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PATTERNS OF PROTESTANT ETHICS AND MODERN CULTURE
IN GRETA THUNBERG'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES

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Abstract: The 16-year-old Swedish girl from Stockholm in the year 2019 was created by media as a suitable candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize and recognized as one of the most influential people of the year 2019. Her ecological message focusing on global climate changes is one of the most exciting phenomena in socio-political life in the European context of the second decade of the 21st century. She grew up in influential, artistic but also a typical Swedish family, deeply rooted in the Swedish tradition. Greta becomes a symbol of the climatological movement; she arranges a climate protest called School strike for climate, Fridays for Climate or Fridays for Future (FFF). The article describes the Lutheran patterns and the roots of Greta Thunberg's ecological activity. We analyze the imagery tied to her public appearances and interpret the analysis with a protestant ideology in the background. First, we try to understand why Greta Thunberg is sometimes called a prophetess: even the prime archbishop of Sweden Antje Jackelén called her attitude prophetic. We will argue that there are some traces of apocalyptic imagery and rhetoric behind her statements. We compare them with some public appearances of her parents Malena Ernman and Svante Thunberg as well as Naomi Klein. Then we trace the family background of Greta which is rooted in Swedish patterns of the Protestant "vita activa". The last part is a review of the criticism of modernity present in the Greta's speeches and writings as well as her parents' writings. We will indicate some precedents in music and film framing this analysis with the musical family roots of 17-years old Greta.

Key words: Greta Thunberg, Public Appearance, Protestant Ethics, Martin Luther, Self-Restraint, Public Responsibility, Cultural Patterns, Modern and Postmodern Society, Christian Responsibility.

1. Introduction: Patterns of Culture and Ethics – Text and Contexts of Greta Thunberg’s Public Appearances

Swedish society is the primary context of Greta Thunberg’s social awareness. Till 2000 each Swedish citizen was initially counted as a member of Swedish State Church – Svenska Kyrkan, one of the grounding members of the Lutheran World Federation. In the long process of secularization, the authorities of the Swedish Church decided to close her privileged position in the organization of the country. It was already planned in 1950, but the process took almost half a century (AP 1995, 8). For the majority of Swedish citizens, the Church played an essential role in their life, an important place in the building of identity, even though they did not attend church services on Sunday. As a symbolic date the new millennium (2000) was chosen to include baptism as necessary condition for membership in the Church (Harding 2016, 10). Till 2000 the Lutheran confession held a particular position in the system of Swedish socialization as well as in the school. In the European Union, such regulation of relationships between the State and the Church was present as a matter of fact in some of the Nordic countries. The Swedish identity and folk culture are deeply rooted in Lutheran ethics and spirituality. The number of Church members decreased to 5,8 Mln. people, i.e. 57,7% of the population in the year 2018 (Report 2018).

Greta Thunberg, the Person of the Year 2019 of the influential Weekly “Time” (Alter 2019) evokes very extreme reactions: she is enthusiastically greeted and applauded at various summits, both President Obama was photographed with her as well as Pope Francis. The celebrities such as the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Al Gore, film star and former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and visionary philosopher Naomi Klein whom appeared with Greta on British television news programs around the world and Today programme which runs its microblogs on Twitter and Instagram. Greta already had a lecture by TED and is an honorary doctor, is followed by millions of fans around the world, books about it (not necessarily the best) have already been created, such as for children, but also adults. However, she is also hated by the greats of this world. One of Greta Thunberg’s great haters is Donald Trump, who is also accused of not being able to forgive the little girl who ‘stole the show’ from him and she became the most influential person of the time of the year in 2019, and not - for the second time - he...

Symbols showing the expression of Greta Thunberg’s face at the sight of Donald Trump at the summit in New York have grown to the rank of an icon. If for Naomi Klein, Greta stands in opposition to politics - consciously destroying nature and glorifying unlimited consumption of ”hamburgers

and plastic drinking straws” – Trump’s team, it does not surprise the US president’s reluctance to the now 17-year-old, who has long ceased to be a little girl and she becomes a teenage prophetess.

Her character, however, is interesting from both cultural and religious perspectives, because her message and her media image bear the hallmarks of being rooted in Swedish cultural models, Swedish cultural realities and more broadly in the already long tradition of the criticism of modernity. What they represent refers to active models of Protestant, Swedish and global celebrity cultures. Firstly, we will describe the Protestant roots of Greta Thunberg social context.

2. Thunberg’s cultural pattern of political protest and activism

2.1. Greta - a prophetess

When 16-year-old Greta Thunberg was declared the Person of the Year by the “Time” magazine, an article about her in a special supplement of the largest Polish daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” was entitled “Get to know the climate prophetess” (2019) Besides that, Alter in “Time” (Alter 2019) himself writes about her speeches as “admonitions”, and Greta’s figure in her pages is called “Conscience”. Often, the biblical literature uses the term “admonitions” to prophesy apocalypse from the Old Testament, and in several places also in the New Testament.

This aspect of spirituality is also clearly visible in the discussion that flared up in Sweden after the entry on Twitter of one of the priests of the Swedish Church proclaiming Greta Thunberg, the successor of Jesus Christ. Asked directly about it, Archbishop of Sweden, Antje Jackelén replied that she is instead not a successor, but maybe a follower Christ, and it would be more appropriate to call her as such. In another publication in the Swedish daily called “Espressen”, the Primate of Sweden says it explicitly and it was the headline of the interview with her: Greta Thunberg is prophetic. In the text, Antje Jackelén compares it directly to the Old Testament prophets (cf Ardin, Krokson 2019; Jeckelen 2019). What is more, even the Catholic Primate of Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin criticized those who attacked Greta and named her a prophetic voice and called for more listening to young people and what they have to say (Luxmoore 2019).

If one looks at her rhetoric more closely, she will be close to the poetics of the Old Testament apocalypse, in which admonition is an essential element of rhetoric. Various apocalyptic motifs we can see, from the beginning of the prophetism of Old Testament prophets, in the context of the inevitable tension between institutional forms of religiosity and its enthusiastic, inspired forms - renewal movements in various churches (whether within Judaism or Christianity). Regardless, very often, when someone thinks of an apocalypse, they mean “the end of the world”. Thus, apocalyptic are often the announcement of the “end of the world”

understood as catastrophe and destruction. In a theological and literary sense, apocalyptic means a genre of prophetic or quasi-prophetic writing that presents the terrifying visions of “Judgment Day” for the world and the grim predictions of the destiny of a large part of condemned humanity and a small “rest” to salvation. In the most general literary sense, apocalypse means revealing the secrets of the future by prophesying or absorbing the entire holocaust. In the scheme, we encounter a vision of the end of history, humanity or any part of it. Apocalyptic visions are also inseparably associated with millennial movements frequent at the turn of the century. These movements predict the imminent destruction of the world as we know it and the rapid arrival of the thousand years. However, “New Aeon”, or Millenarian movements are attributed to the function of social compensation in the field of religion. Also, in the research on the genre of the apocalypse, it is emphasized that admonition and consolation are two dominant illocutions of the apocalyptic language.

Despite these similarities, there are differences between apocalyptic prophetism of the biblical pedigree and Greta Thunberg’s speeches: Instead of speaking directly and passing on the knowledge, the prophets encrypt their statements, saturating it with strange symbols, mysterious numbers and allusions to other writings. Greta instead speaks a simple language acceptable even for businessmen and great politicians gathered in Davos or at the climate summits.

However, the most striking feature of Greta Thunberg’s statement is its potential revolutionary nature, which can increase social discontent and indicate, as in apocalypse, alternative versions of the development of history. Millennial apocalypticism was associated with anomy, and Greta certainly does not go about anomy. However, she can sharply oppose the influential people of this world, not only in the spoken word (cf. the grand challenge “How dare you...”) but also on Twitter Greta Thunberg can confront the world’s highest, such as Donald Trump.

If one thought about the drama of her speech, then the recurring dramatic thread of Greta Thunberg’s imagery is: “the world on fire”. It is especially striking if we bear in mind that Greta Thunberg’s psychological crisis related to her depression and problems with food took place in July 2018, when Swedish forest fires broke out as a result of record temperatures in Sweden. This fact was widely associated in this country with the process of human-made global warming. Everyone talks about the climate problem during the Swedish elections in July 2018. Sweden was experiencing a forest fire crisis.

Greta repeats that the world has caught fire. Repeating this in the winter of 2019/2020 during massive fires in Australia intensifies this catastrophic message of young Greta. Apocalyptic threads we can also trace in the book published by her parents. “Scener ur hjärtat”, which one might translate into English as “Scenes from the centre of the heart”, cordial scenes. The mother herself writes about her daughter as “able to

see more” (Ernman, Thunberg 2019, 43). Malena Ernman, Swedish opera singer and famous singer (born 1970), also writes using similar imagery. “Earth has a fever”, but “fever is just a symptom of a greater crisis in sustainable development” (in Swedish ”hållbarhetskris”), our lifestyle and our values threaten our future survival (Ernman, Thunberg 2019, 46). In one chapter, the motto ”on the dying sun” is from a poem called “Elegi” by Werner Aspenström (1993).

Greta’s parents’ book consists of short chapters, titled as “Scenes”, but this particular consists of three more significant parts: the 1st ”Bakom ridån” (behind the curtain), the 2nd ”Burned out people on a burned planet” (with the motto of Nina Hemmingson, a depressive artist with a Twitter account, cartoonist). And the 3rd about the right life and sense. When Malena describes why she wrote such a book and did not engage in a cookbook, she writes almost biblical verses (Ernman, Thunberg 2019, 85).

What is more, in the book recently published by Naomi Klein, in which the author comments on both Greta Thunberg and other threads of the climate crisis and the “new green order”, it is written many times about “the planet on fire”. Not enough that the book is entitled “On Fire” (Klein, 2019 and Klein with Fonda on YouTube 2019), but also it directly mentions the ”moral clarity” of Greta Thunberg, making her the adolescent heroine of movements such as Extinction Rebellion. The very name of this movement carries a massive load of catastrophic and apocalyptic implications. Klein also mentions in her last book the insect apocalypse and “existential emergency” or ”extinction”. Malena Ernman in “the Scenes from the heart” mentions Naomi Klein explicitly (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 144).

Last but not least, one could point to the biographical prophetic features present in the memories of Greta’s mother, Malena Ernman. The very public and widely known fact that Greta’s illness has been referred to on several occasions as a weakness that can be her strength is exceptionally significant. This fact makes it possible to combine it not only with a figure of David fighting Goliath (also not very conventionally), but also, e.g. with Jeremiah, whose treacherous wife inspired metaphors about the infidel (God) of Israel. The very fact of having to focus on activities, the specific lack of a sense of humour (though complicated) of autistic people means that the public anger displayed by Greta is received as honest and authentic, which is extremely valuable in the era of so-called post-truth. It is also good to remember that Jonah also resisted YHWH long before he began his prophecy, Greta also suffered from climate obsessed psychological crisis for a long time, since at least 2014, as her mother writes about it. The crisis in the family lasted many, many years.

Malena mentions that ADHD and autism diagnosed in her daughters are not disabilities and that they can be superpowers (in Swedish “superkrafter”). This extraordinary power can be the case for artists such as Malena (2019, 64). Nevertheless, the complications arising from the

diagnosis are disability. Greta herself says in a quote that we “Aspergers” have no way of understanding irony (2019, 122).

2.2. *Vita activa* by Greta Thunberg

In the famous biography of Lyndal Roper about Luther (Roper 2016), the author reflects on the complexity of Luther’s personality, his prophetic character. The fact that Greta Thunberg is Swedish is significant in many ways. She could not come from another country or a different culture. One should be aware that it comes from Protestant Sweden, from a family with vibrant religious traditions. Malena Ernman’s mother was a deacon.

Moreover, Ebbe Arvidson was her maternal grandfather (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 12), therefore Greta’s great-grandfather. Malena mentions that as highly placed in the Swedish Church, and one can quickly get to know that he became a pioneer of ecumenism and aid work, he was, among others deacon and director of Lutheran help (Luthershjälp). He is recognized in Bible studies, and he is a co-author and popularizer of what is called the “Swedish method of studying the Bible”. The method consists of a careful and focused study of Bible passages with the help of notes and distinctive signs: lights, arrows, question marks.

Malena mentions her family that they were ordinary people in their childhood, except that they had refugees in the garage and spent their holidays in England at a convent school (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 13). Malena writes that they sang all the time; she also sang in church choirs.

When Greta was five years old, she often cried, she could not sleep, only the Golden Retriever named Moses (another religious allusion) helped to survive the nights. She stopped playing the piano, stopped laughing and talking. Furthermore, she stopped eating (19-20). In 2014, Malena noted an attack of anger, a frenzy, after her parents’ anger broke out because she refused to eat (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 27-28). Greta had an excellent memory (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 36-37), probably after her father, Svante Thunberg also once learned, e.g. flight schedules by memory.

It is a significant fact that Greta is very concerned about assistance to refugees (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 55).

Besides, when a mental crisis (outbursts of anger) also affects Greta’s younger sister, Beata, Malena Ernman, their mother, notes: “We pray and pray. We swear we swear” (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 62).

Malena also uses the ecumenically sounding word *gluttony*, which she makes the title of one of the chapters. This title is a significant choice.

The most important, however, is to realize that *vita activa* is the clear choice of way of life in Protestant countries, especially in Sweden. The country is very Protestant even in the 20th century, in which protest and civil disobedience merge into one concept of active life, active helping people but, when necessary, protesting. The young Greta’s family not only

helped refugees by giving them their summer home on a picturesque island but also protested against extreme Swedish nationalist movements as well as other forms of discrimination. Thunberg-Ernman family is extraordinarily active and public. Greta's great-grandfather, as already mentioned, was the director of a great aid institution of the Lutheran world and a precursor of ecumenism.

Greta argues that the previous generation were hypocrites, instructed to study subjects including the climate crisis. At the same time, there are no significant measures to prevent disaster. This particular fact also falls under the Evangelical model of sincerity and honesty. Hence Naomi Klein can say about Greta that she has "moral clarity": if you know the truth, you follow the truth. Danish and Scandinavian, European writer Hans Christian Andersen and his fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" also invoked a very Protestant allusion. In essence, the child's truth sets free, it is the unity of thought, feeling and action, and at the same time, the uncompromising nature of the truth proclaimed against the authorities. This truth forms a long tradition of civil disobedience visible both among American transcendentalists, popular in contemporary Sweden, as well as the guru of the generation of Greta's mother – Erich Fromm. He claims boldly: "The struggle with state power as well as the struggle within the family has often been a source of the development of an independent man" (Fromm 2015, 32-33). It is from Luther's principles that one can deduce the next call of enlightenment *sapere aude* and *de omnibus est dubitandum*. That is why the activities of little 16-year-old Greta, going on Friday, August 20, 2018 under the Swedish parliament and organizing a climate strike are part of this Protestant tradition and culture. Boldly opposing Donald Trump at the UN summit, or calling the Prime Minister speaking on TV a liar, as her mother Malena mentions. This is worth noting as another confirmation of the existence in Sweden of the genetically Protestant models of the culture of disobedience. Hence, in "Time" in December 2019 one could find a reference to the French heroine Joan of Arc (Margaret Atwood mentioned it: Alter, 2019).

This fact of staying in the circle of *vita activa* personal models has been noticed recently by the cultural scholar and philosopher Elizabeth Åsbrink in an article in "Dagens Nyheter" (Åsbrink 2020). It has also been translated into Polish in "Gazeta Wyborcza". Åsbrink writes that Sweden is, in fact, one of the necessary conditions of Greta Thunberg. She is in the same band as the author of children's books, Astrid Lindgren, the cartoon character Bamse and Prime Minister Olof Palme. Moreover, for anyone who thinks this reasoning looks strange, she adds Ellen Key, a pedagogy thinker, author of "Child Age", a book in which she announced the coming of childhood when children would set standards. Ellen Key inspired Astrid Lindgren, the creator of Pippi Stockings. One of those influenced by Ellen Key was the Polish paediatrician Janusz Korczak. In the two books "How to love a child" and "The right of a child to respect" he formulated the basis

of five principles of protection and suitable for adopted children by the League of Nations in 1924. During the Nazi occupation, he ran an orphanage for Jewish orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto. Nazi killed him when, despite the possibility of escape, he decided to accompany children in the Treblinka extermination camp.

Of course, the Pipi character is not purely Lutheran. However, Lutheran values such as individualism and the need to act and document one's faith in action is a fundamental cultural framework.

Erich Fromm writes: "The prophet is made by a historical situation, not by a desire to become a prophet" (Fromm 2015, 59). Greta has been struggling with herself and the world for several years before starting her activity in the world before the Swedish parliament.

Swedes are a nation in which a strike in 1956 had a peculiar form when Minister Ulla Lindström "as part of gender equality" decided to bow to visiting Stockholm Elisabeth II only, not as a young girl supposed to do. It caused outrage (Everdahl 2018, 24). Sweden is also a country in which the "right of all people" has been in force in the *Constitution* since 1994. According to the law, everyone must have access to nature.

2.3. Criticism of modernity - a return to intra-world asceticism and minimalism

Greta Thunberg aims at post-modern criticism of modernity. It seems that post-reformative forces in the form of instrumental and communicative reason (in terms of Habermas) remain in conflict in our modernity. Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectics of Enlightenment* from 1947 (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994) also raised that criticism, as well as today thinker and activist, Naomi Klein. This criticism of modernity is visible in both Greta's statements and the book by Malena Ernman and Svante Thunberg.

This criticism of modernity takes the form of rejecting everything that results from the dominance of instrumental reason, number, measure and profit. The title of one of the chapters of Ernman's "Scener ur hjärtat" is named after one of the seven deadly sins: gluttony. The reference to seven deadly sins is unusual in the Protestant world.

The word used as the name of the chapter of the book Ernman: Scene 28 "frosseri" (gluttony in English) is a rather old Swedish word with a medieval origin. It occurs in the 15th century, already in the visions of St. Brigitte. Nowadays, it is worth mentioning that in the introduction to the anthology of short narrative miniatures in Swedish Frosseri: the author and editor writes. According to some interpretations, the German-Lutheran order is: Those who do not work will not enjoy the fruits of life (Granqvist 2016, 5). Restraint is a vital Swedish virtue.

Malena herself mentions the famous Swedish word "lagom" several times on the pages of her book. Their daughters are uncontrollable, they are thrown with extreme emotions. Lagom ceases to apply, perhaps that is

why authors of memories recall gluttony (*frosseri*) as a concept more appropriate to criticize modernity. When Malena criticizes modernity, other concepts sometimes appear, including ancient ones, e.g. Greek word and concept *hybris*. In scene 63 entitled “*hybris*”, one may find “bad society of continuous growth” (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 142) The recipe is to reduce differences between people, collective solutions and humanitarianism – they raised us from poverty.

The concept of non-sustainable development or imbalance of growth is probably the most recurring concept other than “gluttony” indicated as the source of the climate crisis. It is worth noting that this concept also functions in the circles of Protestant theology in Sweden (cf. Hillert 2017).

The publication of a group of celebrities and scientists in “Dagens Nyheter” seems to be important in this context: campaign #stayontheground becomes a landmark. It began on June 2, 2017. A group of activists is writing an article in which Donald Trump illustrates the negative forces in the world. The appeal was signed by Kevin Anderson, professor of climatology at Uppsala University and climate and energy at the University of Manchester, repeatedly cited in many places, a very influential scientist and climate activist, a friend of the family, Heidi Andersson and Malena Ernman, Björn Ferry, Martin Hedberg, Staffan Lindberg, Johan Landgren, and Stefan Sundström. It seems that this manifesto by a group of activists is a milestone before the protest of the signatory’s daughter Malena of this open letter, calling for immediate action to prevent the destruction of life on earth.

Malena seems to be very philosophically aware when she directly contrasts two forces: economy and ecology. We have to choose the priorities: either economics or ecology (Ernman and Thunberg 2019, 223). This is the choice between instrumental reason and communicative reason, but in this case broadly understood, as not only covering the human world. Because carbon dioxide is called ‘the eternal macho’, it reaches our outer atmosphere and hits the ceiling. When the law that everything must be bigger and more prominent, and faster, is contrasted with our joint survival. Then the new world stands at the door, and this world has never been as close to us as it is now. However, the heart of the criticism of modernity in the case of Malena Ernman, mother of Greta, is an explanation referring to the practices of late modernity: “selfies tourism”.

It is very significant that this Thunberg-Ernman family of actors, singers and producers is at the centre of both media and scientific life. It is worth noting that the greenhouse effect was described by one of the first “Nobel Prize winners” Svante Thunbergs relative, Svante Arrhenius (157). One can easily find out that Svante has a name after him. Such ancestors had to influence the growth of a young, talented Greta.

For example, it is worth pointing to the media context of ecological activism. Godfrey Reggio’s trilogy comes from the eighties of the last

century. The first is Koyaanisqatsi (1982), the second is Powaqqatsi (1988) and Naqoyqatsi (2002). Philip Glass composed brilliant music, and this music had to be known by the Thunbergs. The only word in the movie is koyaanisqatsi, which means in the Hopi Indian language: 1. a crazy life, 2. an unbalanced life, 3. a hustle and bustle, 4. the pursuit of disaster, 5. a state in which you should think about changing your lifestyle. As the English subtitle of the film, the phrase “Life Out of Balance” is used. But the second part primarily draws attention, because Powaqqatsi (1988) is a neologism in Hopi languages meaning “parasitic way of life” or “life in transition”. This concept can be combined with gluttony. Interestingly, Powaqqatsi is remembered by Vandana Shiva, the author of the introduction to the Extinction Rebellion manifesto entitled “This is not a drill. An Extinction Rebellion Handbook” (2019).

To indicate that these contexts provide cultural patterns to Greta, just watch scenes from the event quite fresh on September 15, 2019, from New York (The Right to a Future, with Naomi Klein and Greta Thunberg (2020), when Greta Thunberg performed on stage with Naomi Klein (meeting host) and Indian activist from the Amazon Tuntiak Katan.

It is not to mention that Cornel West is a well-known theoretician and critic in cultural studies, who is also a professor and one of the actors in the cult film “Matrix” of the Wachowski brothers. He is also the author of the book “Black Prophetic Fire”, which advocates fiery rhetoric among others, Martin Luther King.

Also, Naomi Klein mentions the criticism of modernity that had already begun at its dawn at the end of the Enlightenment: then William Blake opposed his inspired vision of “Satanic mills” in London, as well as using children to work cleaning soot from inside chimneys. It was the beginning of a critique of modernity.

It is also worth mentioning that pop culture songs, a kind of ecological protest songs are also an undoubted context. Greta grew up in an unusual family: Protestant roots of grandparents mixed with the artistic and musical environment of the parents and the scientific traditions of Father Svante. Malena is an opera singer but also a singer not only at the Nobel Gala but also representing Sweden at Eurovision. Greta’s sister Beata Ernman-Thunberg, also musically talented, is already present in the media as a singer. The father is a music producer. Therefore, the natural context for these are such clips: Michael Jackson, Earth Song 1995; Omnia: I don’t speak human 2013; OneRepublic - Truth To Power 2017; Lil Dicky - Earth 2019; Prince EA: Dear future generation: I’m sorry! 2019.

Especially Michael Jackson is appealing in this place, because in it he shows himself like a new Christ who saves the world, saves it, reversing the climate catastrophe. The religious imagery is not equal to Jackson-the prophet; this is Jackson-Jesus Christ, the Saviour. It is worth noting that the picture of the climate catastrophe presented in the Jackson clip comes from a quarter of a century ago.

When Malena Ernman writes about gluttony as the heart of evil, it seems to somehow correspond with the message of Alasdair MacIntyre, who writes:

“The history of modernity, insofar as it has been a series of social and political liberations and emancipations from arbitrary and oppressive rule, is indeed in key respects a history of genuine and admirable progress. The history of modernity, insofar as it has been a history of artistic and scientific achievement, from Raphael to Rothko or from Palestrina to Schoenberg, and from Copernicus and Galileo to Feynman and Higgs, is indeed a history of equally genuine and admirable achievement. And nothing that I have said here or elsewhere implies otherwise. Yet it is this same modernity in which new forms of oppressive inequality, new types of material and intellectual impoverishment, and new frustrations and misdirections of desire have been recurrently generated. There are a number of very different stories to be told about modernity, all of them true. But all of these presuppose a distinctive political and economic framework” (2016, 23-124).

So what Greta Thunberg offers us is a return to the moral of personal virtue.

3. Reformation identity and Lutheran Pattern of the ecological movement

The Swedish culture based on Protestant ethos is one of the most important roots of environmental protest begun in August 2018 by Greta Thunberg. She started so-called “Climate strike” – the local initiative which very fast found a global dimension. She represents the idea of global thinking, the holistic responsibility for the world and the Self-restraint which are the typical pattern of the Protestant Ethics. Although she does not underline in public her Christian engagement, her understanding of responsibility grows from Swedish spirituality and culture.

3.1. The beginning of Lutheranism in Sweden and the Swedish way of Protestantism

The world in medieval Europe had a holistic character; it was understood as one organism. The society appeared as *corpus christianum*, a Christian body, headed by a church with the Pope and a state with the Emperor. On a local level, the representatives of spiritual authority were a bishop, and civil authority was king or duke. Both parts have a vast financial concentration. According to the biblical image, there are various members of this body, so was the society of that time. Each member of medieval society had a specific role in the social structure within the eternal order called *ordo socialis*, where the change of place in the social hierarchy was practically impossible. Society was divided into feudal

structures: knightly, peasantry, middle class, and clergy, which were divided into upper and lower clergy. Each state was assigned specific rights, and obligations understood as tasks to be performed within the state structure (Leppin 2013, 2). To this medieval world belonged a country in far North of the continent – Sweden, connected from 1397 with the Kalmar Union with Denmark and Norway.

The Reform of the Church in Sweden initiated in the 20's of the 16th century has primarily political character and was connected with the process of becoming independent of Denmark. The introduction of the Evangelical faith in the Kingdom of Sweden had a different course than in Germany or Switzerland, it was a political decision with far-reaching religious consequences, although few years after Luther's occurrence in Saxony, Olaus Petri (1493-1552) started to preach "a pure Gospel".

King Gustav Vasa (born 1496, King 1521-1560) at the Västerås Parliament in 1527 demanded that the bishops preached the Word of God purely and nationalized most of the land estates belonging to the Church. Two years later, in 1529, the religious reform was confirmed by a synod of Swedish bishops in Örebro. The consequence of this claim was the subordination of the Swedish Church to the king and the break with Rome. In 1531 the king appointed the Archbishop of Sweden Laurentius Petri (1499-1573), brother of Olaus who received a Lutheran education at the University of Wittenberg (Kaufmann 2017, 262). In a similar way, the Anglican Tradition was created, whose supreme governor of Church of England is still the British monarch. The difference between Swedish and British way was that Nordic Reformation had strictly Lutheran character when the English confession was much more oriented on old Roman Catholic theology.

The Lutheran character of the Swedish Church is due to the consistency of well establish leadership of the Svenska kyrkan by the archbishop of Uppsala, Laurentius Petri and a chancellor of the King (Leppin 2013, 81). The process of Lutheran socialization of the Swedish society was for Primate of Swedish Church, not an easy task and required a series of legal measures to eradicate old catholic as well as pagan customs. The character of Swedish theology, spirituality and the organization of the Church institution was not an original one. However, it was inspired by the heritage of Lutheran Reformation learned by Petri in Wittenberg who understood the Lutheran Confession as a continuation of ancient Christianity (Kaufmann 2017, 262). That is why we can connect the inwardness of the Lutheran Reformation movement in Wittenberg with the Swedish culture and pattern of its spirituality.

3.2. Civil Courage of Martin Luther

In October 1517, the little-known professor of the University of Wittenberg, Martin Luther, dared to call for public debate on indulgences. This event had effects not anticipated by the Augustinian monk. It was not

Luther's aim to begin the Reformation of the Church but primary only to stop selling indulgence letters (Abromeit 2017, 108). Till 1520 he tried to reform a Church within medieval structures. Dr. Martin Luther, announcing his 95 *Theses* in 1517, wanted to call theologians to discuss the essence of indulgences, which made eternal liberation of the human being dependent on the fulfilment of certain civil-legal activities.

This act - which was a call to the public discussion - was not intended to be a libertarian speech against the Church, but was received as such and made Luther aware of the need to undertake the task of repairing the universal Church. The pure preaching of the Gospel of Christ has since become the goal of Luther's action. The years 1518-1519 were a period of crystallization of Luther's theology and vision of the Church. Heidelberg's Dispute in the spring of 1518 was particularly important in this process, where Luther presented his views in the form of theses to Augustinians - his religious *confratri*. After some canonical steps when Dr. Luther was urged to revoke his views, he understood that the reform under the Vatican authority is no more possible - Luther broke with the Pope (Kaufmann 2017, 120).

Modern Australian historian Lyndal Roper in the book published in 2016 described Luther as a Renegade and Rebel (Roper 2016). She understands his way as a radical protest against the Roman Church but also shows his very complicated style of thinking. The other modern biographer, Eric Metaxas, understands Luther as the most influential man in modern history and a person whose courage changed the medieval world and rediscovered God for the ordinary people (Metaxas 2017). The literature about Luther and Reformation published shortly before the 500th Jubilee of the Reformation shows that Luther's theological and political heritage is still a presence in the public debate (Abromeit 2017, 116).

One of the essential symbolic acts in this process was the burning of *Codex Iuris Canonici* and Leo X bull *Exsurge Domine* on December 10, 1520, in Wittenberg. It was the public act of the civil protest. One of the paragraphs of papal Bull accused Luther's teaching that he taught that we have the opportunity to discuss and criticize the conciliar resolutions.

Ever earlier, during the year 1520 Luther's teaching of the universal priesthood of all baptized and appeal to nobility to reform the Christian Church found a published form in 3 so-called programme books: *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*; *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* and the ethical programme: *Von den Freiheit eines Christenmenschen (De libertate christiana)*. In these writings, Luther described the errors of the Roman Church and formulated an outline of early Reformation theology and devotion. In the following letters, these threads will be continued and developed.

The next fundamental act of political dimension was Luther's hearing to the emperor Carl V on the Imperial Diet (Reichstag) in Worms April

1521. During one of the sessions on Reichstag Luther spoke these historical words: “Here I stand”, which is well-known in the formulation of the provocative statement: “Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other.” (Bainton 1950, 185). The original version of Luther’s defence speech contained many more threads: “Ich kann und will nicht widerrufen, weil weder sicher noch geraten ist, etwas wider das Gewissen zu tun. Es sei denn, dass ich mit Zeugnissen der Heiligen Schrift oder mit öffentlichen, klaren und hellen Gründen und Ursachen widerlegt werde, denn ich glaube weder dem Papst noch den Konzilen allein, weil es offensichtlich ist, dass sie oft geirrt und sich selbst widersprochen haben. Gott helfe mir. Amen.“ (Luther 1521).

The way of his testimony as a form of civil courage is necessary to recall the second part of Luther’s defence at the Reichstag in Worms, he referred not only to the Holy Scriptures but to the instance of conscience, saying that acting against conscience is doubtful and bad. It was expressed by Luther in Latin words: “*cum contra conscientiam agere neque tutum neque integrum sit*” (Krüger 1984, 219). The consequence of his uncompromising attitude was the Edict of Worms called by Carl V, prepared by Popes delegate Aleander, which proclaimed Luther and his adherents as heretics. There was for a long time no more way to reconciliation between Protestant and Roman Catholics (Bainton 1950, 189).

In the process of the development of Lutheran identity in the public sphere was the Protestation at Speyer. The one next Imperial Diet deliberated in Speyer, April 1529. During the course of the descent, the 6 princes and representatives of 14 Imperial Free Cities petitioned the Imperial Diet at Speyer against an Emperor ban against Martin Luther, as well as the proscription of his works and teachings, and called for the unhindered spread of the evangelical faith. From this protestation, the adherent of Evangelical faith was called Protestant (Leppin 2013, 69).

The next important event in building an all-protestant responsibility in public space was the public confession of evangelical faith on the Imperial Diet in Augsburg, 25th of June 1530. The text of *Confessio Augustana*, written by Philipp Melancthon, was presented by the chancellor Gregor Brück. The attitude of politics - adherents of the Reformation on Diet in Speyer and Augsburg is the pattern of the collective responsibility in the time of crisis.

One of the most critical features of the reformation movement was the orientation of localism. The program of Church reform presented by Luther and Johannes Bugenhagen in some parts of northern European cities and countries (for example Church Order of Denmark prepared by Bugenhagen) has strictly local validity. The consequence of this is pattern was that the Lutheran Churches in the world until the 20th century functioned as separate ecclesial organisms. The unity in faith but not the unity in the structure was one of the important signs of Lutheran understanding of the body of Christ. The local responsibility is also

presented in the role of the people in the local congregation which elects his pastor in a vote.

3.2. Protestant Ethics as a Program of Self-restraint – Moral Pattern of Thunberg’s environmental Program

In the year 1520 Martin Luther formulated the assumptions of evangelical ethics. Already, the 1st Thesis of 95 *Theses* (*Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*) from 31st of October 1517, called to penance (Latin: *poenitentia*). The program Freedom’s Book from 1520 describes the Christian way of life in two dimensions: freedom from and as the freedom to serve others. Luther’s ethics has an exclusive character: it is addressed to the followers of Christ (Stegmann 2014, 313).

According to Luther, being a free man, and specifically, a master, means that freedom is only possible from the perspective of being God’s child. A Christian is entirely free from all external commandments, customs, devotion, worship, and church regulations. In the anthropological analysis presented in the treatise on freedom, Luther came from the dual - spiritual and bodily - nature of man. For a spiritual man, no external matter is of the least importance to justice.

Lutheran ethics was concentrated on an everyday activity and was strictly related to faith. Good deeds could be understood only as a work of faith alone (Suda 2006, 82). This focus on everyday life and the practical dimension of religiosity differentiates Lutheranism from the Calvinist tradition, where the concept of piety and spirituality has been interpreted as the attitude of a reborn man and his life practice as a response to God’s choice (predestination). Calvinism also emphasizes the role of asceticism more strongly.

Evangelical piety was thus closely linked to the everyday ethos and especially to the work ethos. The doctrine of Calvinism and Benedictine devout formula: pray and work (*ora et labora*) has been replaced by the paradigm: whoever works, he truly pray, thus making work the original sense and culmination of Christian religiosity. Lutheranism eventually took over the ascetic elements of the Calvinist interpretation of the work ethos. For many believers, this ethos became synonymous with evangelical ethics and was the quintessence of evangelical spirituality (Stegmann 2016, 447).

Some important impulses to the understanding of the Protestant relation to the consumption and ecological responsibility can we find in Luthers’s business ethics. For the first time, Luther dealt with economic issues already in 1519 in short treaty *Kleiner Sermon von dem Wucher*, one year later in *Großer Sermon von dem Wucher* and detailed his views in the letter *Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher* (*On trade and usury*) from 1524 (Suda 2006, 175-179).

Luther accepted the existence of property or disposal of things as a necessary condition. According to the Reformer, private property has only

a service character - man is given God's earthly goods in order to be able to share with others. Luther rejected the demands of "dreamers" and peasant leaders to abolish private property and make everything common. Money trading and trading is a must. Christ must know his personal borders.

Luther wanted clear rules to apply in the area of free trade and, above all, to include the concept of justice in the calculation and to be aware that all the property we possess is really God's property (Stegmann 2016, 437).

The Wittenberg Reformer also fiercely opposed monopolistic practices, synonymous with large trading companies. For Luther, a sign of bad economic changes was also the great power of banks that could already buy princes, the embodiment of evil for him was the Fugger family, who repeatedly criticized and called for the suppression of omnipotence. In already recalled a program letter from 1520 *To the Christian nobility...*, Luther strongly opposes world trade, warning against excessive imports, which draws much money from people and promotes unnecessary luxury. World trade, which Luther calls interest trading, is a threat to family businesses and home businesses. Self-restraint should be a proper feature of Christian life. This motive found a developing in the idea of imitating Christ and acting in his place in a secularized world. This issue was expanded in modern theology by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the idea of Secular Christianity (Bonhoeffer 1992).

Concisely, we show the most important patterns of Lutheran theology and ethics, which are somehow still a new issue for nowadays Christians (Abromeit 2017, 113) (Metaxas 2017, 330). This heritage provides the model of social and global responsibility of the world and to the idea of self-restraint, which is the fundament of modern climate protest symbolically led by Greta Thunberg.

4. Conclusion

Greta Thunberg, an unofficial leader of a climate strike movement, is the most influential adolescent of the pop-culture. Despite her very young age, she can be described as a symbolic person of mass culture and a young woman, she has created an ecological attitude in millions of people around the world. Her views are the result of many factors; most of them belong to the Swedish Environment and Lutheran Church tradition.

Even though Greta Thunberg seems to be an original and unique media phenomenon, she can be viewed as a representation of many ideological currents of thinking criticizing modernity. Protestant Sweden is the most critical context of this criticism. However, we cannot forget global medial phenomena as well. Greta Thunberg is a postmodern icon

which takes some robust characteristics from the critics of modernity, even if some of them were before modernity itself. We have shown the patterns of her ideological roots. The most important of them are Martin Luther and his followers and furthermore Swedish Protestantism.

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