delay, as well as the changed titles, were undoubtedly caused by his reflections in the *Nation* [*Naród*] of 1926.

That is not so much indicative of a neglectful attitude towards economics as of the awareness that that particular stage of study cannot possibly be bypassed, the way everyone should first be sent to a kindergarten. Theory, in Rybarski's eyes, is just a necessary introduction to the proper considerations. The ideology of liberalism on which economic theory was based was regarded by Rybarski as a "bagful of generalities" which can be "babbed about no end." Rybarski felt hampered in his straitjacket of economic theorist. He resented being confined to rational actions. But most of all, he was annoyed to see that actually nothing could be added to those sophisticated considerations.

Why, then, did he not repudiate economic theory, which he accused of narrow-mindedness, of hypostasizing, or of remoteness from real life? The answer is easy—Rybarski kept history in reserve. Regarding economy as the ideal of economic behaviours, Rybarski confronted economic theory with real life through history. Economic theory should not juggle with figures. The economy is not just a machine churning out products but a complex structure involving different, sometimes even contradictory, possibilities. Culture is a continuous process in which old elements are constantly mingling with new ones, past with present and future elements all exist side by side with one another. History alone can make us aware of the wealth of economic facts, while history of ideas can show how mankind was construing the information implicit in those facts as time went by.

History, according to positivists, should confine itself to the recording of facts. Rybarski stood firmly by that injunction. His studies in economic history abounded in documented facts, and statistical figures account for more or less 75% of the text. The author himself, never one to put himself in the limelight, talks in the style of a disengaged narrator. The reader gets direct insight into the historian's body of materials. He can check the author's estimates for himself, and he can also try to interpret the figures in his own manner. Only the concluding chapter of a dozen or so pages provides an all-embracing and balanced summing-up. Against the backdrop of other historians of the interwar period, who often gave vent to their prejudices, Rybarski stands out by his all-but Olympian calm and distance, which stands in stark contrast to his views expressed in economic and political pamphlets. While those pamphlets have since then grown a bit out of date, Rybarski's historical studies have benefited and gained enduring virtue owing to that attitude of his. Indeed, those studies can now be used as surrogates of documentary materials for archives which perished during hostilities in World War II.

It took Rybarski 19 years, after the appearance of his first historical study,⁷ to publish the next one, but after that he regularly and at brief intervals churned out next studies⁸ in the history of finance, of which he was professor at Warsaw

⁷ *Sprawa włościańska na Sejmie w roku 1831* [*The Peasant Question at the Sejm in 1831*].

⁸ They were *Handel i polityka handlowa Polski w XVI stuleciu* [*Polish Trade and Trade Policy in the 16th Century*], two volumes, Poznań, 1929; *Gospodarstwo Księstwa Oświęcimskiego w XVI wieku*

University. He strongly hoped to be able to fill the gaps in the history of pre-partition Poland. He completed the job with a history of the reign of the Vasa dynasty during the war, but that study has unfortunately perished.⁹ At the same time, Rybarski did important research in finance theory. His *History of Finance*,¹⁰ which sums up his university lectures, has been hailed as a “perfect college textbook, almost a classic in its kind”¹¹ and it has not forfeited that reputation to this day.

The true context of historical processes can be reached only through the history of economic ideas, which was regarded as one of the most important economic disciplines by Rybarski. The study of economic ideas held by people in previous centuries shows how mankind reacted to economic and other facts, how it interpreted them and what actions it considered right in specific situations.

Rybarski's observations concerning the history of economic ideas are interesting indeed. He impresses the reader with his ability to see matters in all their aspects, to notice links between different political or economic events on the one hand and the cursory ideas on the other, and also with his refusal to yield to the temptation of easy monocausal explanations. Many currents make up the picture of economic life. It is important to acknowledge both those facts which concern directly production processes such as size of capital, financial accumulation ability or technological advancement at the moment, but also ideas, and not merely purely economic ones but also moral ideas, religious ideas, fashion trends, wide-spread customs, etc. Neither the “directly” economic facts nor the ideas will by themselves suffice to account for the phenomenon of economic life. But taken together they make up a system of “economic facts” and make it easier to understand past epochs. Rybarski repudiates the Marxist view of history which says theory is “merely a passive secondary reflection of changes which take place in the economic system.”¹² In his plea for the autonomous character of economic ideas, Rybarski shows how much depends on people themselves, on the wisdom of politicians, but also on fortune, that is, on whether or not a given idea appears at “the right time.”

[*Economic Life in the Oświęcim Duchy in the 16th Century*], Cracow, 1931 ; *Wielkie żupy solne w latach 1497—1594 [The Salines of Wieliczka, 1497—1594]*, Warsaw, 1932 ; *Les finances de la Pologne à l'époque des partages*, Cracovie, 1935 ; *Kredyt i lichwa w Ekonomii Samborskiej w XVIII wieku [Credit and Usury in the Sambor Area in the 18th Century]*, Lwów, 1936 ; *Skarbowość Polski w dobie rozbiorów [Polish Finances during the Period of the Partitions]*, Cracow, 1937 ; *Skarb i pieniądź za Jana Kazimierza, Michała Korybuta i Jana III [The Treasury and Finances during the Reigns of Jan Kazimierz, Michal Korybut and Jan III]*, Warsaw, 1939.

⁹ This is stated by J. Rutkowski in his obituary published in *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 1939—45, p. 595.

¹⁰ The first 192-page edition was entitled *Skarbowość [The Financial System]* Warsaw, 1927. In 1933, Bratnia Pomoc published *Nauka skarbowości [The Doctrine of Finance]* of 290 pages, a second edition of which in 1935 had 398 pages including four appendices.

¹¹ S. Zaleski, “Roman Rybarski,” *Ekonomista*, 1947, p. 157 (obituary).

¹² *Rozwój życia gospodarczego i idei gospodarczych* (vol. one of *System ekonomii politycznej*), Warsaw, 1924, p. 106.

Rybarski's study of departures from rules of economic theory, and his abdication of the kind of inquiry which is described in the first volume of his fundamental trilogy where the primary job was to explain the mutual relation between ideas and economic facts, led him eventually to the question of *Socio-economic Psychology* in the third volume. In it he said economic history and economic theory do not cover all economic life. He underlined the importance of the "collective mind" in "practical life and in the state's economic policy" and set out to study the motives behind economic behaviours and, conversely, the effect different forms of economic activity can have on human behaviour. He also acknowledged possible effects of noneconomic factors (family, caste, class, religion, race, nationality).

Rybarski's psychological economics had nothing in common with the Austrian school. Charging the Austrian school with being too one-sided and equating the psychological aspect of matters with their subjective form, Rybarski proposed his own, broader, sociological approach to the subject. This way, his *Psychology* became a sociological study on the effect economic and noneconomic values have on economic behaviour. The title of the third volume is due to Rybarski's dislike of speculative sociology which is dominated by "quacks"—a feeling, incidentally, Rybarski shared with Florian Znaniecki.¹³ Both wanted an empirical kind of sociology concentrating on the study of social facts.

Rybarski's most interesting observations concern the role of work. He regrets the falling demand for skilled workers, saying that standardization and batch production are depriving work of all fun. Technological progress, according to Rybarski, must not be frowned upon, but then there was no ignoring the fact that the growth of rationality (in Weber's meaning) leads to a degeneration of the role of work. There is no way changing that state of things radically, for "Economic democracy in a hoax,"¹⁴ and the only effect of collectivization is the growing importance of large business enterprises.

The decisive role in the world today is played by the nation, meaning a melting pot in which all elements, including economic ones, are brought together. Studying the tendency of different economic structures to become similar to one another, Rybarski concluded the growing economic similarities entailed no analogous growth of international solidarity. He also expressed the view that "people are connected through different elements. The weakest of all perhaps is the economic interest."¹⁵

Rybarski focused all his attention on economic institutions' destructive effect. In his view, the rationalization of the economic sphere tends to spread over other areas. A person who is guided by economic interests changes into a robot ;

¹³ Cf. F. Znaniecki, "Potrzeby socjologii w Polsce" ["The Needs of Sociology in Poland"], *Nauka Polska*, 1929, vol. 10, pp. 286—298.

¹⁴ *Psychologia społeczno-gospodarcza* (volume three of *System ekonomii politycznej*), Warsaw, 1939, p. 169.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

a nation gradually forfeits its cultural identity; and social ties tend to weaken. The *Psychology* is pervaded with the Rybarski's skepticism about the possibilities of the economy as a progress-generating force and as a domain of creative work. Rybarski attacked the then dominating model of economic life accusing it of the same faults he had earlier ascribed to science. Universalism (the tendency of nations to become similar to one another), individualism (which weakens social ties), amorality and rationality are all factors which prevent man from becoming truly human, do not let man's natural disposition to express itself fully, and degenerate the human race.

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Where is the road to a better future then? For Rybarski, looking for a new shape of science meant discovering some kind of nonscientific authority which could impart meaning to intellectual undertakings. Rybarski found that in politics, which is not "the art of applying old prescriptions and meticulous stencils but a truly noble art which only creative minds can master."¹⁶ Politics basically is to reach to the depths of a nation's indigenous energies and to work for their release. The chief boundary line between science and politics, then, is creative work. Science does not possess that specific quality, for in the best of cases its role amounts to an impassive photographing of the real world. Science is unable to understand a phenomenon such as life which "has value owing to creative work, owing to the fact that next to science there is room for creative art in the broadest sense of the term, that is, also for social art."¹⁷ If creative work is an attribute of the nation, then politics is the tool the nation uses to choose from different possibilities, interests and ideals which exist side by side at the time. That choice "is not an act of scientific truth but an act of will, an expression of needs of a given community determined by all kinds of factors."¹⁸ The cult of science is essentially the transfer of responsibility each politician owes to his nation onto shoulders of scientists, it is a shedding of their moral responsibility and hence an endorsement of the existence of evil in history and of individuals' amoral nature.

Rybarski stood up against the choices imposed upon him by his epoch. He did not think much of the idea of solidarity or of a romantic adulation of history, to say nothing about the cult of science. Caught between the Scylla of the romantic myth and the Charybdis of rational science, Rybarski repudiated both possibilities, wanting neither the cult of myth nor the cult of science. What was left then? Rationalized myth, that is, rationalism as a critical method of studying the real world, and "de-mystified" myth, that is, the Polish people with all its faults and virtues as an autotelic value. Rybarski's nationalism grew up from a need to resist symptoms of moral fall interpreted not only as an external threat

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

¹⁷ *Naród...*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

to Polishness (alien cultures, ethnic minorities) but also as an internal threat which he saw in harmful myths spread by Romanticism and deliberately nourished by pro-Government forces (the *sanacja*).

Nationalism viewed the individual as a human being deeply rooted in history, with strong ties to the national community through the national culture and its unique tradition-bound social institutions. That ideology enabled alienated individuals to identify themselves with the community, being the only remedy against the Durkheim anomie Rybarski repeatedly mentioned in the *Nation*, which is indicative of an absence of emotional social ties. His, then, was a nationalism in the Anglo-Saxon variety, a kind of nationalism which is critical of its own nation and open for the future which must not amount exclusively to the implementation of tasks passed on by tradition but which is an art—the art of making choices in a changing reality.¹⁹

Rybarski's nationalism is a protest against the belief that modernization is a rational process dictated by the laws of reason and therefore proceeding in keeping with universal rules. Rybarski concedes that that process can only partly be rational. The reason of the Enlightenment invented abstractions such as Society, Man, Nature, imparting the same form on them, a "natural" one, while making its most sublime epitome, namely science, the fundamental force which sets into what is a clearly progressive motion all those abstractions. The shaken faith in the automatic character of progress gave birth anew to the question about the clockwork of history. Nationalism supplied the answer to that question—it was the internal forces of each nation which led to the appearance of differences between nations. Each nation pursuing its own specific course contributed to welfare in the world. That moderate brand of nationalism was essentially a nationalistic variety of liberalism, something also like a theory of comparative costs which transposed individual behaviours into entire nations.

Rybarski was fascinated with politics, and the exercise of science was for him a means towards a supreme goal, namely the choice of the civilization which would be most proper and most necessary for Poland. Actually he could have done with economics to formulate a political and economic programme. However, he wanted more than that. He had a visionary's imagination: he wanted a Poland which would be culturally homogeneous, a country of numerous "autonomous economic actors" pursuing the most desirable road of development for the Polish national character. His most favourite pastime was to

¹⁹ He recognized the rate of growth was bound to flag because of the deep crisis of the economy which was based on the idea of free enterprise. The future world will be divided economically, as some nations will prefer economic freedom and others economic planning. Rybarski himself was convinced of free economy's superiority, but he thought the *laissez-faire* doctrine in its "pure" shape as untenable. A system based upon economic freedom should coexist side by side with the state's wise economic policy. In the case of Poland, that should be a long-term policy, and the Government should take it as a principal responsibility to educate society to respect values such as reliability and perseverance which are typically embodied in the middle class.

look for Polishness. Nationalism made Rybarski penetrate the history of Polish culture and institutions which are specific for the Polish people.

Rybarski, unlike most economists, does not see the ideal in a rich country but in one which is civilized, realizing the values history has attributed to it and, on account of that, different from other ones and at the same time complementing mankind's general heritage. Rybarski feared the economic factor may suppress the diversity of social values. Fortunately, culture defends mankind against the rationalized brave-new-world kind of society of robots. Social psychology should take advantage of economic history and economic theory to produce something like a draft socio-economic culture of the given nation.

Rybarski himself made an attempt to produce such a draft project in two studies, namely in *The World Economy's Future* (1932) and *The Polish Economy's Future* (1933). He envisioned the future in terms of the Toynbeeian challenge facing the nation. The correct interpretation of that challenge was a politician's responsibility, but a scholar could help in that, and Rybarski, who made no secret of his fear that the forecast may be wrong after all, tried nonetheless to predict the future of the world and to indicate development trends in Poland.

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It was Vilfredo Pareto who influenced Rybarski more deeply than anyone else. Pareto was aware of the limited validity of economic theory and realized that a science based on the concept of the *homo oeconomicus* stood no chance at all. He pointed at the variety of economic phenomena which were inexplicable in terms of economic theory. He recognized that sociology alone can describe what is ultimately an incongruous real world, which accounts for the definition of sociology as the study of nonlogical facts. Yet despite these reservations Rybarski viewed economics as a discipline helping us to detect permanent behaviours in the economic world (residues). Rybarski went even further than that, questioning those residues as hypostases (fictitious notions). He defined the subject of social psychology similarly as Pareto had defined his sociology.

As for historicism, Rybarski undoubtedly subscribed to most of it, referring to Weber's or Sombart's findings. But the difference was that he refuted relativism, especially the ethical one, as well as the general attitude towards the past. Historism urged people to study the past in order to comprehend it, but it did not take up matters connected with the future as a matter of principle, something which certainly is not true of the author of *The World Economy's Future*. His use of the accomplishments of the historical school was a matter of practice rather than principle or doctrine. The body of his views was perhaps most close of all to those of Max Weber who regarded economics as an inalienable part of sociology, applied classifications, recommended a fully rational approach towards phenomena, and to bring them gradually closer subsequently towards the real shape. He also attached great importance to the discovery of motives of

behaviour. Any attempt to class Rybarski with the historical movement stumbles not only over the obstacle of his futurologist interests but also over the fact that his studies contain none of those historiosophical speculations which are so typical of the historical school.

As for the other schools of thought of his time, Rybarski took a reserved position. Deriding the psychological school as not psychological enough, he was also well aware of the limits of neoclassical economics. He sympathized with institutionalism: he quoted Wesley C. Mitchell as an authority, and he devoted some space to a discussion of Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, but he does not really seem to have relished that particular kind of economic analysis.

Pareto, Dilthey, Weber, historicism—all these do not suffice to describe the specific features of Rybarski's writings. His argument undoubtedly had a peculiar mark which was specifically his own. This is seen above all in the *Nation* and in the *Socio-economic Psychology*. He went along the road indicated by Pareto, expanding economics with a sociologically orientated kind of psychology. But whereas Pareto did write a *Treatise on Sociology*, Rybarski contented himself with his *System of Political Economy*. His trilogy was concluded with the most original work of all, pointing at one area which had not been penetrated before and which was undoubtedly important for economic behaviours. For Rybarski, the entire body of economics is composed of the history of economy and of economic ideas, economic theory, as well as psychology with elements of sociology. That particular insatiable hunger for describing things from all conceivable points of view is what distinguishes him from his contemporaries in economic research. Another distinctive feature is his social, or even sociological, approach towards psychology along with certain anthropological findings.

The simultaneous study of many disciplines was to be a step forward on the road towards restoring the proper status to science. If the proper study of science is life itself with all its abundance of forms, then the more points of view we take in studying it, the greater our chance of coming closer to truth. Rybarski believed the limitations could be overcome by the diversity of social sciences each of which should preserve its autonomy. In his personal ranking of importance, economic theory was at the bottom, history was halfway up the ladder, and sociology (social psychology) crowned it all. History was the discipline Rybarski had the least reservations about of all. As for economics, he accused it of excessive abstractionism and individualism, and sociology of quackery. Social psychology, which should replace sociology, was his greatest hope. Economic theory supplies us with a description of behaviours of rational "actors of national economy" showing the individualistic aspect of the world, History must be credited with the ability to demonstrate the involved nature of social consciousness and of teaching people to be critical in their attitudes. The richness of real life is visible in the specific features of national cultures, in various economic and political facts. History demonstrates the uniqueness of human actions, economics describes the economy in its practical aspect, whereas social psychology supplies politicians with knowledge which is indispensable for them. History

detects deviations from rational behaviour, and it is operating close to the level of concreteness ; economics bases its argument entirely on hypostases ; and so the only truly instrumental discipline is social psychology, because it includes elements of social engineering.

Did Rybarski's suggested a road open to a new line of economic research ? The socio-psychological line in modern economy is not lessening, it has its eminent spokesmen too. One of them began to work simultaneously with Rybarski trying, after the Great Depression, to create a discipline he called economic psychology. He is George Katona, author of the *Psychological Analysis of Economic Behavior* (1951), who concentrated his attention on people's motives and on circumstances amidst which people learn different behaviours. New vistas are opened for psychology and sociology in application to economic facts and processes by Harry Lebenstein (*Beyond Economic Man. A New Foundation for Microeconomics*, 1976) or Kenneth F. Boulding (*Economics as a Science*, 1970). Sociopsychological doctrines, above all that of E. Mayo the author of a first systematic study of human relations, are quickly absorbed and utilized by economics. Many more examples could be cited. The socio-psychological current is producing a number of interesting ideas both for economic practice and theory. Rybarski, therefore, can safely be recognized as one of the Polish fathers of sociopsychology, next to Stanisław Ossowski, who was working on a study called *Some Questions in Social Psychology* during World War II, which however appeared in print only in 1967. Due to the vicissitudes of history, Rybarski's study came out too early, while Ossowski's book appeared too late.

Of his two personalities—as politician and as academic—that of politician undoubtedly was the dominant factor in Rybarski's life. Politics, in his own outlook, was the peak of human activity, for politics meant the furthering of the people's aspirations. Science was merely instrumental in that. Science is just a tool people use to describe the real world by presenting facts. Science's importance must not be overrated, for it is the emanation of only one of man's indigenous powers. Science cannot save the world above all because it cannot impart meaning to human life, while a judicious national policy-making can do that. Man is a being governed by emotions who has a desire of the metaphysical. Man can find satisfaction of that desire of his in religion, as well as on the road of rediscovering his own individuality within his national community. Science can merely suggest a way to do that, it can supply him with the necessary intelligence, because science is confined to praxiological actions. "Science can say what consequences will result from taking a poison [...] but it cannot tell people, 'Follow this goal, not that one : And, science will not be able to persuade the unconvinced by its scientific method.'"²⁰

A hard-working erudite, Rybarski was sophisticatedly skeptical in his arguments. Life cannot be squeezed into narrow scientific categories and there are no answers at hand to surprises life tends to bring with it. Science is basically

²⁰ *Naród...*, p. 33.

a system of mutually opposite approaches. The best thing, accordingly, is for economics to be historical, praxiological and psychological at the same time, to become eventually political economy. Rybarski exploits the opposition between historicism and liberalism, between the Romantic tradition and the Positivist tradition, between politics and science. It is a head-over-heels kind of scholarly tennis in which one man hits back all the balls in a game which is actually a double and the man moreover wants to display truly Diltheyan qualities such as intellect, emotions and will.

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Doubts about the role of science circulating in his epoch were probably articulated more persuasively by Max Weber in his renowned *Vocation for Science* (1919) than by anyone else. Science is an embodiment of “intellectual rationalization”, a tool used to “demystify” the world. What used to be called “progress” basically does not go beyond technology or everyday practical life. Science cannot tell us how we should live, and it cannot take up existential questions. Accordingly, from the angle of human culture (in that Weber refers to Lev Tolstoj’s philosophy of culture) science makes no sense at all because the rational nature of progress logically rules out death. Why should science be cultivated at all ? Since science is no autotelic value, it must not be expected to provide an answer to a question formulated in such a manner. It is necessary to go beyond the boundaries science itself has set to find a solution “in keeping with one’s own ultimate outlook on life.” Weber thus articulated the principal opposition inherent in the idea of science typical of the former half of the 20th century, namely the opposition between progress and rationalization ; science is either a tool of progress, an autonomous creative force, or it merely helps us to understand the world around us better.

Whether somebody subscribed to socialism or to liberalism, the 19th century scientific tradition remained unaffected. To a liberal, science was a value in itself as a factor of progress ; to a socialist, science appeared to be the epitome of human creative activity which accounted for science’s great prestige in society. A nationalist was critically-minded about science, because he rejected liberalism and socialism alike along with their concomitant value systems. The nationalist repudiation of science had therefore primarily a political dimension. That act therefore was running parallelly to the chain of changes touched off by physics at the turn of the century which changed the picture and methods of science, indirectly strengthening them.

Nationalism found a theoretical backing for its fight against science in positivism as well as in writings of the two German historical schools (the older and the younger). Borrowings from positivism included the attitude towards particular disciplines, which were recognized as autonomous fields of knowledge ; a scientific ideal of science along with a refutation of the doctrine that science as such exists as something over and above particular disciplines. Respect

for culture, a strong emphasis in research upon differences existing between different cultures, a relativism of concepts—these were all borrowings from German historicism.

Rybarski's work reflects all ambivalent attitudes which were around during his epoch. For him, nation was an unquestionable value, and politics an invaluable tool. In his *Nation* Rybarski banned science for its different unfounded claims and its desire to dominate all walks of human life. Rybarski's views were in line with the principal current of criticism against science. The attack on science—which was called sarcastically “the deity of the 20th century” by Pareto—was for Rybarski primarily an attack on rationalism and liberalism. Accordingly, economy was bound to become the chief adversary because, in line with liberal principles, it was to be the fundamental social science. History and sociology, on the other hand, were to be elevated.

How did Rybarski set out to do that? Generally, by ignoring the significance of economic theory while underlining the importance of economic history and social psychology. That particular attitude of his caused certain ambiguities, though. In his *Nation*, Rybarski rejected the aspiration to produce a synthesis of all disciplines. But in his economic trilogy he was no longer as consistent as that. His *Social Psychology* tries to overstep the borderline drawn by nationalism. In that book Rybarski obviously tries to drift towards a synthesis on the basis of historical, geographical, anthropological, economic and sociological findings. Would that have meant he was turning his back on what he said in the *Nation*? This question will not be answered, as only Rybarski's next books could supply it. Still, it does seem he regarded psychology as something like a paraphilosophy, a science embracing different fields and describing the diversity of the human world of values.

Rybarski died in the spring of 1942 in Auschwitz at the age of 55. He had published 33 books. Materials for a thirty-fourth have perished.