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## Agonology as a deeply esoteric science – an introduction to martial arts therapy on a global scale

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### Abstract

The struggle is the relation, which is common for people all over the world. It can be encountered from daily quarrel of two people, through political disputes, commercial competition, soccer matches, antiterrorist actions to military conflicts between countries. Increase in the frequency of these struggles and their brutalisation reached the border, which further crossing means that the lynch will become an acceptable way to claim own arguments and the freedom of speech and gestures will be tied up with the awareness of such sanctions. Paradoxically, television channels educate the most aggressively using the word “sport”. Beating unconscious, lying into the cage, dripping blood the neo-gladiator do not fall within a definition of “sport”. There is no exaggeration in stating that the brutalization of fights is the epidemic on the global scale. Always, when threats appear which is a concern of large populations, let alone the entire earth’s population, the hope is in the science. The general theory of struggle (agonology) was established by Kotarbiński (1938). Konieczny developed (1970) a cybernetic theory of struggle. Rudniański created the theory of a non-armed struggle (1989). I’m the author the theory of defensive struggle (1991) and combat sports theory (2000). Thus, five complete theories of struggle built esoteric science – agonology (the original achievement of the Polish scholars). Jigoro Kano was the first scholar who yoked the blood fights in the close contact. In 1882, the educational system was named friendly for the man through the fight judo kodokan. My judo qualifications turned out to be useful enough so that since 1991 agonology can be find as science that provides the argumentation for the inclusion of certain elements of the some combat sports as effective means of the cognitive-behavioural therapy. The main aim of this therapy is to reduce the development of human aggressiveness and bravery (crucial feature to effectively resolve any fight and in a manner worthy of the man).

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## 1. Introduction

The struggle is the relation, which joins everyday billions of people all over the world. It can be encountered from daily quarrel of two persons, through political disputes on different levels of authority, commercial competition, soccer matches, until police interventions, antiterrorist actions, camouflaged and opened military conflicts between countries. Increase in the frequency of these struggles and their brutalisation - including sport - reached the border, which further crossing means that the lynch will become an acceptable way to claim own arguments and the freedom of speech and gestures will be tied up with the awareness of such sanctions.

Among numerous relevant distinctive features of human kind – *homo cogitans*, *homo creator*, *homo erectus*, *homo faber*, *homo ludens*, *homo religiosus*, *homo sapiens*, etc.– *homo agonisticus*[1] is the most difficult to define [2].

This paper has two goals:

- recommendation of agonology (science about struggle), which due to its methodological specificity is suitable to create inter-disciplinary systems of reasoning and empirical systems to solve one of the most difficult issues of the present day – i.e. to prevent interpersonal violence and aggression from micro to macro scale;
- perspective of combining agonology with practice of martial arts as an effective methods to positively influence on the agonistic nature of a human being in preventive and therapeutic sense.

## 2. Justification of the paper's goal – main premises

Measures counteracting interpersonal violence and aggression from micro to macro scale. Every day, media report about victims of even the most brutal murders and mutilation of people. Cutting the heads of hostages by terrorists or ears of soldiers from regular army taken hostage by separatists were noted as the new of the first quarter of 2015. There was no proposal of system effort made by the entire community of the brightest people so that potential perpetrator of such acts have no motivation or courage to repeat them.

On the contrary, each day millions of fans of action movies watch repeatedly even more brutal scenes. For many of them, the boundary between real and virtual world is wearing away. This perspective is frightening. Aggression invariably constitutes a need for some people which is satisfied in numerous ways (from watching to murder), whereas for others it is a lucrative commodity. So it was for centuries when people legally watched gladiators' fights [3]. Nowadays, the number of people enslaved by the syndrome of aggression or selling aggression is not decreasing. Education to violence and aggression is becoming more and more effective.

As a global society, being initiated by electronic media, we are incommensurably higher than citizens of the Roman Empire (who has been fascinated by gladiators' games) in an illusory trap of satisfying the lowest instincts by an opportunity of recurrent watch of destructive fights and other extreme constraints in course of the day. This genre of fascination instead of generating *catharsis* is an effective way of learning aggression and provoking own aggressiveness. A procedure of cancelling the gladiators' games, which began in 326 AD through the special edict by Constantine the Great, lasted for more than 350 years – as long as until 681 AD [3]. Nonetheless, elimination of prevalence and extreme aggression from electronic media is rather impossible [2].

### 2.1. The apparent acts on a micro scale

Ruthless brutal elimination of political opponents in the circles of power in some countries constitutes often only an apparent action on a micro scale. Extremely negative effects may affect societies from large regions or the entire world. Such threat is constituted by people who are enslaved by toxic factor of power (domination over as high amount of people, goods, nature, etc. as possible). If those people are at the same time highly aroused the need for violence and aggression, after obtaining power they can satisfy it both by watching acts of enslaving or destroying people, goods, nature, etc. arranged by themselves and by direct participation.

Paradoxically, scientific and technical progress may be used on the much greater scale in destroying economy of certain country based on tourism (escalation of terrorist attacks on hotels, air and sea transport, etc. is enough), from escalation of fear anywhere (terrorist attacks on schools, universities, shopping and cultural centres, etc.) to the real

destruction of human civilisation. Measures created, which we owe from the progress of science, technology, economy, do not pose threat (apart from the forces of nature – for example a series of nuclear accidents in Fukushima, Japan 2011 due to tsunami preceded by an earthquake at the coast of Honshu). Measures are neutral and become meaningful due to their goal [4]. Threat is posed by people enslaved by the syndrome of violence and aggression, who have those measures and use them in a way which is not worthy for a human being to satisfy their own pathological ambitions and needs. Threat is also constituted by potential disposers.

Thus, the essence of the problem has not changed since thousands of years. Nowadays, the scale of the problem has significantly increased because it directly translates into the range of effects. Some acts of violence and aggression on a micro scale may be transmitted in real time (and so it happens) to any place in the world provided that there are the internet connections. The principals of the aggressors and killer-celebrities are aware of the possibility of such an easy promotion on a global scale, whereas neo-gladiators are additionally motivated by financial profit. Vicious circle is closed by the owners of media companies which sell violence and aggression because they are aware of the demand.

Ratings reports from such events indirectly explain that all parties achieve their goals – the ordering parties, contractors (including potential aware murderers that they will avoid death penalty or suicide victims aware of the fame brought after their death), professional commentators (journalists, experts) and everyone who wants to satisfy the need to enjoy more or less sophisticated form of violence or aggression. The number of doers is still growing. Anders Behring Breivik (2011), a cynical mass murderer, or a suicide pilot Andreas Lubitz (2015) constitute only two examples from the last five years. The perpetrators become celebrities. Victims (killed and wounded) are almost always anonymous parts of statistics for a global recipient.

Lack of updated scientific analyses about the effect of the frequency of such media transmissions on mental and social health as well as on the life quality of people in various countries is worrying. Therefore, it is impossible to determine: which part of population is constituted by the last link in the chain of sophisticated economics – declared and unintentional “consumers” of spectacles full of violence and aggression; what are their social and ideological ties: what is the resistance of unintentional consumers and what is the dynamics of susceptibility of “declared consumers” on the enhancement of destructive layer of their agonistic nature (in the extreme cases: either towards themselves or focused on destroying other people, or oriented to combine both tendencies – the analysis of the social reality leads towards pessimistic hypothesis [2]).

## 2.2. *The global epidemic of fascination with violence*

Pandemic is an inadequate part of the name of given situation. Certain people with a similar mental deformity (such as Breivik and Lubitz, terrorists, those liable for military conflicts and regular wars, promoters of neo-gladiators’ games and blood sports) are responsible for every deliberate destruction or humiliation of a man in the entire world. This is a kind of *global epidemic of fascination with violence* for which people either are not able or do not want to establish an adequate name.

Previously, in the cases of epidemics or pandemics of infectious diseases (when somatic health was threatened), governments and international society received the support of science. Certain scientists stepped up to the challenge. The triumph of science inspires creators, artists and sensitive, responsible people, e.g. very popular thriller *Contagion* (2011) directed by Steven Soderbergh.

Science turns out to be helpless if we cannot diagnose suicide-bombers who constitute potential threat for accidental people from around the world nor communicate about the most important issue, i.e. providing actual safety on a global scale despite formal cessation of the division of the world into two hostile blocks of states. The imagination of creators and artists precedes the effects of scholars which fact is deliberately used by people with a predilection for destruction. Negative heroes of numerous thrillers and horrors find their followers in reality. On the other hand, followers of positive heroes can rarely be seen.

### 3. About agonology

Agonology— science about struggle – is an original achievement of four Polish scientists. Its development occurred in accordance with the principle “from general to specific”. Five complete, but different, theories of struggle, were published in Polish between 1938 and 2000. This proves that agonology is an esoteric science but the nature of the situation can be explained by the historical and political context. Limited access to this unique knowledge has been lasting for almost 80 years [2].

In the language of praxeology “agonology” (*French*agonistique, agonologie; *German*Agonistik, Agonologie) is a general knowledge about struggle [5]. Theory of struggle (agonology) is – in other words – theory of negative co-operation is referred to by Kotarbiński as “a struggle” alternatively with “a negative co-operation” [6].

In 1938 on order of the Polish Army Headquarters, Tadeusz Kotarbiński edited a brochure *From Problems of General Theory of Struggle* which was published by the Psychological Section of the Military Knowledge Association. He raised this set of problems again in 1957 [7] and 1963 [8]. JózefKonieczny developed (1970) a cybernetic theory of struggle (theory of destruction) [9]. JarosławRudniański, when developing a general theory of struggle, referred above all to its language (a conceptual apparatus). An elaboration of a complete theory of non-armed struggle as well as the theory of compromise [10] are considered to be the biggest contribution of in this area of scientific exploration. An essential work (1989): *A Compromise and a Struggle* was written in would-be “two stages”. The general theory of struggle was published 1983 during the Martial Law in Poland [11].

Directly after the Martial Law in Poland ended (1988-1990), I had a pleasure to explore agonology under the direction of prof. Rudniański in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science. In 1991, I published the theory of defensive struggle and theoretical basis for the use of martial arts to reduce aggressiveness and develop people’s bravery [12]. A yearly experiment and observations repeated after three years have confirmed the persistent therapeutic and educational effects of this method [13]. In 2000, I published the theory of combat sports [14].

#### 3.1. The key term of agonology

Tadeusz Kotarbiński in the widest understanding defines “a struggle” as any activity, in which at least two subjects participate (assuming that a team can be a subject) whereas at least one of subjects hinders the other one [7].

The basis for “a struggle” defined in such a way was constituted by Kotarbiński’s awareness that people develop the greatest amount of energy and smartness when they find themselves in constrained situations. Just in course of a struggle, an adversary does all his efforts to obstruct an action of the other side. There are plenty of such situation in various kinds of struggles [7].

A key criterion for the identification of a struggle is the word “hindering” and its synonyms. Such application of the Ockham’s razor is of great methodological importance. This simplifies the interpretation of “a struggle” in the broadest meaning of the term.

Generally, as the most curious case of a struggle however he depicts a situation, during which both subjects not only objectively pursue the discordant aims but also are aware of that and also count for building their plans of action at the expense of activities of the opposite side. This kind of struggles take place in sport, in debates of politicians and lawyers, business competition, partly in education, etc. They qualify to the “intermediate level” of the generalisation stage. This places a military struggle (an armed one) on “the basement”, notwithstanding the “highest level” of the general theory of the deed (praxeology), which includes the theory of struggle [7].

However, the analysis of the nature of the relationship which link the subjects, one of which hinders the other, requires adopting one more assumption. A person does not always fight directly with other person either to survive or safe other people, goods, nature, etc., or to destroy, remove or subdue. Therefore, the relationship of “hindering” with the opposite of this term, i.e. “helping” is significant primarily due to the main (not necessarily declared) goal of a given action and the role of given subject (individual’s or a team) in this action. In the language of praxeology “helping” means “positive co-operation”.

Four relationships between those terms are possible (in detailed interpretation of certain actions—four principles): “hindering through hindering”; “hindering through helping”; “helping through hindering”; “helping

through helping". Agonology deals with the first three relationships (principles). The fourth principle is analysed by praxeology and nonetheless it does not disregard the struggle. An extreme example of counter-effective application of this principle is failure to prepare a child for life by constant application of the principle "helping through helping" by parents (counter-effective is the one, who instead of intended goal, achieves its negation [15]).

An extreme case of application of the principle "hindering through hindering" by fighting parties is mutual destructing struggle (struggle on "the basement"). The theory of destruction deals with the efficiency of such fights [9].

The most difficult opponent is the one who to achieve own, selfish goals can perfectly apply the principle of "hindering through helping". Despite official declaration of help, such person in fact is effectively hindering. Rudniański in his theory of a non-armed struggle [10] explains *inter alia* the sense of applying this category of struggle methods involving camouflage of violence, camouflage of authority, canalization of ideals, intensification of fear, etc. as well as the principle of a controlled surrounding.

### 3.2. Two elementary rules in education

The above-mentioned observations and examples demonstrate the sense of Kotarbiński's interpretation of a "struggle" worded as follows: "this kind struggles take place (...) partly in education". At the same time, this is a key premise to justify the veracity of the assumption that combination of agonology, as a science about struggle, with martial arts is a chance to responsibly implement effective therapy on a global scale (through educational systems of each country) in current situation of escalation of interpersonal violence and aggression on numerous levels of action.

Two of those principles should be applied in the systems of proper education, i.e. "helping through hindering" and "hindering through hindering". The first one should be included both in the physical and intellectual education, whereas the second one in education through sport. The idea of sport is based on the above-mentioned principle combined with the principle of *fair play*: one can and should fight without harming an opponent (an adequate term would be a "competitor", because sport is about competitiveness and not about hostile relation between the sides). One should also respect the competitor, do not be hostile or envious after losing or behave in arrogant and disrespectful way after a victory. In education through sport, the primary issue involves careful selection of people and group for competition. The probability of similar chances moves closer the sustainable experiencing for the long time – preferably lifelong – "being a winner" and "being a loser".

Unfortunately, before Pier de Coubertin revived the spirit of Olympism, the idea of sport was burdened by allowing boxing as a relic of gladiatorial games. Despite using protectors for hands and head and the principles of controlled violence being defined, boxing allows winning by knockdown (causing a concussion). Boxers are aware that they will not bear criminal responsibility even for causing death of the opponent on the ring.

It is absurd – or using in journalist phraseology – an unprecedented scandal to recognise neo-gladiator games in cages as sport by a growing number of media in the absence of opposition of politicians and the most influential and powerful entities in public life. This is a promotion which is not substantially justified but also unethical from the perspective of the *Olympic Charter* [16] which provides for a possibility to apply for Olympic status for each sport. The acceptance that sport involves massacring a neo-gladiator, who is covered in blood and knocked down, is one of the most conspicuous empirical evidence, that *the global epidemic of the fascination* is a fact. Completely different vision and mission of sport is set in the *Olympic Charter*: "Fundamental Principles of Olympism (...) 2. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity" [16, p.11].

### 3.3. Methodological phenomenon of agonology

Jarosław Rudniański discovered that agonology (the main statements of which are based on praxeology [6]) is a useful tool of theoretical research due to a contestation at range of different domains of science. He engaged in discussions about human activity in the method of combining evaluation of skills (the praxeological ones) with the structures of ethical and moral values' values [10, 11].

These criteria are illustrated to the greatest extent in the theory of defensive struggle [12]. The idea of necessary defence is based on the praxeological criteria of evaluation (effective – ineffective) and on ethical criteria (fairly – shamefully). It is brave to defend oneself causing no harm to the aggressor. Kotarbiński formulated such mixed evaluation of “bravery” [6]. In terms of agonology, “bravery” (and its particular courage – “courage”) is a feature of a human which can be empirically measured with simulation methods [13, 17, 19] and with method applying direct observation [14].

Leon Krzemieniecki has applied the theory of struggle into the interdisciplinary phenomena analyses of struggle, that are described in the belles-lettres [5,19]. Due to the fact that agonology keeps developing, and therefore faces progressing crisis of universal values and spiritual practices, the perspective of combining this unique knowledge with psychological, pedagogical, etc. one raises hope for the improvement of interpersonal, intercultural relations and of constructive dialogue between people responsible for global governance.

#### 4. Inspirational role of Jigoro Kano and the example of *budo*

Professor Jigoro Kano was the first scholar who yoked the blood fights in the close contact. In 1882, the educational system was named friendly for the man through the fight *judo kodokan*. Kano needed many years of reflections and practice before he decided to make public the most general ethical principles of judo: “maximum efficient use of energy” (*seiryoku-zenyo*) and “mutual prosperity for self and others” (*jita-kyoei*). These ethical principles were formally announced when he was sixty-three years old, forty years after establishing the *Kodokan* [20]. Kano recommended to incorporate judo in education during a scientific seminar held during the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932 [21]. Nowadays, there are numerous *departments of judo therapy* at Japanese universities.

The year of 1989 was a crucial moment when the *kakugi*, a physical education subject in Japanese system of education, was modified to *budo* (judo, kendo, sumo). These three martial arts were taught thereafter in junior high schools, whereas judo and kendo were taught in high schools [22]. An obvious health benefit is confirmed by the secondary analysis of people who dies or live with disability due to fall in the period of 1990-2010 performed by the Institute For Health Metrics and Evaluation University of Washington [23]. Only in Japanese population between 4 and 59 years old, there was a radical decrease in the incidents (in contrast to the increase in other countries). However, there are no data about the effects on mental and social health of the entire population of Japanese in that period. On the other hand, the results of experiments in USA and in Poland [13, 24, 25] confirm that positive enhancement of all dimensions of health (somatic, mental, social) may be achieved by the combination of martial arts, regardless of the cultural lineage, with traditional patterns of education.

##### 4.1. The perspective of effective prevention and therapy

Practical basis of judo developed by Kano are the key element of *budo* in Japanese system of education. While establishing the basis of agonology, Kotarbiński dealt with fight only in theoretical sense. Therefore, in this plane, both systems are similar. Two in-depth theories of agonology: defensive struggle [12] and combat sport [14] together with effects of cognitive and behavioural therapy empirically verified and based on martial arts [13,25] are close to philosophy and pragmatism of *budo* [26]. Furthermore, the theory of combat sports [13] provided two significant tools for empirical studies. Evaluation of struggle dynamics (modified by Boguszewski in judo version [27]) and bravery/courage are based on direct observation.

Thus, there are methodological, educational, therapeutic bases which are reliably verified on the scale of the large country and by studies of independent scientists to implement these element into national educational systems. Transmission of appropriately selected issues of agonology combined with practice of any martial arts, self-defence exercises, relaxation and concentration exercises deserves a recommendation of health-related training for all. Naming it remains as open question as it may have primary significance for scientists to easily follow reports from studies. For creative adepts, the name of such training does not matter, whether it will be *complementary martial art therapy* (CMAT); *complementary agonology therapy* (CAP) or any other [2].

## 5. Conclusion

I believe two recommendations would constitute the best conclusion of this paper. The first one (universal assumption of self-defence training) is related to preventive aspect, whereas the second (the declaration of *HMA against MMA*) is definitely related to both aspects, i.e. preventive and therapeutic ones:

- “if you have learned to act effectively, wisely and nobly in situation, in which the goal of someone’s actions would be harming or killing you, each different situation would be incomparably easier and you will certainly solve it” [13];
- “continuous improvement of health through martial arts as one of the most attractive form of physical activity for a human accessible during entire life should constantly exist in public space, especially in electronic media, to balance permanent degradation of mental and social health by enhancing the promotion of mixed martial arts – contemporary, bloody gladiatorship, significant tool of education to aggression in a macro scale” – January 21, 2015 supported by Lech Walesa, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate ([www.archbudo.com](http://www.archbudo.com)).

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