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THE PARAGON INDEPENDENT CITIZEN

Creating a model is a vague task, and one difficult to reflect upon. Even if Ossowska were not to have destroyed her diary, we would not have found that much material in it to help in the task of reconstructing the model.

The question I ask myself is: What is the *Model citizen in the democratic system?* Is it but a brochure published a couple of times on the purpose of upbringing, a peculiar frivolity against the even work heading towards a reconstruction of normative ethics in the descriptive science of morality? Or perhaps, as I assume here, one of the forms of expression of the very same ideal that guided both the scientific agenda and life stance of Maria Ossowska (1896-1974)?

I shall attempt to trace the consequences of this second hypothesis, in line with which the brochure is the scholar's life agenda.

However, I will begin by reflecting on the project's ethical context. Note that the *Model* develops from the very start as a work ostensibly independent of this context.

"Every group of people cherishes some kind of model of man, or models, to which its members aspire[1]," begins Ossowska before continuing to an example that in her research played a crucial role, namely to the England of her day, i.e. that recalled from her time spent there between the wars, when she met two people who exerted an indelible influence on her: Bertrand Russell and Bronisław Malinowski. There is nothing random about the gallery of models opening with a gentleman, then followed in historical order by a Greek warrior and Greek wise man, a citizen of Rome, a mediaeval knight and Christian saint, a Renaissance courtier, modern townsman, an American self-made man, and a Soviet 'udarnik', or super-productive worker. These models differ, just as there are different models of democracy as a system devoid of privileges and disadvantages, a system "in which everybody may develop their abilities in an atmosphere of liberty" (p. 14/15), and Ossowska then turns to wonder "what traits we would like to see in somebody who lives in a society thus shaped" (p. 15). There are, as we know, 13 of these traits, and this number also probably derived from some (possibly irrational) premise, concealed from us by the methodical author.

It is this sudden entry into the matter that makes me think. Anybody who has attempted to take the challenge of constructing a model knows how difficult it is to determine a starting point. You have to have some kind of more general vision, of which the model or code of ethics is its concretisation, some kind of – putting it briefly – justifying basis. This applies to models as detailed as the model civil servant, or the model hotelier, and all the more so the model person in a democratic system.

The answer may be found partially in deliberations over the first trait, which is perfectionism. "Anybody who is to exert an influence on collective life should aspire for

[1] Quotes from: M. Ossowska, *Wzór demokraty. Cnoty i wartości [The Paragon of a Democrat: Virtues and Values], Daimonion, Lublin 1992.*

perfectionism, embracing both the perfecting of this collective life and the perfecting of oneself," wrote Ossowska (p. 15). "In order to improve, you have to know what you want, what you understand as important and what as unimportant, what you can do without in the event of a conflict of goods and in what you should unconditionally persist. […] This ability to choose requires the possession of some kind of hierarchy of values. It does not have to be distinctly expressed in words; few have it as such. It is sufficient for certain connate dispositions of feeling we have to constantly guide our selection and lend some kind of correctness to our judgmental reactions" (p. 15). I maintain that such is precisely the foundation of the model democrat, the first trait simultaneously embracing its justification. In describing this model, Ossowska expresses her own dispositions of feeling, her hierarchy of values. Expression is directly appreciated here, and does not require any rational justification. In this sense, democratic ethics is independent ethics. It is not heteronomic but autonomic, it comes from the heart.

But in that case, what about the initial agenda? After all, its construction seems purely functional: let's take the democracy model and consider what human traits are most conducive for democracy. Ossowska was – as was everybody then – obviously under the influence of functionalism, yet at the same time she repeatedly questioned functional reasoning, treating it as but a working hypothesis substantiated in specific conditions, but not as some kind of general method or general assumption of social analysis. So in that case did she approach her work on the model as for a specific practical task, in which having been given *x*, the attributes of a democratic system, one matches the 'functional' *y*, the traits of a democrat? Even if she thought in such a way, this was not how she proceeded. Let us ponder over what she actually did. The question she poses is about "what traits we would like to see in somebody who lives in a society thus shaped". By no means is this a question about what traits somebody living in a democratic society should have in the sense of functional ought. It is not about whether such a person is functional for democracy, or at least not above all about that. Are the perfectionistic aspirations from which she begins really essential in a democratic system? Can a democratic system not manage without perfectionists? Functional proof that Ossowska gave so much attention to in her critical deliberations was not even outlined by her. Why? In my opinion, it was because she did not feel such a need. The model flows from the heart, it talks about who 'we would like to' see in somebody who lives in a democratic society. You could say that Ossowska indulges in the delight of designing a democratic person regardless of their functional justification. Perhaps a democratic system as such is for her a system in which such a person is a model? Meaning that such a model is possible and acknowledged as the object of aspirations.

After all, in her very definition of what a democratic system is, Ossowska by no means sticks to the accepted definitions, but also formulates a certain social project that this time I shall quote *in extenso*: "Using the word 'democratic' forces us to make certain clarifications. Without going into a record of all of the ambiguities, now proverbial, of this term, we shall assume tentatively that by democratic system we shall understand a system in which there are no oppressing or oppressed, no privileged or disadvantaged, a system in which anybody may develop their capabilities in an atmosphere of liberty. When talking about privilege or disadvantage, we have in mind all types of privilege and disadvantage, not only of an economic nature. Democracy thus understood will rule out the existence of any first or second class citizens of any kind, whether rich in relation to poor, some kind of majority in relation to an ethnic minority, people of a certain religion in relation to those of other religions, or men in

relation to women, etc." (p. 14/15). This is not the model of a society drawn from some earlier premises, but the model of a society that Ossowska 'would like' to see.

No differentiation! Could Ossowska have been quite such a Utopian? Knowing her meticulous realism, it would be worth taking this into account in the interpretation. Achieving such a social model seems to be a perfectionistic aspiration. She always thought very highly of aspirations, and as such her social ethics is perfectionistic. One should strive to ensure that there are no first and second class citizens, that nobody is privileged or disadvantaged, that freedom coexists with – *horribile dictu* – equality. So as to avoid any misunderstanding, let us distinguish here between civic equality and social equality; it is not about there being no differences, after all Ossowska does not talk about there not being various religions, various ethnicities, and so neither does she mean that one should abolish property differences, or all the more so gender differences, but talks of the abolishing of privilege and disadvantage based on these differences, and these are two different matters mistaken by both proponents and enemies of equality. This is a liberal-socialist concept of democracy. In this sense its citizen is functional for the democracy, because if not a perfectionist then he or she will be satisfied with what there is instead of constantly tracking privileges and disadvantage in social life. Except that democracy itself is perfectionistic, it is not a task that is achieved once, but a task that has to be constantly achieved. I shall return to this towards the end of my speech.

Ossowska moves on from perfectionism to openness of the mind. "You have to absorb new things and revise your views, especially if the facts that those views were based upon have changed" (p. 17). Here Ossowska must face the challenge that opportunism constitutes for such a stance, although this also depends on the readiness to revise one's views, especially those expressed together with a change in circumstances. "Plasticity of the mind as we understand it is opposed not by a firm backbone but a hard head" (p. 17/18) consisting in "adapting every time to the revolving ideology voiced by one's state's propaganda" (p. 17). A reference to the state appears here for the first time in her paper, and characteristically is critical. The model citizen is most certainly not a model loyalist, even if the state were democratic. However, the point of reference here is, for the second time (as with perfectionism), the 'backbone', a corporal metaphor like 'hard', understood as a 'blockhead'. Besides, Ossowska retained an erect posture till her very last years, she stood straight as she delivered her lectures, and she sat straight – for a woman – in her chair at her institute. Openness of the mind is therefore openness in harmony with the basis of one's stance in life. Yet Ossowska says nothing regarding the content of this stance, and criticism of the model could head towards a distinctive formalism. This is because all that we know so far is that the model citizen has aspirations to change him- or herself and the world around them in the name of their values, and without violating these to be ready to change their views when forced to by the facts; this is a profile perhaps inappropriate for the opportunist yielding to state propaganda, but matching quite well the fascist or communist with whom Ossowska certainly does not sympathise. A couple of these values or traits supplement in a constitutive manner that 'strong backbone' that one cannot deny either Hitler or Stalin, and that provides the basis for inner discipline manifesting itself in long-distance effort, in the ability to subjugate "also at the cost of certain casualties – of things less important for things more important […] the possession of an hierarchy of values based firmly on feelings, burning with not only a short-lived fire […] combined with the will and skill of achieving them" (p. 18). This talk is stern, and softened little by the fourth trait of the democrat, that of tolerance.

Ossowska's understanding of tolerance is specific, and strays from today's media stereotypes. "Tolerance in our understanding is not the non-opposing of things that we regard as bad, but the ability to respect others' needs and others' opinions that we do not share" (p. 19).

Ossowska does indeed strive to understand respect in the kindest possible way for otherness, and stresses that "others' needs are respected by one who takes them into account in their conduct, adapting their own to them; others' opinions are respected by one who in principle is sympathetic towards them", but all the same "in the event of distinct controversy" Ossowska does not relent, but just calls on one "not to attribute an opponent dark motives in advance" just because one does not agree with them. "When fighting with what one considers bad, an understanding person does not act on the basis of outrage, severe condemnation or hatred, but acts on the basis of attachment to what one regards as legitimate" (p. 19). This stance is distinct, especially compared to those who urge today to preconceive that nobody can claim the right to a monopoly on correctness. Ossowska wants no monopoly, but neither does she want to forgo her right to fight for what she considers just. The tolerance she talks of is 'understanding' for those who well know their own, those who have their principles, a 'strong backbone' though not a 'hard head'. After all, according to Ossowska, "Tolerance at the most paralyses certain negative impulses of action, but does not violate those that are positive". Thus all the more important will be the principles according to which this fight is to be conducted, as we shall come to shortly.

Let us recall that tolerance, in the strict dictionary sense of the word, means patiently bearing others' behaviour that one dislikes. T. S. Eliot apparently said that a Christian does not want to be tolerated. Tolerance in itself is insufficient; a Christian wants to be recognised, to be acknowledged. "Tolerance is always only tolerance. It is neither complete equality nor freedom. It differs markedly from brotherhood. For all these reasons tolerance is far-removed from ideal behaviour; you could say that it is infected with the same implications of evil that comprise its meaning". As such, when polemicizing with a deep believer one should not bring up aspects of faith so much as the scope of issues and situations towards which his or her faith must remain staunch. A general inclination for tolerance, when excessively general, threatens indifference. Somebody who feels nothing towards something is indifferent about that something, and not tolerant. In such discussion tolerance thus comes across as a delicate equilibrium between radical intolerance and the loss of one's moral compass. On the whole, though, proponents of tolerance do not demand it in regard to e.g. murder, but just for suicide or euthanasia; for sexual relations where there is mutual agreement, but not for rape; for political comment but not for vulgar expletives; and for cross dressers but not for purchasable politicians pretending to care about the interests of the whole. Therefore as a general principle, tolerance must always have certain borders, as otherwise it loses its sense. One cannot permit others everything considered inappropriate without challenging one's own views; one can only delude oneself that such tolerance may be applied in practice without having to contradict one's readiness to be tolerant towards others, as Candide said when threatened with being cooked in a pot.

Returning to the concept adopted by Ossowska of tolerance as forbearance, it has to be pointed out that it also strives to embrace the transition from 'patiently bearing' to 'action as a result of positive impulses' with its scope. This is only seemingly a more open attitude than the one linked to the dictionary meaning quoted above. In keeping with this concept, he who

fights others, who fights in keeping with his convictions, but because of these convictions and not out of hatred of or repugnance felt for the opponent, remains tolerant. It would indeed be hard to suspect Ossowska of permissiveness; this resembles rather the Christian concept of a just fight that assumes the perception of a fellow human being in one's opponent. I shall conclude my reflections on tolerance "as understood differently (than today)" with a quote from Dr Johnson, one that sends a shiver of inappropriateness through me. Dr Johnson, also regarded highly by Ossowska, said (according to Boswell) that tolerance involves everybody being able to say what they like, but that he, Dr Johnson, may knock him out for it. Ossowska should agree with this opinion, as long as the KO is evoked by "attachment to what one considers right" and not "due to outrage, severe censure or hatred". Besides, resolving disputes through boxing was among the methods accepted in the English culture so dear to her.

For Ossowska, the question of the ethics of chivalry was one of the central problems in the scientific research she conducted throughout her life into moral phenomena. This was probably so because the chivalrous practice of giving an opponent a head start on the field of battle constitutes one of the most distinctive manifestations of overcoming the purely biological conditioning of human behaviour. Instead of taking advantage of any possible opportunity to defeat their opponent, a knight would ensure that the rules of *fair play* were abided by in a dual. Chivalry is a key argument for Ossowska against functionalism. If what is functional is victorious in social life, then why did some lose battles because their leader did not want to take advantage of the superiority given, for example, by night or arriving earlier at the field of battle, but made it possible for their opponent to prepare appropriately? This bizarre custom, the object of so much mockery in history, intrigued Ossowska as a phenomenon in which human culture dramatically escapes simplifying generalisations and attains the highest peaks of ethical demands that man may establish for himself and others.

"Somebody could tell us that we are devoting so much time to the code of chivalry unnecessarily, as it was a code that had no impact at all on the actual course of armed battle," says Ossowska, seeming agreeing with the critics of chivalric ethics. After all Froissart, a historian covering the Hundred Years' War, complained that the majority of battles in that war were conducted inconsistently with the rules of chivalry. The same is happening today. "The right of Manu will cease to apply entirely due to the technical means of total war. But in armed battle certain models have developed for all battle, models of immeasurable educational momentousness," concludes the scientist, and this conclusion is one requiring courage. And consideration.

The fact that Ossowska does not have the apotheosis of war in mind in this fragment becomes obvious a moment later, when she turns to criticise her much-disliked Max Scheler, who happened to see greatness in war and derided the Poles protesting against the Prussian politics of force following the first partitioning. She places this great philosopher alongside Hitler, who also rejected any chivalric concerns for a weaker opponent. However, what we are dealing with here is the astute observation not so much of wars as of their consequences.

Although herself a humanist and a liberal teaching tolerance, Ossowska was not a proponent of some kind of vague humanism or today's fashionable sluggishness veiled by spurious liberalism or tolerance. This may only seem the case to an outside observer who has not read her works. Because should a lady humanist not speak in favour of the 'soft' virtues

she has written so much about? For somebody who – like he who is writing these words – remembers Maria Ossowska first as a lecturer, and later as one's first superior at work, this is obviously false. But for those who did not know her, one has to explain that Ossowska attached great significance to the 'hard' – and let's add chivalric right away – model of life. Besides, the very fact that she was interested in war and battle in the day when she was just setting out on her academic career had something 'unwomanly' about it. Even today we have few women generals in the world.

Ossowska, though, was a feminist in the sense in which it was understood in her day. In 1923 she became the first woman assistant at the philosophy institute of the University of Warsaw. She chose an academic career as she did not want to surrender to the role of the woman as a mother. She even tracked antifeminism among the wisest in history, or among her contemporaries. For her, prejudices towards women constituted one of the fundamental intellectual errors, and she tackled topics that by convention were at least inappropriate for women scholars, i.e. sex and war. This subject matter evidently fascinated her, as also did all taboos and overcoming them, although her good upbringing and personal elegance – and all those who saw her will recall at this moment her famous smart hats – always lent her a specific charm, even when in her own tactful manner she would mention the erotic peculiarities of the sect of perfectionists in the Oneida community, or the sociological value of toilet graffiti. With tact and a smile, as after all despite her personal asceticism she was the person who, as the thirteenth and final trait of the model Pole in a democratic system, proposed a sense of humour.

But at the same time she was very demanding towards herself and others. Looking at the various compromises people made during the German occupation, or later in the years of communist dictatorship, she understood but did not forgive, she would always call a spade a spade, and she said that the only thing that one actually has to do is die. She was intolerant of those who were evil or only base. She herself only wrote what she considered in keeping with her own views. During the occupation, she gave clandestine lessons and made no secret of her views, which put her in physical danger not only from the Germans but also from Poles looking at things differently. Although she never belonged to any party, she appreciated their role in the democratic system. She never collaborated with the PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party, although was occasionally the object of advances intended to pacify her. She took part in the public life of the People's Poland, signing a petition protesting against censorship, the first in a series of those that slowly began rocking the "lava's cold shell", and despite her years she energetically supported those accused in political trials or threatened with reprisals at university for political reasons.

When we take a look at the brochure *The model citizen in a democratic system*, clandestinely mimeographed during the war and published again in 1946, we see all these personal traits gathered together in a whole, and dressed in words. Ossowska herself was a model citizen, except that it was her lot to live and die thirty years ago in a non-democratic state. I had the pleasure of working with professor Krzysztof Kiciński, her student and assistant, on keeping alive the memory of this model in younger generations, and – together with other students of hers – in the endeavours to publish this brief but pertinent brochure under the governments of the communist Former Regime, thinking that the time would arrive when the brochure would bear fruit, and would cease to be necessary. A greater illusion is hard to imagine. Today, educational work on shaping proper civic habits seems even more

necessary. These include the skill of chivalric battle, of *fair play* in public life. After all, as Ossowska wrote: “Struggle is a universal situation. Parliamentary tactics are a battle, as is any polemicizing, a game of chess or a tennis match. The struggle should be conducted according to old chivalric traditions, with respect for the opponent, and – as some insistently reiterate – avoiding any harm not necessary for achieving one’s aims”. One might bridle at such apodictic moralism. Does it befit a scholar who has put her emphasis on a description of morality and ethos (Ossowska insisted on writing this word in keeping with Greek orthography and phonetics, with *th* [as opposed to ‘etos’, the spelling generally used in Polish])? Stanisław Lem once upset Ossowska, pointing out during her jubilee at the Staszic Palace that she had presented the moral norms insufficiently descriptively in her book. She was torn in this matter; on the one hand she was propagating her program of the descriptive science of morality (and was a world pioneer in this field), while on the other she was unable to resist not only others’ expectations – after all she would have managed to resist these just as she had many other temptations – but also her own feeling that in certain matters a wise person must take a stance either ‘for’ or ‘against’, while remaining silent would cause public harm.

Ossowska applies Tadeusz Kotarbiński’s broad definition of struggle as actions heading to contradictory goals. Therefore battle embraces not only armed conflict, or a duel, but also a fight on a playing field, over a game of chess or bridge, in the courtroom and during parliamentary discussions. She claimed that struggle is a permanent part of social play. An ethicist who condemns struggle risks being accused of a lack of realism. The ethos of any society always regulates the methods of struggle, and usually introduces certain limitations, although not in all situations and not in relation to everybody. In defiance of the idealists who would like to totally eliminate conflicts and the apologists for violence, such as Scheler, the ethics of struggle has long been evolving. Even primitive tribes know battles conducted in keeping with certain rules – including yielding the field, forbidding ambushes, and sparing the weaker. A couple of centuries before the birth of Christ the rights of Manu directly forbade the attacking of he who is weak, naked, defenceless or who has surrendered. In the chivalric ethics of battle, similar limitations are expressed in the role model of the ideal knight, such as Bayard or the Black Knight of Garbów. And so “in armed battle certain models were developed for all struggle, models of extreme educational significance”, later adopted by the bourgeoisie idealising the Middle Ages.

Because of this, Ossowska was nagged by three problems. First of all, is there any moral progress in this field? With evident nostalgia she recalls the latter half of the 19th century, when people “began to believe, not without some justification, in progress not only in technology, but also in the forming of interpersonal relations”. Although the belligerent twentieth-century totalitarianism would seem to refute this, Ossowska indicates the evolution occurring in international humanitarian law, which is observed – incompletely as with all norms – if only due to the egoistic fear of reciprocation. She also mentions a peculiar modesty with which perpetrators hide their crimes. Although Scheler, taking Nietzsche’s lead, justified the unconcerned belligerence of the race of men, the extermination of Scheler’s kin was carried out quietly behind the screen of the impersonal language of ‘final solutions’, just as Soviet activists concealed the fact of execution of thousands of interned Polish military and police up until 1990, despite the lack of mercy for the enemy voiced openly by Lenin right at the start of the new communist statehood. The dispute regarding progress embraces contradictory stances. Norbert Elias perceived a process of the West becoming civilised,

while half a century later, Zygmunt Bauman spoke of the intensification of violence. I have indicated elsewhere that the rise in violence observed in our lives is a consequence on the one hand of more and more phenomena being classified as violence, including upbringing as such ("symbolic violence" according to Bourdieu), while on the other it is increasingly rare for state or family violence to be admitted as a means of control. And so not only battle but violence as well is a 'universal situation', and all the greater the significance of its ethical regulation. Control of violence in culture, unavoidable because – as researchers have shown – every culture is violence, even if only symbolic, may therefore only be achieved through the regulation of violence, subjecting it to general norms.

Secondly, Ossowska was vexed by the problem of the class borders in the chivalric code. She writes (in *On certain transformations in the ethics of battle*) that "in a battle between knights class solidarity casts a bridge across the barricade and teaches consideration for the opponent, whom – as one's equal – it is right to respect". This ethics does is not binding for the common people, women, or in a battle between women. Today one can still encounter well-raised people who, with a glint in their eyes, talk of their well-reared forefathers who knew how to hit a 'boor' in the snout to teach him good manners. With the revival of landowning traditions, we are in danger of such boorishness in aristocratic attitudes, a boorishness that was sometimes displayed by members of the elite back in pre-war Poland, and that Ossowska reacted to with obvious disgust. One should bear this in mind when reading her anxiety-filled comments that *aristeia* demands of the warrior that he make his battle more difficult through the restrictions of hampering rules. Justifying the fighting code of chivalry as tending to one's own personal dignity, one's honour, is the only weak point for Ossowska. She is open in her hesitation: "Perhaps it really is the relics of ethics created by the consumer classes, ethics taking consideration above all of interpersonal relations similar to sociable relations", and treats seriously criticism deriving from another point of view dear to her, that of care for others' interests.

Thirdly, Ossowska indicates the conflict between the individualism of chivalric ethics and the collectivism giving birth to the ethics of social representation. "Just now there are few who participate in any battles, even in sport, as individuals. They are usually representatives of others' interests". She expresses understanding for criticism of conduct thus justified using the example of somebody who, in an election, did not vote for himself as he considered it not very chivalrous, and as a result allowed the winner to be somebody he considered worse from the point of view of the group in which the election was held. When two camps clash, one must not evade accepting a mandate, voting for oneself, giving a negative vote in secret, or persisting in one's mistake in a subsequent vote. Ossowska also once voted for herself, but in the secret ballot she received everybody's vote, resulting in her genuine embarrassment. Because although she would reiterate the understandable and legitimate view that one should contrapose self-respecting egotistic motivation with a stance of personal non-involvement, when one adds "total devotion to the cause one is serving", then in the context of her ruminations as a whole then she was evidently hesitant, and not convinced. But this is a very important observation. In modern times representation has developed on a massive scale, and it is rare for an individual not to be bound by commitment towards others, and the norms of chivalry do not apply to such a situation. But not entirely so, according to Ossowska. One has to separate the grain from the chaff in this criticism. And although in describing the ethos of the citizen in a democratic system Ossowska rejects the model of the knight, as that of the merchant, as class-based and not universal models, at the same time she includes the code of

chivalry in the democratic code, above all the duty to respect one's opponent and to avoid any harm unnecessary for accomplishing one's goals. It is interesting that in the list of ethical principles for Polish parliamentarians, impartiality, frankness, conscientiousness, care for the good name of the Polish Sejm, and responsibility are to be found in article 2, but not the principle of chivalrous political battle. This seems a clear oversight. The majority of those issues dealt with by the Sejm's ethical committee for parliamentarians could be classed as disputes provoked precisely due to violation of the principles of conducting the political battle, through insult, slander and other public lies humiliating one's opponent. However, it must be kept in mind that the Polish principles are modelled on norms formulated by the Lord Nolan committee in 1995 (with the telling omission of the principle of leadership, which after all imposes the grave duty of giving a good example), although in Great Britain the obligation to observe the rules of *fair play* is so obvious, that it would never occur to anybody to commit it to paper. Unlike in Poland, where it is rather the need to remind one of the principles that is obvious.

According to Ossowska, the principle of chivalric battle should be universal and apply to everybody, while its justification lies not in the aristocratic sense of one's own higher value, but in the democratic recognition of the equal value of every opponent. Ossowska ends her deliberations contained in *On certain transformations in the ethics of struggle* by quoting her favourite preceptor, Lord Bertrand Russell: "When the concept of honour is freed of the aristocratic shoe and from the penchant for rape, there will remain in it something that helps a person retain their personal integrity and propagate mutual trust in social relations".

A strong backbone is the basis for five more democratic virtues: activeness, civil courage, intellectual honesty, criticism and responsibility for one's word. An active person is somebody who "realises perfectionistic needs in relation to oneself and in relation to one's environment" (p. 20), but this is not necessarily ideological perfectionism, since Ossowska – distinctly drawing on the bourgeoisie ethos – points to an "activity improving in some respect the conditions in which one lives", both the "activeness of those who strive to improve their own personal material situation" and "of those who strive to free the world of exploitation" (p. 30).

On the other hand, this activism is supposed to be linked to civil courage, and as such the readiness to risk disturbing one's various vital interests in the name of what one considers right, and only on this condition, as Ossowska painstakingly differentiates courage from bravado not justified by higher concerns. The remaining virtues in this group are a characteristic variety of courage, one I would most preferably define as intellectual courage. After all, what else is intellectual honesty since "somebody who lacks the courage to take their thoughts to their conclusion, regardless of the consequences their thinking leads them to" is a person who "sins" against this (p. 22). Courage is also required for criticism, "eradicated in totalitarian systems", and for responsibility for one's word, which helps in opposing "telling tales" with intellectual courage, just as civil courage was confronted with bravado. Responsibility for one's word leads Ossowska to criticise "unreliability, not keeping agreements and promises" and "unpunctuality". "Strong emphasis should be placed on eradicating all of the drawbacks mentioned, since the now proverbial accusing Poles of them is, unfortunately, fully justified" (p. 24). At this point Ossowska could, like the scouts, have referred to the proverbial "word of the Black Knight", but she prefers to admit directly to inspiration in bourgeois ethics.

The two final traits of the democrat in the list seem to have a separate character: “aesthetic sensitivity” and a “sense of humour”. Both Maria Ossowska and Stanisław Ossowski were sensitive to aesthetic phenomena to a degree above the average in sociological circles. Ossowska emphasised that the “moral and aesthetic spheres mesh so closely that it would be impossible to set distinct borders between a moral and an aesthetic reaction” (p. 31). We know how frequently in her research Ossowska would indicate aesthetic judgment as decisive in the overall appraisal, moral as well, of some person or some deed. This issue, well-known to philosophers yet stubbornly omitted by sociologists (apart from Bourdieu) and lawyers (apart from Petrażycki), leads Ossowska to a redefinition of attitude towards sex or “matters of sex”. “Today, now that they have had the stamp of sin lifted, their importance is measured by the joy they bring or the harm they may do somebody, while managing this huge resource of potential joys and suffering should be entrusted to our social sophistication and our aesthetic feelings” (p. 34). Hence the significance of personal aesthetic culture, and “aesthetic culture does not [admittedly] guarantee ethical culture, but it does favour it, as with the uncertain border between good and evil the choice of a particular and not another action is frequently purely a matter of taste” (p. 31). The second justification is that “in an aesthetic stance our craving for possessing is suspended, and hence this stance does not lead to those conflicts that are brought about by striving for goods one can only enjoy when they are one’s own”.

An aesthetically sophisticated good citizen has one more trait, a thirteenth, which is a sense of humour. Ossowska thought very highly of subtle wit in the English style, was capable of discretely noticing the amusing in others’ behaviour, and was capable of talking about herself and her worries with humour. This is not heroic humour, but critical humour. “One good humorous note, a joke passed from mouth to mouth” is sufficient to upset the pompousness of the monopoly on authority usurped by one person or by one party. It is knowledge shared by the political police and political censorship in totalitarian systems. This is why she concludes her list with a wish: “Let our future person possess that ability by which Aristotle attempted to define man: let them be capable of smiling” (p. 32). I realised the unluckiness of this thirteenth trait when, despite my attempts, it was removed from the ethical principles of the good civil servant. Besides, in my opinion it was this refusal to acknowledge Aristotle’s thesis that determined the failure of the entire campaign.

Socialisation, which in Ossowska’s brochure is the topic of a specific little philosophical treatise, appears as a separate trait, unrelated to the hidden backbone. Ossowska does not want to talk about socialisation in a broader sense, as qualification for peaceful human coexistence, but in a narrower understanding, which embraces: a) interest in social issues and a certain resource of competence in this field; b) overcoming egocentrism and the skill of also looking at issues from another’s point of view; c) dedication and service for society; and d) the skill of cooperation. I have the impression that just as the traits of the citizen listed so far form a kind of formal frame of character, so socialisation is content embraced within its borders. After all, one could have said till now: all right, so practically anybody can be a democrat, it’s enough to fight for what you strongly believe in, to be open to reality, and in your conduct towards others to be guided by your convictions and not aversion towards others. Even a Chekist or member of the gestapo could refer to these principles; there were honest and ideological communists and fascists, even with a sense of humour and aesthetic culture. But this is not the case with socialisation.

Egocentrism is a drawback, as it makes it impossible to look at an issue from somebody else's point of view. Ossowska is not, for the time being, demanding altruism, but does point out that "egocentrism, which does not notice others' interests at all, causes no less harm in social life than egoism" (p. 26). Before we think about dedication and the sacrifice of one's interests in favour of others, we must learn to look at issues through another's eyes. Besides, she does not demand the former, she wants people to have an inclination to help others, "even if this were to jeopardise our personal interests" (p. 27). This help is expected not only when there is a conflict of interests, but at any time, even when in regard to our own interests it is indifferent, and even when it is favourable to us. I know this sounds strange, but it was by no accident that Ossowska went from 'allocentrism' to 'altruism' (I shall omit here the notional distinctions compiled by K. Kiciński), what was important to her was that a readiness to help manifested itself on a daily basis as our habitus, and was not heroic behaviour. And in addition, she expects this dedication not only in individual relations, but as participation in public life.

The good citizen in a democratic system has not yet had the opportunity to enter into broader social relations. He was a perfectionist, and conducted himself so as to improve his surroundings, although equally as well his personal surroundings and equally as well on his own. Until this point democratic ethics has been the ethics of individual interpersonal relations. Now Ossowska raises the bar for perfectionism. The entire fragment here deserves to be quoted:

"We desire to see not only spontaneous dedication and not only in a person's personal contact with another person. We also want organised and planned dedication for the achievement of collective goals, as such dedication is demanded by service for society, which a citizen in a democratic system should feel obliged to give. By no means does the dedication of the first type have to entail the dedication of the second type. During the years of occupation it was not difficult to indicate those who were always the keenest on giving food to a hungry child knocking at their door, who took in those with no roof over their heads, yet who neither felt obliged to participate in the collective battle with the locusts that beset the group, nor work together on the organising of future collective life in Poland once liberated" […] "In particular we esteem those who in combining the ability to make sacrifice with a sense of responsibility for collective life in their service for society do not ask why they, specifically, should undertake this service, but ask why they would evade it" (p. 27/28). Hence the fourth component of socialisation, the skill of cooperating in a 'group of solidarity', examples of which are given by Ossowska – from the scouts and sports teams to a trade union or political grouping.

Ossowska as a scout? A party person? A syndicalist? It would have seemed that somebody so concerned with independence would be as distant as is only possible from similar 'groupings', and yet those who knew Ossowska can remember how conscientiously she fulfilled roles accepted in collective activity she recognised as legitimate. Certainly not a party, as what could have been her party in the Polish People's Republic: the Polish United Workers' Party, or a satellite-façade of the SD (Alliance of Democrats) type, in which certain professors found an outlet? After all, that was 'ostensible activity' as Jan Lutyński, another scholar of the younger generation close to her, once said. Yet for example at the Warsaw Branch of the Polish Sociological Society, which she and her husband restituted in 1956, Ossowska always participated actively in the annual gatherings for reporting and elections,

and in the battle (usually victorious) that non-party sociologists fought using voting cards with sociologists belonging to the PUWP. She fulfilled her role in an informal organisation of independent Warsaw intelligentsia following the authorities' dissolution of the 'Crooked Circle' club; I can also remember those nerve-wracking meetings at her home in March 1968, when decisions had to be made regarding who to help and how. She had the kind of independent public life that Poland's intelligentsia could afford at the time; and she considered it her duty to put her academic authority at stake in certain critical moments, such as the 'Petition of 34', the first political protest in the Polish People's Republic, or the persecution of the youthful 'revisionist' opposition of Michnik, Kuroń and Modzelewski.

There's no point hiding the fact that Ossowska's democratic ethos lies on the left-hand side of the ideological spectrum. The democracy she had in mind is democracy in which capitalism is tamed in the name of equality of rights. In this respect she does not differ from the majority of Poland's liberal intelligentsia, which emerged from the war with the hope of the country's post-war order not seeing the rebirth of the pre-war Poland together with its political, religious, ethnic and class conflicts. Ossowska does not go beyond the description of democracy quoted above, and the word 'socialism' does not appear in her works even once. Neither was it used by Stanisław Ossowski, who in his approach to society suggests a new type of social order, an order of collective agreements between various social centres, giving as an example the councils from the period of civil war in Spain. However, I can recollect a seminar on the concept of the left run by Ossowska and Jan Strzelecki, a man who did not avoid using the word 'socialism', and despite belonging – almost to the end – to the PUWP was the only politically active student and friend of the Ossowski home. I prepared a speech for that seminar dealing with various empirical indicators of left-wing-ness, delightfully including American questions about attitude towards the Soviet intervention in Hungary, but cannot recall the seminar's hosts reaching any conclusion other than my own, and namely that this was a certain general attitude with variable concrete content. And perhaps there was not even such concord. In any case, this remains, as was written, democracy as a task of the battle for equal rights within a framework of freedom. One could call this a social-democratic ideal, but Ossowska herself did not use such a definition. Probably rightly so, as she was not a social democrat, she could not stand collectivism, and above all statism, which in this formation is a constant element. If she is to be classified, then she would rather be among the social liberals, people sensitive of the individual's independence to the degree that they point out the social limitations of freedom brought about by any inequality. Ossowska's liberalism is expressed in a second definition of a good system: "Human individualism is respected by the kind of system that respects people's aspirations for personal improvement according to their own models, and not those imposed by the state and identical for everybody; a system that respects personal freedom, freedom of convictions, and a person's sphere of privacy" (p. 29). Entitled individualism is – according to Ossowska – the kind that "is expressed in the feeling that one has the right to demand such searching". However, it is not asocial individualism, involving an "inability to interact with others on equal terms", and all the more so deliberately impairing such interaction. "Brawling, which due to the Polish traditions already mentioned should be methodically eradicated" (p. 29). One should therefore add one more characteristic of Ossowska's political philosophy. This is not about just any independence, but about independence within the equality of rights, independence from the state understood as imposed power, independence restricted by the requirements of interacting with others on equal terms, liberalism that has been socialised through cooperation and, one would like to

say, through mutual solidarity. As much freedom for the individual as is possible without violating equal rights. As much equality as is necessary to ensure freedom for everybody.

This in turn requires an equality of obligations. Ossowska treats her model as a universal task, and addresses it not to the elite of perfectionists, but to as broad a swathe of the masses as possible. She emphasises that "ours is neither an elite nor a class model", as opposed to the wise man, the holy man, the knight or even the most democratic of these models, the gentleman; "anybody may adopt it as the basis for moulding themselves" (p. 33). What is more, this is a model that "embraces both men and women" (p. 33), the latter wronged to date as a result of the limited scope of expectations placed in them ("innocence before marriage, faithfulness once married – virtues sufficient for somebody expected to live a quiet life at home," scoffs Ossowska s(p. 33).

The fact is that almost everybody then was left-leaning; we wanted the world to go in the direction of some form of socialism – as defined by a question in a famous survey conducted in the early 1960s among students in Warsaw, drawn up by a team directed by Stefan Nowak – so that the main branches of industry would be public property, except that – as with the Solidarity of 1980 – we wanted this to be property genuinely socialised, and not owned by state or party bureaucracy. Ossowska's citizen would live and function in a socialised economy.

I shall return now to the beginning, deliberating over style. The addressee, the popular character of the brochure, its brevity; all of this imposed this style. However, the preface makes you think. Not particularly entrancing, and you could say too scientific for a brochure intended to propagate and instil a model. Scientific reasoning. Roman style. Ossowska begins with an English gentleman, and ends in Rome. Because the penultimate words are surprising: "Compared to the majority of models developed in the past, our model differs in the emphasis being placed on the socialisation, which is clearly explained considering that we compiled it for a system that engages the broad masses in the organisation of collective life" (p.35). Then the reader may well expect to finally see the word 'socialism', but instead of that the word 'Rome' is used. "In this respect we felt closest to the Roman model citizen, one that the National Education Committee in Poland [1773-1794] once referred to" (p. 35/36). This was not about the Rome of the Caesars, but about the republican Rome that for centuries was a model in schools shaping the citizens of Europe, the Rome of Gaius Mucius Scaevola, Cato and Cicero, the kind we want to be present in our speeches. A Rome more democratic than it ever was, a new Rome – a combination of the ideal of the citizen nurturing public virtues with the civic emancipation of all people, two perfectionistic tasks, one for the individual, the other for the community of the individuals. Perhaps then one should translate the text, bearing the style of Latin laconicism, into or in a way back into Latin. Anybody who is to influence collective life should have perfectionistic aspirations. As my Latinist acquaintances have translated this: *Quisquis vitam civium suorum formare vult, perfectionem assequi conetur.*