

The theme of struggle in European epics: agonological aspects from the perspective of possible prevention and therapy

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Abstract

Reflecting on the epic, a genre that is surrounded by an atmosphere of the sacred and nowadays already outdated, with a lineage belonging to the distant past, we draw attention to those of its qualities and aspects that have a universal (timeless) dimension. Its lineage begins in the world with the ancient Babylonian epic about Gilgamesh – the brave king of the Sumerian city of Uruk. In pre-literate Greece, oral tales depicted individual battles of heroes. The genesis of epics was usually associated with the chivalric culture they served, affirming fame and the ethos of warriors. The action took place in two worlds: the divine and the human. Although humans fight to the end, their ultimate fates are decided by the gods, whose personalities and characters are as humane as possible. Fighting is undeniably one of the most important elements of Greek civilization.

The purpose of this narrative review is to synthesize the knowledge of struggle in European epics from the perspective of possible prevention and therapy in terms of innovative agonology.

It may soon become apparent that combining seemingly only distant activities such as geography of combat sports, martial arts bibliotherapy, music prevention and therapy with elements of martial arts or self-defence art, cultivation of the ancient model and specific nationals of wrestling struggles, fun forms of martial arts, specific motoric simulations, etc. will yield unexpected preventive and therapeutic results documented by public health indicators.

Meanwhile, the results of research using modern technology, including artificial intelligence, provide evidence of the preventive effectiveness of innovative agonology methods. Retirement age, from the perspective of a creative individual, does not have to be associated with an increased risk of bodily injury or death due to a fall and collision with a hard ground or with a vertical obstacle, or even with a moving object.

Keywords: geography of combat sports • martial arts bibliotherapy • modern technology • music prevention and therapy • neo-gladiatorism

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Narrative reviews – are a discussion of important topics on a theoretical point of view, and they are considered an important educational tool in continuing medical education. Narrative reviews take a less formal approach than systematic reviews in that narrative reviews do not require the presentation of the more rigorous aspects characteristic of a systematic review such as reporting methodology, search terms, databases used, and inclusion and exclusion criteria [50].

CZĘSTOCHOWA DECLARATION 2015: HMA against MMA – “continuous improvement of health through martial arts as one of the most attractive form of physical activity for a human, accessible during entire life should constantly exist in public space, especially in electronic media, to balance permanent degradation of mental and social health by enhancing the promotion of mixed martial arts – contemporary, bloody gladiatorship, significant tool of education to aggression in a macro scale”.

Gdansk 2nd HMA World Congress Resolution – Article 1 The white flag with five interlocking “Olympic rings” is the most recognizable symbol in the global public space. Neither did the resurrected idea of Olympia, “Citius, Altius, Fortius” save humanity from the horrors of two world wars, nor did the declared mission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC): “1. (...) the promotion of ethics and (...) ensuring that, in sport, the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned” (Olympic Charter, p. 18) stop the pathology of permanently educating contemporary man in aggression. Article 2 Likewise, symbols (a sword pointed downwards surrounded by five rings) and motto (“Friendship through Sport”) of Conseil International du Sport Militaire (CISM) did not stop soldiers from killing each other and murdering people after 1948 (the year of establishing CISM, the second largest multi-sport discipline organization after the IOC, and also the year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Article 3 Although there are five identical combat sports in the Olympic Games and the Military World Games,

INTRODUCTION

Struggle as the overriding thought of epics

Reflecting on the epic, a genre that is surrounded by an atmosphere of the sacred and nowadays already outdated, with a lineage belonging to the distant past, we draw attention to those of its qualities and aspects that have a universal (timeless) dimension. Its lineage begins in the world with the ancient Babylonian epic about Gilgamesh – the brave king of the Sumerian city of Uruk [1].

In fact, almost every society legitimizes a work (or works) treated with special reverence. This glorification applies, without exception, to the civilizational and cultural history of Europe and books written in the tradition of various provenance: mythological, biblical, heroic, chivalric, didactic, allegorical, historical, philosophical, and other. The broad and precise insights of literary anthropology, supported by related humanities, lead to the centre, the essential element of which is man and his relationship with the world. For those who read with the desire to explore the mystery of life, thinking inspired by literature has an undeniable purpose and meaning.

One of the attributes that round out the hallmarks of this genre is the essence of the subject matter, for the epic depicts the history of a nation at its turning point and is the source of myths. This is invariably linked to the fact that its chief ideological issue remains war (struggle – in the sense defined by Tadeusz Kotarbinski, the creator of the general theory of struggle, or agonology [2]), which impacts the way the plot is presented (historiosophy), its plot drama (the fate of the heroes), metaphysics (gods, wonder, monsters, magic) and style.

At its core, the epic puts historical rulers, chieftains and knights shrouded in legend, remarkable and brave figures, brave and courageous heroes, and daredevils. They participate in numerous battles and duels. Chivalrous virtues, victories won in skirmishes and examples of honourable death shape the image of the ideal world. This is confirmed by the historical European epic [3], a classic genre in the writing of various nations and periods from Homer’s ‘Iliad’ and ‘Odyssey’ [4, 5] and Virgil’s ‘Aeneid’ [6]; through the epics: French ‘Song of Roland’ [7], Celtic ‘Beowulf’ [8], ‘Tales of the Round Table’ [9], Slavic ‘Word of Igor’s Expedition’ [10], ‘Battle of Kosovo Field’ [11])

and Italian ‘The Frenzy of Orlando’ by Ariosto [12] and ‘Jerusalem Delivered’ by Tasso [13], as well as German ‘Song of the Nibelungs’ [14]) and Finnish ‘Kalevala’ [15], ending with Adan Mickiewicz’s Polish ‘Pan Tadeusz’ [16], which is the finale of the genre in Europe. Of course, the issue has been covered in an encyclopaedic nutshell and, where possible, from the perspective of agonology [2, 17-22] in a cultural and historical context.

Emphasizing the theme of combat in the warp of the epic, we proceed from the assumption that on the one hand there is an invader (aggressor), and on the other – a defender, that is, a participant in a defensive war. By their very nature, battles are destructive, there are winners and losers, different scales prevail: from micro to macro, hence martial arts-related texts can be widely used in psychotherapeutic (bibliotherapy) ventures. The subjects taking part in these epics use various tools of combat (types of weapons, elements of strategy, tactical actions, surprise, misleading, deception, etc.); on many occasions the opponents of man are animals (a theme taken up in the literature of innovative agonology [21, 22]) and creatures from the world of bestiary.

In pre-literate Greece, oral tales depicted individual battles of heroes. The genesis of epics was usually associated with the chivalric culture they served, affirming fame and the ethos of warriors. The action took place in two worlds: the divine and the human. Although humans fight to the end, their ultimate fates are decided by the gods, whose personalities and characters are as humane as possible. Fighting is undeniably one of the most important elements of Greek civilization.

The purpose of this narrative review is to synthesize the knowledge of struggle in European epics from the perspective of possible prevention and therapy in terms of innovative agonology. For obvious reasons, many references are to the most relevant works translated into Polish.

Martial arts in ‘Iliad’

The Trojan War, which is the subject of Homer’s well-known epic [4], depicts the history of the stronghold and its destruction, and subsequent birth to the civilization of Rome (for the fall of Troy gave birth to Rome.) Its founders turned out to be refugees from the city that had been turned to rubble. The battle between the Trojan

defenders and the Achaean invading army with their allies is fought over Helen abducted by Paris. This decade-long war sows devastation on both sides. The losses are enormous. The battle taking place in the vast area under the city walls takes different forms. Most often, the heroes of the enemy ranks clash with whole groups, among which large hosts of warriors die. Around them, a common movement of archers, slingers and coppersmiths flashed missiles glaring at the enemy. Warfare was not hurried. The city defended itself bravely and repelled successive enemy assaults. Sometimes tournaments of individual knights were held. The bravest in battle and duels was Achilles.

This greatest of the heroes (next to Heracles), quarrelsome and offended after being deprived of his female captive, stops fighting, contributing to the successes that the Trojans begin to achieve. Hector, the defender of Troy, kills Patroclus, who, wearing the armour of Achilles, moves into battle and tries to frighten the city's defenders. Achilles, grieving, throws himself into the fray, chases Hector around the walls of the castle three times and kills him in a duel with a spear, then drags his body behind his chariot. Hector's father asks him to return the corpse, to which Hector agrees. Shortly thereafter, Achilles dies, hit by Paris with an arrow to the tender spot, which is his heel. Homer was not a pacifist. Thus, it is not the horrors of war, but the magnificence of martial arts – martial deeds – that is the target of his story, for Homer narrates the course of battles, the deliberations of strategists, duels, and the martial superiority of individual combatants.

Odysseus' wiles

Odysseus, the ruler of a small island of Ithaca, is one of the main characters of the 'Iliad' and the title character of the 'Odyssey' [5]. He was famous for his cleverness, reason, and prudence, and was an excellent advisor and negotiator. Many famous warriors suffered the death by his hand. He also came up with the idea of constructing the Trojan horse. The Greeks win the war thanks to the ruse devised by Odysseus. They build a giant, hollowed-out horse in which the bravest warriors hide, while the fleet sails away as defeated. Believing the horse to be an offering to the gods, the Trojans drag it behind the city walls. At night, the Greeks sneak out from inside it, set fire to the buildings and doom the city to destruction.

After the fall of Troy, the Greek hero sets out to return to his native Ithaca. Despite Athena's divine protection, the journey takes twenty years and during this time Odysseus experiences many adventures fighting with his companions for life and survival. A particularly dangerous situation occurs when he and his crew land on an island inhabited by one-eyed giants. One of the cyclops locks them in a cavern. Odysseus puts up a heroic fight against him by blinding him and admitting the name 'Nobody,' causing misunderstanding among the neighbours of the great Polyphemus, rushing to his aid. The blinded giant fights to the end. Odysseus and his men save their lives when, hooked up to the bellies of sheep, they escape the confinement and captivity of the Cyclops.

The hero from Troy finally becomes the only survivor of the entire crew to return to Ithaca, unrecognized, dressed as a beggar. In his palace he finds one hundred and eight suitors. So, he persuades his faithful wife Penelope to promise her hand to the one who strains the mighty bow. He was the only one able to do so, killing all the suitors with its deadly arrows. In this battle, his only allies were two servants and his young son Telemachus.

Aeneas: a Trojan-Roman hero

Aeneas, along with other Trojans, escaped from a city sacked by the Greeks. He is the protagonist of Virgil's 'Aeneid' [6], which combines the themes of Homer's well-known epics. Aeneas appears several times in the warfare at Troy. He is at Hector's side, fights against Achilles and kills many Achaeans or forces them to flee. After leaving the burning city, he begins a long wandering. Before he reaches the shores of his beloved Italy, he experiences many dramatic moments (such as entering the underworld). The King of Lazio, having given him hospitality, at the same time gave him his daughter as his wife. It was not without a fight. Aeneas had to fight a battle with the Rutulians and their leader Turnus (duel of two nations), to whom Lavinia was promised. The Trojan was victorious and remained in Lazio, where he founded a new city, named after his wife Lavinium. Aeneas – as befits a hero – died in battle against the Etruscans.

The Roman hero, in addition to the qualities of chivalry, also embodies the qualities of a defender of the state as well as social and civic concern. He is guided by a sense of duty and rejects lack of restraint and weakness. In this sense, he is

their potential is still not used to meet the second of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism: "(...) to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity" (Olympic Charter, p. 13). Article 4 Boxing and wrestling cultivate the traditions of ancient Olympism. Judo and taekwondo have given martial arts humanistic and health attractiveness. Fencing combines this tradition with modernity in the spirit of chivalry. Aiming dynamic offensive and defensive actions directly at the opponent's body (irrespective of the protectors used) in such a way as not to hurt is a measure of respecting those knightly rules. This rule harmonizes with the principle of respect for the opponent's as well as one's own corporeality and dignity over the vain victory at all costs. Article 5 For the civilized individual and the society for whom human health and dignity are the common good, participation, in any role, in brutal shows of people massacring each other cannot be a standard of the quality of life. Neo gladiatorship camouflaged under the banner of martial arts or combat sports is a slight to the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, but also to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, this Resolution should inspire as many actors of Knowledge Society as possible jointly to oppose any deformations of the mission of Olympism and sport. The expansion of the pathology of unauthorized naming neo gladiators as combat sports athletes will soon turn the Fundamental Principles of Olympism into their own caricature – objective indicators are a testament to the devastation of all dimensions of health by the practice of legal bloody pageants [30].

the opposite of Achilles. Considering the stories described, the well-known old Latin maxim 'Si vis pacem, para bellum' ('You want peace, get ready for war') is also confirmed.

Betrayal and honour in 'The Song of Roland'

The epic poem of medieval France is a retelling of the story of Charlemagne and the ambush into which his armies, returning from an expedition against the Arabs in northern Spain, fell. In the poem, the unexpected attack is not an accident, but the result of treachery and personal revenge by one of the imperial vassals (Ganelon). The thunderous attacker is a Saracen troop of a thousand soldiers. Roland, despite the request of his companion Olivier to blow his horn and summon the king's main forces to his aid, does not do so. Driven by noble goals, he fights alongside twelve parries against the overwhelming forces of the enemy. When he finally decides to call for help, it is too late. When Charles arrives with an army, he can only avenge the fallen and crush the Saracens. The traitor Ganelon, after God's judgment in the form of a duel, is quartered [7].

The French epic is a story of battle, a tale of chivalric loyalty and betrayal, of heroism and meanness, of power and justice. The battle, with all its cruelty, takes on the forms of chivalric ritual, and in turn it becomes the ethos of chivalry. Chivalry is honourable, noble, patriotic, and valiant service, it is devotion to the ruler, tradition, and the sword. In Roland's case, it is Durendal. The epic contains universal and timeless values – in this work it is a reference to centuries of cultural and religious struggle of various religions, including against the extreme manifestations of Islam.

The brave in 'Beowulf' and the Arthurian cycle

Celtic mythology abounds in extraordinary tales in which giants and enemies are beheaded and heroes are summoned for chivalrous duels. The Old English epic 'Beowulf' [8] tells the story of a mighty hero who struggles against monstrous beasts – a man-eater and a fiery dragon. However, his demise is caused by fiery fumes and dragon fires, although the reptile is annihilated. The legendary leader of the Geats is laid in a tomb, accompanied by a funeral ritual of two hundred horsemen. The epic is used in modern times as a source of various myths in fantasy genre.

On the other hand, 'Tales of the Round Table' [9] belongs to the anonymous chivalric narratives related to the history of King Arthur, ruling the territories of western Britain, and defending his domain against Anglo-Saxon invaders. The members of the king's finest team in the persons of noble Lancelot, fearless Parsifal, brave Gavin, bold Tristan and brave Gaalad traverse the country, bringing justice and defending the oppressed. Their most famous quest is the pursuit of the Knights of the Round Table for the elusive Holy Grail. The first to seek it is Parsifal. Subsequent stories tell of several knights, including Lancelot. They, too, failed to obtain the cup. Other versions claim success in the search. Thus, the Last Supper cup combines and perpetuates Christian motifs with the tradition of the knightly ethos and the struggle for the sacred.

Slavic Battles – 'Word of Igor's Expedition' and 'Battle of Kosovo Field'

The hero of the Rus micro epos is the valiant Prince Igor Sviatoslavovich – ruler of Severovo Novgorod [10]. Organizing an armed raid on the Polovtsians, he does not inform the Kiev prince about it. Together with his military allies, he fails to withstand the counterattack and gets captured by the Polovtsians. After a successful escape, Igor returns to Rus territory.

The essential theme of the work is the story of the war expedition and battle, which is in line with the thesis of the epics. The main part of the poem includes a description of the gathering of the Russian army and the meeting of the two commanders – Igor and Vsevolod. It continues with the march of the army, the first victorious clash with the enemy and the decisive battle. The defeat of the army leads to the captivity of the Rus princes.

The course of the plot resembles the matter of a historical-war novel. It is a message for national harmony and getting rid of selfish aspirations. The fate of individual heroes is a symbolic expression of the fate of the nation and the country, in which those who disregard the common good fall into slavery.

One of the main themes of Serbian folk poetry, which has been dealt with by literature and has acquired the status of a myth, is the great armed clash of 1389 [11]. In that battle, Ottoman troops led by Sultan Murad I defeated an army

led by Serbian Prince Lazarus and composed of Serbs and their allies. The sultan and the prince were killed, and the Ottoman state absorbed Serbia. Prince Lazarus was declared a holy martyr. Serbian songs about the Kosovo battle commemorate this very famous event. Among others, Poles also took part in the battle against the Turks. Surprisingly, the modern roots of the Albanian-Serbian conflict go back to the fighting of that era.

Struggles in Italian epics

'The Frenzy of Orlando' by Ludovic Ariosto [12] refers to Carolingian legends about the battles between Christians and Saracens. The plot is centred around the main themes, which are guided by war as an important theme of the epic poem, according to the logic of the presented world. The battle plot shows the battles for Paris, which Charlemagne's knights are fighting against pagan hordes led by Agramant, an African ruler. Agramant is supported by numerous allies, including King Marseilles, the most prominent Saracen cavalryman. Supernatural forces intervene more than once in the sphere of duels and assaults. The anti-Christian camp suffers defeat. Orland is a heroic warrior. Cured of madness, he remains a credit to the knightly craft.

The main axis of the plot in Torquat Tasso's epic 'Jerusalem Delivered' [13] is based on historical events: the siege of Jerusalem and the capture of the holy city by the commander of the First Crusade, Godfrid de Bouillon. Superimposed on this historical layer – as in Ariosto's poem – is a myriad of different plots and characters. All possible forces participate in the battle described, both in the service of the infidels as well as the crusaders. There are battles involving large armies and individual struggles of knights, joyous tournaments are interspersed with descriptions of natural disasters and supernatural activities. The epic is reminiscent of Homer's 'Iliad,' especially in its depiction of war councils, battles, and duels.

The struggle between Christians and Saracens (Crusaders and pagans) is at the same time a struggle between Good and Evil. The plot of espionage is shown, the military superiority, armed scouting and valor of the knights are characterized. The qualities of Godfried, the Knight of Christ – valor, prudence, piety, make him a Christian Aeneas, a brave warrior and an advocate dedicated to a just cause.

German heroic epic

'Song of the Nibelungs' [14] ('Misery of the Nibelungs') consists of two parallel themes. The first tells of Siegfried's brave deeds and death, the second – the annihilation of the Burgundians. The brave and noble Siegfried is immune to the blows of weapons, is the owner of the magnificent sword Balmung and the treasure of the Nibelungs. He is reminiscent of the heroes of old, demonstrating his stoutness and vitality. The dragon slayer demonstrates strength, agility and courage while hunting the big beast. When he leans over a stream, he receives a fatal blow. His opponent Hagen kills Siegfried with a stealthy thrust of the spear and takes Balmung's sword. A dramatic battle between the Burgundians and the Huns and love plots, create a tense plot. In general, in the world of warriors, unnatural death is a normal, typical death. The main characters of the epic follow the path outlined for them by Germanic honour, which leads to the ultimate.

Specific to chivalric novels in this poem are issues of the chivalric ethos, heroic battles and struggles of friends and enemies, military events, and battle clashes. Burgundian heroes and warriors show affinity with the heroes of other great historical tales, such as Achilles and Patroclus, Aeneas, Roland, and Olivier. Hence, the epics treating battle can be treated analytically as a certain whole – a text and metatext of culture with notable semantics, conventional signs, and readings.

Finland's 'Kalevala' as an epic about a nation of heroes

A folk collection of songs from different eras combines various themes and resembles the works of Homer. The struggle to regain the freedom and identity of the Finnish people is fought on sacrificial fields and with heroic flair. This is attested to, among other things, by age-old pagan runes, extolling the victory of man over the hostile forces of nature, symbolized in the figures of mythological deities. There are also chivalrous tales of battles fought by the victorious farmers of 'Kalevala' and benefactors of mankind [15] against the Sami nomads they displaced.

The goal of many of the battles that take place – as in other epics – is to regain lost property (for instance Helena in the 'Iliad') or to gain a particular good. Finnish epic is colourful and exotic. The forefront is the argument about heroic deeds and extraordinary adventures. An example is the great

hero, Ilmarinen, who plowed a monstrous snake pit with a plow forged of gold and adorned with silver.

Analogously, as is the case in other epics, 'Kalevala' glorifies the weapons of battle. There, swords have both a purely utilitarian function, facilitating warriors to perform great deeds, and symbolize valour, being part of the chivalric ethos (for instance the French epic and the Samurai code). This momentous function performed by swords in the world of heroes ensures their success in battle.

'Pan Tadeusz' by Adam Mickiewicz – the finale of the European epic

Polish Romantic literature grew up in a peculiar atmosphere of constant overt or covert, armed, or mental struggle against the invader. Mickiewicz's epic of 1834 is connected, as the subtitle proves, with the last invasion of Lithuania. The sensational and adventurous plot of this nobleman's tale, the heroic and monumental elements, the Sarmatian reality make up the picture of a world that is passing away. Various quarrels and disputes, amorous maneuvers, the wartime fate of Jacek Soplica – the priest Robak, the preparation of an uprising in Lithuania, the nobleman's inn and events related to the entry of Napoleon's army into Lithuania make up the main plot threads of Mickiewicz's poem [16].

Scenes of a concerted battle between the Horeszko and Soplica sides against a Russian battalion, the successive phases of this battle ending in victory for the Poles allude to the aura of battles described in classical works. It is this that unites the feuding parties. Jacek Soplica – one of the protagonists of the story – with his soldierly biography and mission as an emissary enriches the semantics of the work with a new personal model of a patriot and citizen, fighting for independence. Other, sometimes hero comical references to the structure of the epic, the depicted battles, battles, and duels are also readable. Thus, they close the history of the heroic genre in European literature, whose focus was martial arts and agonies.

New life and applications of literary epics

Nowadays, the epic is used as an inexhaustible source of schemes, patterns (variants and invariants) for martial arts primarily in a genre such as fantasy (comics, novels, films, computer games). In this sense, it received its new life (Erick R. Edison, J. R. R. Tolkien, Robert R. Howard, A. Sapkowski, and others). In the myriad of plot transformations

and character variants, it is most often difficult to find the original and original sources used in practice (myth, heroic romance, motifs of knights wandering to their destination, magic and the sword, the struggle between Good and Evil). Mass culture interest in martial arts (including widespread neogladitorialism [23, 24, 22]) is immense. This is also confirmed by relevant elements of science fiction literature, horror varieties and thrillers.

Selected excerpts from epics – as a cross-cultural dialogue – can also serve in interdisciplinary bibliotherapy as reading material to help relieve emotions (preventing aggression, psychotherapy, cathartic functions; they also act as well-known metaphors, e.g. the *Trojan horse* – a fatal gift, *Achilles' heel* – a weakness, *Odysseus' fortes* or characters of symbolic rank, such as the *brave Ajax*, the *noble Hector*, the *honourable Roland* with his magic weapon – the *sword Durandal*, etc.).

A lofty and pathetic style with a significant emotional charge, characterized by archaization can – against all appearances – arouse curiosity, historical exploration, and cognitive orientation. This is a surprising phenomenon, since those who watch martial arts in images (film, comics, illustrations, and therefore representational patterns), often later want to familiarize themselves with them in a verbal message that does not fetter the imagination as much as the iconic message and shape imposed in its essence does.

Instead of CONCLUSIONS – the most general remarks about the preventive and therapeutic possibilities of struggle

This specific narrative review contains references to only 15 works relevant to the topic of European chivalric epic [1, 3-16] and not much more to the topics of agonology and innovative agonology [2,17-14 plus cited later] combined. Such attention is unlikely to bring the two phenomena closer to the issue of prevention and therapy. However, if we put the four facts together, an elementary question emerges: why the science of struggle with a man in the leading role was born and is being developed in Poland, precisely with the prospect of applying its recommendations in the broadly understood prevention and therapy of such personality states that will minimize the risk of realizing the various needs of subjects operating from micro to macro scales by destroying other people, the environment and cultural heritage.

First, the European epic of chivalry is part of the heritage of a world mythology with a centuries-old tradition [25] dominated by the issue of the struggle between Good and Evil. Second, Agonology (1938) and the other four detailed theories of struggle [26-29] originated in Poland: the country which is the geographical centre of Europe; where the world's second democratic constitution was established (adopted on May 3, 1789), which resulted in the loss of independence for more than 120 years; whose partition was carried out by two powers in 1939 (Hitler's Germany with its aggression on September 1, and Soviet Russia on September 17) and where, after the end of World War II, Soviet (and later Russian) troops were stationed until September 17, 1993. Third, despite the initiative of Polish institutions to organize two world scientific congresses dedicated to the promotion of health through the practice of combat sports and martial arts and criticism of the pathology of neo-gladiatorism (2015 – see glossary and 2018 [30]), the social media was dominated by the promotion of neo-gladiatorism under the camouflaged name of martial arts (adding only the short word 'mixed') [23, 31]. Fourth, the bestialities perpetrated by Russian aggressors against Ukrainian civilians after February 24, 2022, are direct evidence that man *en bloc* has not mentally changed for millennia, but consistently, not only perfected the technology of destruction, but used it against international peace conventions.

Therefore, the subject of struggle is not only a cognitively fascinating (from the perspective of different sciences) multi-threaded phenomenon. It is part of a mental and physical reality

combined with a gigantic multi-industry marketing. However, with continued disregard for scientific recommendations on the preventive and therapeutic possibilities of using negative cooperation (a praxeological synonym for struggle [32]) for human development (understood in the sense defined by innovative agonology [31]) is the simplest path to thermonuclear self-destruction. The first and foremost complementary approach offered by innovative agonology (and its specific methods and unique tools) to issues in relationship with the struggle phenomenon in the broadest sense can be an incentive for creative and courageous researchers to break many paradigms prevailing in science and education. It may soon become apparent that combining seemingly only distant activities such as geography of combat sports [33, 34], martial arts bibliotherapy [18-20], music prevention and therapy with elements of martial arts or self-defence art [35, 36], cultivation of the ancient model and specific nationals of wrestling struggles [37, 38], fun forms of martial arts, specific motoric simulations [39-43], etc. will yield unexpected preventive and therapeutic results documented by public health indicators.

Meanwhile, the results of research using modern technology, including artificial intelligence [44-49], provide evidence of the preventive effectiveness of innovative agonology methods. Retirement age, from the perspective of a creative individual, does not have to be associated with an increased risk of bodily injury or death due to a fall and collision with a hard ground [44] or with a vertical obstacle [45], or even with a moving object [47].

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