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Civility. A discourse absent from pedagogy. An attempt at (re)constructing the concept¹

Abstract

This text is an attempt at analysing civility, an undertaking practically absent from the contemporary pedagogical discourse though amply discussed within the humanities. The (re)construction of this concept aims to restore the importance of civility as a form of civilised life and to advocate for the need to acquire this quality through education. To this end, I review the history of the concept of civility (as a part of the civilising process) and then establish its relation to social mores and morality. Finally, I propose a contemporary understanding of civility within the public and private sphere and in its interpersonal and social roles and how these relate to each other. I assume that a reconstruction of the concept, including a portrayal of civility as a useful good and simultaneously a manifestation of human morality or the human condition in general, warrants the placement of civility among the internal goods of education.

Keywords: civility of good manners, civility of civil society, education, good upbringing, mutual respect

Słowa kluczowe: ogłada towarzyska, ogłada polityczna, edukacja, dobre wychowanie, wzajemny szacunek

Introduction

The topic of civility does not enjoy much popularity today. Remarks about someone's lack of good manners or the sentimental recall of currently neglec-

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ted standards of good upbringing, the lack of which is universally evident today, can only sporadically be heard in conversation. These observations are not limited to our own native culture, as evidenced by contemporary texts and commentaries in the field of European humanities and social sciences (e.g. Martin, 1995; Merchant, 2008; Levine, 2010; Shiell, 2012). Simultaneously, *savoir vivre* guides do not disappear quickly from the shelves of bookstores, although their modern authors, and even more so their target readers, hail mainly from the worlds of diplomacy and business, worlds far removed from pedagogy. It is not easy to explain why this topic has ceased to be of interest to pedagogy; an attempt at reviving it in pedagogical discourse seems equally difficult. However in order to reconstruct the concept of civility – as is the main purpose of this study – we ought to explain this phenomenon and answer the question underpinning it: namely what are the reasons for this lack of a discussion of good behaviour in the field of modern pedagogy. These two issues are interconnected: with the disappearance of a given topic from mainstream research, the key concepts distinguishing it often lose significance. This also applies to concepts relevant to the subject of broadly understood good upbringing. In pedagogical thought, this has been described as good manners, etiquette, courtesy, good behaviour, politeness, civility. In this context we may recall the sentiment expressed by the popular British actor Sanjeev Bhaskar, who, when asked what he would consider worthy of reviving, replied “good manners” (Barker, 2008). Such a state of affairs provides an opportunity for the introduction of renewed concepts into educational theory and subsequently for their new application in pedagogical practice, mainly in educational programs. This study proposes that civility ought to be such a renewed concept.

The (re)construction of the concept of civility requires, first of all, a presentation of the historical context in which the topic of good conduct (within which civility is situated) had emerged in the past centuries as the primary civilising challenge set before educators. I will then exemplify the gradual loss of focus on the care for good upbringing, with the intent to approach and identify the causes of this pedagogical domain’s devaluation. After this historical and critical segment, I will propose a renewed, modern rendition of good upbringing as civility (understood as being-civilised), as manifest both in the private and public spheres, i.e. taking form as both social and political civility. I assume that it is this double importance of civility that provides the opportunity to generate interest among theorists and practitioners of education, to include it in pedagogical discourse and to ensure its positive reception by school youth.

Unsurprisingly, the modern rendition of civility ought to be inspired by and refer to its previous instalments. While illuminating it, one also needs to consider its relationship with social mores and morality, to examine what kind

of good it was and what value might we assign to it today. In other words, what would the purpose of civility be today? Wanting to discern it as an educational goal, one must be able to justify it, renewing its purpose and meaning. It can be assumed that this renewed form of civility would benefit from having its links with ethics established, since we are not satisfied with presenting its superficial utility as courtesy or etiquette (though that aspect may also be exhibited and promoted). The outward dimension of civility, that is, appropriate behaviour, has forever found good use, facilitating the establishing of contact and mutual sympathy in society. This was due to the cultivation of good habits, referred to as good upbringing. Today also bookstores offer a wide range of advisory publications devoted to this issue, though unfortunately these also do not hail from the field of pedagogy, nor are they authored by educators. The goal therefore is not so much the reconstruction of civility understood as a manifestation of socialisation, but as a goal of education (*Erziehung* and *Bildung*), accompanied by an ethical justification for its inclusion into pedagogical discourse pertaining to formative education.

Finally, the distinguishing features of civility in its both forms – social and political – and their interplay will be discussed, aspiring to integrate them as goals of instruction and upbringing into the field of contemporary formal and informal, domestic and institutional, social and civic education (cf. Swim, Howard, Kim, 2012; Biondo, Fiala, 2014). I assume it is this dual meaning and application of civility, its utility both in private and public spheres, that can turn out to be a contemporary asset, allowing for its dissemination among modern teenagers upon gaining their approval as a valuable and useful educational good.

An historical perspective on civility in pedagogical thought – select formulations

The supply of pedagogical literature aimed at promoting good behaviour concerned with appropriate upbringing of youth expands considerably in the Renaissance. *Il Cortegiano* by Baldassare Castiglione, perused with interest throughout Europe, is adapted to Poland's native culture by the humanist writer Łukasz Górnicki as *Dworzanin polski* (*The Polish Courtier*) in 1566. Another such text, the verse *De moribus puerorum carmen iuvenile* by Ioannis Verulani, had already been published in Poland in 1533 by Francis Mymerus, professor of the Cracow Academy, who appended to it a Polish translation by Ambroise Alantsee. Yet another text read in Poland was *Catonis disticha moralia*, trans-

lated by Mymerus and published in 1535 as *Katonowe wiersze obyczajne* (*Cato's Moral Distichs*), later edited and published in 1588 by Sebastian Klonowic as *Katonowe wiersze podwójne, dobrych obyczajów uczące* (*Cato's Double Verses, Teaching Wisdom and Morality*).

The subject had also been taken up by the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, who occupies a special place in the genealogy of pedagogically understood civility, by means of a work devoted entirely to the principles of correct behaviour in society, the *De civilitate morum puerilium* (*On Good Manners for Boys*) published in 1530. Judging by the rapid spread of this work, both in the original and translated, throughout Europe (including in Poland where it was first published in 1540 and then in 1590 as *Dworstwo obyczajów dobrych* [*On Good Courtly Manners*], translated by Klonowic), Erasmus chose an opportune topic. The impact of this work on the formation of the concept of *civilité* that emerged in the process of changing behavioural codes of Western Civilisation has been emphasised by Norbert Elias (Elias, 2000), to whom I shall refer more than once in this study. Erasmus' *Familiarium colloquiorum formulae* (*Patterns of Informal Conversation*, 1522), written for school use in the form of dialogues about well-mannered and pious life, also contained themes relating to the culture of socialising. Renaissance texts, while referencing classical authors, introduce a tone of courtliness – or, to put it in Klonowic's words: "agreeability and humanity of manners" (Wiśniewska, 2006, p. 182). Klonowic edits the whole of Erasmus' text for school use, giving it the form of questions and answers and dividing it into sections addressing particular topics relating to courtly manner, such as posture and dress, conduct in church, at the table, during meetings, at school, during play and in the bedroom. For example, at the beginning we find a question about the scope of education: "The order of training the youth has many parts?" Followed by an answer: "Three at most. First, so that the youthful mind accepts the seedlings of Christian piety. Second, so that he loves the liberal arts and learns them. And finally, so that from his youngest years he trains himself to fitting mores" (Wiśniewska, 2006, p. 182).

In the modern Polish translation of *De civilitate morum puerilium* by Maria Cytowska, Klonowic's "good courtly manners" is replaced by "good upbringing" (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1992, p. 264)². In this work, Erasmus argues in favour of good upbringing by emphasising its utility in the "winning of good will (...) in the eyes of men" (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1985, p. 273). "By following the principles of good manners – he writes – one will win praise without envy

² For comparison, the most recent English edition of Erasmus' *De civilitate morum puerilium*, translated by Eleanor Merchant, employs the phrase: "good manners for children" and – just as Klonowic did earlier – modernizes the text, editing it in an attempt to render it attractive to today's teenagers.

and will gain friends” (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1985, p. 288). He also argues that a graceful and dignified look ought to be a reflection of one’s mental state, though he complains that owing to educator’s neglect “sometimes even upright and learned men lack social grace” (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1985, p. 273). For Erasmus, true nobility is derived not so much from descent, but from a mind adequately formed, versed in liberal arts. It is thus understood nobility that warrants noble behaviour, manifest in gesture, motion, dress and relations with others. The advantage of good upbringing is that it facilitates seeing the other illustrious qualities of the human mind. I consider this aspect to be key: civility in Erasmus’ formulation, though manifest externally through behaviour, nevertheless expresses a person’s internal culture. Thus the fostering of politeness in children was to be “a symptom of true education” (Kot, 1996, p. 211).

Once articulated, concern for correct behaviour in a social context gradually became a necessity during that era, at least in select spheres of society. Consequently, social demand for normative guidelines and advice concerning this field of human activity grew. Erasmus’ emphasis on the importance of good manners reveals the influence of Italian Renaissance humanists, esp. Lorenzo Valla, the author of *Elegantiarum libri* (1471) (Cytowska, 1969). It is worth noting that Erasmus uses the term *civilitas* to reference the norms of children’s good behaviour. While nothing of modesty of behaviour, so much the focus during the Middle Ages, had been neglected, good manners gained a new dimension, namely elegance and grace, “refinement of (social) conduct” and became the codex of “civilised behaviour” (Cytowska, 1969, p. 15). This new humanist understanding of good upbringing which comprises the notion of courtly *civilitas* is worth emphasising. I refer to it, while proposing the use of the term ‘civilization’, which expresses well the understanding of cultivation of manners recovered in the Renaissance, alongside or interchangeably with ‘civility’ (Elias, 2000).

Among Polish Renaissance texts dealing with the topic of good manners in conjunction with formative education, the work of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski stands out, especially his *Commentariorum de Republica emendanda* (*On the Improvement of the Commonwealth*) (1551). The first part of this memorandum is entirely devoted to mores, on the melioration of which, according to the writer, the future of the country depended. These in turn would require “adequate upbringing and instruction of the youth” (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 100) by means of schools which the state ought to set up. To illustrate the views of the reformer, let us quote a few sentences from the mentioned work. The author sets before the parents the task of imbuing childhood with such mores and thoughts “so that it becomes as if a foundation for an honest, unblemished and admirable life” (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 110). Among the specific recom-

mendations made to parents are to “form their [children’s] speech and all actions with regard for beauty, justice, gentleness, kindness and humane civility” (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 111). And further on “it is also necessary to teach children what they owe to others, their obligation to parents, to fellow citizens, to the Republic. To teach them how to keep company and peace with others, how to behave towards those of higher, lower and equal standing, towards comrades, friends, relatives and those in affinity, towards officials, masters and servants and even towards enemies; all this both in private and public life” (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 113). Writing about the court, which for Modrzewski was a perfect training ground for acquiring “civility and shaping of the mind”, he admits that he hopes for such a beneficial influence of the court, which would educate the youth and shape their mores. While postulating these precepts, Modrzewski also lists the vices of courtly life, such as vanity, hostility, false friendship and others, which, on account of their prominent exposition as manifest at court, ought to be all the more criticized and rectified (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 115). The quoted fragments of Frycz Modrzewski’s thought regarding civility clearly show its double, social and civic nature, which I will refer to and develop in the latter part of this work, devoted to models of civility desirable today. Civility forms part of mores and customs, which in turn influence a country’s prosperity. If the state of a republic is to improve, the degeneration of customs within which youth matures needs to be addressed. Subsequently, such conceptions of civility were mostly abandoned in Polish culture, with the meaning of civility limited to etiquette, leaving out the issues of citizenship from the sphere of good manners. In view of this, it is worth noting, that this is not the case in the English tradition of understanding civility, where both aspects remained in cultivation over the centuries. It is this tradition that I will describe next, by providing the relevant texts, starting from a passage concerned with “good breeding” from John Locke’s treatise *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693).

Locke ranks civility third among the prerogatives of education, after virtue and wisdom, but before learning, which is ranked in the last fourth position. Like Erasmus, he distinguishes between its internal and external aspects. The first is a person’s general attitude, a “state of the soul” characterized by the will not to harm others, the second is the ability to express this through gaze, voice, words, motion, gesture and in behaviour in accordance with the customs and fashion of a given society. For Locke then, the task before education, as far as civility is concerned, is the shaping of a general stance characterised by kindness and respect for all people, the external manifestation of which would be both care not to disrespect anyone and avoid disturbing them when in their company and an effort to show others how they are respected and valued,

their merit, condition and social standing recognised. The author of *Letters on Tolerance* valued this cultivated trait of human nature, calling it the “internal Civility of the Mind” and placing it as the “first, and most taking” among social virtues (Locke, 2003, pp. 200–201). Thanks to it all those with whom we converse are satisfied and enjoy each other in our company (Locke, 2003, p. 201). Concluding his reflections on this aspect of education, Locke points out the close relationship between courtesy and tact with decency, which, he remarks, he would like to see more of in civilised societies. A lack thereof suggests a lapse on the part of education, which is supposed to address this “ancient Piece of Barbarity”, retained in our cultural circle mainly out of habit (Locke, 2003, p. 206). Locke notes that despite our disapproval of others’ impulsiveness, bickering, rudeness, heckling and other examples of tactlessness during social gatherings, we often fail to control these in ourselves because of the habituation of such behaviour. The rationalist Locke emphasizes the significant influence that the practice of rites and customs of one’s region and country has on the formation of moral and religious beliefs. (From today’s perspective we might add this is also the case for political ones.) It is this influence, I think, that often leaves a deeper imprint in human sensibility than the judgement of one’s own reason. Although in the empiricist Locke and his hierarchy of fields of education civility is of tertiary importance, nevertheless, because of the potency of its influence, the importance of the milieu in which the pupil grows up cannot be overestimated and therefore requires special care. It is no coincidence that the topic of civility is discussed in the text immediately following the treatment of wisdom (in the sense of prudence). Already here Locke will stress the importance of cultivating this intellectual virtue by raising the child’s mind “to great and worthy Thoughts” and by keeping him/her “at a distance from Falshood, and Cunning, which has always a broad mixture of Falshood in it” (Locke, 2003, p. 199).

Summarizing Locke’s rendition of civility I would like to first of all emphasize his continuation of Erasmus’ line of thought, the understanding of ‘civilization’ as a manifestation of the “internal Civility of the Mind”, which is made apparent through respect for the people with whom one comes into contact. Secondly, I would like to note his appreciation for good morals – which encompasses civility – as a value both in the private and the public sphere, subject to “external and internal court”, both by the ruler and conscience (Locke, 2010, p. 31). This second aspect is, I think, the beginning of the development, alongside civility of good manners, of the political sense of civility, citizenship as a sign of civilization. As mentioned before, the English tradition of understanding civility contains both senses (Shils, 1997). In the Anglosphere, good manners signifying decency and civilization were required of the elites respon-

sible for the running of the country and so became a hallmark not only of social, but also public life. It was expected of persons in government and civil service as well as citizens engaging in political initiatives within civil society that they maintain not only private, but political civility, that is possession of both command of public affairs and civic virtue. In juxtaposition to the Anglo-Saxon understanding of civility as tied to civilization, on the continent in the Germanosphere a different understanding of being civilized had formed – civilization as opposed to culture. I will exemplify this position with the thought of Immanuel Kant.

Kant classified being civilized as antithetical to culture. We find this stance directly expressed in his lectures *On Pedagogy*, where being civilized is discussed as one of the tasks of education alongside being disciplined, cultured and moralized. Kant complains that “we live in the epoch of disciplining, culturing and civilizing, but we are still a long way off from the epoch of moralizing” (Kant, 1904, p. 124). In this assessment, a similarity to Locke’s position, for whom moral formation was central to education, is to a certain extent identifiable. Kant, on the other hand, would want moralisation to develop in the pupil the tendency to choose good objectives, that is, those that are recognisable as valid principles of behaviour by every person. This is a difficult task and, according to him, rarely achieved. Moreover, it is planned in education only after disciplining and culturing. Kant differs in this from Erasmus and Locke who postulated moral formation since early childhood. Civilization for Kant entails a different kind of skill, unconnected with morality; it is rather a form of worldly-wisdom or prudence, thanks to which one is liked and respected, “by virtue of which all men may be used to one’s own ultimate aims” (Kant, 1904, p. 123). Such civilization requires the adoption of good manners and behaviour; it is the objective of pragmatic teaching, carried out by an educator or tutor. This training for worldly-wisdom bestows social value and allows for the formation of a citizen. Kant expands the understanding of civilization, by giving it a civic dimension, previously strongly emphasised by Frycz Modrzewski. In a more profound sense, then, it is not only the art of bending others to one’s will to further one’s own ends, but also the practice of adapting oneself to civil society (Kant, 1904, p. 136). From the onset of his argument however, Kant separates the spheres of civilization and good conduct. The latter of which he treats as the domain of morality, or even going as far as to identify it with morality (Kant, 1904, p. 198). He formulates this most explicitly in the final part of his lectures, where he shows how particular human attributes relate to aspects of education. He associates skill with talent and morality with character, and what interests us, civilization as part of practical education, with temperament. Kant once again emphasizes the importance of acquiring this worldly wisdom

in relations with others, that is such a mastery of our own skills as to be able “to use men for our own ends” (Kant, 1904, p. 198). Certainly, teaching a child how to hide one’s own character and thoughts while learning the art of reading someone else’s mind for the sake of one’s own purposes has nothing to do with morality. Such a skill is the opposite of the law of imperative governing morality. “The art of external appearance is propriety – writes Kant – and this art must be possessed” (Kant, 1904, p. 198). If self-control is part of this art, then it can certainly be useful for mitigating rash temperament, but nothing more.

Kant’s approach to civility illustrates the process by which on the Continent (in the Germanosphere, but not among Francophones) the spiritual sphere represented by decency, morality, culture and education (*Bildung*) began to diverge from the sphere of civilization, including politics, economy and social relations. Elias complements these lists with the concepts of depth, sincerity and true virtue, which were placed in the sphere of culture since the Enlightenment and were exemplified by the creative and educated elites. By contrast, he associates the superficiality, hypocrisy and insincerity of the court aristocracy with civilization (Elias, 2000). This outline of the history of civility, presenting the various aspects of its meaning, allows for a better diagnosis of the causes of the crisis of civility characteristic of modern times. Civility today has disappeared from pedagogical discourse and is absent as a goal of education, regarded by modern educators with suspicion, considered an unnecessary corset, convention or even a fallacy hindering free development. Is it then a revival of civility possible? If so, in what shape, for what purpose and how justified?

Rules and norms of good upbringing – civility within the sphere of manners and morality

To begin to answer the above questions I will present a revised version of one of the historical understandings of civility, considering it to be both relevant and useful by virtue of what it offers and cautions against. A different understanding could of course be chosen, for instance that which Eleanor Merchant opted for when editing Erasmus’ text, believing that good manners are universal pedagogical equipment, essential for the educational pursuits of parents and teachers, regardless of era. Today, as in the past, we can be confused or disconcerted by behaviour in everyday situations, social and public life, on the internet or the political stage. Timothy Shiell lists modern manifestations of the lack of civility, which, together with their still prevalent predecessors, form a large collection of inappropriate conduct, encompassing both non-civic

attitude and common rudeness. For instance, the list includes the following: obscenities on the radio and television, not giving way to the elderly on public transport, students engaging with social media during class, smoking near non-smokers, littering, unethical journalism, voting on the basis of prejudice, answering the phone while talking to someone, sacrilege, painting graffiti, children refusing to obey parents, obscenities uttered against teachers, etc. (Shiell, 2012, pp. 13–14). We are also taken aback by dishonesty and superficial politeness, because those betray falsehood, disrespect and instrumental treatment of others; we are already aware of the dangers of superficial courtesy. While modern egalitarian societies do not require civility the likes of which would be essential at court, some variant of civility, tailored to the needs of a democratic society, is still needed, I suppose. The renewed version of good upbringing – civility that I would like to call upon is based on two basic positive formulas – the principles of politeness and courtesy, and on four norms, formulated not as prohibitions but in the milder form of cautions. The following hail from Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.

The principle of politeness – be respectful and kind by honouring and giving due reverence to everyone, without being suspect of flattery, pretence or perfidy. Take care not to show any disrespect or contempt to anyone with whom you interact.

The principle of courtesy – take care to properly express respect and kindness through words, gestures, gaze and conduct.

Learn to account for others' personal preferences, temperament and standpoint. Attempt to refine yourself and beware of being rude.

Beware of disrespecting others with gesture, word or gaze; do not be contemptuous of others.

Do not be quarrelsome. Learn not to point out faults in others, avoid mockery and heckling.

Learn not to interrupt or correct the speaker. Beware of arrogance, do not show off.

A key feature of this proposal is that it emphasises the dual, internal and external, dimension of civility, an aspect which it shares with what Erasmus proposed in the Renaissance. It would therefore be difficult to accuse it of promoting superficiality and falsehood. Modern democracies need a humanistic outlook and can find it in civility, freshly understood. Such civility would be best promoted today as the union of a person's moral character, called by Locke the "internal Civility of the Mind" (Locke, 2003, p. 200), with the acquired culture of manners and tact in the adopted ceremonial formula (courtesy). Such for example is its rough description in the works of Helmuth Plessner (Plessner, 2008), which indicates a partial breakdown of the boundary between cul-

ture and civilization introduced by Kant in the Germanosphere. On the other hand, within Francophonie, Henri Bergson's work on politeness, explaining the phenomenon of *la politesse* in the civilised world, draws our attention. In the search for "true politeness" he demonstrates the importance of the three forms it takes. The first, politeness of manners, he argues that it is more reasonable to consider it indirectly, not with reference to the value of manners themselves, but by examining the consequences of their neglect. Their absence is perceived as shocking, testimony to bad upbringing and so, although Bergson intended to search for true politeness elsewhere, he is not in favour of breaking with the formulas of politeness. These ought to be connected to one's state of mind and set in motion by love of equality, manifest through the recognition of a just ratio of merit and reward. In this sense, politeness denotes "the art of showing everyone, by one's attitude and words, the respect to which they have the right" (Bergson, 2004, p. 21). Locke's formulation of civility is easily identifiable here. Departing from knowledge of good manners and their relation to feelings, Bergson seeks to establish a higher order of civility, a politeness of spirit, developing alongside civilization. This would be the acquired ability "to put oneself in the place of others, take interest in their undertakings, think their thoughts. Simply put: to live their lives, forgetting oneself" (Bergson, 2004, pp. 22–23). Bergson considers this to be a hallmark of intellectual flexibility. The behaviour of a person with this ability becomes graceful, expressing and evoking sympathy. This spiritual grace cannot be confused with self-interest or hypocrisy, although it includes the desire to be pleasing. In Bergson's formulation, civility is overshadowed by an even higher, almost perfect virtue: kindness of the heart in the form of benevolence, manifest through gentleness, at the source of which lies "natural goodness" (Bergson, 2004, p. 26). To teach this via school curriculum would prove difficult, though, as Bergson has it, the mentioned virtue may be associated with liberal education understood as liberal arts, which Bergson termed selfless education and valued very highly. And so, we come full circle to Erasmus and his praise for humanist studies, amongst which he included the acquisition of civility.

In this context it is worth drawing attention to the work of the Francophone author André Comte-Sponville, who placed politeness in the antechamber of virtues, as an introduction to them, vital especially in childhood since it teaches formulas which are later backed up with moral considerations (Comte-Sponville, 2000). A valuable work in the Polish language composed with a similar goal, namely, to establish the relationship between morality and manners, including the rules of good upbringing, is a text by Andrzej Potocki OP, in which he justifies the compatibility of such rules with the Aristotelian-Thomistic ethical tradition (Potocki, 2012).

Within all the formulations of civility, or its components in the form of kindness or politeness, called upon in this paper, a similar tendency can be detected. This is to do with the attempt to ascribe to them a deeper meaning, disproving the stigmas of superficiality, empty and superfluous form, or instrumentalization. This tendency is found both in the humanist tradition and in classical philosophy as well as classical liberalism. I think I have successfully demonstrated the ethical minimum which should be associated with civility – a necessary step in the (re)construction of this concept. It would be difficult to bring civility back into pedagogical discourse without an ethical dimension. In the remainder of this study, I adopt a working understanding of civility as politeness, courtesy, personal decorum and concern for others, manifested in behaviour and action for their sake out of respect for them and oneself. Departing from this basis I move on to a modern English understanding of civility, which presents it in two varieties, social and civic, since it performs two separate functions in the private and public spheres respectively. Using this example I would like to demonstrate how traditional rules of good manners can be brought into the space of modern civil society, in other words, how thus defined politeness, courtesy, personal decorum and concern for others can be expressed both in good conduct and in purposeful action.

The modern offer of social and political civility

The challenge of combining and engaging with the French term *civilité* and the English double meaning of civility has been taken up by Jerzy Szacki in the introduction to his *Ani książę, ani kupiec: obywatel* (*Neither Prince nor Merchant: Citizen*). While civility today carries primarily public and civic connotations, it has not lost its older, more private dimension of “good manners, politeness, kindness, courtesy” or “gentleness of morals” (Szacki, 1997, p. 14). For a Polish audience Szacki suggests the term ‘political civility’, though he notes its artificiality (Szacki, 1997, p. 13). I return to this proposal after more than 20 years with hopes that such a term might become embedded in Polish discourse. The aforementioned double meaning of civility has been extensively discussed by Edward Shils in *The Virtue of Civility*. Its primary understanding is civility of good manners, i.e. “courtesy, well-spokenness, moderation, respect for others, self-restraint, gentlemanliness, urbanity, refinement, good manners, politeness” (Shils, 1997, pp. 337–338). This has fulfilled and perhaps continues to fulfil certain important social functions: alleviating antagonistic convictions and feelings, restraining aggression and the pugnacity and vulgarity that stem from it, providing a framework for conversation and guarding against “sloven-

liness, poor taste and unpleasing eccentricity” (Shils, 1997, p. 79). All these characteristics contribute to social relations, since civility, as Shils has it, is the basis for face-to-face relations. It can therefore prove useful e.g. for setting up cooperation, certainly facilitating the initial steps to that end. A key feature of civility is the treatment of the others while acknowledging them as “equal in dignity, never inferior” or without dignity (Shils, 1997, p. 338). Neglecting to demonstrate respect is tantamount to lack of civility. On the other hand, the second meaning of civility is concerned with civil society, necessitating a perspective with focus on the common good. The civility of civil society describes a civic attitude, an orientation towards the common good, tolerance for different views, political culture and wisdom.

The link between good manners and civic attitude may not be immediately evident and yet what connects both forms of civility, as Shils argues, is the respectful stance towards all citizens based on the postulate “of moral dignity” (Shils, 1997, p. 338). This constitutes the ethical basis for both forms of civility. The first manifests itself through behaviour and direct contact, for example via correspondence, while the other by encompassing society as a whole with care, considering what benefits it and desiring to serve it, even to the detriment of one’s own individual or group interests. In Shils’ formulation, political civility (civility of civil society) has the benefit of facilitating and ameliorating various demands and moderating different ideals, rendering it useful for the development of approaches that must account for different interests and political considerations and in the debate over them. Social civility (civility of good manners) is also of use in such situations, since it “provides procedures or modes of speech”, which help articulate demands, relieving perceived antagonism between participants of a debate or dispute (Shils, 1997, p. 345). Its absence may “aggravate incivility or be a part of it” (Shils, 1997, p. 80). However as Shils notes, the civic stance which is the objective of political civility, that is, an orientation towards common good for the benefit of both one’s allies as well as opponents, cannot be reduced to good manners and requires much more than those to occur.

Shils considers social civility to be part of substantive civility as “the virtue of civil society” and “a mode of political action” (Shils, 1997, p. 340, 345). We are convinced of the value of the latter when watching the proceedings of both houses of parliament and other political gatherings, especially when the participants of those lack the principles and norms of manners good upbringing. Common good is harmed when representatives of opposing parties insult each other or are unable to control their anger and other negative emotions towards their adversaries. This stokes up anxiety and discontent, which are easily transferred to the audience. This does not serve civil society. Conversely,

as Shils points out, good manners among the participants of meetings and debates make potential disputes less aggressive and easier to handle. It is no coincidence that important political matters are discussed during meals stylised as social events, with the accompanying atmosphere of socialising. Good manners manifest in the public sphere and a concern for the common good, when considered complementary parts of civility, would certainly serve civilisation and the culture of modern societies, as indeed is the main proposal of this paper.

Common to both types of civility is an engaged attitude and respect for the dignity of every person, or, put succinctly – consideration for others. This manifests itself, depending on the context, through appropriate behaviour when engaging with people or via commitment to the common good of a community. Civility is a combination of personal and social virtues, which can be revealed in different ways, from social interaction to civic activity. Both require training, knowledge and good example and it is for this reason that I postulate the reinclusion of civility into pedagogical discourse.

Civility in education (combined with upbringing): a summary

I began my discussion of civility by reviewing its chosen historical formulations, then proceeding to establish its links with social mores and morality, and, finally, searching for a modern version of civility, broadly applicable both in a private and public or political context. I will now offer a summary consisting of a few key points, mainly focusing on the findings relevant to education.

1. While civility originates from the culture of stratified society and is associated with court, hierarchy, distinction and rule, it is nevertheless well regarded in modern democratic societies as a basis for egalitarian relations founded on mutual respect, benevolence and moral dignity. It is therefore postulated as a public good and a manifestation of the culture of a given community, to the degree to which it is civilised.
2. Civility creates an atmosphere of cooperation and facilitates the achievement of educational goals and should therefore be widely available; it is a useful tool for pedagogy and ought to be a goal of formative education or combined with upbringing.
3. Civility understood as consideration for others, manifested through politeness, good manners and involvement is best learned willingly by means of example. This can occur naturally and without effort when the

child or pupil grows up in an environment in which one can encounter well brought up and active citizens.

4. Civility should be present in the school education process when a good example is missing, but also as a way to complement the educational process. This should take the form of continuous learning and improvement of behaviour corresponding to various social situations (e.g. public speaking, social gatherings, sporting events) and encouraging engagement in various civic initiatives within and without school (e.g. school council initiatives, volunteering, clubs and associations).
5. If internal goods of a given practice are the goods which cannot be attained outside of that practice, which we define with terms taken from that practice, and which in turn we identify through participation in them (MacIntyre, 2007), then civility (both in its private and public formulations) is an internal good of education. This calls not only for the propagation of civility in accordance with the highest standards of education and upbringing but also for a justification of its relevance with a focus on its autotelic and/or instrumental meaning, that is, a presentation of its intrinsic value and utility, which I have attempted to provide in this text.
6. Civility among equals is more useful and appreciated in an egalitarian society than it had been at court in the past, since it is based on mutual respect and not social position.
7. Civic duties of the noble born are today conferred upon all citizens. Therefore civility may again manifest itself in both of its spheres, one after the other, reproducing the sequence of pedagogical efforts – from politeness and kindness to engagement and consideration for others, which together constitute a complete morality. In civil society it may appear in the form of civic virtue as investment in the common good (Dagger, 1997). In other words, in an egalitarian society consideration for others in the form of courtesy develops naturally into civic engagement.
8. The utilitarian aspect of civility does not diminish its significance, on the contrary: should civility, bolstered with respect for all people, happen to be useful – so much the better. In education it is easier to encourage good manners and engagement in pro-social activity (e.g. charity) when that is simply beneficial to the learner.
9. Outside of the courtly environments of the past, the need for good manners remains, especially since new environments emerge, such as the Internet with its specific ‘netiquette’ (Willard, 2011; Shiell, 2012).
10. The ethical norms underlying civility decide about its limits. Without taking these norms into account I do not think civility would be defen-

sible today. When witnessing behaviour in violation of human dignity, such as humiliation, disavowal or insult, we are obliged to intervene, irrespective of the norms of politeness. This becomes more challenging when we ourselves become the object of vilification, but even then, we retain the right to be 'naughty'. Going further, we might reflect upon the limits of civility when citizens resort to civil disobedience in response to authoritarianism or abuse of power. This, however, is an issue that goes beyond the scope of this study; it is worth addressing elsewhere.

It is edifying when we can appeal to and draw upon civility, but it is also worth remembering that there are limits of its applicability.

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