Human Dignity: Values and Justice

Czech Philosophical Studies, III

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Printed in the United States of America

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Preface

Miloslav Bednár

This volume on human dignity is the result of a conference on the same theme sponsored by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) and The Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. It reflects a variety of philosophical approaches to the issue of human dignity. (Additional papers relating this to ethics and the foundations of social and political life will be part of *Czech Philosophical Studies, III*.)

The rationale of this scheme of research was twofold. On the one hand, the topic of human dignity integrates the organic core of the phenomenon of human existence or its intrinsic transcendence. This provides a solid ground for reasonable socio-political argumentation able to withstand the current wave of deconstruction. (Though presumably post-modern, this in fact is but a typically modern destruction of any coherent systemic and reliable basis for philosophy and the human sciences.)

On the other hand, Prague was an appropriate locale for this conference. Communist totalitarianism had constituted a project for the total annihilation of human dignity. In contrast, the new conditions of thought in this Central European capital provide an especially fertile, yet fragile, ground for endeavors to recuperate the genuine philosophical sense of human dignity. This is reflected in the writings of the mostly Czech contributors.

The two exceptions are symptomatic as well. Aviezer Tucker , an Israeli philosopher, wrote his doctoral dissertation in the U.S. on the Czech philosophical underpinnings of the Charter 77 opposition movement. He elaborates the thought of Czech phenomenological philosopher, Jan Patocka, disciple of Edmund Husserl. Eventually, the Charter, as a cultural and political anti-totalitarian movement, gave birth to the new post-communist Czech political elite at the end of 1989.

Vincent Shen from Taiwan -- itself a relatively new democracy -- extends the purview to the possibility of a synthesis between Husserl´s phenomenology of the human person and the Confucian tradition of China.

Thus, all the presentations converge in revisiting the traditions of the philosophy of human dignity in the light of the overwhelming cultural challenges and opportunities of this turn of the millennia. These it seeks to infuse with respect for the human dignity of individuals, nations and civilizations. To do so the chapters lay a common and substantial philosophical basis for diversity in unity. This expands magnificently the sense of human dignity beyond the old individualist and communal paradigms, opening the person first to society, and then to nature as well.

This work, then, is not just a defense of a minimal sense of an inviolable individual. Rather, in the sense of Charter 77 and for the new millennium, it is a proclamation of the dignity of human persons and peoples with their proper destiny, mission and responsibilities.

Introduction

George F. McLean

In this period of social reconstruction, after the long period of wars and central totalitarian rule, many very basic issues reemerge regarding the foundations of social life. The new countries of Central Asia have never before been independent and national identities must be created from ancient cultural roots. In Central Europe cultural identities were intensively discussed earlier in this century, but their post Versailles experience as democratic nations was relatively brief before being interrupted by World War II and its aftermath. Hence, today rich discoveries regarding nation building and national reconstruction become newly possible. What is remarkably evident as this work proceeds is that not only is human dignity being reaffirmed, but dramatic new dimensions of human life are now opening after the cold war. These promise to not only to reaffirm the fact of a minimal and inviolable human dignity, but richly to enhance it.

Miroslav Bednár has brought together an outstanding team of authors to continue the project of Czech philosophers on this theme. The first round of volumes of "Czech Philosophical Studies" concentrated on retrieving the tradition: Volume I, *Tradition and Present Problem of Czech Political Philosophy*, and volume II, *Czech Philosophy in the XXth Century*. An additional part of this picture is to be found also in volume I of "Slovak Philosophical Studies," Volume I, *Language, Values and the Slovak Nation*.

For their second round of volumes the Central European teams have chosen as their general theme: "Building Democratic Societies: Values and Rights". To begin this project it was thought wisely to be necessary to lay as a firm foundation the reality of human dignity. Without this being clear any steps in building democratic societies could be inadequate or even destructive. The present volume, *Human Dignity: Values and Justice*, Czech Philosophical Studies, III, from Prague bears the results of this study. Other volumes are under development and two recently have been published: *National, Cultural and Ethnic Identities: Harmony beyond Conflict*, Czech Philosophical Studies, IV from Brno and *Interests and Values: The Spirit of Venture in a Time of Change*, Slovak Philosophical Studies, II from Bratislava.

The work of the present volume, *Human Dignity: Values and Justice*, is divided into four parts: "Human Dignity"; "Dialogue: Interchange as Human Transcendence"; "The Ecology as a Broader Human Context"; and The Human Person.

Part I "Human Dignity" lays the foundations for this study.

M. Bednár in Chapter I "The Phenomenon of Human Dignity after Totalitarianism" begins the work auspiciously on the basis of the thought of Jan Patocka, the key theoretician of the modern Czech philosophical experience. Rather than trying to make room for the human in the midst of impervious alien givens, with Patocka Bednár focuses on the very appearing of reality. This makes it possible not only to protect human dignity, but to identify the key role of the human in the internal constitution of the world as the creative source of values, in contrast to a mere external technical ordering of goods or external measurements of equality.

Jolana Poláková in Chapter II "Struggling for Human Dignity in Extreme Situations" draws upon the special experience of the people of Central Europe investigating how the great trials and tabulations of this century have made possible new discoveries regarding human dignity. She

shows how external situations which threaten to crush and dissolve the person internally can be the basis for transcending the situation and gaining an authentic and indissoluble freedom.

Jan Payne in Chapter III "Human Dignity" also develops this theme distinguishing from the interpretation of reality in terms of force expressing power, the experience of freedom in terms of value judgements. As both are integral parts of human life he turns to the hermeneutic circle as the manner of interrelating the two in a way that retains and promotes human dignity.

Part II "Dialogue: Interchange as Human Transcendence" begins to expand the horizons of human dignity by introducing its dialogical dimensions. As processes of transcending the self-enclosed ego, Jolana Poláková in Chapter IV, "Dialogue as a Way to Humanity", begins this process by pointing out the poverty of prior attempts to affirm human dignity. Enlightenment rationalism had reduced the sense of the person to the atomistic individual, whose isolation could be overcome only by universal concepts incapable of expressing the individual person because abstracting from one's uniqueness and freedom. The sense of dialogue is now breaking definitively beyond these restrictions. Instead of a solipsistic atomism of the first or third person, the relations expressed by the second person now come into the fore. This is not only a matter of communicative interchange; more deeply it is a teleological openness to God and an anthropological openness to other humans. In this light we are now moving beyond seeing the I as the center of the universe to seeing it as a gift of my creator to you. This constitutes a broad enrichment of the sense of human dignity and meaning.

V. Hála in Chapter V "Ethics and Dialogue: Some Philosophical Contexts" follows the same path of dialogue relating it to the search for an ethnical minimum or unrelativizable ethical core upon which to build human interaction. He contrast in this regard the communitarian effort to contextualize this in particular cultures to a position he tends to favor which would look for a universal basis. Rather than attempting to realize this in merely formal structures, however, he proceeds in two subsequent chapters to look for its concrete bases in the political and environmental orders.

In Chapter VI "Morality and Legality: The Political Significance of Their Relationship" Professor Hála attempts to situate the legal order in relation to morality, noting that law can cover only some parts of life, but that it is founded in morality, which, in turn, it can help to define and apply. In his longer discussion of the issue of legitimate protest he is able to draw on the lived experience of the last decades in order to explore this realm of morality as foundation for social life where law is either not sufficient or not just.

Part III "Ecology as a Broader Human Context" constitutes a further major contemporary extension and enrichment of human dignity, its context and its role.

It seems only fitting that this part should be introduced, even if schematically, by the late Josel Vavrousek in Chapter VII "Human Values and Sustainable Ways of Living". Perhaps more than anyone in the Czech Republic he led the way in environmental concern and performed an analogous service in such international organizations as the United Nations. Here he lists in summary, but particularly
insightful, fashion the shifts in philosophical and humane horizons involved in the new emergence of ecological awareness. These themes are richly elaborated in the following two chapters.

Oleg Suša in Chapter VIII "The Ecological Problem in Modern Society: Solidarity, Conflict and Human Dignity" provides a uniquely rich overview of the development of the environmental

consciousness. His study deals with the problems of the growth of ecological risk in modern society and its social and moral consequences in the form of solidarity and conflict in the communication of two competing viewpoints: technical and ethical, institutional and value-based. Philosophical reflection faces the task of investigating the interaction of society with nature as well as the ecological problems resulting from power-based, technical, economic and science-based cultural processes.

In the first part of the study the author analyses certain significant cultural-historical relationships of the double conception of environment on the basis of the socially created contrast between culture and nature. The first points above all to the problematic character of the modern conception of the interaction of human society with the natural environment as regulated by power-based technological-economic structures, the second to the need for ecological ethics in modern industrial society.

Suša follows with an analysis of a deeper socio-cultural relationships of the modern power-based pattern of a morally neutralized relation to the natural environment. Here the aim is to show the ambivalence of the rationalization of nature and society and its cumulative unintended consequences. These include both a civilizing process of modernization and rationalization, and a mechanistic conception of nature, society and man. This implies the need, possibilities and problems of developing an alternative normative-ethical "social control" of the interaction of society and nature in order to surpass the present power-based metaphor of this interaction. This would unify the double environment within the framework of a co-evolutionarily expanded conception of membership in the ecosystems.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the investigation of the phenomenon of environmentalism as an ideological and social movement in the context of today's modern ecological discourse.

This evokes pressures both to solidarity and to conflict in the discussion and solution of problems arising from the confrontation of plural interests, needs and values of society as well as the state and the quality of the natural environment. There was a note of the way discourse on the fear of ecological risks acts upon the solidarization and conflict to reproduce the tension between values and institutions, legality and legitimacy. The growing topical significance of ecological problems in the social, political and cultural context appears as an argument for deeper and more intensive related analytical research.

The reintroduction of moral values and valuation into our understanding of the world, and also ethical checks of self-control upon our whole cultural relationship with nature, become not only a political necessity, but also a matter of human dignity and of the good life in a good society.

The problem with an environmentally responsible ethics arises in terms of how to implement this practical reason within the context of the structures and systems of modern instrumental reason, i.e., the structures of instrumentalized action. The search for alternative moral conduct should build on the European cultural heritage: for instance, upon the Aristotelian unity of human, technical, scientific and aesthetic faculties and virtues, connecting them with moral political conduct. There is also the biblical tradition of the human dominion metaphor. This contains both the power and domination paradigm, on the one hand, and morally responsible and cognitive respect for the whole of creation as a community created by God, on the other. In both conceptual frameworks much is to be learned: cognitive respect means mutual understanding within this community as a presupposition for adequate public policy, which thus becomes the moral direction of power in the controlling structures of human action.

Beyond presenting simply a pragmatic response to a practical challenge, Professor SuÑa shows how this is even more a deep transformation of modern human self-awareness. Human dignity, consciousness and responsibility are no longer issues for an isolated and fearful entity, but rather essential characteristics for one who would engage the global horizon. The human home is no longer a hut or even a castle, but rather the globe with not only physical but cultural dimensions. This chapter points out how in these times human dignity and hence responsibility have been vastly enriched.

In Chapter IX "The Ecological Motivation of Ethics and the moral Critique of Society" Vlastimil Hála returns to this task. In the first part of this chapter he focuses on a number of theoretical problems in ecology, especially the relationship between anthropocentrism and biocentrism and the possibility of going beyond the intersubjective concept of moral judgment and extending it to non-human beings, particularly to animals. In this context the author supports the position of "cultivated anthropocentrism" and an extended concept of humanity.

In the second part he reflects on the practical application of ecologically motivated ethics, and especially on the significance of the concept of long-term sustainable life. He is convinced that a change in value orientations is possible, not so much in the form of a society-wide process, as in the form of struggling and gaining space for the development of "minority" styles of life that are favorable from an ecological point of view.

He recognizes the Judeo-Christian religious basis, but does not see this as sufficiently inclusive. This may be due to the fact that after the manner of a science he is looking for a deductive principle from which the conclusions follow of necessity, or for a world view which is centered upon human freedom that is responsible for all of creation. That, however, would not seem appropriate for religion as a free response to the divine gift of love, for this an inductive and aesthetic approach would seem indicated proceeding from the experience of life to its transcendent principles, which inspire and fulfill as much as explain.

Chapters VIII and IX jointly would seem to illustrate well the present philosophical challenge and opportunity for human dignity. In the modern external technological paradigm an anthropocentric view would mean violence to, and exploration of, nature. The solution would be merely to expand the horizons to an abstractive biocentric view, which, however, as abstraction would lose the freedom and creativity of humankind and hence the special role of reason in nature. The solution would seem to lie in a new transcendence, first of reason and its manipulations in order to include will, values and goals; second of human and physical nature as vicious competitors on a limited field in order to treat them as joint heirs and participants in a project grounded in an infinite and loving source and goal.

Part IV "The Human Person" proceeds to examine human dignity on a basis that is much enriched by the horizons of dialogue with other persons and interchange with the natural environment which were developed in Parts II and III. Here the focus turns to the dignity of the human person.

Bohumír Janát in Chapters X "A Time of Titans: Reflections on the Philosophy of Present History" and XI "Philosophy and the Metaphysical Vision of a Just World: Reflections on Justice in the Present Spiritual Atmosphere of Middle-Eastern Europe" draws out these foundational implications regarding the horizon needed to resolve positively the alternative contexts for approaches to ecological issues. For this he points to the new openness to the spirit entailed by the collapse of militant materialism.

This study is an attempt to formulate a philosophical response to the present "materialistic liberalism" notable in the postcomminust countries of present Middle-Eastern Europe. In accord with the old Marxist supposition, they tend to declare economy the most significant stratum of human and social being and thus to diminish the importance of spirituality, dignity, morality and justice. The author tries to open a deeper historical-philosophical perspective on the contemporary situation. His endeavor is to provide evidence for the preference of metaphysics over political philosophy or for the grounding of the latter in the former. The key idea is that the spiritual substance of Euro-American civilization can be saved only if the philosophical archetype embodied in Socrates wins over the nihilistic, violent and orgiastic pathos figured in Nietzsche, i.e., if "*epimeleia tés psyches*" prevails over "*der Wille zur Macht*".

Aviezer Tucker in Chapter XI " Patocka's Ethnical Naturalism: the Primacy of Value over Fact" shows how central was Jan Patocka's focus upon care of the soul to a philosophy truly attentive to human dignity. In this he sees special continuity with the work of society. Echoing a theme from chapter I he notes also the uniqueness of Patocka's work vis à vis Heidegger. Where M. Bednár pointed to the deepening of Patocka's horizon beyond being to appearing, Tucker notes its displacement from being to value, thereby giving it the strong developmental, teleological and ethical character needed in order for it to provide the reflective dimension especially needed in our time of social reconstruction.

Vincent Shen in Chapter XII "'Person' as the Central Concept in the Human and Social Sciences: An Interpretation of Edmund Husserl's Thought on the Human Person in *Ideen II*" begins from Dilthey and his identification of the essential difference of the human from the technical sciences. In this light it becomes possible to see the importance of the phenomenology of Husserl, especially in *Ideen II*, in making it possible to explore the properly human consciousness from within in the work of self-constitution.

In the latter part of the chapter Professor Shen points to the work of Thomas Aquinas in ontically relating this dimension of the spirit to the body in an integrated sense of the human person, but Professor Shen considers this no longer adequate for the technological complexities of contemporary society investigated by J. Habermas. In view of the earlier direction of the chapter as well as the general pattern of development in the rest of the work, this might also be read conversely to point out how the formal character of Habermas's analysis stands in need of the phenomenological elaboration of the life of human consciousness by Husserl, and that this in turn needs an integration of the human person in the sense of the existential philosophy of being of Thomas. (See Robert Badillo, *The Emancipative Theory of Jügen Habermas and Metaphysics* [Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I, Culture and Values, vol. 13; Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991].)

This again would be an inversion of the method of philosophical reflection to look not deductively from abstract principles, but inductively from the dignity of human life lived in existential freedom to the unlimited source and goal of such life beyond the human person. This is needed in order to provide the openness within which freedom, rather than determinism, is the mark of being and the context of the dignity of the human person.

Karel Vrána in Chapter XIV "The Writer's Mission and Politics" elaborates this existential theme richly in relation to literature and the work of the writer. For this the writer must overcome a series of temptations in order to be guided by truth precisely as the way of access to being and existence. The alternative is to be reduced to an instrument of profit through advertising or of power through ideologies.

In sum this volume is truly a *tour de force*. It could have been simply a minimal assertion of irreducible human dignity in the face of modern oppression, or a search for foundations in earlier sources. Both would have been worthy accomplishments for this volume. Beyond both of these, however, the volume is both creative and prospective, looking for the elements now appreciated as missing in the modern project of technical progress. Above all, it looks not only at particular insights, but at broad steps in the contemporary evolution of human consciousness in integrating dialogical or inter human action and ecological or human-nature awareness. In both dimension the atomistic individual is liberated and both nature and society are rendered humane. In this light human dignity emerges no longer as a fugitive viciously pursued, but as the creative center, ready to build the life-world of the third millennium.

Part I
Human Dignity

Chapter I
The Phenomenon of Human Dignity after Totalitarianism

Miloslav Bednár

The appearance of the totalitarian alternative to human existence, so typical for the 20th century, represents a consistent, consciously anti-traditional and universal alternative to human life and its world. This consists in an elaborate ideological and behavioral embodiment of the essence of technology, i.e., in the comprehensive manipulability of both mental and practical human bearings. In other words, totalitarian regimes present a systematic and cogent, but morally reprehensible reply to the modern split between rationality and morality which is reflected in the sharp division of the private and public spheres of human life. The totalitarian alternative offers an alluringly simple closure of this gap at the heart of modern humanity. In cases where such an answer has been accepted, as with the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes, the continuity of the Western tradition as such has been interrupted.

The central assault of the totalitarian thrust was aimed at the phenomenon of individual responsibility for one's public life including its moral and spiritual meaning. Precisely here, totalitarian regimes appeared extremely successful in creating a new type of human, always ready to comply with any ideological commands for total lack of personal moral responsibility. Instead of a unitive moral orientation, the manifold tints and nuances of totalitarian sophistry succeeded in promoting a universal relativism of values. This crucial elements of the totalitarian mentality and activity now constitute a most sinister flaw impeding the solid recovery of post-communist countries from their long-lasting systematic disregard and elimination of the spiritual and moral foundations of the Occidental human tradition.

In the present situation of the post-totalitarian intelligentsia in Eastern Europe, this spiritual and moral predicament appears considerably strengthened by the contemporary influx from the West of post-modernism and neo-liberalism. In fact, these views seem to be the last possible stage of the modern move toward the fragmentation of unity and the tensions of human life anchored in, and developed out of, Western spirituality and morality. The common denominator of the present post-modern and neo-liberal *dernier cri* is evidently the same as the kernel of the new totalitarian human being: a universal, manipulated atomization of everything.

Nonetheless philosophically, the totalitarian communist break in our civilization induced the Czech philosopher, Jan Patocka, both to regenerate and reinterpret radically the genuine spiritual roots of Europe, i.e., Plato's concept of *care for one's soul*.[1] In this way, Patocka deepened his conception of three basic moves of human life into an outline of spiritual life consisting in the original phenomenality of all reality as not a matter of course, but an evident precondition of all phenomena, and by the same token of all reality.[3] Consequently on existential and phenomenological grounds Patocka restored the Socratic *daimonion* as an ability "to say 'no' to these measures of mobilization" so characteristic of our age of technology and totalitarian regimes. These "render permanent the state of war", i.e., the exponential growth of force as the essence of total technology.[3]

The intensive encounter of the totalitarian alternative for human existence, as a radical break with Western civilization, induced Patocka to reformulate human dignity in the light of ultimate horizons of modernity at the end of our century of world wars and totalitarian regimes. Patocka's concept of human dignity consists in a phenomenological reinterpretation of the original Platonic

and Aristotelian harmonic hierarchy by constructing the concept of the good human life against the background of the original principle of phenomenality as such. This original European principle appears as the basic legitimation of both human plurality and tolerance. It is the origin of human communication, able to cope with differences, tensions and conflicting views deriving from the plurality of human decisions, knowledge and culture.[4]

Thus, post-totalitarian human dignity consists in the capacity to question all reality including its open and non-guaranteed origins, as well as to adopt this ground of phenomenality as a starting point for joint human recognition, communication and action, on the one hand. On the other hand, this level of human insight made broadly available through the totalitarian attack on the foundations of Western tradition, presents the only legitimate environment for the genuine contemplative dimension of human life, traditionally known as *bios theoretikos* or *vita contemplativa*.[5]

This radical restoration of human dignity occurred in totalitarian circumstances as a conscious expression both of a cogent, responsible moral resistance, and of a permanent future project of meaning for human life and world. This poses a universal, alternative human existence in principle capable of coping with the essence of technology, whatever forms it may assume. This is nothing less than to uncover and reinterpret the original creative Western tensions between soul, being and freedom as the explicit existential environment of humanity at the climax of modern times toward the end of our century. In other words, this spells a recovery of the founding human situations which makes it possible for human freedom to face the permanent alternative of good/evil, truth/untruth.[6]

Heidegger's concept of the human being was characterized by its relation to being, actively taking it over, responsibly "caring", and thus being free in attitude.[7] Patocka put this consciously into practice. Nevertheless, in contrast to Heidegger, his basic insight consisted in founding the problem of Being in the much more original and profound problem of appearing (phenomenality). This is the source of original human time, and makes it possible for us to understand Being.[8] Patocka's conclusion that the problem of appearing as such is in fact more basic and deeper than the problem of Being implies a considerable and profound revision of Heidegger's thinking. This consists in the identification of the phenomenon of movement with the original appearing.[9] In this way were laid ontological grounds for freedom and human dignity in both the post-totalitarian and post-technological era, including the question of the precise relation between Being, time and appearing.[10]

Seeing original appearing as the utmost ground and origin of time, and consequently of Being, points to the very condition of possibility for all reality. Such an exact distinction and hierarchy reflect a radical phenomenological way of coping with the original Greek philosophical experience of *drke, fysis, polemos* and *logos* as the prime source of everything what exists. This is a modern and responsible reconstruction of the founding and the stumbling block of Occidental spirituality. It spells tremendous risk, but seems to be the only promising alternative after the radical totalitarian break in Western civilization. In this way, human dignity appears to consists in a basic post-totalitarian faith grounded in a precise and verifiable hierarchy generating the human spiritual and moral step. As its distinctive element, faith is the appropriate resolve to dare the highly risky option for human life and thus repair the totalitarian break in human history due to the radical anti-political, anti-moral and anti-spiritual character of the essence of technology.

The nature of this kind of faith as a risky post-totalitarian resolve points towards a modern reformulation of the original Western notion of a good life in a good political community. The principle of a good human life in the Greek tradition was identical with the realization of virtues

through the whole course of human life in the environment of the *polis*, which, in turn, perpetuates itself in this way: on the one hand, such an environment was the only possible one where a good life could take place; on the other hand, the very existence of a genuine political community was based on the exercise of virtues as its vital principles and essence. Thus, the distinctively Greek notion of humanity as the permanent aim of the life-long endeavor traditionally expressed by the concept of *paideia* could be recovered in the post-totalitarian West. Now the stress would be laid on the implicit move of soul, its movement of *praxis* creating the source of the whole of *aretai*. This type of move of human life before its subsequent conceptual distinction and intrinsic differentiation is conceivable as the original appearance of human faith. This is bound, yet free, for it is towards a life that is not established for the sake of life itself. Such a phenomenon of essentially emerging human faith appears to be the practical, dynamic human counterpart of Plato's highest principle of the Good. This is precisely its distinctive nature as one (*to hen*), being absolutely simple (*haplun*), indivisible (*adiaireton*), and undifferentiated (*adiaforoi*), and preceding all quantity as its original principle (*arche*) and element (*stoicheion*).[11]

The obvious central problem of this crucial phenomenon of humanity consists in its excellence over science, knowledge and truth. Because it makes these fundamentally possible, in principle it resists all discursive description. Nevertheless, its baselessness and preconditionlessness, which by the same token is the possibility of any precondition and foundation, substantiates Patocka's central position regarding appearing as such, which makes possible all appearances, and in this way all reality. Consequently, the very nature of the phenomenon of original human faith as fundamental appearance necessarily encompasses both plurality and universality as its prime and mutually compatible dynamics.

In this context, Masaryk's courageous notion of religious democracy[12] might find its spiritual legitimacy. Conversely, it expresses the basic human appearance of the essential phenomenon of human faith. This appears as a type of community explicitly founded in human plurality, which emerges as democracy. Thus, human faith as an original human move and the counterpart of the oneness (*to hen*) of the highest good is the genuine and most adequate expression of the individual uniqueness of persons. Similar to metaphysical ontology, where the original oneness is the precondition of quantity, the oneness of the highest Good, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the original phenomenon of human faith appear as the utmost pre-limit and pre-measures with no preceding condition. These alone makes possible the limitation, differentiation, measured quantity and variety of the world and of human life. In this way, the fundamentally originating centrality of appearing (phenomenalism as such) unfolds into appearances, i.e., into reality. Hence, the prime ontological importance of original human faith in the movement of appearance.

Similarly, the ethical and ontological foundations of human dignity appear also to be anchored in the centrality of appearing. This provides a central orientation on how to reformulate the very concept of the entire realm of human virtues, which is to reformulate the very core of Western humanity. This remains under the sinister shadow both of its historic break by the totalitarian regimes and other forms of the development of the substance of technology in our century. This twofold radical shadow within Western civilization is the fatal fruit of its risky nature and origin. The only appropriate way to cope with this appears to be radical reflection and moral action based creatively on the founding Western insight of the central originating importance of an earthshaking pre-phenomenality of appearing as such for all that exists. Failure to abide in this spiritual and moral principle of the West was, and remains, the primary source of its deficient choices. Hence a redefinition of the moral complex of human and civic virtues in the light of appearing as such and

its prime characteristics seems to be the way out of the looming impasse of the post-totalitarian predicament of democratic civilization.

This requires restoring the interdependence of courage, practical wisdom, piety, justice, theoretical wisdom, temperance and friendship in terms of their immediate foundation in the pre-phenomena of appearing. The need for such a refounding of all virtues in the experience of appearing as such is pointed to by the phenomenon of totalitarianism as a radically anti-political and anti-moral embodiment of universal manipulability as the essence of technology.

Justice

One example is the virtue of justice. Presently it is discussed in terms of distributive and corrective systems of institutional arrangements. Behind such standard disputes towers a technological mentality postulating that the virtue of justice is a problem of inadequate systems and methods of institutional administrative organization, i.e., a task for applied technology. According to this attitude, justice can be achieved by applying an appropriate system and subsystems of administrative processes, i.e., justice appears to be at the disposal of organizational and administrative power. This obviously technological conception of justice points towards another standard of justice as much more than an institutional and organizational mechanism. It points to the appearance of a mutual recognition of the rights and duties of free citizens as a proper legitimating environment of moral and legal guilt and its redemption. Moreover, the environment for a mutual moral recognition of human beings in freedom after its radical totalitarian liquidation has decisively contributed, at least in Czechoslovakia, to a restoration of human and civic virtues after everyday life and peace have been shaken to the roots of its meaning.

Thus, the sheer pre-phenomenality of appearing as such constituted the final resort, and by the same token the very first beginning of a meaningful life and world which, if recognized and followed consistently will spell another beginning of history after its totalitarian rupture. Consequently, Plato's question articulating the moral and spiritual movement of the Greek beginning of history, the question of how vice in the soul is possible, can now be answered once again. This follows the radical totalitarian negation of the history of answers to this most powerful question in European culture, and is situated in the midst of the culmination of the technological era of universal and versatile manipulability in the environment of modern democracies. The proper answer to this fundamental question of Western culture since 1989 is a conscious result of both the experience of, and a thorough reflexion on the founding pre-eminence of, appearing as such. This includes recollection of the earlier course of Western history deeply determined by a lack of enduring clarity as to the true nature of the phenomenal process of original appearing.

In such a critical reinterpretation and recovery of appearing as such, the virtue of justice appears first as a problem of moral responsibility. The striking totalitarian success in liquidating this crucial element of original European morality and systems of law had been made possible by the artificial modern division partitioning human life into two independent spheres: public rationality and objectivity, on the one hand, and an allegedly merely subjective personal morality and religion, on the other hand. The totalitarian regimes constituted a radical attempt to close this characteristically essential abyss of modernity by a sophisticated and flexible combination of terror and ideologically manipulated behavior aimed at the total liquidation of individual moral responsibility, on the one hand, and of the distinction between state and society, on the other. To restore justice after such a challenge amounts to redefining carefully moral responsibility in terms

of overcoming the modern partition of public rational objectivity from private subjective morality and religion.

This implies a profound reformulation and extension of the concept of human rights to include both individual and public moral responsibility for the political and historical consequences of individual and civic decisions. In this moral way the conception of human rights receives a substantial extension to basic duties. Thus, the technological concept of justice as universal order solving the question of human guilt, and appearing both in the form of equality under law and as enabling everyone to do what fits one's individual dispositions can be reformulated. Instead human rights would be redefined in terms of natural law.

Moreover, such an urgent redefinition points, first, to the need to reformulate Aristotle's general concept of justice as a matter of state into the total complex of all morality.[13] Second, it points to Plato's problem of the possibility of justice in the human soul. Beginning with justice as a quality of the human soul, in the earth-shaking experience of appearing the appearance of original human faith is a proper environment for justice, for its upholding is stamina in the moral order of virtues in action. This is the post-totalitarian moral ground facing the predicament of democratic humanity and citizenship in an era of the culmination of technology. It makes possible consistent philosophical thought capable of coping with the affective contradictions of human life, and so creates the world that originally encompasses us.

In terms of human dignity, this consists in the concept of human beings as the genuine domain of the originating process of appearing as such which preceeds all beings. It is given essentially with human finality,[14] and defines the human soul as such.[15] To cope with the affective character of the human soul from the point of view of original appearance is nothing less than to cultivate the affective human move of *thymos*, i.e., the move of human existence towards clarity[16] as the well spring of human dignity. Such cultivation appears as a genuine move of human faith which produces the justice of the human soul as its proper life-world.

In the case of its post-totalitarian conscious foundation in human dignity as the domain of original appearing, justice is a total complex of morality upholding the political, i.e., civic, order. This entails another approach to its expressions through distributive and corrective justice. This is Aristotle's insight that the human sharing of a common understanding of justice makes possible both family and state. Note that Aristotle does not say the state only, as would Rawls.[17] This clearly points to the inseparability of both private and public, and of moral goodness from right and justice. Consequently, Rawls's conditioning of moral goodness taken as a construction by principles of right and justice i.e., in terms of its distributiveness and correctiveness,[18] reflects the modern supremacy of administrative and admittedly objective rationality over so-called private and subjective morality, not to say, spirituality.

In contrast to this typically modern conception of justice, the central and originating position of human dignity as a genuine sphere of appearing radically reverses the meaning of distributive and corrective justice. A characteristically modern position of equality corresponding to the state of nature in a onesidedly selected, and vaguely understood traditional theory of social contract,[19] obviously is replaceable by a concept of free human dignity residing in the pre-phenomenal move of appearing. This position provides the ground for understanding the two principles of justice mentioned above. Thus, the call both for the broadest extent of liberties to all, and for inequalities reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage which are attached to positions and offices open to all.[20] These need to be anchored in other concepts of equal rights and advantages, i.e., in the equality given by free initiative, and in the advantage given by a moral

understanding of the entire move of human life in recognition of human dignity conceived as the origin of the phenomenon of appearing.

Notes

1. Cf. e.g., J. Patocka, *Evropa a doba poevropská* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1992); and J. Patocka, *Kacirské eseie o filosofii dejin* (Praha: Academia, 1990).
2. See Jan. Patocka, *Prirozeny, svet jako filosoficky problem* (Praha: Ceskoslovensky spisovatel, 1970), pp. 216-234.
3. Cf. Jan Patocka, "Duchovni Clovek a intelektuál," *Souvislosti* (1990/1), 15.
4. J. Patocka, *Kacírské eseie o filosofii dejin*, p. 141.
5. Cf. Jan Patocka, "Duchovní clovek a intelektuál," *ibid.*
6. VIII/7-8.
7. Cf. VIII/20.
8. Cf-VIII/3.
9. Cf. J. Patocka, *Prirozeny, svet jako filosoficky problém*, p. 211.
10. Cf. VIII/3.
11. Cf. Plato, *Parmenides*, 137c4 - 1452a8.
12. Cf. Ludwig, p. 71.
13. Pol. 1253 a.
14. Cf. J. Patocka, VIII/6.
15. Cf. J. Patocka, *Evropa a doba poevropská*, p. E38.
16. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 83.
17. Cf, J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1972), p. 243,
18. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 404.
19. Cf. Rawls, p. 12.
20. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 60.

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Chapter II
The Struggle for Human Dignity in Extreme Situations

Jolana Poláková

If there is any conviction shared by sensitive and rational people in our times and culture, most probably it is the view that our civilisation finds itself in the throes of a crisis. Explanations of the genuine cause of this crisis as well as attitudes toward it vary. One, which in our view seems to have its sights set on the very crux of the matter, is the explanation that the crisis has been caused by the indisputable hypertrophy of external, materially mediated dominance. This gradually generated an atrophy of a life-giving internal, spiritually conditioned understanding as if the internal sources of human life have virtually been exhausted for us. Indeed, in various contexts of our spiritual life we come up against manifestations of relativism, superficiality and loss of perspective. It is evident that the question whether this is still "merely" a crisis of growth is closely associated with another, namely, whether there is any human dimension at all to that growth.

Our historical process has led to far-reaching crisis situations which face humankind as a whole (ecology, economy and global military-political problems), by various small or large groups of people (discrimination, manipulation, disinformation), and by an ever growing number of solitary individuals (poverty, diseases, social marginalization, deterioration of interhuman relations, devaluation of spiritual values). Attempts at remedying such situations usually are confined to endeavors to identify mere symptoms; what exceeds the possibilities of external control generally is neglected to the detriment of the key, intrinsically human need to understand one's self and one's actions, even though such a need usually is most acutely felt by humans in situations of the deepest crisis. An externally oriented civilisation is neither able nor willing to admit that a path can be found out of extreme situations, either with the help of "the best social order" (which on the contrary — in totalitarian and military regimes — tends to provoke such situations on a large scale), or with the provision of the greatest material wealth and well-being (which serves rather to multiply them in rich societies and social strata by lowering the threshold of sensitivity).

Certain elementary extreme situations, inevitable for human life and its maturation are associated with the natural course of life, but often we no longer know how to cope with these. In our present era people seem to have somehow forgotten the traditional spiritual strategies and tactics of coping with these extreme situations (documented by myth, theology and philosophy). There is no longer an inner connection to model personalities in extreme situations (Jesus, Buddha, well-known saints and martyrs); no rehearsal situations (initiation rites, exercises, etc.) are available; even simple human empathy and active solidarity with people in extreme situations also have disappeared. On the other hand, the capacities of mental hospitals, jails, orphanages and other specialized institutions have been expanding, various repressive measures have been widespread, and there are mounting tendencies to make up for the utter lack of meaning in life with a hectic scramble for power and wealth. This is at the cost of bringing about new situations of major crisis proportions, neither natural nor inevitable, which are increasingly difficult to cope with in any meaningful manner.

A merely externally conceived defence against extreme situations, which leaves all the spiritual possibilities for coping untouched usually results in a drastic impoverishment of humanity and a further reproduction of such situations at ever new levels. Extreme situations may be

countered efficiently and productively solely with the help of internal, intrinsic sources. Only therefrom is it possible correctly to stipulate the choice of external means. An authentic capacity to carry out what would amount to a genuinely helpful external intervention is always commensurate with internal human maturity on the part of the decisive agents.

That is why the cultural-paradigmatic importance and profound historical human need of all such individual activities and social movements has been growing. Such activities and movements often are tied deliberately to certain spiritual traditions. Irrespective of their economic and social context, from profound inner resources and at the cost of one's own sacrifices they are able to provide way out of various modes of natural as well as unnecessary extreme threats to humanity anywhere and anytime (e.g., the order of Mother Theresa of Calcutta or the Czechoslovak Charter 77 Movement).

The following philosophical study is dedicated to such personally motivated and involved people struggling for human dignity in adverse circumstances.

The individual sections: existences, humans, values, meaning and being, are meant as thematic probes into the contexts, which are of key significance for the issue under scrutiny.

Existents

If we approach everything receptively and with critical detachment from our own utilitarian intentions, we discern existences in their original inner self-determination, integrity and irreplaceability. They present themselves to our eyes in their independent identity as emanating from the depth of being and aspiring to the heights of being. This makes evident that characterization of this or that existence can in no way be exhausted through its mere situatedness: no existence is "soluble" within this or that situation, it is never completely shaped or determined by it; in changing situations it remains more or less itself or ceases to exist in its identity. This is ontologically primary and, in view of the possibilities of any existence in extreme situations, is substantially significant.

It has two different aspects: external and actual, which stand out directly against us. This is given by the specificity, differences and clear-cut particularity of existence, which outwardly tends to develop its identity vis-a-vis other existences. The internal and potential, given the independence of each existence, can only be surmised in its entirety. This inheres in the inmmicability, inaccessibility and inexhaustibility of the substantial specification of the given existence, which is rooted internally in the creative depths of being. Due to this fundamental identity, existents encounter other existences as they find themselves in various situations. But they do so through their creative, internal and potential identity stemming from being which is beyond any situatedness, and as such is moulded solely by the interaction of existences.

It seems therefore that the creative current of being flows, as far as existences are concerned, from the inside outwards: for the initial point of each existence lies in its inner identity, received in profound dependence on being, while the impact of a situation on existences is determined only by their interrelations. Seen in this light, a situation affects existence principally secondarily and outwardly. The dependence of existences on a situation is conditioned by the dependence of a situation on existences which jointly create it, actively or passively.

Under the term situation we may describe the sum total of external conditions and circumstances, under which existence as the "center" of a situation happens. At the same time, especially as regards extreme situations, it is of vital importance that these external conditions and

circumstances are not primarily constitutive of what exists or happens, although they may support or suppress existence, action or even the very origin of anything.

Whether a situation affects existence positively or negatively, whether it is more or less in harmony with it, as is an apple tree in a fruit garden, or in conflict with it, as is an apple tree in a building site, is for each existence a crucially important feature of its situation. An extremely unfavorable situation, wherein the very identity of existence is threatened up to its actual limit of resistance, beyond which its being-related potential to perfectibility dissolves, is most accurately designated as its extreme situation.

The ontological necessity of the emergence of extreme situations evidently ensues from the fact that existences do exist in situations. Given its external particularity and hence its actual limitations, no single existence can cope with an unlimited number of factually possible situations. The paradoxical ontological possibility of surviving extreme situations, on the contrary, emanates from the fact that existences do exist out of being and for the sake of being. Its internal determination is potentially inexhaustible. It has emerged from the creative depths of being in which each existence is rooted, and proceeds towards the transcendent heights of being to which it is attracted. On this basis existence may hold out even under an extreme situation.

Therefore, extreme situations are both exceptionally dangerous for the identity of existences, and immensely stimulating in terms of creativity and development. Being is the source and goal of the growth of their independence and integrity. In time, everything inanimate, animate and conscious gradually grows out of being into the space of the world, which is pervaded with the struggle for growth in being at different levels of its reception.

Humans

Just as an extreme situation is one in which the innermost identity of any existence is revealed and subjected to trial, a human extreme situation is one in which all this concerns humans. In an extreme situation men and women also are threatened in their own constitution, which they alone have acquired from being.

This signifies that exposure to extreme situations will most clearly show which particular characteristics are actually specific to him in terms of "species", what is intrinsically their own and what eventually matters most to them. Their extreme situations are highlighted and stimulate their humanity due to this having been jeopardized.

All subhuman animate existences demonstrate their identity most prominently in situations in which their life is threatened (a snail will withdraw into its shell, a gazelle will run, a tiger will fight) for their innermost intrinsic characteristics serve their own survival in a specific manner. A threat to life is identically a threat to the intrinsic characteristics in a live subhuman existent; their identity neither survives nor in any way extends beyond their physical existence. As with a inanimate existences where an extreme situation poses a threat to their intrinsic mode of inanimate existence, a situation involving a threat to one's life is the specific extreme situation of subhuman animate existences. This provides a point of departure for identifying the extreme situation of the person as a live and conscious being.

An animal which finds itself in a life endangering situation tries to escape quite unambiguously and at any cost, although sometimes in a mediated fashion as dictated by the instinctive attachment to one's offspring, mate or herd. Under such a situation humans do not always behave so unequivocally. Their attitude to their own life is not determined solely by instinct, but is freer and more complicated. Humans are capable not only of saving their own life,

but also of sacrificing it; they are capable of running the risk of losing their life and even of giving it up in passive resignation.

Such a free and differentiated approach attests to the fact that humans do not identify what they intrinsically are with their physical existence; somehow they can confirm their humanity independently of their own survival, sometimes even against it. Evidently, they strive to exist somewhat differently than a biological entity, trying to transcend their physical existence. To put it in positive terms: they strive for a spiritually independent existence. Only on such a basis is it possible to compare life with other values and freely avail oneself of it.

This spiritual existence implements a purely human possibility of self-transcendence through a principal attachment to values. Humans can sacrifice or save their life because of something that exceeds the value of biological life. That is, because of values towards which their life aspires, on which it is based, in which humans invest, with which they identify themselves, and to which they attach supreme meaning. Only a threat to such values — "sublime" or "mundane", but always vitally important — constitutes an extreme situation characteristic of man. If the principal values of his life have been destroyed or devalued, one's bare life retains value only if and as one is capable of retaining at least some hope of discovering or creating new values. Then life becomes, provisionally, a supreme value only in the name of those unknown values and in linkage with them.

From a human viewpoint, mere survival does not appear to be an end in itself. It is not something absolute or unconditioned, but rather something to which one can assume a personal attitude; that is, one which is not arbitrary but spiritually free and connected with values. The fact that one carries within oneself something one protects more than one's own life and without which one's life would lose its meaning and humanity points to the conclusion that, unlike other live beings, one's specific extreme situation involves a threat to values which one regards as supreme. A threat to life is perceived by humans as an extreme situation only insofar as it jeopardizes also their possibility of living for certain values. In a situation of a total value vacuum and hopelessness life tends to become virtually irrelevant to a human person.

Thus, one may attach to a certain value, rather than to one's bare life, that which is intrinsically one's own, one's most profound identity, namely, independence and integrity. This reveals the ontologically unique spiritual nature of the person. What seems to be significant in extreme human situations, therefore, is not any boundary of human potential for biological survival, but rather a limit of this or that individual's value orientation and attachment.

Values

Freedom, health, honor, property, loyalty, power, friendship, enjoyment work, success — every human individual is known to live in the name of a certain basic value orientation which integrates one's life. From one's prevailing attitude to life can be deduced one's supreme, vitally important values, whose threat inevitably takes one into an extreme situation.

The innumerable possible types of threats posed to various vitally significant values may be systematically classified by this three level scheme:

I. threat to the embodiment of a given value,
II. loss of the embodiment of a given value,
III. doubts cast on the validity of a given value.

Threat

1. The first level or threat posed to a vitally significant value — an extreme situation of the first degree — arises when the embodiment of such a value is seriously threatened. Such an embodiment is that to which such a value is ascribed: a valuable thing, person, relationship, status, activity, etc. — collectively expressed as "goods". For instance, if I appreciate friendship or human dignity or property as the supreme value, then the embodiment of this value is my friend, or my civic rights, or my bank account. If such a threat is to fall into the category of extreme situations, the only or the most important embodiment of this supremely significant value must be threatened and it must be extremely difficult to avert such a threat.

The imminent destruction of what is or, for a certain individual, can be genuine fulfillment — a lively accomplishment or implementation of one's uppermost values in life — tends to provoke massive defensive reaction. One applies oneself to saving the situation, which is not yet totally lost, even though it is so unfavorable that in order to retain a chance of changing it man has to stake everything. After all, he has got nothing to lose because an extreme situation is a situation posing a threat to what is most valuable to him, with which he is tied in a life or death relationship, and from which the very value of all the other things more or less derives.

An extreme situation of the first degree is therefore marked by its risky and demanding, though still practicable, changeability; this, in turn, encourages man to try to avert the danger at any cost. What must be done by the individual, who through this struggle for the existence of the embodiment of his cherished value fights for his own integral existence, is to mobilize as much courage as possible.

One will either succeed in saving the situation, in restoring the original state of the undisturbed existence of the "good" involved (regaining one's friend, civic rights or bank account), or one will not.

Loss

One who has not managed to save the situation finds oneself in an extreme situation of the second degree — which could arise directly, without passing through the first stage. This involves loss of the embodiment of a vitally important value. Its eventual restoration (if this be at all feasible, as where, for example, no exclusive personal relationship is involved) usually is a long-term affair and does not depend solely on one's own activity.

In an extreme situation of the second degree the value itself (friendship, human dignity, property) is not destroyed. On the contrary, it remains valid and one continues to regard it as one's own supreme value and maintains one's intrinsically serious attitude in its regard. But the value's embodiment, through which the individual participated in that particular value (or intended to so participate), no longer exists or has become definitely inaccessible.

In these terms there is nothing to save at the given moment: the original state of affairs cannot be restored and it is uncertain whether the value itself will ever see its alternative embodiment. It is thus crucial to bear the situation. This means enduring the profound contradiction: on the one hand, is that which is most desirable for the individual, what "should be" in order to sustain one's integral existence. On the other hand, there is that which simply "is" under the given situation, regardless of the conditions of one's most intrinsic identity and of the possibilities of one's truly human life. This contradiction, which must be suffered, involves the existence of an abstract meaning of value and the non-existence of its concrete embodiment. The value indispensable for

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the life of an individual, which in its embodiment always is bound up intimately with his or her life, in an extreme situation of the second degree loses its lively and impressive particularity. It is preserved solely in one's mind as a powerless idea, as nothing but a destructive awareness of what an individual cannot live without.

Extreme situations of the second degree, unlike the preceding stage, are characterized by the impossibility of salvaging the original state. The only way out here is to turn towards the future possibilities of finding a new embodiment of the self same value. That is why such a situation necessitates a maximum mobilization of hope. For one who attaches the meaning of his life to friendship or human dignity or property, it is certainly difficult to live on his own or in prison or in impoverished old age, hoping for new encounters, for freedom or for a lucky win. The fulfillment of his desire does not depend solely on his own will and behaviour; he has simply to persist, waiting and hoping.

It may well happen that one will not endure these trials physically and hence will die; or one may lose all hope and commit suicide; or one can no longer endure the contradiction between the existing validity and non-existing embodiment of his value and will succumb to an insane illusion that the embodiment continues to exist ("I manage to talk to my friend across the distance between us", "I am Jesus", "I have a treasure hidden somewhere") or in a desperate desire for solace (at any cost) he will change his value orientation in an uncontrolled and unreflected manner (although with later "justification") mostly by lapsing to lower values. The value of friendship will gradually be replaced, e.g., by the value of external social recognition and appreciation, or the value of human dignity will imperceptibly give way to chemically induced euphoria, etc. One will begin to re-examine one's existing value orientation quite consciously in a process that will, however, qualitatively change one's extreme situation.

Doubt

While humans grapple with false ways out of an extreme situation of the second degree, this situation may deepen still further to a third degree. This may arise also in response to the first degree of the threat posed to the value involved, or quite directly without any previous threat having been posed or without the loss of embodiment of the given value. It could also be a hidden process concerned not so much with the values themselves, but rather with the embodiments representing them. As far as the third level of threat to a vitally important value is concerned, not only the embodiment of this value is threatened or lost, but the value itself is in jeopardy.

This may occur only after doubts have been cast on the validity of such a value, on its significance for man and its position among other values in his personal hierarchy of values. To cast doubts on the validity of one's supreme value is a free internal human act, albeit caused by external circumstances either repelling one from a specific value or attracting one to another value. One experimentally gives up one's previous conviction regarding the meaning of life and sets out to seek a new, more substantial answer to the question: why live at all and where to invest one's life. One goes out of one's way to find a new value orientation or to ascertain, with a degree of reliability, whether another value orientation would not be better, whether in it one could really find oneself and one's own path to the world. One does this in a conscious and reflected manner, unlike the above-mentioned uncontrolled escape from an extreme situation of the second degree into a scramble for false values.

Quite voluntarily one thus introduces problems into one's ultimate life certainty, which itself may turn out to be not quite as bright and conflict-free as one would hope; one abandons it for the

uncertainty of assessing, pondering and searching. One asks oneself whether one has not been deprived of the embodiment of such a value rightly, whether this particular value is really worth sticking to as a supreme value, or one of the supreme values. In brief, one wants to understand the situation.

The process of casting doubt on the validity of an existing vitally important value may stem from the value itself: one feels a certain dissatisfaction and uncertainty towards it, without perceiving as yet any alternative value. Or such doubts may be caused by a comparison of one's hitherto valid principal value with other values. Thus, one hesitates at a crossroads, trying to choose the right direction rather than opting for an illusion of salvation at the cost of betrayal.

To avoid being wrecked in the straits of widespread inner uncertainty and intractable conflicts, to avoid losing oneself amidst the chaos of numerous options which tend to render choice impossible or at least difficult, one needs to mobilize wisdom out of one's innermost self. It is immensely difficult to decide whether one has justifiably cast doubts on a key value such as self-assertion, and whether it is more appropriate eventually to replace such a value in one's hierarchy, e.g., with the value of loyalty or health. Faced with a situation involving doubts, e.g., about the value of property, it is no less difficult to discover for oneself a sufficiently satisfactory higher value. No wiser person can stand in for oneself in such decision making.

One may or may not succeed in understanding the situation; one may not gain an insight into the situation and may succumb to resignation. One may even opt for a voluntary departure from life or quite consciously choose an inferior but easily attainable value: classically, wine, women and song. But this usually fails to be fully satisfactory once one has set oneself much higher objectives in life and now lives with a suppressed sense of non-fulfillment or eventually of betrayal. Or finally one can respond by giving up and becoming bogged down in the deadlock of the impossibility to decide. Then one is seized by the experience of the vanity and relativity of everything which gradually disintegrates into a feeling of absurdity and a loss of the future.

Or one may manage to work one's way to a clear-cut recogni-tion and endorsement of a value one genuinely can accept fully as a supreme value. As the case may be, this can even entail that original value on which doubts were cast for a time, or a value to whose unsuspected importance one has been led only through the suffering experienced in an extreme situation.

Overview

	first degree	*second degree*	*third degree*
initial situation	threat to embodiment	loss of embodiment of value	doubts cast on validity of value
goal	save the situation	bear the situation	understand the situation
way	to mobilize courage	to mobilize hope	to mobilize wisdom

Meaning

It is evident that human choice and the defence of certain vitally important values or, on the contrary, their conscious abandonment cannot be explained by, or deduced from, a mere situation. There are situations, which seem to be optimal for the full assertion of a given value; yet under such situations one may give up this very value in exchange for another value, e.g., to devote

oneself to hard work in a situation facilitating the easy life. On the other hand, some situations are extremely unfavorable even for the very internal preservation of a certain value; yet one is prepared to defend that value at the expense of one's life, e.g., the value of religious freedom in an atheistic dictatorship.

It seems that in consciously selecting and defending or in giving up a certain value, one is not necessarily guided by the situation. Rather the ultimate explanation and justification of one's decision is a purely internal matter: a certain value either has a meaning for one or it has not.

The meaning of a value need not be in accord with the situa-tion at all; on the contrary, it may prove it to be senseless, emerging independently of the situation and enabling one to assume an independent position towards it. Also, independently of a situation, a certain value may lose its meaning so that one no longer has any reason to defend it even though the situation should "require" it.

As a symptom of the intrinsic verity of values, meaning refers to being and not to situations. It is its "sign", which emerges as a mainstay or a challenge to one to espouse a certain value orientation which is intrinsically important for him or her. In this way, each conscious attitude to values is guided by the perspective of meaning.

However, one's attitude to one's principal values is not always fully conscious. One may not discover which particular values actually are personally most significant until one gets involved in situations where such values are endangered. Therefore, extreme situations can evoke a conscious verification of the meaningfulness of vitally important values.

In extreme situations of the first and second degree one may be forced into taking a conscious decision whether to mobilize one's courage in order to save the situation or one's hope in order to endure the situation, or not to mobilize them at all. One is forced therefore into consciously examining whether the value whose embodiment is threatened or lost does or does not have any meaning.

The extreme situation would cancel itself out immediately, without one having to save anything or trying to bear an unbearable situation if one realizes that, in actual fact, the situation signals that the value in question only seemed to be a supreme values. It may have lost its meaning for one who may have outgrown it, and one's prior acknowledgement may have been only because it had not yet been endangered. That is, it may be due to a certain unconscious inertia, while in the meantime meaning has been transferred to other values.

One then emerges from an extreme situation enriched with a clear awareness of what is really meaningful. For instance, a distinguished scientist, who has suffered a spinal column injury and who has found out that he or she will be able to continue his or her work, but will not be able to walk, may react at first as if their supreme value had been jeopardized. But they will succumb to this extreme situation only very briefly before realizing quite clearly that for a long time the actual meaning of their life had not really lain in the value of physical health anyway. Similarly, an extreme situation easily can undeceive one, e.g., a philosopher who believes that he cannot lead a meaningful life without a certain social status, or the father of a family who is convinced that the material well-being of his closest relatives is of paramount importance.

If, on the other hand, one establishes beyond any doubt that a value whose embodiment is threatened or has been lost nonetheless does retain its meaning, this will serve as a source of virtually inexhaustible inner strength. It is truly remarkable what extraordinary feats can be performed and what an immense amount of hope can be held out by people inwardly integrated through their perception of the meaning of an espoused value. This is the case of a man saving the life of a drowning child, a political prisoner withstanding torture by his interrogators, a wife

forgiving her husband's repeated infidelity and cruelty, or an aging author rewriting his destroyed lifelong work.

If long lasting extreme situations of the first and second degree are involved, one repeatedly has to reassure oneself of the meaning of one's coveted value. Otherwise, the danger may arise that meaning will escape and one will therefore succumb to the impact of the situation after all. A prerequisite for rescue or endurance is repeated restoration of one's clear-cut awareness of whether and why one should still stick to this or that value. Only thanks to a keen perception of meaning does one know quite invincibly what one really wants, what one is working for and in what one puts one's hope, in whatever situation one may find oneself.

This keen awareness of meaning in situations of extreme suffering gives an exceptionally profound dimension to human life, rendering it truly human. If the meaning of a certain value is virtually the only thing that "sustains" one in a situation, where the embodiment of this value is lacking, one meets, as never before, the opportunity to experience fully the most profound, spiritual dimension of one's own life and of leaning thereupon.

The inner strength thus acquired and maintained has nothing in common with the defiance of one who tries — in uncontrolled panic, entirely on his own and at any cost, often using morally unsavory means — to cope with his or her situation in his or her own behalf, without at all examining its meaning.

One who believes, however transiently, that the meaningfullness of a certain value has been established merely by the fact that he or she wants it, runs the risk of becoming bogged down in an illusory imitation of meaning. This cannot for long serve to draw strength for one's own will power in life because, on the contrary, such an illusion tends to live off one's own will and deplete it.

The strength emanating from mere defiance will be used up quickly in an extreme situation. One may lapse into resignation and failure: depression, suicide, hopeless feelings of guilt or a slide to surrogate life values, "solace" in alcohol, drugs, violence, vulgar distraction, overindulgent imagination, etc. Or in a happy moment, even though one initially believes that this would only hopelessly deepen his suffering, one eventually may awaken and with the meekness of a keen awareness may begin to ask about meaning. Thanks to this, one will freely distance oneself from all one's illusions, sorrows, guilts, anxieties, uncertainties and apathy. In this way one will approach the very underpinnings of meaning, which may turn out to be a source of necessary courage and hope in one's life, whether it turns out to be meaningful to remain faithful to one's value or to abandon it.

Conscious verification of the meaningfulness of life values in extreme situations of the third degree qualitatively differs from similar activity on the preceding two levels. This entails not only a mere act of ascertaining whether the given value has meaning or not, but also an intricate process of examining which value really has any meaning. This is either within .the framework of a given alternative or in a previously unlimited, but always at least somehow structured, space offering possibilities of choice. One therefore finds oneself, at least for a time, in a situation marked by lack of basic inner provisions and by uncertainty as to which main values should be used to guide one's life.

For example, a woman doctor, who is both a mother and a scientist in the field of tropical diseases, under the impact of her personal firsthand experience with the greatly insufficient system of medical care in developing countries may begin to re-examine the values of maternal love for her teenage children and of providing assistance to unknown suffering people to whom she feels she is responsible due to her professional qualification. Or an adolescent suddenly will cast doubts

on all the values he or she has recognized up till then because he or she finds that the choice of such values was unconscious and seems to have been directed from outside.

One duly rejects such an absurd situation and embarks on a painful and groping search for a new value orientation, still unknown but certainly more profound and indisputably one's own. Faced with an extreme situation of the third degree, it is particularly crucial to retain unbiased confidence in meaning in general.

Naturally, one may also "seek revenge on fate" in a negativist fashion because of finding oneself in a state of hopelessness as far as values are concerned. One may even derive almost inhuman delight out of what can be termed the cult of absurdity, sometimes with tragic external consequence. But it is destructive enough when an unhappy individual allows their consciousness to be obscured by very intense feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, uncertainty, guilt and despair. It is destructive when one fails to extricate oneself from one's own self, when one attempts to pursue meaning which seems to be escaping, or when one fails to allow oneself to be led without any conditions or strings.

Within the enclosed space of the human mind, all the possibilities remain indifferently open. If one is not to become, in one's own eyes, as unreal as such possibilities, if one is not to be drowned in a sea of indefiniteness and relativity, it is essential to leave this prison and step out of the confines of one's own self and of one's situation. Conscious openness towards meaning is invariably supra-situational (practicable under any situation). This makes it possible to transcend the horizon of all the given possibilities and to assume towards them a novel approach "from above".

Faced with situations in which doubts have been cast on their vitally important values, some are capable of brightening their consciousness as never before particularly through unqualified trust in meaning. They can divest themselves of all the negative and chance influences and positively gravitate towards the substantial. An awareness that I have nothing to lose and everything to gain is in itself a source of peace of mind and concentration, even amidst the hardest suffering.

It is necessary to allow ourselves literally to be permeated by nothing other than our own thirst for meaning to such an extent that we forget ourselves, making ourselves available to meaning instead of seeking it for our own ends. This is the condition for transcending the zone of what from our present standpoint is seen as liable to doubts. It is required in order to open ourselves to that absolute horizon in the deepest perceivable background of our existence: a certain shape of an alternative value orientation for continued movement in life begins to shadow forth.

This key, liberating moment of understanding, when one's own inner image of the fulfillment of humanity reveals itself, is not so much a moment of literal "discovery of meaning", but rather a moment of "discovering ourselves in meaning". This moment arrives only when one is so genuinely concerned with meaning that one longs for it not only because of oneself but because of meaning itself.

One who seeks meaning in such a selfless way, who is willing to let himself be led solely by it and never be distracted by any imitation, on the one hand, or illusion of absolute meaninglessness, on the other, has the prerequisites for emerging from this extreme situation inwardly transformed and liberated due to the certainty of his or her values.

Through the meaning received the order of human experience is again interconnected with the order of being.

Being

Through the external aspect of one's own identity one finds oneself in situations. Through the internal aspect one proceeds from being, while simultaneously gravitating towards being. In this context, one does not differ basically from other beings (see the first section above) even though one follows one's own ontologically unique human path. The fact that human independence and integrity, unlike all other existences, inheres in one's existential relationship with values constitutes the focal point of one's self-determination with regard to situations and to being. Through the choice of values one determines freely the mode of one's procedure from being as well as the mode of one's emergence in situations.

One can be guided by two principal criteria. In view of the situation, each value is more or less practicable, and in view of being it is more or less meaningful. To orient oneself during the choice or defence of values according to their practicability, therefore, means increasing the rate of one's dependence on situations, while to orient oneself according to their meaningfulness means enhancing the rate of one's responsibility towards being. Responsibility towards being means assuming a free attitude to situations; on the contrary, loss of responsibility towards being is conducive to enslavement by situations.

Each extreme situation puts one at a crossroads: whether to take one's bearings according to practicability or according to the meaningfulness of the endangered life value.

One may orient oneself in terms of a situation: to abandon a meaningful value because its embodiment is threatened or made impossible, and to assert a value that is intrinsically perceived as not too meaningful but in a given situation practicable. This course of action guarantees one a certain situational profit but at the same time substantially harms one's human dignity.

Or one can orient oneself intrinsically: to abandon a practicable value if it is meaningless and to uphold a value, which is practicable with the greatest difficulties, but which I intrinsically experience as meaningful. This implies that I manage to persist in a humanely fulfilled harmony with being.

A situational solution of extreme situations subordinates meaningfulness to practicability, the viewpoint of being to the viewpoint of situation: what is practicable is also "meaningful", what is not practicable is "meaningless". The concept of meaning is deprived of its genuine sense as a regulating agent independent of situation.

An intrinsic solution of extreme situations, on the other hand, subordinates practicability to meaningfulness, the viewpoint of the situation to that of being. What is practicable is not necessarily meaningful and what is meaningful does not have to be practicable here and now. The concept of meaning retains its authentic sense so that what is also preserved is that specifically human creative tension between the requirements of practicability and of meaningfulness, which spells out one's dynamic relation to being.

An intrinsic solution of extreme situations thus offers the preservation and promotion of what belongs to human identity and dignity: a free relationship to situations and to one's own life in the name of responsibility towards meaning and being. In intrinsically selected and defended values one experimentally codifies one's free and differentiated attitude to situations and one's responsibly integrated approach to being.

Conclusion

Being, meaning, value, life, situation: to one oriented on being all these concepts have their full meaning and an order of mutual creative tension stemming from being. This resembles the

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tension of a cascade of lively streams flowing gradually from the heights of being down to the full breadth of all situations. A keen sense of the order of this ontological streaming constitutes a condition for one's full endorsement of one's own being.

On the contrary, a situational solution of extreme situations tacitly presupposes that this order is completely the converse, for ontological dominance is ascribed to the situation. To maintain such an idea being must never be allowed into play — its concept is utilized simply for the denotation of a mere summary of all situations. In this way, the situation grows into the supreme power; as an infinitely broad context it incessantly consumes all. Sucked into its whirlpool, one loses oneself and one sense of the whole ontological order. One subordinates one's life to the requirements of the situation and degenerates into a mere struggle for survival and prosperity. "Meaning," if it is mentioned at all, is reduced to a mere expression of satisfaction derived from the practicability of chosen values. The fullness of the human being is then ascribed to the full development of one's abilities to adapt oneself to any situation and to succeed in deriving profit for oneself. This adaptability may even figure as "responsibility"; the power, attained through such adaptability and situationally conditioned, may then be glorified as "freedom".

The conflict between being situation-dominated and being-serving is virtually inevitable. It can develop into an extreme situation for both, their vitally important values contradicting each other. Outwardly, the latter is usually the loser, sometimes to the point of the violent liquidation of physical existence. But the main support of one's human, i.e., spiritually conditioned, existence can never be taken away through the situation.

On the other hand, such a confrontation with the second of the two elementary life options may call forth in the very depth of the soul of the situationist an unexpected feeling of guilt. This is a sudden pang of conscience that he is, after all, acting against being, meaning and values, which — independently of the situation — one probably would endorse as one's own. This is to realize that one is, indeed, acting against oneself. This sense of betrayal or defection from being invariably arrives as soon as the individual realizes that one has threatened a value, which, at the bottom of one's heart, is meaningful for oneself. At the same time it paves the way for re-establishing one's attitude to being.

If, however, such a one remains absolutely consistent in one's situational life and orientation, though this result in exceptional external prosperity, it also entails inward mortification. This extinguishes what is intrinsically most specific to one as a human being, namely, one's creative spiritual existence. Through an inner attachment to meaningful values, this offers one a fabulous privilege among all other existences: a free attitude to situations and a responsible relationship with being.

No external situation provides a reliable breeding ground for what makes one human. Each attempt at striking root in the presupposed universality of outward situatedness, in the desire to master situations by incorporating oneself into them, to prosper under any circumstances, inevitably leads on the contrary to human independence being swallowed up and disintegrated by the relativity of this situatedness. In it one becomes callous, devoid of the inner support from meaning and being, captive and irresponsible. Such a one is dissolved and disintegrated into building material for the purely external (biological, economic, social, psychological and ideological) factors of one's life. In a word: one loses oneself.

At the opposite end of the scale, human partiality rooted in being, and without ambitions towards universal situational profit and power, receives life-giving fulfillment, free and responsible. This is an absolute life dimension.

One who is inwardly happy thanks to this fulfillment is capable of meaningfully coping, even with immense situational suffering. One who is "happy" only outwardly, as a result of a favor granted by the situation and for the purpose of situational appearances, is at the same time quite helplessly exposed to a hidden innermost suffering. Before this one can either ignominiously flee in search of external distraction or admit to oneself, frankly and meekly, the intrinsically significant meaning of such suffering, which in turn challenges one to mend one's ways.

Whatever the vitally important values which this or that human individual has chosen so far according to this or that criteria, in each situation involving their threat — in each extreme situation — one is offered a basic new opportunity in life. Once again one finds oneself at the crossroads between being and situation, between the preservation and loss of one's human identity, between being and non-being. An extreme situation may even be directly summarized also as a situation which presents the question: to be or not to be with extreme urgency.

One is more if one chooses and defends one's vitally important values primarily according to their meaning, that is, in accordance with being, not if he chooses and the defends these values primarily according to their practicability, that is in accordance with the situation.

If an individual goes out of his way to avoid extreme situations, which is possible only through an unconditional adjustment to any situation, then one rejects one's specifically human being. If, on the other hand, one tries to accept any situation in freedom and responsibility — which is possible solely in unqualified loyalty to being — then such a person develops towards their specific fullness.

Translated from Czech by Jan Valeška

Chapter III
Human Dignity

Jan Payne

In various political agenda we call for a precise definition or at least description of what the dignity proper to any human being might be. This question has been a quarrelsome issue across the whole European tradition and its solution in terms of the human essence is by no means an easy task: what makes the human being a person? Is there anything that in principle protects against the fabrication of a similacrum resembling the person that might be considered the distinguishing feature. After abandoning the zeal of modernism that promised a solution based on rationality and that formerly had replaced the scholastic notion based on the divine image, we remain in a relativistic doubt about what might be a solid foundation for further political thinking. Acquaintance with the essential attributes of the human being is a condition for the development of the customary and legitimate framework necessary for the development of the whole of society.

In studying the essential traits of the human being particular attention is paid to innate human rights, and what can be derived therefrom, what must be recognized and what under certain conditions might be infringed upon;[1] in other words: what is given by culture and what is given by nature as regards the rights of the human being? It is necessary to consider whether rights are *ontological* or *historical*. If we take into account evolution and tradition we are able to bring these approaches into some convergence, since the *historical* and ontological portions of human life are entangled together and any disposition can be twisted by a contract and any contract can ripen into a disposition of the human being. Thus, the nature of a person is the culture as such obtained through one's heritage from one's ancestors, while culture adds something to the nature with which a person is born. There is a mutual exchange between what is given, *thesei*, and what has *physei* or roots.[2]

This puzzle referring to the range of rights becomes urgent particularly in the realm of medicine with its duty to decide when to initiate and when to withdraw the administration of extremely expensive and exhaustive services. Yet not only health care alone, but also other spheres of the social life depend on the conception of inborn rights, among which the notion of justice as such holds a central position. Any lawyer dealing with justice, be it distributive or retributive, is compelled to draw line between *ius naturale* that must not be encroached upon and *lex positiva* that is amenable to changes (if any rule is to avoid emptiness it must be anchored in and adjusted to concrete experience). Yet we can deal with that frontier not as something that divides, but as binding together both sides: this dialectical approach is proposed here to establish the philosophical grasp of the enigmatic issue of human dignity.

Therefore we shall not pursue the simplifying, and still quite ordinary way, of rejecting one of two possible solutions, but shall undertake the complicated way which attempts to hold both poles together. The immediate result of this conception is the reverse of the classical position for it holds that human dignity is not a *substance* in itself, but a *process* in the relation between the two poles of mental life. Now we are challenged to account for both poles in their nature.

Some Basic Methodological Guidelines

A natural condition for any notion of dignity attached to the human being is that it must be essential and that everybody ought to have the same share in it. In contrast to this stipulation there is no trait of a person given by the senses which might be deemed as the same in all people. Of course, we must not neglect empirical data entirely. But experience is broader than that given merely by the senses. Beyond registering outer events we are aware of inner ones occurring in the mind, which can be inquired into by philosophy.

The merit of phenomenology is that it has enabled the mind to become a matter of research. Phenomenology has cultivated reflection so that it provides an efficient tool for the investigation of immediate experiences (*Erlebnisse*). Thus we shall start our ethical enterprise concerning human dignity with inquiry into our private world. What we meet there first is naturally our feelings,[3] which represent both the utmost horizon of the mind and its proper matter as well. Everything happening in the mind including logical operations (operations of logical sort represent, after all, its formal side) is tinged by some kind of affect, which if reflected upon merges again into another affect, and so on.[4] This important structure of mind deserves further discussion which is the aim of this chapter.

As we cannot scrutinize all the dimensions of feelings we therefore restrict ourselves to some relevant traits. These should help us to achieve a notion of the dignity attached to the human being and to construct on it an ethical framework for human behavior. We have selected two aspects of feelings that have special affinity to morality in order to explore them by phenomenological means.

Experience with Reality through Force Expressing Power

In the first moment feeling renders an encounter with reality.[5] Here reality is perceived due to some kind of affect inasmuch as every affect is an expression of resistance exerted by the hardness of things.[6] Ordinarily we get a plausible proof of the stone and discern it from a mere dream about a stone by the pain that ensues from kicking it. Indeed this proof is still an experiential one and lacks absolute validity since it is possible that pain is a result of anticipation that in some way lacks satisfaction. We are hungary due to withheld food and this hunger might even resemble pain in its outcome. On the other hand, if all our expectations were fulfilled, there would be no awareness of them, for then all the feelings would have melted away. The feeling underlying everything else therefore must be the feeling of incongruence between physical and psychic forces known as astonishment (*thauma*) in Greek terms, and even dread (*jirrat*) in Hebrew.[7] The bulk of biological facts demonstrate this.[8]

Having recognized that reality is perceived through an affect and having defined affect as a product of mismatch between expectation and reality, we are obliged to correct our grasp of reality and the ontological scheme as well. The fact that there is something at all (*uberhaupt etwas und nicht vielmehr nichts*) is not merely an objective datum, but is shaped by a subjective component as well. Human subjectivity has two strictly separate roots: the *unconscious* one explored above and the classical*conscious* one; the confusion of both has triggered great confusion in philosophy.[9] It must be stressed that this contribution of subjectivity to objectivity is surprisingly influential, not if it is in accord, but if it is in discord with the thing. Thus the hyletic principle behind appearance acquires a totally different meaning.

On the basis of these reflections we proceed to note that since the experience of our own affect betrays a kind of resistance exerted by the hardness of things, we can conceive of that affect also from the other side as a manifestation of power, which power is either of psychic forces over physical ones or of physical forces over psychic ones. At this point we are close to the ethical

consequences of the above: the encounter with reality is shaped as feeling, which must always be regarded as feeling of power that is either beyond or below us (to be aware of this latter power requires more refined reflection and more mature morality than the former).[10] If those forces are strong enough and if we are able to take control over those forces by giving preference to one of them (*tun und lassen*) we have legitimate *responsibility* for our deeds, whereas conversely whenever those forces drag us about we are exculpated from responsibility no matter what the outcomes of those forces would be. The question of what the proper control might be will be postponed for now.

Experience with Liberty through Value Judgements

The second moment of feeling blends with the first and is an appraisal as to its value for the person involved: since some mis-matched estimation of this kind brings about a feeling which only with difficulty is discernable from the original one. Yet this distinction must be made: the feeling itself and its value are so different in their nature that any affect that is at some time positive can acquire in other conditions a negative weight, and vice versa.[11] The alternative, either of evil or of good in itself is not a biological one. The argument is quite plain: animals are totally governed by their pleasant affects whereas humans often eschew the pleasant for the sake of other goods. Even as they apply good to what is actually pleasant this application is due to an appraisal, and is therefore an addition. Pleasantness as such is for humans deeply alien to that of animals and quite often is estimated as evil. In philosophical terms we can articulate this fact by categories of means and goals: goals give their value to means, but need not necessarily be absolute.[12]

We evaluate any affect (different from pleasantness) by our judgement, and any judgement beyond its explicit meaning has an implicit one. If I assert that something would be bad, in consequence I must admit it might have been better and conversely. Values are not independent entities, but merely a product of the valuation of things. This cannot be escaped, for any determinist who is consistent enough cannot but depict soberly an order of events, while judgement on their value must be put in brackets.[13] For determinism nothing is either bad or good; everything is merely being. If, on the other hand, I pass a judgement about value the consequence is that willy-nilly I reckon with a free agent who sometimes and somewhere has caused the outcomes; this is the argument for liberty from private feelings. Of course another task is to find the location of the author of the either bad or good thing. At first approach there is no proof of the actuality of liberty and we are never certain about who should be treated as a free being; we can merely be sure that someone has been free.[14]

Our judgement about the value of an affect conveys our recognition of liberty and our confession that we are convinced about it, wherever or whenever. This proof of liberty is still quite poor as it shows merely that someone could have acted otherwise and that she/he is capable of decision making of a yes/no kind. Since there is no other dualism of yes/no besides this one, such a notion of liberty must be identical in all who are acknowledged as people, be they children, elderly or mentally handicapped. The sole decision we are able to make again has a yes/no shape as to whether someone would be acknowledged to possess the ability of choosing between yes/no. In this ability there is necessarily a perfect equivalence of all the people while this equivalence is something that is not, but that ought to be. We can merely take for granted that since judgement is built on them decisions of the yes/no kind in regard to one's feelings have proper control over the forces coming from either outside or inside and the art to change them.

From these preliminary considerations we come to the question of dignity itself. It has been mentioned that dignity is not a substance but process; this movement will now be sketched out. It has two focuses: interpretation of one's behavior and assignment to the self. We can suggest in advance that this movement is hermeneutic in character.

By assignment we acknowledge that some appearance, either the body with its deeds or the resulting work, is a manifestation of the core of the other, which core itself allows for only a sheer yes/no choice. As to this choice we know almost nothing except that, although despite the equality of all people (it is amazing that small individual differences are smoothed over), it depends on the customs of the community in which we live: this assignment thus has a historical background. Yet if it lacks ontological anchoring that assignment might be a mistake. The trouble is that decision making is always a unique thing in itself (*Ding an sich*) and as such eludes any conceptual conceivement. Anticipation of the yes/no choice is in principle infeasible (due to the lack of any regularity there) and thus this choice with its responsibility is an obscure secret for our thinking. The sole way of penetrating through appearance to the core of the other is indirect, namely, by interpretation of his or her behaviour.

Regarding interpretation we have to make several remarks: interpretation does not offer recognition, but opens up comprehension of one's neighbor.[15] This comprehension is the way we grasp the uniqueness of the human being. In any appearance we assess its power. Since power is a mirror of reality a pure immanence can be recognized and compared through measurement with others. This is the onset of the proper hermeneutic enterprise which comprises two steps.

The first step concerns the question of forces as something that we assume in coming across power. For us power as such is a result of interaction between outer and inner forces. By the forces coming from within ordinarily we mean ours; however, the forces coming from outside might still represent power as a result of interaction between outer and inner forces while the forces coming from within we now impute to the neighbor. This suggestion of foreign inherent forces (unconscious drives) overcomes the classical homogenous notion of phenomena and allows "slots" for the yes/no choice through the judgement of the other. That keeps control of the power, but escapes a positive grasp. What we can do is merely assess it in a negative way from its environment.[16] This is the second step.

Thus the sole thing we can rely on is the evaluation at two levels, allotting the judgment of a neighbor as either good or evil and whether that judgement influenced the direction of the operating power (either inner or outer). The next moment requires us to correct our mistakes starting the same process again: this is the elementary hermeneutic circle.

In these terms the elementary hermeneutic circle might be articulated also between the power and the judgement, between the freely developed framework and the true will of a neighbor, between free creation and the interpretation of the reality that is the behavior. All these alternatives take us round the elementary hermeneutic circle of understanding. This circle penetrates the veil of the phenomenal world amenable to recognition, while bridging to the noumenal[17] world that is attained merely by comprehension and the theomenal18 world that is proposed solely by our deliberation towards the neighbor.

Having prepared the mould we can now summarize what dignity is. The dignity closely related to the feelings of any human being has two poles: the pole of judgment as something that is properly free and the pole of will that exerts some power over things. The latter pole is rather an ontological one whereas the former pole depends on the historical background, The two poles are

divided by the sensual veil between them. Both these poles are then closely connected with each other through the elementary hermeneutic circle. Only through this process can we honor the dignity of other people.[18]

At this point the elementary hermeneutic circle can broaden into the general one: there is the behavior not only of the other, but also of ourselves, which brings a new dimension into our thinking. After the first interpretation we can identify the conjecture of power with the judgement it included and its direct experience (*Erlebnis*). This opens up the complexity of our own free will, and of the same structure we can expect in the other. Therefore the general hermeneutic circle moves between the free will in others and in us: from the decision making in us to the decision making in the other and back. This is the hermeneutic movement and process that establishes the dignity of the other: we are moral and treat people as human beings only if we are prepared to be empathic in understanding free will through ours and our free will through theirs.

Notes

1. This question has been studied particularly in the classical figures of liberalism and is reflected for example by Hayek. F. von Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1973), ch.: I/4 and II/8.

2. Here we employ the notion of Heidegger and other thinkers, who emphasize that we are to dispose of, and be responsible for, our own human essence; the human being comprises both "Entwurf" and "Geworfenhei." M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 1979), pp. 336-346.

3. In the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl little attention is paid to affectivity, whereas some of his pupils attached to it a great meaning; among them particularly Scheler, [*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik* (Bern: Francke, 1966), pp. 331-345] pointing out that feelings offer intuitive recognition of values and Heidegger [*Was Its Metaphysics* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1949)] who claims that the mood (*Stimmung*) is a revelation of being.

4. We can find a conception of consciousness as affectivity for example in Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, tr., Ph. Mairet (London: Methuen, 1962), pp. 23-28, and 91.

5. Apprehension of reality through affects also has been argued (*ibid.*, pp. 56-63).

6. Our approach as regards resistance (*Widerstandigkeit*) is close to that of Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik* (Bern: Francke, 1966), pp. 149-156. Yet we counterpoise not volition on the whole and reality, but unconscious internal and external forces.

7. Wonder is the simplest affect according to the phenomenological inquiry of P. Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, tr., E.V. Kohak (New York: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 253-267.

8. A notion of affects as a mismatch has been recently accepted by N.H. Frijda, *The Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 256-257 and 333.

9. The difference between postmodern and modern ways of thinking is probably given by the notion of subjectivity which is conceived of not as a simple referential point, but as composed of the complicated level of unconsciousness, with consciousness being something else merely grafted to it. This is a departure from the former philosophy pursued particularly by German Romantism, which proposed an absolute mind (*Geist*) that is identical with being and that governs all historical events. Achievements of independent individuals are therefore creative merely in illusion and owe their originality totally to the decisive influence of the spontaneity of single people. This approach

is represented particularly by Hegel, *Vorlesungen uber die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, ed. K.L. Michelet (Berlin, 1840), ch., B/1/c.

10. This is the psychoanalytical skill to explain unconscious influences as stated for example by Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious" in *Man and His Symbols* (London: Aldus Books, 1964), pp. 3-17.

11. Of course there might be a dispute whether the two affects can be the same at all; this question was treated first by Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr., G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), pars., 256-270

12. This distinction between *agathon auton* and *pros* "has been raised by Aristotle. *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. J.E.C. Welldon (New York: MacMillan, 1906), ch., I/4:1096b.

13. The question is whether any single judgment might be quit of value and valuation at all; some thinkers deny it seriously, as for example, R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), ch., 1/I and 5/II.

14. There is also a deterministic notion of the world where the sole free agent is the god at the beginning who determined all its events. Such a god might even be wicked as is the case of the "demiurgos" in gnosticism, particularly by the prominent Basileides. Iranalus, *Adversus haereticorum*, ed. W. Harvey (Cambridge, 1857), ch., I/25.

15. Stress upon the aim of comprehending the intentions of the neighbor reflects the founder of the modern hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher, who asserted that "the ultimate aim of hermeneutics is to understand the author better than he understands himself." P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, tr., J.B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 153.

16. It is an achievement of thinkers like Plotinos, Dionysos Aeropagita, Scott Eriugena and Cusanus. Nicolaus Cusanus, *De deo abscondito*, in *Opera omnia*, ed. E. Hoffmann and R. Kalibanski (Leipzig, 1444/1932) that employs "apophatic" attributes of the transcendent being: that God is not. . . . Here the transcendence of God is a model for the transcendence of judgement in itself that still is "behind a curtain".

17. While preserving their original sense we have borrowed the words "phenomenal" and "noumenal" from Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed., J.H. von Kirchmann (Deidelberg: Georg Weisss delberg); ch., II/3, pp. 249-268.

18. We use the word, "theomena" and "theomenal" derived not from the word "theos" as it would seem, but from the words "titheo" and "thema" that mean to "appoint" and "assign".

Part II
Dialogue: Interchange as Human Transcendence

Chapter IV
Dialogue as a Way to Humanity

Jolana Poláková

The Philosophy of Dialogue

A programmatic philosophical reflection of dialogic thinking in the 20th century has been developing remarkably, tied to the greatest crises in the history of Western society. The origin and continued development of an European philosophy of dialogue represents a sensitive and radical intellectual reaction to the two most tragic events in the 20th century — the crisis of spiritual values brought about by the First World War and the profound shock to democracy by the rule of totalitarian dictatorships.

In Western thought, the dialogic philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber — having originated in the early 1920s — constitutes the first systematic awakening of an awareness of the irreducible dimension of "You" or "Thou" in the ontology of human relations. The tragic objectifying of "the other one" and his or her degradation into cannon-fodder for the great power interests has its spiritual roots in a seemingly unchangeable, and for centuries ingrained, theoretical reduction of one's being to its non-relational parameters. This thought of man only in the third or first person: He, She or I, and the other as my "other self". The lack of relational receptivity and the spiritual dominance of European selfhood in ordering the world eventually caused a profound crisis of European humanity. It has been precisely the "solipsism" of philosophical thought, its neglect of the relational dimension, that has proved to be the weakest spot in the modern concept of humanity. This manifests itself in its deficiency at a time when "I" becomes capable of bestially turning against its own "You". The philosophers of dialogue, shocked by the experience of the catastrophic war and out of the depth of their spiritual conviction, demonstrated that the main condition of humanity is my relationship to "You". The "I" is not a centre of the universe, but a gift from my Creator to You.

The two microcosmos of personal relations and of social entities comprehensively affect one another. If a personal relation to God and to one's neighbor, which is the foundation of Judaeo-Christian spirituality, vanishes from the soul of modern Europe, then the whole design of the world is marked with this deficiency and the entire praxis will have corresponding consequences. This reflection by the first generation of the philosophers of dialogue was radically deepened after the second recent catastrophe in European history — after Auschwitz and the Gulag. After the collapse of Nazi totalitarianism, Emmanuel Lévinas began systematically elaborating the ethical dimension of "I and You", shifting the focal point of this relationship still further towards "the other one" and reflecting personal responsibility as the deepest substratum of social justice. He analyzed the genesis and function of totalitarianism as such and radicalized the awareness of the "otherness" as a redeeming transcendence against immanent, horizontal being. Till now, his philosophy has been the last and strongest word coming from this line of philosophy.

The crisis, which is a challenge to dialogic thought at present, is no longer describable in terms of apparent liquidation of other human beings, but in terms of a simple passive collapse of human relations. This collapse is sometimes diagnosed as a negative phenomenon accompanying postmodern radical pluralism.

Postmodern Pluralism and Dialogue

The postmodern era was one of civilizational and cultural recapitulation. Its synchronic pluralism was a projection of the diachronic pluralism of traditions, which were revived in the postmodern era and which meet one another. The resultant plurality of convictions, values and norms that find themselves in the most different interrelationships (from convergence to conflict) is a stimulus and subject of various modes of communication. In a situation where their common context is reduced to an utterly abstract principle of unbridled plurality, born out of the levelling off of all temporal-spatial factors, the very possibility of communication cancels itself out. This obtains not only between different traditions, but often within the framework of one and the same tradition. This is due to the fact that the modes of its interpretation, not being guided by any delevelling criterion of correctness, become instrumental not in the development of that tradition, but in its collapse. Thus, the criterion for the correctness of any statement or act becomes this statement or act itself. In this way, the principle of unconditional individuation turns into a mechanism of gradual but endless decomposition because once arisen a thing is not subjected to the need to be bound to anything outside itself. At the same time to seek a criterion of correctness in oneself means a new explosion of plurality of possible self-interpretations which, once again, are not guided by anything external to themselves, and so on and so forth.

This process has fatal consequences in dehumanizing everyday relations, invariably turning its edge, with cruel clockwork tenacity, against that which is not (in an ever narrowed down sense) "our own", but "the other one". A counterpoise to this process may only be a movement proceeding from the potentialities of dialogue. This can be linked to the fact that its contextual prerequisites lie in the very principle of plurality.

Dialogue springs from the same trans-immanent nothingness into which the postmodern infinite differentiation collapses. Although not coming with ready criteria, it restores the possibility of communication, thus transforming the levelling-off disintegration into new creation. Emerging out of the latent nothingness "before Creation", it has its *telos* from that, namely, to put everything into the relations mediated through this purifying and substantiating nothingness in which, particularly at the time of crises or catastrophes, we finally come to enquire why we really are, what we were born for. Such a contingent plurality of human singularities, which is capable of reflecting autonomously in its members the nothingness of one own's isolated being, is also capable of turning towards mutual incontigent relatedness. Through nothingness which underlies our being we drop out of ourselves into relationship with the other one and becoming capable of togetherness.

The part of our postmodern humanity which is capable of being dialogically transformed can be a new starting point for a constructive movement.

The Extra-ordinariness of Dialogue

Dialogue is left as the only chance for communication in situations where the possibility of understanding another person utterly fails: where it is impossible to place that person into the same order in which I myself am placed, or at least, to find some constructive connections between him and "my" order. Furthermore, only when this possibility is out of the question, is there chance for a "pure" dialogue in the true sense of the word, or, to be exact, does dialogue reveal its most profound potentialities. It is apparent that in this most intrinsic sense dialogue is communication

which breaks through the boundaries of mere comprehension: "dia-logue" is a penetration beyond my or our order of thinking, towards the living reality of the other one.

In this way, the transcending nature of dialogue eliminates the idolatry of any construed meaning and makes it possible to accept meaning which, on the contrary, constitutes and transforms us. Its source is the Infinite of which I catch a glimpse through the slits in my order, through nothingness and absurdity.

In a "space" of transcendence thus opened, an unconditional openness is possible — not as a senseless disintegration, but as an act of acceptance of the Other one — into Meaning which touches both of us. This character of dialogue spells out the simple fact that the core of dialogue takes place outside the sphere which is humanly disposable. Interaction which wants to preserve the character of dialogue should not take anything for granted.

Dialogue and Discourse

The development of postmodern society has been aiming at an ever greater distancing from all the ideal models of the communication community through which modern rationality has ever more been enclosing itself into the ghetto of its deontological fictions. It is hopelessly burning out within, while life continues. On many occasions it seems to be going down towards the bottom; but at the bottom of life one finds not ideas, rules or exchange of arguments, but integral human communication into which Transcendence may enter.

The vertical openness of dialogue relativizes the horizontal criteria of a discursive consensus. A discursive effort to attain relationless formal universality which, through its emptiness, eventually allows any formally endowed acts of arbitrariness, is surpassed by dialogue and subordinated to the relational search for content for universality. Its infinite fullness is granted according to the so-called principle of grace: at its own discretion and independently of human ambitions. Seen from this viewpoint, dialogue is a way to opening, of subordinating an anthropological action perspective to one that is theological.

Unlike artificial human universalities, the genuine universality of this perspective brings an intrinsic confirmation of each uniqueness: it is universality that creates not generalities, but relations. Not representing any abstract pattern, it is a point of encountering virtually all singularities. Dialogue is an entrance to this relation which is opened without any restrictions, and hence always the same in an infinite plurality of unique dialogical encounters. The integrating effect of the dialogue principle on all the spheres of human experiencing and thinking is conditioned by its transcendent nature. In it, the horizontal movement "towards" is always synthesized with the vertical movement "through" and "above". In dialogue, each particularity is thus rendered transparent and is elevated into a universal relational context.

Dialogue liberates and transforms, being liberation and transformation itself. In it there is an outgoing interaction underway between all the dimensions of the human, an interaction which does not cancel differences and which respects mystery. This is what creates productive unity. It can be observed that dialogue is, to a greater or lesser extent, a hidden driving force of all the modes of human communication as long as their goal is to overcome the mortifying self-sufficiency in this or that sphere of human life. Only certain pseudo-communicative structures of self-absolutized human power, whose feedback is just an impetus for a more perfect act of subjugation, are thoroughly closed to transcendence.

Dialogue, transcendence and creative humanity belong to one another. They express three different aspects — communicative, theological and anthropological — of the same productive

relational mutuality between the relative and the absolute. Through dialogue each human singularity takes a share in the universal fullness of being. Through dialogue it bypasses, opens up and surpasses each case of the totalitarianism of systems and each act of terror committed in enclosed worlds. But by overstepping the horizontal order, it does not find itself in a horizontal chaos but rather in a vertical order of love. The theological dimension of dialogue is a source of strength to attain freedom — not only freedom, however, but also responsibility.

As a result, dialogue is a mode of emancipation of the human which does not turn against impersonal necessities and pressures with the same impersonality of the discursive and manipulatory approach. Eventually this succumbs to, and reproduces, what it originally wanted to oppose. But, by itself, dialogue shapes and embodies an alternative which is untouchable and unconquerable by any tendency to impersonalization since this alternative has its starting point, and is anchored radically, outside that area.

Dialogic Truthfulness

By not reducing the truth to a consensual formulation, dialogue opens up each consensus to what transcends it — to what there is. In this way, it also goes beyond the horizon of postmodern relativism. By insisting on the unimageability of truth, it stimulates the truthfulness of human attempts at its imaging. Thus, it becomes a permanent spiritual being on the journey, a never ending shared pilgrimage after the gradual fulfillment of the relation to all. Standing in humility before the mystery of being, any system of ideas and any world of experiences ceases to be a prison for man and becomes an instrument, an open opportunity.

The liberating importance of aiming towards the truth is based on dialogical respect for what I do not understand, and yet do not want to lose my relation to. Therefore, dialogical knowing has the nature of a patient, loving adventure in which I voluntarily give up my self-assurance; courageously I subordinate myself to the unknown. Dialogical relation to this has neither a speculative nor an observatory nature. It is an intrinsically engaged total conversation, a transcending flare-up, a purified identification with what I yearn to know.

Language from the Viewpoint of Dialogue

The communicability of the truth known through dialogue, just as the very linguistic mediation of dialogue, makes it imperative to assume an unreduced attitude to language itself.

In dialogue, language as a system of signs is just an aid to relation, which permeates language, appropriating it and creatively working with it. Despite modern linguistic reduction, he who speaks and that which is spoken of does exist outside language. The possibility of linguistic creativity is conditioned precisely by this fact. In case the world is identified with "the world of language", there is nothing to conduct genuine dialogue about and no one with whom to conduct it.

In dialogue, language is adjusted to relatedness, not the other way round. Language receives its life from dialogue; without contact with what there is, it dies. Even my speaking Self becomes real or unreal depending on the extent of the reality I allow to enter into my words. If I am more my own myself in dialogue, this is because in it I intrinsically stand up for that which is — and then also my language meets its intrinsic destination. If I transcend it with a genuine contact with reality, it, too, will transcend me with a genuine contact with that with whom I want to speak. This transcendent character of dialogue is transferred onto everything that may serve it.

The freer we are from language, the freer our language is itself. The system of signs can function only in relation to an indisposable reality. In the opposite case, it does not "mean" anything, but ceases to be itself.

In the end, the predominance of relation over language means that a dialogic relation may cover more than could be communicated by language.

Dialogue and Ethics

The principle of dialogue can be perceived as an initial principle of ethics. It establishes the moral endeavor in an unconditional respect for the non-I in love. It systematically concertizes its imperative as respect for otherness, as a relational decentering of the I and as a shifting of the centre of gravity into You, independently of whether it will ever be reciprocated or not. Dialogic ethics is not exhaustible by rules, which it goes beyond. Its practice does not deal only with what still is morally permissible and what no longer is. It does not move at the lower threshold of the norm and does not bargain over the possibilities of its violation. Dialogic ethics can rather be called an attitude which looks out in the opposite direction: how to do for You more than is obligatory.

Dialogic Fullness of Humanity

Sociological, epistemological, linguistic and any other forms of unrelatedness are an impoverishment of humanity. Basically these are deprived of altruistic dynamism and its transcendent motivation. In egoisms, the forms of human existence and mutual contact, however comprehensive they may be, are analogous to subhuman animal, vegetative or mechanical forms of existence and contact. In this context, the growth of the dialogic potential within the individual, group and social life looks like a mode of redemption. Dialogue replaces solipsist idolatry with a relation to reality. It transforms destructive, entopic plurality into a productive, creative one; the enclosed space of human immanence is opened to that which transcends it.

The dialogic fullness of humanity thus attained has an almost infinite number of mutually inspiring and potentiating dimensions. At the level of philosophical abstraction the following aspects emerge:

- intrapersonal: Dialogue confirms personal humanity in its integral quality. Unlike all the other modes of communication, it confirms not only its "horizontal" or immanent dimension, but also its "vertical" or transcendent dimension.
- interpersonal: Dialogue allows for the constitution of a fruitful, internally differentiated "we": acceptance of the otherness of the other one eliminates both a rift and unity at the cost of reduction.
- anthropological-theological: Dialogue is established as a synthesis of relations of the "communio" and "religio" types. Rendering human relations transparent for a relation with God brings them infinite enrichment, permanence and basic support vis-a-vis all the factors of life operating against relatedness.
- humanistic-realistic: Dialogue balances the interrelation between the personal and the impersonal in human life without the personal being reduced and the impersonal neglected. The independence of dialogic humanity, based in an asymmetry of relation between transcendence and immanence, allows for the same creative asymmetry in human relation with subhuman realities.

- intercultural: Dialogue renders any cultural plurality productive. It maintains positive relations even beyond the bounds of mutual understanding. Through variety it makes it possible to derive mutual enrichment.

- intracultural: Dialogue is an embodiment of the full synthesis of European spirituality. The idea of dialogue was born out of the need of this century, brought to a head by crises, to overcome the dichotomy of the personally relational and the impersonally substantial model of Western thought in favor of the regulative position of universally humanizing relatedness.

Ethics and Dialogue: Some Philosophical Contexts

Vlastimi Hála

The present era has been characterized in various ways as a post-modern age, an era of difference, multicultural, and so forth. What is common to these characterizations, however, is an emphasis on plurality, openness and equality of rights. This relates to the most diverse aspects of human self-realization, including the right to choose an individual life-style and to fulfil one's own conception of the best way to spend one's life. The character of our era also has direct implications for the philosophical basis of ethics. It can be said provisionally and in general, that our age of "post-modernism" and "difference" seems to express itself in the ethical sphere in a contradictory manner. On the one hand, it brings radical and wide-ranging democratization to various spheres of social (and especially political) life. This is because it greatly extends "discursive space" and so enables groups of citizens previously subject to discrimination (women, ethnic groups, homosexuals etc.) to make their voices fully heard. It also recognizes the right of children and young people to their own non-derived culture and style of life, and weakens or rejects authoritative models of life with the values that inform them. On the other hand, of course, the present age opens the door to an overall equalization of values. This phenomenon is in no way independent of the positive characteristics already mentioned, but organically linked to them. It is favorably inclined to the "shaking" even of values which until now have been accepted as self-evident, including those which have created a traditional component of inter-subjective relations.

Universality vs Context

The most striking philosophical consequence of the character of our era is the key place being given in philosophical conceptions to dialogue, or "discourse" as the starting point for the thematisation of present crucial moral and ethical problems. In J. Habermas's classic conception of discursive ethics I regard two aspects as being of key significance: the open and pluralistic character of its starting point and the question of the separation of ethical, i.e. evaluative questions, from problems of a moral, normative and formal character. Both these aspects, of course, are internally related.

In the ethical field the "good" features as the key category. This category is, as it were, the symbolic summarization of the values that are positive in content. For the purposes of a non-metaphysical conception it is not, of course, presented as something ontologically anchored, as it is in the Platonic conception. Instead, it appears principally in the context of questions of the good life, i.e. in the sense of concepts of a certain ideal or desirable way of life as considered in ancient philosophy principally by Aristotle. From the point of view of a discursive concept of ethics these concepts are, of course, linked with a variety of concepts within which they have a specific meaning. Different people and different human societies, different cultures and such like, understandably have differing concepts and ideals, and therefore ethical or evaluative questions cannot be extracted from the contexts which give them meaning. Thus there is no authority competent to pronounce a universally acceptable and binding qualified verdict on these questions of content.

If we cannot expect "consensus" on the content of ethical questions, the situation is different at the moral level of the problem. There the category of justice expresses the "formal" character of the posing of the questions and that orientation to general aspects which comes to the fore in the framework of the rivalry between the claims of competing norms. These "put themselves forward as candidates" for the status of universally founding and therefore universally applicable norms. Such a norm can emerge only as the "product" of intersubjective dialogue and result from a procedure of argument (accepting basic rational rules), where all participants have an equal chance as free autonomous individuals. Habermas emphasizes the importance of the category of justice for this aspect of the problem as well. It is not simply the procedure of argument in dialogue that is the precondition for the universal validity of a moral norm, but its voluntary recognition and acceptance by the participants in the dialogue, under conditions of symmetry, reciprocity and reflexivity. The basic norm may thus become paradoxically both the beginning and only the result. The key place of intersubjective dialogue is hence irreplaceable both for the "input" and "output" of moral theory.

This intellectual position, similar in many respects to the allied conception of Rawls's "Theory of Justice," has understandably been the subject of philosophical disputes. It has been criticized both for giving dialogue the key role in the conception of ethical theory (Tugendhat), and for too great a reliance on dialogue as a decisive authority, since "the devil argues well" (A. Heller).

The main focus of dispute is, of course, the problem of the "contextual dependence" (*Kontextabhangigheit*) of moral (in Habermas's sense "ethical") concepts, opinions, value models, norms, etc. This is because for Habermas the condition for transition from the "ethical" level of posing questions to the "moral" level is the "decontextualisation" of axiological questions, i.e. the transcendence of the context-dependence of their thematisation. The possibility of this "decontextualisation" is not of course self-evident, and indeed represents the heart of the dispute between "universalism" (along with Habermas, its typical representative is Rawls, at least in his classic work) and "communitarianism" (Sandel, MacIntyre, Walzer). While Rawls and Habermas renew Kant's "formalism", of course in individual ways and in new contexts, the communitarians are inspired not only by Aristotle, but by Hegel's critique of Kant.

One can say in rough terms that universalism, linked with the value neutrality of liberalism, insists on the possibility of solving morally relevant problems on the basis of a consensus arising from universally valid and accepted rational argument. This is so regardless of the specific content of the "ethical" positions of the participants in the dialogue and the anchorage of those positions in particular social and cultural contexts.

The classic view of the communitarians, on the other hand, is that questions of a moral character, typically linked to the category of justice, cannot be resolved on the basis of a standpoint neutral to those value models of an "ethical" nature that are informed by a particular concept, i.e. the concept of good. In this connection the communitarians continually charge the universalists (or the "liberal" universalists) with underestimating the importance of the role of tradition and society for the solution of morally relevant problems (Sander, Walzer). They claim that the universalists, in the belief that they are abstracting from special contexts in which questions of the good and the "good life" emerge, are in fact merely giving priority to their own conception of these problems, and therefore are themselves insisting on specific value assumptions which they simply refuse to acknowledge and thematise.

This "rough" reconstruction of the dispute allows us, of course, only a grasp of the basic difference between the two philosophic standpoints. It must be admitted that their representatives have been enriching their arguments in numerous discussions. In so doing, however, they have to

some extent relativized their points of departure and so it appears that instead of strictly antagonistic poles of argument we are now dealing with differences of emphasis on aspects of shared philosophical problems. This leaves aside, of course, a whole range of other elements, among them political issues, which are involved in the area under discussion.

Both standpoints are based on an irrefutable fact: the historical, social and cultural anchorage of concepts, values and norms involving ethics is indisputable. The question is: how strongly shall we emphasize this fact in relation to the problem of contextual dependence and the question of "decontextualisation". I regard as most difficult — and open — the question of whether communitarian relativisation also strikes at the (supposed?) "value neutral" position of liberal universalism. In discussion the universalists answer by pointing to a certain general invariability in rationality which generally allows meaningful dialogue. This is a "transhistorical" and "transcultural" compatibility not only of morally relevant positions, but also of meaningful intersubjective communication in general. The communitarians, in my opinion, are right to emphasize the presence of a particular basic concept of good in the universalist intellectual position. But this concept is, of course, only a general one, and "formal" in the Kantian sense (Kant himself worked with the idea of "the highest good"). Thus it does not seem to provide grounds for the reproach of inconsistency. It is also difficult to find fault with the claim that in morally relevant questions the decisive factor is not the discovery of some "Archimedean point of leverage", but the discovery of an integrating ("overlapping") consensus. But there remains the question of the basis on which such a consensus would be possible at all - and this returns us once again to the argument over the standpoint of a universal rationality.

As has been said, there are a whole range of questions linked to the problem of the relationship between communitarianism and universalism - for example the question of the extent to which political liberalism is organically connected to a "capitalist economy" (see the discussion on Rawls's theory of "justice"), or of whether Habermas's conception of "discursive ethics" is not principally a political conception (J. Cohen). It would also be possible to point out that even the problems which are being thematised in contemporary discussions are not entirely new. For example, in Marxism we find both "communitarian" concepts (the interpretation of "ideology" and critique of "bourgeois" universalism), and a "universalist" conception which expresses itself in the self-understanding and self-interpretation of Marxism. The problem of values has also been widely discussed in the history of philosophy — this problem was thematised in the greatest detail in the conceptions of "value" ethics associated with M. Scheler, N.Hartmann, H. Reiner and others, in the Brentano school, and especially in the work of A. Meinong and others. But what is typical of current discussions is that these problems have been freed from their anchorage in metaphysical contexts and situated in the sober milieu of consensus within interpersonal communication.

An Ethical Minimum

The question which, as it were, "runs through" the specific disputes between universalism and communitarianism is the question relating to what I would call the "unrelativisable core" of morality and what can be termed, in G. Fatziger's phrase, the "ethical minimum". At this point I shall not tie myself to intellectual structures provided by particular philosophical conceptions, but shall discuss the problem more freely. In doing so I shall leave on one side the question of the "ontological status" of this "unrelativisable core" or "ethical minimum" i.e. whether it is only the expression of interpersonal consensus or whether it is grounded in something else. I shall just mention that in relation to this question I am, at the most, prepared to accept Kant's

"postulatorism", of course, in a more radically problematic sense than Kant himself saw it. Although overall I take no unambiguous standpoint in the dispute between communitarianism and universalism, the following lines will perhaps betray a somewhat "universalistic" tendency.

What I have called the "unrelativisable core" of morality can, in my opinion, be understood as a "fact" of our interpersonal moral experience. Its interpretation, of course, may differ and this depends on basic philosophical starting-points. The "formal" viewpoint following from Kant characterizes the approach of discursive ethics. It lays weight on the search for, and delineation of, the most universal scheme possible. This can be filled with the most varied concrete expressions of values without being based on any preliminary hierarchisation of values. In contrast, the "value" conception, which found radical expression in the "material" value ethics of M. Scheler and N. Hartmann, is based on the conviction of the possibility of a concrete preliminary *a priori* development of this "unrelativisable" element into a hierarchically conceived system. There are obviously many other possible philosophical approaches What is essential, however, is that there need not be agreement about the precise conception of that which can be called the "ethical minimum", and need only be agreement on the acceptance and recognition of its meaning as the indubitable foundation of inter-personal communication.

This immersion of the distinctively moral meaning of inter-personal relationships in the basic semantic layer of inter-personal communication is perhaps most beautifully expressed in Kant's well-known example of the "deposit": if I did not return the sum that a person has deposited with me, then — if I "universalized" my attitude not only would there be no "deposit", because the very basis of specifically interpersonal moral relations would be destroyed, but what is more the very possibility of meaningful interpersonal communication would be undermined. Nevertheless, it is also symptomatic that even those thinkers who try like Kant and, yet more radically, Habermas, to build their philosophical conception of ethics (or morality) "formally", and exclude preliminary determinants of content, *de facto* work with basic determinations of content. In the case of Habermas, for example, there is an emphasis on the positive value content of basic moral norms, even if expressed in a negative form such as the biblical commandment, "Thou shalt not kill".

The Present Challenge

The questions that have been mentioned are far from having no more than a specialist philosophical relevance. Ethics like theory thematises the practical problems of life. And it is precisely our concrete present predicament that shows that in the "abstract" theoretical form of philosophical interpretations contemporary questions of general human and direct social importance are being thematised. Questions such as the contextual dependence of ideals about the best way of life, and the character of the competing projects and demands which enter into social and political dialogue are problems which emerge very sharply in the social and particularly the political field. Let us look first at some aspects of the generally social layer of the problem of ethics.

As mentioned in the introduction, the present era is marked by widespread tolerance for various manifestations of individual life styles and individual self-realization. This is opening up a broad space not only for diverse variants in the choice of life style which respect the "unrelativisable core" of morality or "ethical minimum," but also for activities which from the social point of view are at the least problematic, or directly negative, as far as values are concerned. Examples of such activities are ready to hand: the public propagation of such self-destructive activities as drug use, and expressions of "life styles" and "entertainments" involving an aggression

which violates the rights of others who are not interested in them and do not wish to join them. The "theoretical expression" of orientation to negative values is "satanism", not simply — at least I fear so — as an insignificant marginal phenomenon, but as an expression of the emotions of a growing number of young people. If we want to capture and do justice to the pluralist character of our "post-modern" era, then we must not start out from ideal conceptions, but from the empirical reality of individual and collective modes of self-expression which are finding concrete manifestation in life attitudes and styles. Here we meet standpoints which not only in various ways articulate the "ethical minimum" and which accept this basis of interpersonal moral relations as self-evident, but which violate this very basis itself. Such standpoints are also filling the real "discursive space".

The conscious and purposeful pursuit of evil in human behaviour is — despite a dangerous growing tendency — perhaps an extreme case of a life attitude which is prevented from universalization only by the possibility of punishment. What I regard as more socially dangerous is thoughtlessness as a basic life attitude, which as such is also the expression of a certain "ethical" (i.e. relevant for the ethical field) attitude. We meet thoughtlessness as a constitutive moment of self-realization at literally every step: coercively aggressive music and other types of "entertainment", graffiti-scrawled walls. Another whole chapter could be devoted to the question of the specific contextually related opinions and attitudes of various ethnic communities, which Czechs and Slovaks experience most sharply in relations with a part of the Romany ethnic minority. We cannot go into these problems in detail.

Ethically problematic and negative concepts which render impossible transcendence of the content and context of ethics in the direction of the morally formal (in Habermas's sense), and so establish no opportunity for universalization, are then parts of the "real discursive space", but not of a meaningful discursive space. This meaningful space is too narrow for them, precisely because it is limited by respect for the "ethical minimum" in the framework of interpersonal relations. Only such an attitude of respect can be the foundation of a consensus in basic moral questions which maintains variety in matters of specific content. Nevertheless it is obviously necessary to be aware that the polarization of the notion of ethical content and moral form should be understood in a relative and not an absolute sense.

In relation to this set of problems I would also like to dissent from the "transvaluation of all values". Historical experience in my opinion shows that beside values that are really contextually and historically dependent (such as nobility as a rank), very conservative values that are not transient continue to survive (love for one's nearest and such like). These are contained in the very foundations of our civilisation. By this I do not wish to claim that historical development has not enriched ethical life and people's awareness of values. The Enlightenment, so often repudiated today, emphasized the subsequently developed idea of tolerance, which bore and continues to bear positive fruit in the field of interpersonal moral relations. Of course, tolerance, too, is the necessary victim of attitudes and conduct which are hostile to the "ethical minimum" of interpersonal relations.

The sphere of "politics" is a distinct level of interpersonal social relations. Particularly in the first phase of the transition from a totalitarian to an open society there was much talk of the need to anchor politics ethically. Obviously there is an ethical dimension of politics. Especially in the period of political repression and immediately afterwards, the elevation of the unconditionally moral claim as something which lies beneath the purely pragmatic layers of politics played a unique and irreplaceable part. However, with Kant, politics is linked rather to the sphere of legality than to that of morality. In relatively normal conditions an unambiguous establishment,

interpretation and adoption of clear rules of the political game seems preferable to the terrestrial image of the kingdom of heaven.

At the level of "morality" the starting point and address is the individual and interpersonal relations, Here the motive of conduct, attitude and conscience are also relevant in judging morally a person's behaviors. If we go beyond Kant, then it would also be possible to add the emotional relations of an individual, such as trust, love and other personal qualities of conduct. In contrast, in the sphere of "legality" the individual is defined as an abstract element within "macro-social relations". Only acts as the external "products" of interpersonal relations are taken into consideration. Of course, there is no sharp dividing line between legality and morality, and legality too is deeply anchored in morality. But it obviously cannot capture the depths of the dimension of personally anchored moral relations. Only those levels of morality which can be formulated into an impersonal system normative in character can enter into legality.

The interpersonal consensus required by a discursive ethics is, in its own way, implemented in the sphere of "legality". This is, of course, a consensus not of all the participants in the "discourse", but of the majority who by means of election results choose a victorious alternative from the range of competing possibilities and delegate its concrete realization to their representatives. The more fundamental the questions of the legal organization and political and broadly social relations to be decided, the broader the consensus demanded. The acceptance of a legal and pluralist democratic state as the basis of more specific articulations of "legality" in the form of laws, legal norms and so on, from this point of view is obviously the most fundamental element of such a consensus.

To summarize, whether in the wider social context of interpersonal relations or in the narrower field of political legality there are existing opinions and conceptions which explicitly or implicitly do not respect the "ethical minimum". This is the unrelativisable core of interpersonal relations from the moral point of view and therefore the condition of inter-subjective communica-tion. Such opinions cannot fulfill the precondition of meaningful discourse or dialogue. Approaches, which place themselves outside the playing field, not only offend against (in Habermas's sense) "ethics" and "morality", against the good and justice, but, in their own way also reveal the mutual linkage between these in the discursive ethics on thematised levels.

In conclusion, with all respect for the democratic openness of the basic position of discursive ethics, there is something excessive and one-sided about the sharp distinction between the contextual, content-related and the formal sides of the ethical conception. In addition to genuinely variable elements, we also find in the preconditions of morality dimensions on whose unrelativisable and basic character we must insist. We must do so even in the awareness that in real human moral experience the elements of this intrinsic core may themselves appear mutually conflicting, as such differently orientated philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre and N. Hartmann have shown us.

There is another major problem in the need to reflect, at the level of theoretical ethics and not only at the level of practice, on the questions posed by the urgent ecological crisis which threatens to grow into a catastrophe and which compels us to set limits to a one-sidedly anthropocentric human attitude to nature. In the field of ethics it will be necessary to go beyond an exclusively inter-subjective position on this problem. It will be essential to include among the basic ethical human relations those to nature and to the non-human beings which with him create nature. These must be included as an original and irreplaceable relationship. The future of ethical philosophical thought lies in the development of a synthesis of a discursive ethics inspired by values, and an ethics oriented to ecology.

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Chapter VI
Morality and Legality:
The Political Significance of Their Relationship

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Legality and Morality

As is well known, the classic distinction between the categories of morality and legality is to be found in the philosophy of Kant ([7], 107-108). What is involved there is a distinction between action that is merely consistent with the moral law, and action, to use more modern terminology, that is directly motivated by this law. In this paper I shall not, of course, simply reproduce Kant's definition, but shall discuss what I consider to be its more general significance. This is a certain conception or "stylization" of the character of human subjectivity, principally its intersubjective dimension, from the point of view of what is regarded as essential in this context.

For morality what is essential is the character of the motive on the basis of which a person acts. In Kant's conception this motive is an inner and free identification with the moral law. For the relation of law, however, what is essential is simply the 'external' consistency of a certain action with that which, as law, expresses necessity and generality, universal validity and obligation. This differentiation between morality and legality is thus a particular attempt to grasp something fundamental in interpersonal relations. Behind Kant's conception there are two basic aspects: area and viewpoint. These aspects are in fact mutually related, but nevertheless illuminate the problem in different ways.

Legality

Both as area and as viewpoint, the notion of legality has more distinct contours. As an area, legality includes the whole sphere of the legal 'stylization' of interpersonal relations — i.e. the system of laws, legal norms and such like. The angle of vision or viewpoint that we apply to the character of human action, principally, of course, in its meaningful intersubjective dimension, is the consistency of this action with law, its harmony with a law or laws. Here I would like to point out, simply in a preliminary way, that Kant does not consider law to be something indifferent to, or isolated from, 'morality'; to a certain degree it always includes a moral viewpoint within itself. Of course, laws and the legal order itself are things that change and develop, among other things in line with changes in the moral consciousness and ideals of morally relevant action, which predominate in particular human societies. In any case, however, the viewpoint of "legality" represents, towards human action, something given. It has as its relatively clear "objective correlative" the system of universally and necessarily applicable laws and legal norms on the basis of which human actions are assessed. A human action here does not have to be directly motivated by respect for the moral law on which, as it were, the legal system is supposed to rest "in the last instance". From the point of view of legality this is not relevant.

Morality

The case of morality is different in this respect. Here what is involved is a problem that is very hard to grasp. As a preliminary I would like to point out that it is necessary to introduce a certain modification into the Kantian conception on which I base my arguments at a general level. This is because Kant's concept of "morality" is strongly "legalistic" whereas the key category here is the moral law. Does this notion, however, really cover the whole area of essential "phenomena" in respect of morality? I am convinced that it does not. This has been suggested more than once in the history of ethical concepts, and in this context I would like to mention at least the thought of N. Hartmann. He argued that in our morally relevant decisions, we are motivated less by the formal universality of law than by personal individual choice from the scale of possible value orientations, including positive, desirable possibilities for value realization ([4], 523).

While, then, "legality" forms what is at least a relatively identifiable area, in the case of "morality" the situation is more complex. Morality (in a sense broader than that of Kant) expresses the inner sphere of the human personality. In the moral "stylization" of inter-subjectivity there are important subjective and especially interpersonal relationships which cannot be expressed at the level of their "legal" stylization. These include the internal phenomena of inner disposition, conscience, trust, love for others and a whole series of other aspects linked to the unique individual life of each person. For "morality" conceived in this way, the content linked with individual particularity is constitutive. Only partially and to a certain degree can this be "translated" by means of formalization and universalization into the "language" of legality. For the field of morality, then, what is symptomatic is plurality.

Also, of course, in the adjustment of human conduct to that which is desirable from the moral points of view, the moral standard or principle (in Kantian terms the "moral law") is conditioned by a whole range of historical, social and individual factors. Habermas calls this aspect the field of "ethical" problems, but I shall not here discuss the question of the distinction between the "ethical" and the "moral". In any case, there is general agreement on the notion that morality, both as area and as point of view, is much more difficult to define and characterize than legality, and that this fact is organically linked with the plurality of human morally relevant ideas, attitudes, ideals, models of the best life and suchlike.

Here I would mention, as a marginal comment, that the essential difficulty of defining morality has increased considerably as a result of the democratic openness, plurality and multicultural character of the world today. In comparison with Kant's time this phenomenon restricts our capacity to produce an unambiguous and objectively founded formulation of that which is desirable in terms of morality, which is the principle and standard of our actions and what Kant called the moral law.

The Relation between Morality and Legality

Of course, it is not only difficult to grasp the meaning of both our key categories; it is also hard to define their mutual relationship, whether from the genetic or, as it were, the structural point of view. The question it would seem is one of mutual and complex interrelation and the conditioning of one by the other. I shall simply consider a few aspects of this relationship, which is extremely hard to thematize.

From the genetic or historical point of view "morality" may be regarded as preceding legality in view of the basic difference between good and evil as polar categories, which categories are essential for the meaningful formation of interhuman relationships. This basic moral consciousness is the condition for the possibility of the historical constitution of laws and legal systems, and

therefore of that which is defined by the field of "legality". The relation may, however, be formulated in the opposite way: the formation of people's morally relevant opinions is influenced by the action of laws and legal norms. In this sense morality as it were grows upward from a base (of pure) legality. "Morality" as conscious personal and individual reflection — and therefore inner feeling on questions of good and evil, justice and suchlike, in this way represents a more demanding motivation for moral conduct, since it raises itself above pure convention and transcends the purely "conventional" character of the consistency of conduct in relation to historical types of positively given legality (viz. Kohlberg's "conventional" and "postconventional" stage.) Within this perspective morality then represents a kind of categorical "plus", to use the terminology of N. Hartmann — in contrast to "pure legality ([4], 649).

From the structural point of view as well, the relationship between morality and legality is many-layered and many-sided. Morality in relation to legality — as also legality in relation to morality — always represents in any particular relationship something more and something less. This is due to the reasons already introduced in the preceding interpretation. The difficulty of defining the category of "morality" is evident also in the fact that it covers two areas. First there is the kind of basic phenomena of interhuman relations that thematize such fundamental, and morally relevant determinations as the difference between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, decency. Then there is its opposite, i.e. that which is usually considered as the "unwritten law" and the more subtle nuances of the ethical level of interhuman relations. Also falling under the term is that which Habermas calls "contextual dependencies" ([2], 33-36, [3], 119 an.) i.e. opinions, attitudes, "programmes", etc. These are relevant from the moral point of view, but in their particularity are too bound to projections of the meaning of human life or the optimal arrangement of interhuman relations. These have wider, not merely moral, ends such as worldviews and political or religious conceptions. Finally coming within the sphere of "morality" are such phenomena as create a kind of "plus" in contrast to that which may be regarded as merely required from the moral point of view. Value-oriented ethics has concentrated on the analysis of such phenomena. N. Hartmann's examples of these include,*inter alia*, love for others or enrichment by virtue ([4], 453 an.).

It is thus clear that we can include a broader field of phenomena within interhuman relations under the heading of "morality" than can be thematized at the level of "legality". In this sense legality can define only a certain "minimum" in morality. This moral or ethical "minimum" takes out of the many-sided sphere of "morality" only a basic formulable and universalisable section. It leaves out the levels of interpersonal relations that are, as it were, too self-evident as a basis of interhuman relations, and those which, given their plurality and "character of difference", defy universalization. It also leaves out those levels of morality which from the point of view of legal thematization are, so to speak, too high. It can be said in summary that the ethical minimum that can be integrated into the broader sphere of legality, represents certain general and essential features of morality which can be generally accepted as something that goes beyond the particular content and contextual (individual, group, interest-group etc.) dependency of opinions, concepts, programmes and suchlike.

Just as in the case of the "genetic" point of view, however, we can also propose an opposite relation between morality and legality from the structural point of view. This is because legality relates to a broader field of interhuman relations than those which have a morally relevant character, i.e. it also concerns aspects of human action that are neutral from the moral point of view. Here I would like to stress that the "ethical minimum" that is integrated into legality as the morally relevant dimension of laws, legal norms, etc., is not the only moral dimension of legality.

The "formal" character of laws and norms and their universal applicability have of themselves a deeply moral significance, since they constitute a way of expressing the equality of people as citizens before the law (people in this sense in the position of "abstract individuals"). Embodied in law there is thus the principle of justice which — as is known — in modern ethical conceptions competes with the principle of good in its claim to the position of founding category. And thus, just as morality has a legal dimension (which is embodied in Kant's concept of moral law), so legality possesses a moral dimension.

I would, of course, like to add that the relationship between morality and legality has yet further aspects. If this distinction defines a certain "stylization" of human relations, then what is also fundamental is the starting-point which in both cases has a key significance for the creation of these relationships. While in the relation of morality the starting-point is the individual and his relations with other people as an individual, for legality the characteristic starting point is the broader whole of human relations and intersubjectivity — to use modern terminology — of a "macrosocial" type. This aspect is already discernible in the thought of Kant, especially in his sketch of a "philosophy of history", where, in relation to the morally desirable orientation of state-organized societies in the dimension of history, the decisive role is increasingly taken on by factors of a non-ethical character: the interplay of "the mechanism of nature" and the teleological principle. It appears as if the quantitative growth in human structures is accompanied by change in the character of the factor fundamentally determining a given "stylization" of intersubjectivity, and as if the motivational and formational power of the moral law weakens so significantly that its role is somehow taken over by the non-ethical factors mentioned ([12], 454-462).

Paul Ricoeur expresses the problem when he speaks of the essential difference between one person and another, "short" and "long" relations, in which the first are the direct relations between man and man while the second are interhuman relations penetrated by institutional mediation. In Ricoeur's conception as well, this difference in relations, which has both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension, establishes a differing character of intersubjectivity in a sense comparable to that of our distinction between morality and legality ([13], 105).

Another way of approaching a related problem is to be found, I believe, in the distinction between types of human community as either "Gesellschaft" or "Gemeinschaft", which was put forward in German and Austrian philosophical thought in the 19th century. This distinction thematizes the difference between the abstract and impersonal character of society ("Gesellschaft") on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the particular, personal character of interhuman relations (including moral relations), which defines a community in the sense of a "Gemeinschaft" ([5], 92) The problem also is reflected partially in the contemporary dispute between communitarianism and liberal universalism, which while principally a controversy within morality, is also linked to the question of the character of interhuman relations and of what follows therefrom for questions of the conditioned and the unconditioned, universality and particularity, etc. ([16]).

Just as within the moral sphere we find various conflicting aspects of questions of good and evil, justice and the optimal arrangements of interhuman relations, so in the field of legality we also meet various, even contradictory, approaches to basic principles. Morality and legality also come into conflict as the basic angles of vision on various important aspects of interhuman relations ([6], 132). The existing legal system may be criticized from the moral point of view, for example, at those times when opinions motivated by moral reflexes as it were overtake the conceptions built into existing "legality" (for instance the notion of human dignity and people's basic equality as citizens before the law in the conceptions of the French Enlightenment philosophers). In the opposite way, however, certain moral concepts that have already found their

way into existing legality may come into conflict with the prevailing moral consciousness and value system of a society. In this case legality as it were overtakes the contemporary predominant moral point of view (one example might be the resistance shown to the Patent of Toleration at the popular level, that had been much influenced by the Catholic church).

Essential for the understanding of the cases mentioned and other controversies and conflicts is the fact that both key categories represent very striking ways of expressing views on the questions of the desirable arrangement of human relations, as they are expressed in the intersubjective *dialogue* of society or particular human communities, and at the most varied levels, from the discussions of experts to dialogue involving the entire society, as in elections and referenda.

Since the problem of legality and morality concerns interhuman relations, the political dimension plays a significant role within it. Politics is not simply the jousting field of ideas, where good and evil struggle in some black-and-white manner; nor is it always just the field of action of interest groups of various types. It is the institutionalized expression of societywide dialogue, and "discourse" and therefore the space for the confrontation of various, also ethically relevant, concepts and programmes for the optimal arrangement of interhuman relations. Naturally, by means of institutional mechanisms only some of these concepts are pushed through to the extent that they have a decisive influence on the various aspects of interhuman relations. That which is pushed through at the normative level (and in the ethical or morally relevant sense as well) is always already the result of a process of *choice and preference* out of a particular range of possibilities, during which the alternative possibilities are understandably pushed into the background.

Dissent

There are "sensitive spots" in society-wide dialogue, where it is extremely difficult to find a consensual solution that would ensure unanimous support or at least a clear majority of public support for laws accepted. Where these are concerned (as in the cases of the "lustration" or "restitution" laws in the Czech Republic, for instance), it becomes especially clear that the various politically relevant laws that are passed also represent a particular concrete expression of an ethically motivated concept of good, justice, and such like. Opposing the particular form of such legal norms, which are to a significant extent ethically or morally motivated, but at the same time strongly politically contextual, are not simply standpoints of an amoral or morally neutral kind, but also variants and alternatives emphasizing other likewise ethical or morally relevant aspects of the problems. In real terms a universally binding legal norm cannot be formulated and accepted by all participants of the society-wide dialogue (as the Habermas formulations might tempt one to think — on this question see Tugendhat's criticism ([15], 162-176)). Instead this is achieved on the basis of an institutionally appropriate majority choice. A "consensus" achieved in this is always, in this sense, a conditioned result of a real political configuration. In a democratic society such a consensus is for these reasons always "revokable".

The relationship between morality and legality cannot then be considered in isolation from the basic character of the social and especially the political relations which make up the basic society-wide framework of the "discourse" in question. The relationship between morality and legality, and the conflict between them, takes one form in a democracy and another in an authoritarian or a totalitarian state. In a stabilized democracy the fundamental political basis of interhuman relations is a "legitimate" legality. This grows out of authentic social consensus and

presupposes the free individual who has the chance to choose the basic framework of his life from competing conceptions of the optimal social and political arrangements, or at least to take part in decisions affecting oneself. There is a much sharper conflict between morality and legality in authoritarian and totalitarian socio-political conditions, because the existing legality here has an "illegitimate" character in the sense mentioned ([1], 18 offers a different view). An authoritarian, and even more a totalitarian system (I do not wish at this point to go into this complex problem in any greater detail) is based on the denial of the unique status of the individual and his or her essentially non-instrumental character in the sense of Kant's well-known formulation. For this reason what is raised from the field of morally relevant concepts, opinions, projects, etc., into the sphere of legality, and what therefore becomes a legal norm, a law, is not the authentic result of the free society-wide dialogue as we have characterized it, because society is under compulsion from the real holders of power. This problem has been the theme of many studies. The specific problem that is the most immediate for us in our current situation is then the period of transition from totalitarianism to an open democratic society in which we are confronting the problems characteristic for a standard democracy while still struggling with problems organically connected with the period of totalitarianism.

Pan-moralism

Logically, the least tension should exist between morality and legality in a stabilized democratic society. Even here, of course, conflicts can and do occur, but the democratic framework at least allows these conflicts to be ventilated. People have the chance — again at least in principle — to influence issues on which they feel that there is a gap between morality, i.e. that which they themselves regard as desirable from the moral point of view, and existing legality. They are able in the overall democratic social framework to try to gain acceptance for the ideas that they are convinced are better grounded and justified. Obviously change of this kind in the sphere of legality is effected only very slowly and partially, as is clear in the case of campaigns to integrate ecological viewpoints into legislation in democratic countries.

In view of the natural pluralist structure and stratification of society in democratic countries, it is natural that here too there emerges as a contemporary problem the possibility of protest and revolt against existing legality. This is where an individual or group of like-minded people are so strongly persuaded of the moral value of their views that they urgently require that they be upheld. Therefore they are not willing to submit to the procedures of decision-making processes in a democratic society or to pursue their ideals in a lawful manner, e.g. by means of the right to petition, or participation in elections and referenda, etc. As a result, they go to the lengths of knowingly breaking the law. Here, naturally, there arises the problem of the moral justifiability of such individual or group resistance to existing legality: resistance is itself in some way morally motivated (ecologically motivated protests may perhaps serve as an example here).

Without supporting breaking the existing legality, such protests can in extreme cases be accepted or at least understood as a form of the imperative practical expression of ethically motivated views and attitudes, or even as a cry of despair against the "state of the world" and the prevailing tendencies of social development. But these may be accepted only on one important condition, namely, that those who resolve to take such actions and rebel against existing legality (or a part of it) must be prepared to take the consequences of these actions within the framework of existing legality.

In this context a particular problem arises in the transitional period between a totalitarian and a democratic social systems. In this period a characteristic attitude which might be termed "pan-moralism" still tends to survive to a significant extent. What I have in mind here is, of course, a morally motivated attitude (elsewhere in society we meet with a whole range of other attitudes, including ones that are expressly amoral). "Pan-moralism" I define as a certain "overstraining" or exaggeration of the claim of the moral standpoint. The representatives of such a conception extend the primacy of the morally motivated and justified viewpoint (or their own particular conception of morality) even into areas which ought to be governed by particular standard rules deriving from the given legal system. So far this describes a problem that arises even in stabilized democracies. In a transitional period the difference consists, of course, in the fact that the rules of a democratic system, including — at least as an ideal — respect for the unique sphere of legality as something binding on society as a whole, have not yet been fully experienced and internalized. Society has not yet come to see such respect as something which has moral value, not least because it is the expression of a certain social consensus, achieved by dialogue, even in the areas directly related to politics.

Another problem of the transitional period from a totalitarian system to one of democracy consists in the fact that, for the most part, it has not yet proved possible to build an existing "legality" unambiguously on a new democratic base. Supporters of a "pan-moralist" standpoint can then point to a whole range of laws that have lingered on from the undemocratic period, and can use this claim to underpin their refusal to respect the existing legal system. One example of conduct resting on this position was the action of the parliamentary deputies of the so-called Smíchov variety, one of whom justified his behaviour on the grounds that if he did not like a law, then he would simply not respect it but would break it. Hence, the principle already mentioned applies: if someone — on the basis of a certain moral motivation — decides to break the law, then he must be prepared to take the personal consequences of such action. This may be done also in order that one's example, or even sacrifice in the case of tougher sanctions should stimulate public opinion or the legitimate representatives of the citizens to change the laws that from his viewpoint are no longer in harmony with the social situation. However, if someone breaks the law on the presupposition that he or she will enjoy "immunity" from punishment — as I believe happened in the case I have chosen as an example — then such action loses the moral dimension that (supposedly at least) motivated it. In addition, a contemptuous relation to legality, even if that legality is imperfect, makes it difficult to build up a state based on law.

Another feature of the "pan-moralist" point of view, which follows from the characteristics already mentioned, is a general failure to respect the essential frontier between morality and legality. The problem is not simply black and white and cannot be torn out of the historical conditions that condition it. In this sense the "pan-moralist" approach has a certain logic. It is necessary to be aware that this attitude originally developed in the dissident movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and that in this context it is impossible to deny it a true moral dimension. The unconditionality of the claims of morality (in the work of Jan Patocka, for example, and derived straight from Kant) was at that time raised against the entire state of society that had grown up. This was based on the "illegitimate legality" of the totalitarian system and further strengthened by the installation of the "normalizing regime" after the liquidation of the "Prague Spring". At a later period, however, during the building of the structures of a state based on law, this attitude began to take a more hazardous form. This was the case whenever and wherever its adherents failed to realize that even in pluralist democratic conditions, and not only under a clearly illegitimate regime that completely prevented the free exchange of opinions on the most serious problems, such a

concept could find practical expression only partially. That is, only to the extent that it gained social consensus. In laying emphasis on the moral dimension of interhuman relations it is likewise necessary to be aware of the fact that there is far from being only one morally motivated and morally relevant viewpoint, and that in this field one has to reckon with a real plurality of opinions. This is evident, for example in the discussion over abortion, euthanasia and such issues, which is currently going on in the world, especially in stabilized democracies, and in which it cannot be assumed that it will be possible to reach a universal consensus.

Resistance in Undemocratic Contexts

In my view, however, the biggest problems arise from the question of the relation of morality and legality in basically undemocratic conditions. Despite the fact that this is no longer directly our problem, we are still its heirs as well as of the open questions that the period of totalitarianism left. Although today there is strikingly general agreement in our society on the question of the basic evaluation of the totalitarian period, we differ basically on the question of the value we attach to the particular forms and methods of the morally motivated struggle against totalitarian reality, which we can also regard as one of the innumerable problems of the relationship between morality and legality.

With few exceptions Czech society has always preferred a non-violent approach. This attitude has, of course, its general advantages and disadvantages, which will not be discussed here on a general level. The consensus on the basic evaluation of the totalitarian period and the character of the regime also conditions the positive assessment of the non-violent, morally motivated protest embodied during the last 20 years of the totalitarian regime, above all by the activity of Charter 77. If the existing legality is in principle illegitimate, one can scarcely have any objection to non-violent moral resistance to it, based on a morally motivated critique.

There, is, however, far from being a consensus on the assessment of violent resistance of a kind that even cost the lives of people who were innocent. That is, innocent to the extent of their not being builders or important representatives of the totalitarian regime, or people who carried sufficient individual political or moral guilt for the functioning of morally illegitimate conditions. It is, of course, possible to attribute uncertainty about violent resistance to the overall rather non-aggressive and compromising character of Czech society, but this scarcely resolves the moral dilemma. It raises the whole question of whether, or in which cases, morally motivated resistance to a non-legitimate regime may involve the sacrifice of the lives of other people on the grounds that they may be regarded — if only in a particular situation and for a particular moment — as representatives of the non-legitimate regime (and therefore also of "illegitimate legality").

In my opinion this is a very complex question, to which it will probably always be possible to give various and even contradictory answers. This is so above all because the question is very much "contextual". Radical pacifism may be a legitimate moral position, especially if we start from the premise of the irreplaceability of each individual and the absolute inviolability of his or her life. But outside this position we must concede the possibility of violent resistance to a non-legitimate regime in some form, albeit as a necessary evil. But if we concede this possibility, then we must also accept the further logical eventuality that during violent actions against such a regime people who are innocent in the individual sense may lose their lives. During large-scale violent protests such as rebellions or revolution it is very unlikely that such sacrifices could be avoided. For a concrete evaluation of such resistance to non-legitimate conditions it is, of course, necessary to take into account other more specific, for example "pragmatic," aspects of the problem such as

the meaningfulness of the entire action, its hope of success, the technical means for undertaking it and so forth. A factor which is likewise very significant here is the wider moral context of such activity, for example whether the value of its aims really, at least in a certain context, "justifies" the use of violence, which in my opinion can be accepted only where the aims have meaning from a universal human point of view.

Where what are concerned are individual acts or the acts of a small number of people, such as a resistance group, following more particular and limited goals, — because the question is not one of a relatively "impersonal" act — it is necessary to take into account, with great responsibility, the particular form of risk involved to others who (in the narrow sense) may be individually innocent. Here it is necessary to take into consideration, for example, the specific position that these people occupy within the system against which the morally motivated violent resistance is being directed. In my view it is not possible to regard all the people filling certain roles, perhaps in non-decision-making positions inside the system as "bailiffs" of the regime, merely as "examples" of something general. Nor, even if their positions are important can their death during violent action be considered as something in itself or for its purpose Justifiable. If we were to insist on such a standpoint then it would evidently be necessary to formulate a more general principle of a moral character, for example, that all the negative characteristics of the system automatically relate to a person fulfilling a certain function within an illegitimate system to such an extent that on that score to take his life is justified. If we were to take an even more radical standpoint we might extend the charge even to any person who failed to take an active stand in the sense mentioned against the illegitimate regime. These are, of course, standards which in practical terms cannot be enforced and, moreover, they involve a dangerous devaluation of human lives, to which no one is entitled.

As I have argued earlier, the problem of the possibility of violent resistance to a non-legitimate legality is a deeply "contextual" problem. One who allows oneself such action must be aware that besides one's own moral motivation, however justified from a certain viewpoint, there exists also a range of other, likewise morally motivated, standpoints, which also possess — again in other contexts — major relevance. These other standpoints, which include for example legal judgment, have to be taken into account from a general interpersonal standpoint that aims at objectivity. It would seem to be the obligation of anyone who during violent resistance takes the life of other, in an individual sense innocent people, to give him- or herself up to legal judgment for his act, of course on the condition that the process of justice takes place within the legal framework of a state based on law. But even then one cannot reach a single and unambiguous conclusion, since there are too many problematic and controversial aspects in play and, moreover, such a judgment must logically take place ex post *facto*.

Conclusion

The relationships and examples mentioned are far from exhausting the problem of the many-sided relations between morality and legality as particular forms of human interpersonality. These are problems which, of course, can be perceived and defined in other ways. Elevating the particular significance of legality certainly should not be understood as an undervaluation of the importance of the moral dimension in interhuman relations. The reverse is true: stressing the unique character of the legal sphere and the relevance of the legal point of view at the same time points to the moral dimension inherent in legality — in the basic or minimal sense suggested. One of the reasons is the fact that "legality" itself is a basic expression of the democratic "discourse" of a society, resting

on the recognition of the irreducible and unrelativisable value of the individual and his or her unique and non-instrumental character. In this way legality is not "purely" formal, but has its own moral content and significance. Another significant reason for the moral relevance of legality is the fact that respect for laws expressing the consensus of a society, however temporary and revocable, is also an expression of humility and self-limitation proper to the individual as a part of a wider whole of individuals having the same rights, however much one regards any different views one may hold as justified and morally motivated.

It is necessary to note also a rather unpopular opinion: we must learn to live with the knowledge that there are problems that may perhaps have no satisfactory solution, and that all the injustices of history — alas — cannot be removed. The "pan-moralist" standpoint, in its opposite conviction, comes perilously close to the Utopian conceptions of which the most striking were the socialist Utopias and the most elaborate of them Marxism, which developed on the implicit assumption that it is possible in some way to "restitute" the original authentic and just relations between people. In this context pragmatism (although not in its decadent forms) has a part of the truth, since the pragmatist is aware that the enforcement of the moral point of view as an instrument of "remedy reality" can be only partial.

Finally, there is a set of questions which, while making up a separate and internally richly structured field of there own, are nevertheless connected to the goal of this paper. Ludvik Vaculik recently expressed the notion of creating the sort of institute which would be "new" and "different" in the admission that nature and the creatures that together form nature have rights independent of man. This problem, like the dispute between anthropocentrism and biocentrism (viz: p. 12), in addition to being a practical dimension, also has interesting consequences in the field of theoretical reflection on the foundations of ethics as a philosophical discipline.

Ethics in this sense, is founded in the European tradition on considerations of intersubjectivity, and is therefore strongly anthropocentric. The extension of the radius of the action of ethical reflection to "non-human" beings in recent decades is certainly not an accident. It is part and continuation of the striving to overcome barriers of discrimination that have expressed themselves, for example, in the field of activities to end discrimination on the grounds of race, the emancipation of women, tolerance towards all kinds of minorities and their lifestyles, etc. It is logical that this tendency should "spill over" into the field of relations with other living creatures and nature as a whole.

Difficulties arise, of course, if we have to give theoretical justifications for this expansion of the field. As Tugendhat has shown, we already meet problems when we have to give a purely rational account of justifications for ethical relations with children ([15], 177-196). Even here what is lacking is what is in most formulations of moral principles regarded as essential: that is the principle of mutuality. We confront similar problems in relation, for example, to seriously handicapped people, in the understanding of unborn life and suchlike. Of course these difficulties become even more serious in relation to animals and living nature in general. A particular problem is represented by relationship with nature as a whole. According to Tugendhat this cannot be given rational justification on the principle of mutuality.

He sees the path forward in the utilitarian extension of moral responsibility ([14], 381-382) and in emphasis on the principle of compassion and the ethics that follow therefrom ("Mitleidsethik") as elaborated by Schopenhauer. While this kind of emotivist justification is not, according to Tugendhat, adequate from the point of view of rational formulation, it nonetheless represents a significant expansion of the content of the notion of ethics ([l4], 381-382, compare with [15], 188-189). In this context, of course, we must not forget the still more radical concept of

honor toward life formulated by A. Schweitzer. My personal opinion is that theoretical reasoning is only a part of the field of ethics, which in addition to rational dimensions has an emotional and violative side.

Another important question is whether it would not help to overcome a purely intersubjective conception of ethics if ethics tended to the side of biocentrism in the dispute between anthopocentrism and biocentrism. From the point of view of the possibility of general theoretical reasoning and justification the biocentric position raises major difficulties. Nature itself is not at all "democratic" or "humane"; it does not and cannot recognize anything like a universal "honor toward life". Moreover, the spokesman "for nature", or "for life" is still, "in the last instance" man. I believe that the "natural" position is paradoxically the anthropocentric position, which is precisely the "standpoint" that enables us to perceive and thematize something like the whole of nature, and even to formulate, as it were, her interests and rights. Only from this position is it possible at least in some respects and to a certain extent to transcend the merely egotistic species determination of man. This must, of course, be a cultivated anthropocentrism that involves even a certain inevitable species and individual egoism. This standpoint seems compatible with utilitarianism ([10], 99, [11], 9 n) in a cultivated form, i.e. the kind which takes into consideration a broader good than what which is merely short-term or momentary, considering the good and the useful within a long-term perspective (the notion of "long-term sustainable life"). Utilitarianism thus conceived can then include in the sphere of meaningfully human "good" also such phenomena as pleasure in man's relationship of belonging to the wider whole of nature, sharing in the mystery of life, joy in the possibility of communicating with other creatures and also, of course, the aesthetic experience of the beauty of nature. If someone is capable of achieving some more radical, directly biocentrically motivated conception of the relationship of man to nature this would definitely do no harm. Such a standpoint will always remain very much a minority one. In any case, today, in a period when there is a perilous erosion of interhuman relations and an ecological crisis, basic agreement on the direction of our efforts is more important than the motivation behind our opinions.

What I have advanced in favor of the anthropocentric point of view in general terms applies as well to the question of whether it is possible to formulate distinctive rights of nature and of beings other than ourselves. This can be done — but, of course, only on condition that we are aware of the fact that no one other than ourselves can formulate these rights and that in such formulation we cannot (even should we wish to) abandon our own "human situation" and the sphere of our own interests. Our morally motivated viewpoint here, as elsewhere, can be "translated" into the language of legality only partially and in a fragmentary way. Above all we cannot expect that the majority of humankind will change significantly for the better and that people will be capable of adopting an essentially new, non-egotistic and non-utilitarian attitude to nature. We have to be soberly aware that certain anthropological constants cannot be changed at will, since we are not purely intellectual beings realizing moral ideas. All we can do is to cultivate and to a certain extent regulate and limit those aspects of our adaptation which have dangerous consequences for other beings in the world that we jointly inhabit and for nature as a whole. This striving should include the attempt to create certain barriers to the worst tendencies in man in the form of ecologically-oriented laws that will formulate, from the human point of view, the interests of nature and the creatures that inhabit it. This may not be enough to enable us to avoid the growing crisis in the ecological field and its possible culmination in catastrophe. Nevertheless, it is a task that cannot be avoided.

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Part III
The Ecology as a Broader Human Context

Chapter VII
Human Values and Sustainable Ways of Living

Josef Vavrousek

The development of human society in the last several hundred years has been characterized by a number of basic and still deepening contradictions. It has brought also such positive trends as the rapid growth of technical and scientific knowledge, which has increased substantially the amount of information about our world and led to a higher standard of living in most European, North American and some other regions. It has brought improvements in healthcare, limited the impact of infectious diseases and therefore lowered the death rate in most of the world. An increasing number of countries assert democratic political systems and the ideals of human rights and freedoms.

We must, however, also consider the negative features of this development, which have dangerous consequences. The high, and still growing consumption by the "northern" and some "southern" countries is among the most important of them, connected with a rapid deterioration of natural resources and the production of enormous amounts of waste. 20 percent of the population now consumes about 80 percent of raw material and energy resources. The population of most of the "southern" (and some "northern") countries lives in poverty. More than 780 million from the total of 5.5 billion world inhabitants under the poverty level — each minute 28 people die from hunger and people attempting desperately to survive destroy the surrounding nature. Expansive development of the Euro-American culture is leading to the weakening or even destroying of national or regional cultures, which means irreparable loss of the cultural diversity of human kind and the restriction of its ability to react efficiently to new circumstances, leading thereby to a growing fragility of human society.

All these processes contribute to the rapid deterioration of nature and the human environment on global, regional and local scales. Air pollution leads to acid rain, ozone layer depletion and climate change. Forests lose their vitality, trees are cut down, soil is desertified due to erosion, growing salinity, the lowering of the water table, and humans lose. Humans have irreversible negative impact on natural resources, the genetic pool and Earth's life-support systems.

What is particularly dangerous is the unprecedented scale of these negative changes and the speed with which they occur. This is closely connected with the technical ability to change nature and with the "globalization" of human civilization (Earth as a "global village") which is the consequence of the speed of information dissemination. One of the reasons is also the exponential population growth; the fact, that it doubles once in 40 years is a warning in itself. The danger of such a development is even more threatening because it is regionally unbalanced — the birthrate being greater in the poorest countries deepens the above problems.

For the first time in history the whole human society, together with a countless number of other organisms, is endangered. This is an unprecedented situation; till now a decline or even disappearance of a civilization concerned only a separate region such as the ancient cultures which lived between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

We near the crossroad — if we have not already passed it — when a reevaluation of the whole past development is critically needed. In the long term perspective it is obviously unsustainable, and could lead to the escalation of the social tensions in the world, the consequence being growing violence and destruction of the global environment vital for man and other organisms. Any delay

could trigger uncontrollable processes. Potential attempts of some countries or regions to isolate and protect themselves by new electronic "curtains" and thus preserve their prosperity is not only unmoral, but also short-sighted and condemned to failure. The key conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) therefore was the Strategy of Sustainable Development, as a blueprint for the future orientation of mankind.

Sustainable development — or perhaps more precisely a sustainable way of life — is concerned with the search for harmony between man and nature, society and its environment, so that we should achieve the ideals of humanism and respect for life and nature, as much as possible and in all time horizons. It is a way of life which searches for balance between the rights and freedoms of every individual and his or her responsibility towards other people and nature as a whole, including responsibility towards future generations. We should accept the principle that the freedom of every individual is limited not only by the freedom of the other, but also by the principle of avoiding deterioration of nature.

To find sustainable ways of living we should analyze recent unsustainable trends, which consist in quantitative growth connected with a number of deep discrepancies. We should attempt to build on ideas that are compatible with visions of a sustainable way of living. That must begin the working-out of this vision and support its realization, while at the same time avoiding activities that raise or deepen the huge problems of humankind. Part of such an analysis should be the identification of all important factors which negatively influence current development, which support the positive factors and supplement them in areas where they are weak.

A common feature in understanding people's behaviour is the general criteria used by them in the evaluation and decision making processes. These criteria are human values which express individual or collective perceptions of life. Probably they are partly stipulated biologically (most importantly genetically), and partly have their roots in specific human cultures. If this hypothesis is correct, then an analysis of the development of human values in different parts of the world during the last decades and centuries could help us to find the roots of the recent ethical crisis as well as the human values compatible with sustainable ways of living.

In search of human values suitable for sustainable living we should begin by analyzing the values which are dominant in Euro-American (or North-West) civilization. This is not only because it is the only way to change our behaviors and thus solve the problems of our region, but also because this civilization affects very substantially the whole planet. Conversely, if it is possible to discover the unsustainable character of many global trends, we must admit the crucial role of the Euro-American value system in this frustrated development. By starting at home it is possible to help all humankinds.

The value system of Euro-American civilization develops in time and is relatively non-homogenous, with regional differences and varieties of values typical of specific social groups, for" real capitalism" as well as for former "real socialism". But even though we can identify in our civilization general value orientations which have directly initiated all the social, economic, environmental and political problems of our times, at the same time we could discover in the roots of Euro-American civilization values compatible with ideals of sustainable living and renew, develop and reenforce them.

The following brief survey is a working hypothesis, which tries to describe the most important values of Euro-American civilization which could contribute to unsustainable trends (value A), along with alternative value orientations (value B) which could lead us along sustainable course. Some of these have been emerging especially during recent years. A simplified description of an

immensely complicated subject may contribute some orientation in this situation and lead to further discussions.

Relation of Humans to Nature

A. Reality: Predatory, exploitive relation to nature, which is considered as a bottomless resource of raw materials and a passive "playground" for human activities, disrespectful of the natural limits of the environment; expanding exploitation of non-renewable natural resources and emission of very dangerous wastes.

B. Alternative: Awareness of the relation to nature, respect of life in all its forms and of nature as a whole, use of the landscape within the limits of its carrying capacity, orientation toward renewable natural resources, minimization of wastes and their recycling.

Relation of Individuals to Society

A. Reality: Two extreme approaches

a) one-sided emphasis on individualism and competitiveness (typical for "real capitalism") based on the assumption that the egoistic behaviour of any individual and competition with all others are "automatically" mostly beneficial not only to him, but also to the welfare of society as a whole (A. Smith's "invisible hand"). This approach has, on the one hand, enabled the explosive economic growth of Western Europe and North American, but, on the other hand, has led to the decline of personal responsibility for common matters and release from bonds to other people.

b) one-sided emphasis on collectivism (typical of former "real socialism"), where all interests of any individual theoretically should be subordinated to collective interests. In reality all powers had been concentrated in the hands of a small group of people or even a single person, who represented the communist party, without any control. At the same time the immense majority of the people had no real right to participate actively in public affairs and lost many other human rights and freedoms. This led to a huge loss of self-confidence and of any feeling of shared responsibility for the development of the society and its environment. The results were, on the one hand, a common state of "collective irresponsibility" that led to the apathy of the powerless and, on the other hand, the conviction of some independent people that the whole system should be radically changed if the decomposition of the society and destruction of nature were to be stopped. Fortunately, in 1989 in all European "socialist" countries the alternative approach prevailed.

B. Alternative: Balanced emphasis on the individual and the collective, which should be not only our family, community, nation, state and culture, but also humankind as a whole. Self-confidence of every individual, based on free decision-making, connected with the recognition of the interdependence of every person with all others. Emphasis on love, solidarity and altruism as driving forces of human behaviors, supplementing competition with cooperation in the name of common human values and goals.

Relation to Time and the Sense of History

A. Reality: Fascination and obsession by the idea of quantitative growth; one of the "engines" accelerating the process in society is the common conviction that it is the growth of selected criteria (e.g. the GDB on the national level or the incomes or earnings on the personal level) that are the measures of success, of healthy development, and even of happiness. In a world of limited resources, such an orientation lacks foresight and in rich societies it is even useless, for no growth can continue for an unlimited period of time: sooner or later it will reach its objective frontiers

B. Alternative: Emphasis on the qualitative development of human society, oriented first of all on improvement of the quality of life and human relations, development of the sciences, culture, spiritual and intellectual life and the cultivation and use of the people's abilities, because human creativity is perhaps the only unlimited natural source. A prerequisite of this orientation is the fulfillment of basic human material needs.

Relation to the Sense of One's Own Life

A. Reality: Hedonistic orientation and consumer style life, where the main sense of life is seen in achieving ever higher comfort (which is often accompanied by growing stress) and higher satisfaction of material needs (which usually have no natural limits). The whole mechanism of market economy with the help of aggressive advertising based on brainwashing practices is focused on the creation and stimulation of ever new material needs in a situation in which all the basic needs of almost all people living in the Western democracies have long been satisfied. The amount of money and the level of luxury consumption have become universal measures of success.

B. Alternative: Emphasis on the quality of life, deliberate modesty and renunciation, self-denial of superficial things. These values were found in the cradle of the Judeo-Christian civilization, together with love, solidarity and altruism; a return to them is extremely important for sustainable living.

Relation to Freedom and Responsibility

A. Reality: A one-sided emphasis on human rights and freedoms, erosion of personal co-responsibilities and lack of inter-generational awareness. Underlining human rights and support of human freedom in the period of the Enlightenment was an extremely important for the development of European and American democracies, especially in sharp contrast with the previous serfdom of medieval times; but it was not accompanied by a corresponding sense of responsibility for common public affairs, and in "real socialism" not even by responsibility for our own lives. In the praxis of "real capitalism" personal freedom often is reduced to the freedom to consume material goods.

B. Alternative: Establishing symmetry between human rights and freedoms, on the one hand, and human responsibilities on the other, with respect for other human beings, nature and the development of both.

Relation to One's Knowledge

A. Reality: "Pride of reason" though an overestimation of the scale, depth, reliability and complexity of our knowledge and experiences; one-sided reliance on intellect, rationality and simple causal thinking, lack of ability to foresee and shape future development. Extreme overvaluation of our knowledge was typical of the centralized command economy of former "socialist" states, but we can see it also in Western societies.

B. Alternative: Adopt a precautionary principle, exclude all activities whose possible negative impacts could not be judged with sufficient reliability in all time horizons, supplement rational thinking by intuition, relate the sciences and the arts, intensive support of scientific research development and education.

Relation to One's Own Life

A. Reality: Weakening of the human instinct of self-preservation, alienation with regard to one's own life, lack of feedback. One often deliberately behaves in a way which destroys the environment and endangers his life or the lives of his relatives; smoking, destruction of forests, and spoiling rivers.

B. Awareness of the negative impact of human activities, evolution of mutual links of events in space and time; a precondition is the systematic education and information of the broadest possible groups, and the improvement of institutional feedbacks.

Relation to Future Generations

A. Reality: Preference for the short-term goals over long-term permanent ones following the principle: "carpe diem"; life at the expense of future generations due to overexploitation of natural resources and the spread of wastes.

B. Alternative: Awareness of the long-term goals and consequences of human activities, based on the precautionary principle and the development of knowledge, responsibility for future generation.

Relation to Other Opinions and Other Civilizations

A. Reality: Low respect for the other opinions: ideological, religious, racial and other; intolerance: solving conflicts by force and violence. Often also sharp underestimation or even ignoring of human civilizations and culture, based on the unjustified assumption that Euro-American civilization is superior to all others; sometimes also aggressive behaviour against the other civilizations, by military means in recent history, and by economic and cultural instruments now.

B. Alternative: Mutual tolerance, empathy for the situation of the other peoples, cultures or civilizations and their values and goals; efforts to use the experience, knowledge and wisdom of other cultures. Political and economic security and other global mechanisms enabling the cooperation and mutual enrichment of different people, states and civilizations, preserving their uniqueness and autonomy.

Relation to Common Affairs

A. Reality: Resignation on common decision-making, passivity, brainless acceptation of foreign patterns, monopolization of political and economic powers in the hands of a small number of people, leading to an infantilization of human solidarity and to a decrease in ability to govern future development.

B. Alternative: Develop participative democracy, supporting creative activities of all citizens, decentralization of powers with effective coordination and feedback mechanisms preventing the abuse of political, economic or other powers. Direct participation by all people in decision making processes concerning the future value orientation of society, even if they have not enough information and knowledge to solve specific professional problems.

The above brief analysis is a working hypothesis which needs to be carefully revised and amended. But it suggests, that some of the value orientations on which recent Euro-American culture (values A) is based are a blind alley. At the same time it proposes human values (values B) which could be compatible with sustainable ways of life. These are not "new", artificial constructs; almost all have their roots in the Graeco-Roman, Judeo-Christian foundations of European culture. We should "rediscover" them and supplement or modify them where necessary due to the unprecedented increase of humankind's ability to destroy nature as well as itself, or where it is possible because of the development and deepening of human knowledge.

Type B values could have real influence only when people place them rather high in their hierarchies of values. These values would have to be incorporated into legislative, institutional and economic arrangements of human society as the shared values of an important part of their citizens. It is not possible to assume that the "sustainable value" (type B) could be adopted from one day to the next by some "great leap forward" or that the values of type A will simply disappear or be abandoned. We can foresee the consequent, step-by-step changes of the order of different human values or shifts of their relative weights in the assessment and we decision-making processes of people, accompanied by feed-back, corrective measures, and one should do everything to support these trends. Because any delays of the necessary changes of value orientation are very dangerous, the inertia of the recent trends is working against a sustainable future. It is a race against time.

We have to return to the basic question of the sense of life and search for answers appropriate to a dangerous and rapidly changing situation. Probably there are only two basic alternatives of future development. The first one is a continuation of the existing unsatisfactory and unsustainable trends; this would lead, with a high degree of probability, to chaos and a series of catastrophes of different kinds. There is a real threat that the period of environmental deterioration and of the decay of social structures could be very extensive and in extreme cases could lead to a degradation of humankind.

The second alternative is a systematic and quick evolution oriented towards the solution of existing problems and the prevention of some new ones. Care for our common environment perhaps could form the foundation of such an alternative. The existence of substantial political, economic, national, religious and other contradictions in the world do not allow too many changes.

Searching for and enforcing values which could lead us towards humanism and harmonious relations between man and nature is a common ideal for religious people, as well as people believing in humankind and its ability to distinguish between good and evil.

Chapter VIII
The Ecological Problem in Modern Society
Solidarity, Conflict and Human Dignity

Oleg Suša

Since the latter half of the 20th century there has been an awareness of the risk connected with the continuation of the present development of modern civilization. The ecological crisis has been seen as a menace and simultaneously as a challenge for a new human self-understanding and there has been dramatic growth in the search for alternative solutions. The substance of the ecological crisis as a social problem is the critical situation in the society's relation to nature as its environment with the physical and biological prerequisites of social life. Particularly this regards the growing and cumulated effects which disturb these naturally ontological prerequisites. In this situation of ecological destruction of the physical-biological prerequisites of human bio-social beings it becomes necessary to revaluate the values of social existence when society begins to render insecure its biological existence.[1]

The comprehensive approach to ecological problems cannot accentuate technical and regulative power-based and economic issues only. It must include also cultural, value-oriented and ethical aspects in a broader sense, for instance, in one's self conception as a member of both society and the broader ecological community of the earth. From this enlarged conception of membership there can then arise conflicts of needs, goals, roles, standards and values, but also significant correctives for the regulation of social behaviour in the political comparison and assessment of chosen alternatives, advantages and impacts.

Economic correctives also can be developed, e.g., in the sphere of "ecological economy" in the form of applications of "cost-benefit" analyses (comparison of costs to be "paid" by the society for disturbing the environment with the advantages and results of certain social activities) or "technology assessment" (assessment of technologies from the viewpoint of social and natural consequences for the living environment).[2]

The management and control of nature in implementing society's needs or the goals of humanity, human cultivation or emancipation — which still recently have been considered as obvious matters — are being faced today in the context of the destruction of the life. This fact can appear as an expression of the crisis of the legitimacy of ideas, values, goals or institutions of modern society, and as a crisis of the meaning and course of the movement of civilization as regards human dignity itself.

Humankind pays for the feeling of liberation from nature through the knowledge and mastering of its forces by a growing dependence on civilization which appears both in a physical-material and in a spiritual manner. This dependence — familiar to sociology — is manifested, for instance, by the manipulation of different techniques and apparatuses of technical, economic, administrative, political and ideological control, including control of the communication of meaning, content, languages, information and instructions for thinking and acting. The physical and spiritual dependence of people in modern civilization is mediated economically, technically, and informatively by complex artificial systems and apparatuses which manipulate material as well as spiritual needs and interactions.

The artificiality of the environment — which increases together with the uniformization of the industrial-urban technical environment creates social integration in a physical and much less

spiritual and ethical manner. The modern society creates control factors for the harmonization and manipulation of the surrounding context. For instance, the scientization of cultural life and consciousness, the so-called human engineering and social technology, is a means of control and manipulation not only of the social but also the cultural environment with lack of human dignity. In this union of modern society's relation to nature and the dominance of social control and self-regulation there appear the genetic features of a radical reversal in the relations of men, society and nature. From this viewpoint one considers the modern society as one which has "hopelessly lost touch with life lived on a simpler, more primitive level."[3]

In the present study we will try to treat ecological problems within the framework of the character of modern society's relation to nature in which the pattern of instrumental-rational action began to dominate to the detriment of the communicative pattern. At the same time we will proceed from the presupposition that the issue of the quality of social action towards nature as an environment and its ecological consequences are connected with the much discussed issue in modern social theory, i.e., that of the interdependence of the modern instrumentalization of nature and instrumentalization of the human person. This interdependence has some deeper roots in the present critical situation in the relation of modern society and nature, i.e., the ecological crisis. This crisis follows from the disequilibrium between power-based and ethical aspects of relations, between anonymity or ethical neutrality and responsibility in social action. This disequilibrium appears also in cultural contradictions and in the conflict of values in the reproduction and legitimization of social action in the relation between society and nature.

The Cultural-Historical Context of the Concept of a Double Environment

Modern culture distinguishes two different meanings of the concept "environment": cultural as "internal" environment and nature as "external" environment. This differentiation proceeded philosophically from the traditional modern dualism of "spirit-body," and "culture-nature".[4] Modern social science began to consider the internal environment as its research subject, while leaving the natural environment essentially to research by the natural sciences.

It is essential that it connected this "alien" environment with the fundamental distinction of human and extra-human reality based on the differentiation of the "world of men" and "the world of things" and consequently the conception of nature as an object. This implicitly presupposes power manipulation by the subject — science and technology being the products of human society. Like economy, modern sociology also took as obvious such a conception of human society's relation to nature and the natural environment in an instrumental technical attitude, dominated as superior from the viewpoint of power in the philosophical as well as the scientific paradigm of inductive "technoscience" and the industrialization process. Not only sociology and economy, but also ecological science itself not long ago was still markedly influenced by the economic or technological utilitarianism of securing resources for human society,[5] despite the fact that the core of the ecological view was a holism and mutual interdependence in the environment as an earthly system.

Systemism and holism, as well as interdependence, are used by sociology as well. For instance, Talcott Parsons applied them to society, though in connection with the traditional dualistic conception of environment. In this way Parsons differentiated the dual relation of society as a system to the environment which is created by culture (as normative order) and by nature (as organic-physical environment). At the same time, the normative order of culture legitimizes the right action of people in the sense of harmony with the "institutional order" (of the society) —

through not "morally."[6] Parsons interpreted the interaction of society and nature as a subsystem of a primary technical referential framework, i.e. society's technical organization "as a boundary-structure between the society as a system and the organic-physical environment."[7] Economy links to nature at this boundary as a part of the technical-primary, physically defined referential framework, which is considered by Parsons to be "the focal structure providing linkage with social community." By fulfilling the function of distributing resources for satisfying the society's needs it is the primary referential framework from the viewpoint of the social system.

In modern social systems technology becomes — according to Parsons — "the socially organized ability" of actively mastering and changing the objects of the physical environment in harmony with some needs of man.[8]

The following facts result from Parson's model:

1. the main subsystem which structures the interaction of society and the natural environment is the technical-economic organization as an organized social ability to master and change the objects of physical environment; and

2. the main aim of this interaction between society and nature is to satisfy certain human and social needs which are thus closely defined in a technical-economic way — i.e., independently of the normative system of culture and morality.

In the conditions of the present ecological difficulties of modern societies this very separation of technology and economy from cultural and moral values (or even their subordination to the aims of technical-economic, instrumental rationality) has become unsustainable. In the same way the viewpoint of the society's independence (defined by Parsons as the self-sufficiency of societal community) from the instrumentally mastered and controlled environment has become unbearable. This is true as well of the principles which lead to the well-known negative consequences of overloading this environment by means of society's technical-economic activities which break through of the limits of its "permanent sustainability."

Finally, the situation mentioned results in the fact that it is not possible to limit the validity of ethics as a regulator of human attitudes and activities and the maintenance of behaviour pattern by values only to the internal context, i.e., to inter-human or intra-social relations. Correspondingly, the regulation of relations to the natural, extra-human environment cannot be left "in the hands or competence" of society's technical-economic structure and organization. In society's cultural and communicative context there occur contradictions and changes. The goals and norms of behaviour also change on the basis of a growing recognition of the negative consequences and the feedback of information, so that there arises the need of new "environmental ethics" or ethics of respect for the environment.[9]

Ecological ethics, oriented towards ordering the relations of human society to natural ecosystems, proceeds from the viewpoint of the conditioning of societies as systems by natural ecosystems. At the same time, it is organically linked with the extension of the traditional ethics of people which regulates their interrelations and which therefore can be comprehended as a part of the normative order of society and its culture. A specific social function of this ethics as regards to the environment then also consists in the legitimization of a new alternative attitude of society and humans to nature, e.g., on the basis of alternative interpretations of scientific findings concerning ecosystems. This attitude would replace the present instrumental, power-based orientation contained in Parson's (and obviously not only Parson's) model of the interaction of society and nature.

The above-mentioned earlier conceptual model of society's interaction with nature was in terms of a separation of the natural environment from the social environment. This process from the modern cultural tradition which with E. Kohák[10] we would link with the "industrial-technocratic metaphor" of nature and world as a mechanism. In the natural sciences this metaphor appeared in the conception of nature as, for instance, a "bio-mechanism". In sociology it appears in the conception of the life processes of society as "social mechanisms". This metaphor establishes a certain power-based attitude and regulates human behaviour in the world. In the world of nature it is then the attitude of the master which assesses nature as a source of material. This metaphor seems to be firmly rooted in the modern society.

On the contrary, the metaphor of a harmony of man and nature, and of participation thusfar socially is weakly rooted. It is the "choice between a suitable an unsuitable metaphor"[11] creating our social attitudes and regulating our action in the world. This requires a much more cautious, i.e., not only exact, but also ever more ethical, assessment of the impacts of these social attitudes and action, rather than only an indifferent description identified with objective truth. This has become the problem of the day.

Of course, in considering the relation of society and nature within the scheme in which there prevails the goal of an instrumental implementation of certain economically and technologically defined needs of the human society, we can notice also certain interaction feedbacks in nature's effect on society in the sense of survival, biological reproduction, and influence on the development of civilization. If then there occurs an ecological emergency — for instance, the exhaustion of natural resources as a social effect (e.g., technical work) on the instrumentalized environment — we can identify the retroactive influences of changes in the natural environment in the form of the consequences of previous social activity or their combinations. In this sense a number of social scientists also began to reflect upon the present ecological crisis in its manifest and empirically observable aspects — for instance, overpopulation, migration, fight for resources, and the like.

There exists however a much deeper historical and cultural connection of this crisis in the relation of society and the natural environment which reflects the cultural dynamism of human society and the relations of society and humans in the process of modernization. For instance, the conceptualization of nature in the history of European thinking which searches for the sense, purpose and order of nature appears as an analogy deduced from the external manifestation of human activity, i.e., as an analogy of human society.[12] There appear deeper connections between the theories of nature and the theories of society, when the social idea of nature represents a certain projection of the human perception of one's ego and of the society upon the world or cosmos. On the other hand, theories of nature have been interpreted historically as containing the behaviour of individuals and social groups.[13] In this sense one also can find certain reflections of the state of human society and its relations behind the metaphors of culture which express the conception of the interaction of society and nature. Behind the metaphor of organism one can see the more integrated premodern world of European societies, behind the metaphor of mechanism one finds the more differentiated social world of modernity, and the entire historical process of modernization is characterized by a complex structural differentiation and autonomization.[14]

The modernization paradigm of social motion which is based on the duality of subject and object, enlightenment anthropology, and the like, created a scheme of emancipation or liberation

of humanity from nature as a realm of necessity, poverty, and the like. This reflected a teleology of society's development facilitating the growing human emancipation, i.e. towards the attainment of greater liberty. This liberty was identified with the true human character and nature as a substance which results ontologically from the intellectual ability to reflect the world and the ability of self-reflection. In social development this naturalness in liberty must overcome the cultural and historical sediment of authoritative traditional structures, institutions, privileges, and the like. The appeal to science and reason was a part of this development in culture and society. Modern rationalization turning away from theology in reflecting on the environment was an instrument in the society's liberation from the feudal traditional structures of mastery and its modernization, on the one hand. On the other, they led to the "disenchantment of the world"[15] by its materialization, atomization and instrumentalization as shown by M. Weber. This appeared both in the auto-reflection of human society and in the reflection on nature and the relation to it. Many people see the long-term cause of the ecological crisis in the very projection of the dominant type of mastery among people in society into nature, that is, onto human society's relation to nature. This is seen particularly in the modern idea of mastering nature, which identifies social progress with the rate of domination over nature.[16]

The Ambiguity of Modernization and the Double Environment

The process of modernization itself inside the society is however ambivalent, even from the viewpoint of the sociological investigation of sociocultural consequences for man. Thus, for instance, according to P.L. Berger the process of modernization is the development from fatality to choices in human life. According to Berger, it is mainly science and technology in the form of the ability of humans to control their environment which render these choices possible. Paradoxically, technology also makes it possible to control individual human lives by means of great and powerful institutions (e.g. the totalitarian state). The great drama of modernity consists in the "dynamic tension between liberation and enslavement."[17]

This paradoxical or ambivalent character of the historical process of modernization as a technical rationalization of power (mastery) over nature and people was already analyzed in a deeper way by M. Weber, particularly in his investigation of the dynamism of the Western cultural differentiation of social systems, the rationalization of the performance and organization of power (i.e. economic as well as political power) and the legitimization of authority by the rational means of science, law and the modern ideology of efficiency and effectiveness.[18] In spite of the fact that this conception of Weber has been sometimes interpreted as a one-sided idealization of the modern bureaucratized and organized technical society (e.g., in the sociology and psychology of organizations), it is possible to consider it as a conception of the ambivalent character of modernity which has revealed the cultural context of connections between the mastery of nature and the development of mastery in society.

In this historical developmental context of the sociological analysis of the modernization of European civilization, N. Elias also pointed to the marked reenforcement of the technical factor in society's conception of its relations to the environment and nature. According to Elias, this trend was evident as early as the high Middle Ages in Christian Europe in the West and resulted in the fact that in the process of formation of modern European society it was the very technologization of the internal and external interactions of social structures which — apart from the apparent changes of the social class structure — became the decisive moment in the process of civilization.[19]

The historical process of modern civilization can be reconstructed from the viewpoint of ecological connections between society and natural environment — seen through the prism of power and control, mastery and domination. It appears as a contradictory process which, apart from the human social (and organized) activity aimed at the emancipation from nature and the control of its powers, contains the individuals' efforts at emancipation from the society's supremacy as well. Modernity means both the growth processes of interdependence in society and the counter-processes of growing efforts toward the individualization and autonomization of man as a subject and an object at the same time.

As a matter of fact, the double determination of environment and of man in the ecosystem is the concern all the time of both society and the extra-social. The first or social determination itself makes it simultaneously possible to become conscious of the environment of both types and develops reflections and findings about both types of environment by means of sociocultural communication, particularly speech communication. This may also be the reason for the fact that the cultural and artificially created social environment evolves into seemingly the only and main determination of human ecology. One's individualization in modern society in anonymous and objective relations also meant a reduction of relations with nature as well as a reduction of the natural environment itself. Anonymized individuals lose consciousness of their appurtenance to ecosystems. Relations with the world of nature and culture are increasingly mediated by the abstract network of artificial and intricate systems which become relatively independent as aspects of economy, politics, law, morals, arts, and the like. For this reason it is very complicated to situate in modern and thus functionally differentiated society concrete responsibility for the ecological problems and the negative consequences of the society's effect on its environment.

The above-mentioned complex differentiation of the social environment in the modernization process of European societies — which was observed and elaborated by M. Weber — has from the viewpoint of the human social effect on nature rational, technical as well as ethical components, and at the same time it has ambivalent consequences. From the viewpoint of the comparison of the historical forms of this effect it is above all a matter of the ambivalence of creation and destruction, cooperation and combat, aggression, appurtenance and power-based domination and mastery. The unity of man and his forms of sociality with nature therefore appeared to S. Freud as a negative or predominantly negative matter, in terms of the fight for survival in evolution understood in the Darwinian sense. Hence humans creates culture and civilization as an artificial environment for his own safety. At the same time it is seen as an instrument of mastery, both with regard to nature and with regard to most people participating in the cultural community.[20]

According to Th. Adorno, M. Horkheimer and H. Marcuse, this cultural repression is based on science and legitimized by the universality of reason and the prevalence of instrumental rationality in the world's manipulation. This mastery is based on the human mastery of its own nature and of work as the creation of individuals as well as of external, extra-human nature. Culture's mastery of nature and man becomes a reasonable mastery — "reasonable lack of freedom" — in the sense of evolution of the level of civilization of man and his society — even in the sense of the legitimization and justification of mastery.[21] According to Marcuse, scientific rationality contains "hypothetical instrumentality" of the technological *a priori* — projecting nature as "potential instrumentality." Simultaneously it founds the development of a specific technical organization of society and culture: "namely technology as a form of social control and domination."[22] Thus the scientific method itself, which has led to an ever more effective mastery of man with regard to nature, has provided concepts and instruments for an ever more perfect and effective man's mastery of man through the mastery of nature.[23] J. Habermas has shown that the

rationalization of social structures is at the same time a rationalization which conceals the motives of archaic mastery by means of "the invocation of purposive-rational imperatives".[24]

The relation of humanity to nature, mediated socially and culturally in the context of civilization was essentially reduced (just as the rationalized nature was reduced from the viewpoint of useful perceptibility) to an instrumentally rational utilization. Simultaneously, this reduced it to the procedures of manipulation, with the treatment of things as means for human goals. In this way there arises in the social consciousness and in culture an assessment of nature in which value is deduced from human purposes and needs: nature becomes "secondary", society "primary". At the same time, the relations between people which are purposefully rationalized reflect similar relations to nature.

The modern attitude to the world is simultaneously interlinked with the value conflicts and cultural crisis. G. Simmel interpreted the crisis of modern society in terms of a cultural contradiction between the objective and subjective components of culture. Objective culture, based on the improvement of objectified products, creations and forms (e.g. of technics, science, art, religion, philosophy), does not serve the development of an individual man, though it states it in the framework of its own legitimization within society's normative order. Instead, it becomes "the oppressive master of subjectivity in the actual order of historical development". The forms are deprived of their sense for the life of individuals and there appears a pathological identification of technical progress with cultural progress. Individuals escape to hedonistic consumption in which the individual seeks happiness and delight in the desire for money and whatever money can buy.[25] But is this conducive to greater human dignity?

The idea of a free human subject — which was also present at the birth of modern culture — was to deprive humanity of its dependencies both on nature and on society. In the framework of the forms of modern social mastery there arises the dilemma of technical rationalization versus humanization of society, because the dark side of rationalization consists in the universalization of the manipulation both of nature and of humans. There arises the question whether it is possible to further develop human emancipatory goals and values in modern society irrespective of the values of the dignity and continuity of the variety of life and irrespective of undermining the ecological foundations of life.

For human dignity this fact means that one should not separate the problems in human relations in the social environment from the problems of society's relations to the natural environment. This task requires new efforts to surpass the traditions of the dualistic structure of thinking[26] (subject-object, spirit-body, culture-nature, and the like) which sets present barriers for the solution of topical problems connected with the contemporary, and unfortunately growing ecological crisis. It is possible to call this crisis in a radical way a consequence of technical civilization's manipulations of nature and man or in a less radical way an unintended consequence of social interaction with the extra-human world. There arise also for socio-political analysis many concrete new phenomena created by these consequences, particularly if they are informatively communicated in society and come together as a conflicting field with regard to values, politics and interests.

Ecological Discourse: Communication, Solidarity, Conflict

The Challenge

The relation of society and nature in the present conditions of ecological crisis is connected with the power-based reduction of society's interaction with the environment. This reflects an evident growth of problems with the effective regulation of negative, "secondary" or "unintended" consequences of the "management of resources" in the utilization and manipulation or control of the external environment of objectified and instrumentalized nature. If this relation is a part of the culture of totalitarian processes of modern society, on the one hand, then of course, on the other, nature still exists in and round a people though it is considerably devastated and disturbed by human activities. It is perceived and reflected sensually, aesthetically, emotionally, biologically (appearing, for instance, in the health conditions of the members of society) and rationally. In the situation of negative retroaction of the cumulated consequences of the power-based social interaction of society with natural environment, the biological component of man's constitutionality becomes a basic condition for the survival of humankind and their societies, and a prerequisite for further cultural and civilizing, economic as well as technological reproduction. As we have tried to indicate in brief, the dualization and "primarization" of culture against nature has its historical reasons, forms and connections; these, however, should not be considered as eternal, fatal and unchangeable. Nor should one deny the transcendental dimension of man, his rational and spiritual creativity, his moral self-reflexion and communicative ability.[27]

In the present modern industrial civilization this self-reflection and communication face the complex task of regulating the conflicts and disequilibriums of interests and values in society in connection with the natural ecological capacity of tolerability and permanent tenability.

Modern society as production and output-oriented faces nowadays the cumulative consequences of its own productiveness. It must bear the burden of the growing, excessive burden of the negative consequences of industrial activities. There arises a conflict of values and goals between production and its consequences: on the one hand, there is affluence, ownership, national state, legal and social securities; on the other, there is the accumulation of unintended or unwanted consequences of social action. For this reason apart from technical, legal, economic and sanitary reasons — the significance of the ethical as well as of political discourse is also growing in this context.

U. Beck who works in this connection with the concept of "risk society" (*Risikogesellschaft*) has shown that the fact that this society produces mass dangers which cannot be seized by the structure of rationalized institutions — e.g., economic calculus with their functional control-regulation system — has become the number one problem. The dangers are ever more "externalized", which means that they fall outside institutions and upon the shoulders of the public, individuals, nature and future generations. Thus industrial society produces by its rationality the irrationality of endangering men and nature: both biologically, physically, technically and morally, socially, ethically. Any deeper reflection and discussion of ecological problems therefore increases the tension between values and institutions, apparatuses, legitimacy and legality. The effects exerted by such institutionalization and rationalization as would neutralize the social conflicts related to ecological problems frequently lead to legal individualization, technical legitimatization or political minimization. Thus the very legitimacy of the existence of apparatuses and institutions of modern society with their further expansion is also undermined. The traditional modernistic legitimatization — based on the idea of the progress and rationality of institutions and their action — obviously diverges from the natural life world. In this modern society of risk the social class conflicts as their institutionalization recede — according to Beck — into the background before the unlimited ecological menaces. Institutions manifest a chronic contradictoriness: on the one

hand, they make efforts for the security and control of risks and, on the other, they simultaneously legalize the irresponsible practice of hazard with the possibility of a catastrophe.[28]

The technical-economic power of modern society is thus overshadowed by the production of its own encumberment with risks. Ecological and other research surveys and public information which try to reflect this contradiction create a platform of new social movements and political controversies The contradictoriness of values and interests and the value-ideological level of ecological incompatibility are a consequence of the trend to mistake legitimacy for legality, as well as an effect of the "rhetoric of fear, of anxiety" in society's consciousness. This also supplements the broad inability to take over real responsibility for further perspectives and future generations in the atmosphere of a long-term Cold War, with the menace of nuclear destruction with uneasily imaginable impact. It is indisputable that both exercised and still exercise influence on society — for instance, in the reproduction of value hedonism "Here and Now" or "Me-First", reminding one of the late Roman "*carpe diem*".[29]

The consciousness of ecological menace is therefore not only a "positive" stimulus to growth of the "solidarity of fear and danger," but evokes the need of socially and culturally developed ecological ethics or ethics of regard to the environment and social solidarization. The former is a matter not only of the ethical charge of ecological knowledge, but also of a much broader relation to the above-mentioned double environment. This consciousness is also a source of tension and conflict inside society in the form of growth in consciousness of the risk of society's self-destruction; this continues to feed this self-destruction, while stimulating and also communicating it at the same time. In fact, respect for others is respect for oneself.

The Emergence of Environmentalism

The movements for the protection of living environment, protection of living beings, conservation, alternative technologies (both with regard to industrial and energy production), changes of human values and life styles, and the like, were briefly denominated as "environmentalist" or "green" movement.[30] They are a new type of civic movement arising in the context of the tension between legitimacy and legality — between the modern society's values and institutions.

Environmentalism today can be considered a "global subculture"[31] which unites with political, religious and ethical movements and creates the platform for a fundamental dialogue in society. The purpose consists in the creation of a new type of social self-reflection oriented towards society's relations to the local and global natural environment, that is, in the creation of ecological consciousness.

From the beginning of the 1970s this self-reflection aimed at the formation of consciousness of the growing risk connected with the uncorrected continuation of the previous evolution of modern civilization. The civilizational ecological criticism was supplied with weighty arguments about the deterioration of the quality of the life environment and the accelerating devastation of nature. Great discussions — for instance, the "Global Debate" about the limits of economic growth which was initiated by the Club of Rome, as well other discussions — evoked significant new moments in cultural consciousness, scientific and political thinking and strategic considerations which were orientated towards the search for alternatives to the status quo.[32] Alternative thinking aims at the reversal of ecological crisis into the opportunity for society's self-transformation and therefore evokes great expectations with a view to the human spiritual and intellectual creative potential, to culture and to society.

For instance, environmentalism in the USA appeared on the cultural, scientific and political scene around 1970 and spread at first among the prosperous, educated and conservative segments of the white society. Ecological criticism referred above all to the fact that the system did not work as it should and that it was therefore necessary to look for concrete technical and social solutions in the form of innovations, new alternative technologies, reforms, legislative changes — i.e. in the form of creating the instruments of social control of the human society's relations to the natural and artificial environments. In this way many improvements were indisputably achieved, many legislative measures were implemented, and the like. Soon, however, it became evident that ecological problems and ecological crisis in general were not only a result of the systemic functioning or individual dysfunctions in differentiated subsystems or institutions which could be amended or adjusted by means of a reform of traditional public policy.

It became evident that it was a matter of much broader and deeper problems of the nature of man, his society, culture and, last but not least, of the very power metaphor of technical control of the world. That is, of the already analyzed modes of human reference to the world which it controls without being effectively controlled as regards itself.

Thus environmentalism became not only a civil political movement, but also above all a social and personal self-reflection.[33] This proceeds from the massive criticism of modern thinking and the practice of industrial exploitation of nature, of the goal of a linear growth of production and consumption with multiple consequences which are generally denoted by the term of ecological crisis. Environmentalism appears as a "postmodern" criticism. It contrasts to the dominant problems of modern society and its theory concentrated round rationalization or criticism, or the alienation of human relations inside society. Instead, it stresses criticism of the alienation of human society's relations to nature and shows that the consequences of the rationalization of relations both in the "internal" and "external" environment afflict all individuals and social groups involved in the devastation of nature and man.

From this viewpoint environmentalism is a type of social knowledge and consciousness which connects criticism not with the particularization of social interests and their conflict, but with the way of life of society as a whole as a system in interaction with environment. Instead of the differentiation of the rate of responsibility inside human society, it stresses the universalistic issue of human responsibility to the world and to other people, as well as to itself.

In this way there arises a challenge in social communication in the form of expectation of changes in everyday consciousness and action, changes oriented towards acceptance of one's own part of the responsibility. It becomes an appeal to human self-interest, to humans not only as social actors or members of society or culture, but also as members of the natural community, as a biological, physical, living and thus also mortal, natural being.[34]

This formation of alternative consciousness, however, contained from the first a value conflict, e.g. between the interest of being healthy (which so far has been defined socially in a modern way in the form of an institutionalized health system and connected with the personal expectation of services provided by this system) and the interest in the rise of the material standard of living and in the quality of life. Ordinary everyday consciousness reflects in an elemental fashion the wish for unification or synthesis of these interests in the aspiration "to have both".[35]

This value conflict then creates a basis or field for the origin of social conflicts or quasi-group interests concentrated round the interpretation of the ecological appeal in society and evoking the need of their technical or political (rational-technical) or discursive solution. As far as these solutions tend to an institutional neutralization of the conflict, which seems to be the rule, they do not yet imply a solution of the conflict between legitimacy and legality.[36]

One can consider as a significant social factor of the vigor of environmentalism as a "global subculture" and as "ecological communication"[37] in society the growing possibilities of information dissemination and its effect on the public. That is, the growth of the rate as well as of the quality of being informed about the state of the deterioration or improvement of the ecological quality of life. This includes the possibilities of information dissemination about the ecological crisis locally and globally, about ecological damage, scientific and technological discoveries, measurements and assessments of the impacts of different technologies. There is an extensive and frequently very radical criticism of modern perceptive natural science and "technoscience." But the source of ecological philosophy, ethics, theology or ecological political theory is above all scientific information about the ecological impacts and limits, as well as the ecological risks of survival. That is, not only the survival of so-called external nature as an environment of man and nature, but also the survival of the so-called internal nature of man as a biological individual or organism, and also that of human society. As a matter of fact, a great amount of information points to how fragile and easily destructible is not only nature, but the modern society of scientific and technological devices as well. The growing consciousness of human, natural and social risks and its communication create psychological situations and political pressures on the systems of political action and decision-making with the aim of stopping the growth of this risk and reducing stress and uncertainties.

In this situation of ecological communication of risk, however, there arise also numerous destructive steps in the growth of fear and anxiety — "ecological anxiety." This is dealt with by N. Luhmann who shows that these cannot be effectively regulated by society as deviations; the possible panic cannot be normatively regulated, for instance, forbidden or scientifically explained, and the like. Luhmann hints at the origin of the "rhetoric of anxiety",[38] Beck at the "solidarity of fear" when political discussions focus on the risks and consequences of modernization in the form of irrevocable endangerments of the life of plants, animals and man.[39] The effects of this anxiety and growing fears strengthen and motivate the creation of new social solidarities, which leads to a new moral based on the common interest of removing anxiety.[40] A. Giddens speaks in an analogous way about the expansion of the risks of modernity, and about the expansion of the consciousness of risks connected with life in modern society. According to Giddens, to live in this society means to believe in "expert systems," in anonymous social relations. The production, distribution, dissemination and communication of new knowledge and findings about the world, however, lead to "reflexive modifications" of social relations[41] and transformations of natural-technical reality. In this way the risks of modernity become ever more global and have social origin and character, i.e., they are super-individual and not easily localizable in society. In that way social reflection leads to the expansion of the consciousness of risk which changes the nature of this risk itself, because the public is in the position of a layman in relation to the overwhelming majority of expert systems.[42]

The efforts at a rational answer to uncertainties and fears in this situation create two types of attitudes: the utopian realism of the policy of projects oriented towards the future and realistically linked with the immanent trends of development, and the formation of social movements oriented towards local and global action in the macrosocial as well as experiential dimension of modern life.

According to N. Luhmann, the semantic effect of the reflection of communication of ecological warning information represents another problem that proceeds from the communication of ecological risks, threats and anxiety. The communication of anxiety makes it possible to communicate anxiety which is self-supportive in this sense: talk about uncontrollable anxiety

spreads universally throughout society. The rhetoric of anxiety is selective because it psychologically accentuates the deterioration of the situation to the detriment of its improvement. In the means of communication anxiety become a moral problem which determines our duty to participate in the public's fears in a normative way, i.e. it becomes a duty to feel uneasy — even to participate in the fears and demands for protection against the dangers of ecological crisis and ecological riskiness. This self-feeding character of the communication of anxiety which is caused by ecological dangers as well as by the moralization of people's relation to this anxiety functions on the principle of self-justification. This does not require theoretical argumentation because "anxiety changes the uncertainty of the situation into the certainty of anxiety".[43] The semantic nature of this phenomenon makes it impossible for any subsystem (institutions) to master anxiety.

The Moral Issue

Ecological communication and the volume of such information in society, however, create positive prerequisites for (reflective) social theory as well: The search for alternatives and new solutions provides chances for new social and human creativity — both individual and collective, group and institutional. Instances are the practical solution of the needs of conservation and protection of nature, resources of water, oxygen, human health and the life of extra-human beings, and the like. Ecological communication, mediated in this way, becomes a medium of many useful human activities and a source of the sense of social action for people which often is absent in the institutions, apparatuses and subsystems of modern industrial society. Ecological communication helps to disseminate new meaning of social activity, new values in the context of existing dominant values in society. Some authors are excessively optimistic in their evaluation of the changes in values, as far as the effects of new environmentalistic values on the dominant systems of culture are concerned. Others presume that the contemporary cultural and value crisis of modern society will be fully overcome only when the new "environmental paradigm" fully substitutes the present predominant structure of values of the perduring "industrial" culture. The first viewpoint can be found, e.g. in L. Milbrath's study concerning the vanguard social role of environmentalism, the other in the works of C.F. Ferkiss or W.T. Anderson.[44]

In the context of the cultural change of values W.T. Anderson points to the problem of social communication of ecological communication. Thus, for instance, the research surveys on public opinion create information which has a feedback effect to the public's consciousness. N. Luhmann reacts to this in his conception as well. According to Anderson, investigation of the purely rhetorical base and the form of this communication situates the complex cultural changes much nearer "than it develops in reality".[45] In his opinion from the viewpoint of cultural and value change in society the environmental movement is very contradictory and brings about many difficult political problems. It goes without saying that it has however brought a whole number of significant new values for the emerging "bioculture" as an alternative for the "technoculture" of modern society, on the one hand. On the other and at the same time, this new bioculture has an intrinsic disposition to become global, worldwide or planetary. In contrast, most "ecotoplan" theories (i.e. Utopias of the target ideal of an ecologically sustainable society) are based on the model of a self-sufficient local community. Members are more localists and separatists than members of a global *polis*. As a matter of fact, there appears at this moment a contradiction between the global and regional perspective of environmentalism. This is connected with the diversity of political cultures. According to Anderson, this diversity will be reaffirmed within the framework of a global *polis* through common programmes and projects of cooperation, based on

interdependence and consciousness that one lives in a biosphere, though being also a member of society.

For this reason, the conscious search for ethical, political, economic and technical answers to the changing conditions of life on the planet is a positive effect of the ecological discourse in society. However, it sets unprecedented demands on social communication as well as on institutional and political decision making for the solution of emerging value conflicts.

These solutions which presuppose the existence of a pluralistic (democratic) situation with the possibility of controlling institutions by means of values concern ecological problems and conflicts like any other social conflicts. According to Vaclav B• lohradský, in such a situation it is a matter of "putting through the predominance of values over the interests of institutions by means of civic movements which do not seek political power but space for the tension between institutions and values". Correspondingly, political decision making should proceed more and more "from more general viewpoints than the partial interests of structures if the movements are to be accepted as legitimate."[46]

Developments show that even though the ecological movements of environmentalism are legalized, this does not yet mean a practical solution to the dilemmas of interest and value conflict within the framework of the still dominant industrial or modern "technoculture", on the one hand. On the other, the existence and effect of this conflict is for contemporary civilization a basis (and a prerequisite) of constructive tension. This evokes, among other things, the need of human potential for the search for creative alternatives for the new adaptation of society. This is proved by the development in the 70s, 80s and 90s which was initiated by the very sharp debates in the communication of, e.g., pessimistic, alarming and warning information, prognoses and judgements about the limitedness of our planet and about the limits of the extensive or expanding economic growth.

Even though R. Dahrendorf does not explicitly deal with the ecological problem in his analysis of modern social conflict, nevertheless he acknowledges the importance of discussions on global problems in the socio-political context.[47] Dahrendorf does not deny the existence of these problems, but he considers that they were exaggerated by the Club of Rome and that the Meadows' study *Limits to Growth* neglected the possibilities of conservation — of savings and new methods and alternatives. But there then came to the fore the problem of pollution which shaped all action agendas, overpopulation and other global problems, inclusive of the new forms of death (e.g., AIDS). These forced people "to fear and to think about the future".[48] Dahrendorf critically refuses above all the extrapolations and the "idea of limits" itself as limited thinking on the concepts of limits. He considers real historical development to be rather a non-linear and non-extrapolated movement of the knight in the game of chess moving "aside and forward — i.e. by detour".

On the other hand, he acknowledges the significance of the global debate and the experience of the 70s as a moment of reversal in earlier social development which he compares to the transition "from the liberal to the social democratic century a hundred years ago".[49] Dahrendorf sees the main significance of this moment of reversal (possibly inspired by a similar term of Mesarovi*f* and Pestel) in the fact that the effort "to cope with the new situation" became the main condition of policy everywhere. In economic thinking it was awareness of how unhealthy it is to make it possible for societies and economies to develop in an undisturbed way, "without internal and external shocks", and thus to rigidify and become unable to innovate and adapt themselves. Thus Dahrendorf assesses in the main positive influence and effect of the ecological and global debate in social communication on the social development, as well as being part of the content of modern social conflict. Finally, he acknowledges some usefulness of the concept of "limits" for

the search for alternatives to the limits of the "state of social services" or the "welfare state", which creates new reasons for the legitimization of its necessity. Dahrendorf also outlines cautiously the differences on the value spectrum between the policy of "the Greens" and "those who tried to become rich quickly". This appears as a conflict between adherents of the social costs of growth and the adherents of the social costs of non-growth.[50]

The ecological discourse in modern society brings with it — as is obvious from our analysis — both a potential for social conflict and stimuli for alternative changes in thinking and decision making, values and goals, as well as new unities or solidarities in society. The need of alternatives grows above all from awareness that ecological problems are primarily not of technical origin, and that as such they cannot be solved effectively without taking into regard the socio-cultural and political context and thus being treated as a moral problem.

Environmental Discourse and Dignity

The reintroduction of moral value and valuation into our understanding of the world and of the ethical checks of self-control into our whole cultural relationship with nature has become not only a political necessity, but also a matter of human dignity and good life in a good society.

Given this necessary premise, we should hardly understand these tasks as a simple confrontation which counters directly modern value-free rationality of the scientific, disenchanted, view of the world. It should be rather complementary — both within science and wider societal culture. Rather, ethical value-rationality, in a sense of nearly Kantian practical reason, should confront the technological manipulative attitudes to the natural world as environment. This "ethicization" of our images and attitudes to the world should then lead our conduct along an alternative path against technocentric megalomania with its far-reaching impacts and risks.

To avoid the risks and cure their causes, therefore, means also to confront patterns of power within the human structure of social life, within the structures of rationalized systems of domination in modern society. For science, technology and ethics evolve and effect through human action, and patterns of conduct within certain social contexts.

The problem with environmentally responsible ethics arises in terms of how to implement this practical reason within the context of structures of modern instrumental reason, i.e., the structures of instrumentalized action. The search for alternative moral conduct should build on the European cultural heritage, for instance, the Aristotelian unity of human technical, scientific and aesthetic faculties and virtues, connecting them with moral political conduct. There is also the Biblical tradition of the metaphor of human dominion, which contains both aspects: the power and domination paradigm on the one side, and the morally responsible and cognitive respect of the whole of creation as a community created by God, on the other. In both conceptual frameworks much is to be learned: cognitive respect means mutual understanding within this community as a presupposition for an adequate policy for the public good, which thus becomes a realization of the moral control of power and of the structures of domination in human action.

In short, ecological morality should become the capacity for self-control in human action oriented toward control of the environment. This capacity can be seen as an organic part of culture as the cultivation of human potential to develop not only instrumental capacities, but also intrinsic, non-instrumental, existential aesthetical capabilities as well.

The Human Dominion Metaphor

The Biblical tradition bears a certain tradition of the sacred dignity of all creation. At the same time this has been influenced by certain interpretations of the cultural meaning of the metaphor of human dominion. One interpretation sees the place and relation of humanity to the natural world as either master or viceroy of God on earth. This implies exceptional human dignity, based on the divine gift of the Spirit. Other variations interpret the human position and dignity as shared with and conditioned by a moral vision of respect for other parts of creation because they are God's creations and thus sacred. Humans are not apart, but situated within earthly creation, and as such "members of the natural community". Human will and action are therefore limited by ethical norms established independently of human purposes. Similarly, the surrounding world of nature has its purpose entirely apart from its function as a material basis of human activities. This implies that human dominion on Earth should be interpreted in a wider ethical framework and/or moral policy.

The first version is now undergoing a certain reinterpretation of dominion read in a sense of domination[51] which metaphor had political connotations as this shrunk into a blind desire for power. Such secularized power in its political, technological, military, etc. forms lacks ethical good, moral responsibility and respect for the dignity of living beings, and leads to current critical environmental problems.

Alternatively, the second version interpreted human "lordship on Earth" as a rather gentle duty, a stewardship[52] of a divine creation based upon an understanding and appreciation of what nature is about and with love for nature. These human qualities should become the qualifications for attaining truly human dignity, as well as knowledge of the functioning. This knowledge should also be more predictive because we need to know what to expect from the results of our own actions. These human qualities and qualifications, therefore, can be seen as necessary steps toward proper dominion of earthly nature.

Pursuit of the Good Life as a Politics of Human Capacity for Self-Actualization

Human self-fulfillment is not only in terms of values and interests of wealth, status and power — but also in terms of the realization of potential faculties that define such practices. This means, to recall the Aristotelian distinction between living and living well, that human well-being is not to be identified either with the realization of psychological states or satisfaction of preferences, or with the possession or realization of objective goods which includes the achievement of certain human perfection.

The pursuit of the good life in society requires certain politics such that it allows a plurality of human practices to flourish. The conditions of social choice should allow different judgements about the value of objects surrounding us. Such a view of public life and its political context is necessary if human society is to be ecologically wise. This ecological view consists of:

(a) an appreciation of, and concern for, the goods of the natural world, by means both of sciences and of arts and religious piety; this should open humans to the goods around them;

(b) socio-political contexts which recognize that human individuals do not live in a vacuum and situate them within certain historical traditions in which the well-being of those in the present is tied to that of those in the future;

(c) such contexts and practices distinguish living from living well so that the boundaries or limits in the human acquisition of material goods are recognized.[53]

Politics and political economy should then be informed by such practices and ways of life in the society as "economy" in the Aristotelian sense: i.e., as the art of wise household management which recognizes that there are limits to the material things and acquisitions required for the good life.

With respect to socio-cultural contexts, rational adaptation to limits posed by current environmental situations therefore now requires a different institutional context with a much wider and wiser definition of human interests. Environmental policy should not be obsessed with environmental limits only and/or by the projection of possible catastrophes — but be directed rather towards a certain revitalization of civil society, where the goods of life (i.e., also environmental values) are pursued and discussed. There is, nevertheless, a problem regarding how an ecologically rational politics could be practically pursued and discussed by citizens within the various institutional frameworks or contexts of the present modern culture (for example market economy, state administration, etc.) with their often conflicting constraints, pressures or goals and rules. To build different institutional contexts is to care seriously about better conditions which facilitate human potential growth where human capacities could flourish. It is precisely this care and protection of the growth potential of human capacities which should become one of the strategic goals for environmentally-oriented efforts of the politics and political culture of civil society.

Conclusion

Nowadays philosophy and other fields of inquiry cannot evade the existence of the ecological crisis and the effect of the cumulated problems and consequences of the activities of modern industrial society. These are the consequences of the socio-cultural metaphor of domination which legitimized this action. Otherwise, it could find itself in the opposite role of a surprised observer of new conflicts which result from misunderstanding the social causes and effects of ecological problems and the nature of growing interdependencies of the coevolution of man, nature and society. This is the challenge to identify in time the social context, sense, importance and historical causes of the topical and contradictory processes in environmenta-lism. It is a dynamic intellectual process of cultural and civilizational criticism, theory of science, philosophy and "greening" of the natural and social consciousness of global endangerments, social risk and the existing form, structure and orientation of social systems. It is also a challenge both to change awareness and action, and to new adaptation and qualitative transformation.

This transformation has as its prerequisites a deeper understanding and explanation of the coevolutionary dependencies between society and nature. We shall have that as long as there continues a one-sided conception of the interaction of society and nature based ethically on power and control. In that case unfortunately the external and internal destruction of the environment can only deepen further: biologically, economically, socially and morally. The other possible interpretation of the sense of the present ecological discourse in modern society is that value and institutional conflicts, linked with confrontations in communication which arise and will continue to arise in the future, may act at the same time as socially solidarizing and diversifying factors. Along with the destruction and disintegration of earlier patterns of interaction between society and nature, these can evoke new chances for change and new adaptation promoting greater human dignity.

Notes

1. The fact of feedback impacts the global and local processes of the deterioration of the natural environment on the industrial societies of modern civilization and motivates the need for research and investment into the permanently sustainable economic development of societies. At the same time it evokes the urgent need of new alternative approaches to the coevolution of society and nature. See e.g. R. Norgaard, "Sustainable Development: a Co-evolutionary View", *Futures*, 20, 6 (1988), pp. 606-620.

2. Assessment of the negative impacts of modern technologies is a difficult task — for instance, to express ecological damage concerning human health in terms of money (comp. in greater detail: J.F. Coates, "Technology Assessment: the Benefits, the Costs, the Consequences," *The Futurist* V (December 1971), p. 228; F. Hetman, *Society and the Assessment of Technology*, (Paris: OECD, 1973).

3. Th. Rozsak, *Where the Wasteland Ends. Politics and Transcendence in Post-industrial Society* (London: Faber, 1973), p. 37.

4 According to T. Benton, the duality differentiating the biological-social and nature-culture has retarded sociological research concerning the linkage between these abstractly opposed spheres (T. Benton, "Biology and Social Science: Why the Return of the Repressed Should be Given a Cautious Welcome", *Sociology*, 25 [No. 1, February 1991], 7). Catton and Dunlap refer to this problem (W.R. Catton and R.E. Dunlap, "Environmental Sociology. A New Paradigm," *American Sociologist* 13 [1978], 41-49) in a similar way as, for instance, M. Redclift in the context of development (M. Redclift, *Development and the Environmental Crisis* [London: Methuen, 1984]). Benton proposed a taxonomic survey of the topical sociological research agenda in the following fields: social and personal conditions of health and illness, relations between the sexes and social structure, ecological conditions and unintended consequences of the human social interaction with the extra-human world, patterns of social conflict by which these conditions and consequences are created. (T. Benton, *op. cit.*, p. 25)

5. D. Worster, *Nature's Economy. A History of Ecological Ideas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 291-311.

6. T. Parsons, *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (Englewood-Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 16.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

9. Environmental ethics — developed above all in the framework of moral philosophy — deals with the moral relations between men and the natural world, further with the principles which determine the human duties and responsibility to the earthly natural environment and its inhabitants (P.W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*[Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986], p. 3); it also endeavors to build up a suitable axiology and particularly to replace the instrumental values by such values as acknowledge the internal values of nature and its individual parts, not only such as result only from their functional linkage to the whole of the ecosystem, but from their existence, aesthetic qualities, and the like. For instance, E. Hargrove pleads for the establishment of environmental ethics on the very aesthetic values of nature which he considers from the ontological viewpoint as more original for man, i.e. as existing prior to economic or scientific values (E.C. Hargrove, *Foundations of Environmental Ethics* [New Jersey: Englewood cliffs, 1989], pp. 125-126). There also exists critical reservation to the fact that the ethical approach within the framework of moral philosophy has meanwhile

mostly ignored the historical, political and social relationships of ecological problems; that it is individualistic and apolitical (e.g., the belief in respect for nature only in the case of an individual); that it characterizes man more or less independently of the concrete social contexts. Environmental ethics has so far concentrated for the most part on the changes of individual attitudes to the detriment of the society's political and structural changes and not on political problems which are faced by man as a social actor in the context of power-based relations, because an ecological problem is above all a political problem. Yet, environmental issues need some political framework because they really are political problems — that is, problems that confront us as social beings within the context of power relationships. (T.W. Simon, "Varieties of Ecological Dialectics", in *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, No. 3 [Fall, 1990], p. 215-216).

10. E. Kohák, "Hovory se stromem," *Filozoficky casopis*, 39 (No. 6, 1991), 903-912.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 911.

12. C.I. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 4.

13. C. Merchant proved this fact on the connections of the paradigmatic structure of the unification of social and cosmic reality in the historical conditions of transition from the agrarian to the industrial way of life in which the ecology and economy of farm, forest and swamps were replaced by the new forms of human interaction with nature. Society's organic traditions and social organizations were destroyed as well. C. Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), p. 68.

14. The mechanical metaphor was advanced at the time of acceleration in commerce, transport, banking, metallurgy, mining and the application of machines. The way to a more extensive exploitation of nature was opened by these new social goals of European society jointly with the legitimization of the philosophical and scientific "killing" of nature, which removed the moral scruples connected with this metaphor of earth as an organism and living creature. Organism was replaced by mechanism and the world became more rational, more predictable and manipulable. The instrumentally manipulative pattern which is concentrated on power has penetrated modern development from the 17th to the 20th century in government, technology and science. The power-based goals have spread from society to nature. The control and destruction of the natural environment have brought many ambivalent consequences for society because the metaphor of a machine (e.g. clockwork) mechanism began to hold even in human society. C. Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

15. Considering the reconstruction of Weber's concept *Entzauberung der Welt* (disenchantment of the world) see J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, I (Frankfurt, a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 262-298.

16. M. Bookchin analyzed the extension of social relations to relations to nature on the example of the pattern of a hierarchic structure of power. He interprets the relations of society and nature as dialectical relations. The modern institution of control and mastery is based on the moral of hierarchy and proceeds from the epistemology of government : the origin of mastery of nature lies in man's mastery of man and his archetypal moral of patriarchy as human mastery of woman and his mastery of nature. M. Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom. The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto, Ca.: Cheshire Books, 1982), p. 121.

17. P.L. Berger, *The Capitalist Revolution. Fifty Propositions about Prosperity, Equality and Liberty* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 86.

18. M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. by A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons (London: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 115-131, 148-153, 184-191. For more recent analyses of Weber's conception of the rationalization process in the development of modern society, compare W.M. Sprondel, C. Seyfarth, *Max Weber und das Problem der gesellschaftlichen Rationalisierung* (Stuttgart, 1981); S. Kallenberg, "Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Process in History", *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (1980), P. 1145.

19. N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. Vol. II.: *State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

20. S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972).

21. H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (New York: Sphere Books, 1970), pp. 115-125.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

24. It follows from Habermas's conception that modern society's relation to nature is a relation of objectified human communication in which instrumental rationality ousted symbolic interaction by a scientific model: the powers of nature and man are disposable means of the functional adaptation of the society's self-maintaining system. Rationalization means that both nature and man are subjected to the goals of the abstract social whole — to the system which stands up against them as a subject. The communication with nature and among people is thus an alienated communication. J. Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society* (London: Heinemann, 1971), pp. 86-88.

25. D. Weinstein and M.A. Weinstein, "Simmel and the Theory of Postmodern Society," in B.S. Turner (ed.), *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity* (London: Sage, 1990), p. 79-80; further, G. Simmel, "The Conflict of Modern Culture," in P. Lawrence, *Georg Simmel: Sociologist and European* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), pp. 223-212. According to Ch. Lasch, the psychological narcissistic trend testifies to the way in which individuals submit to the social dynamism of modern consumption. If they do not realize their actual needs, they begin to look for substitutes in consumption which, however, cannot substitute for the spiritual void and create intimacy; the individual then delivers the lack of development of his own personality to the tender mercies of manipulation. Ch. Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1978).

26. The thesis on the coevolution of human cultural, natural and biological aspects makes it possible to overcome the radical dichotomy of anthropocentrism and biocentrism on the basis of a revision of the dualism of subject and object, human and natural creations: it influences the degree of adaptation, survival and reproduction in natural and social environments in a selective way in the mutual interaction of cultural and biological evolution. The coevolutionary approach can explain the adaptiveness of human social behaviour without its enforcement of the models of natural selection or separation of the influences of genetics and culture, as is assumed by W. Durham. W. Durham, "Towards a Coevolutionary Theory of Human Biology and Culture," in A. Caplan, (ed.) *The Sociobiology Debate. Readings on the Ethical and Scientific Issues concerning Sociobiology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 441.

27. The human speech ability as a social property can appear as a basis for the differentiation of the natural, the human, and the cultural, i.e., for the dualistic distinction and thus also as a discursive barrier. This ability, however, can be also an opportunity for discursive equality in the partnership of men and nature as a communicative rationality which would found the alternative ethics of men and human society in their relations to nature instead of instrumental rationality. See

J. Dryzek, "Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere," *Environmental Ethics*, 12 (no. 3, 1990), 195-210.

28. H. Beck, *Risksgesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* (Frankfurt, a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986).

29. "Me-First!" is a psychoculture by means of which D. Yankelowich denoted the type of a hedonistic consumption attitude spread in modern society. This modus of human self-realization was construed by Yankelowich on the basis of public opinion polls. He pointed to the ethical-ecological limitedness of the culture of narcissism and expressed the opinion that it was necessary to implement qualitative value changes. D. Yankelowich, *The New Rules: Searching for Self-fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Random House 1981). According to E. Fromm, this orientation of man means "to have and not to be", it is an expression of the alienated relation of human individuals to the world which is reduced to possessiveness. E. Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (London: Heinemann, 1976). D. Johns considers narcissism as a basis of social manipulation in modern society; according to him, excessive consumption is a symbol of success for the individuals, society and the whole civilization; simultaneously it symbolizes the triumph of control and technology on the basis of the anthropocentric idea of man as a master of the Earth and a central point of the universe. D.M. Johns, "The Relevance of Deep Ecology,"*Environmental Ethics*, 12 (no. 3, Fall 1990), p. 243. However, there exists a difference between egocentrism which is represented by the narcissism of "Me First!" and anthropocentrism as a view of life, i.e., the difference between real everyday behaviour and values as a view of life.

30. T. O'Riordan, *Environmentalism* (London: Pion, 1981). The author followed the global discussion on the limits of growth and expressed the opinion that this was not a matter of the mere problem of the equilibrium between population and resources, but of the goals for which the resources are used in economic growth as well as of the moral problem of the loss of modern society's respect for nature. Ecocentrism as an alternative of the modern anthropocentric orientation of goals and patterning of social behaviour therefore requires a revision of the goals and means of society's development. D. Peeper analyses in detail the practice of environmentalism in Great Britain and the USA in his work *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism* (New Hampshire: Croom Helm, 1984). J. Petulla sets the movement and ideas of environ-mentalism into the interpretative framework of an analysis of the value structure of American society and confronts the competition of different trends — i.e., economic, ecological and biocentric — in the creation of environmental policy. J.M. Petulla, *American Environmentalism: Values, Tactics, Priorities* (Collese Station: Texas University Press, 1980). B. van Steebergen considers environ-mentalism as a new political ideology which originated in the 70s, stagnated in the 80s and again reached the "peak of political agenda" in the 90s. Recent development has disproved the objections against environmentalism as an ideology: both from the part of technocrats who consider ecoproblems as technical and soluble in the framework of the present economic order and from the part of socialists who experience competitive endangerment from the part of ecological movements and who blame "green ideology" for non-complexity and accentuation of one partial problem. Steenbergen says that it becomes doubtful that "we can solve our ecological problems in the context of an expanding economy; it is also becoming clear that we can develop a complete ideology and an economic theory, as well as a vision of future society" B. van Steenbergen, "Scenarios for Europe in the l990's: The Role of Citizenship and Participation," *Futures*, 22 (no. 6, November 1990), p. 964.

31. W.T. Anderson, *To Govern Evolution. Further Adventures of the Political Animal* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), p. 290.

32. Comp. D.H. Meadows, *et al.*, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972); A.D. Herrera and H.D. Scolnik, *Catastrophe or New Society?* (Ottawa: IDRC, 1976); I. Miles and J. Irvine, *The Poverty of Progress. Changing Ways of Life in Industrial Societies* (Oxford: Persamon Press, 1982).

33. Comp. e.g. A. Stikker, "Evolution and Ecology," *Futures*, 22 (no. 2, March, 1990), 168-171; A. Pricels, "Value and the Environment," *Futures*, 22 (no. 4, May, 1990), 436-439.

34. B. Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); the term "biotic community" recently has been advanced by deep ecology and deep anthropology. This concept is to serve the moral conception of the interaction of human society with nature on the basis of acknowledging nature as a value in itself. A. Wittbecker, "Deep Anthropology: Ecology and Human Order," *Environmental Ethics*, (no. 3, 1986), 268-270.

35. According to the above-mentioned public opinion polls carried out by D. Yankelowich, most Americans want wealth and consumption as well as ecological security and quality of life in a healthy natural environment: they want more material goods as well as more personal freedom. They want to have more leisure jointly with present comfort, to maintain economic securities and simultaneously experience adventures, variety and change. Most of them appreciate political freedom and new social claims. (D. Yankelowich, *op. cit.*, 159.) This internal value conflict of aspirations contrasts with the hopes and challenges of the ecological adherents of sustainable society and the life style of conservation: D. Elgin and L.F. Brown propose the values related to the life style of "voluntary simplicity" based on the tightening of one's belt in consumption and on the preference of "higher", spiritual goals of life. D. Elgin, *Voluntary Simplicity* (New York: W. Morrow, 1981); L.F. Brown, *Building a Sustainable Society* (New York: Norton, 1981).

36. Y. Belohradský, *Prfrozený svet iako politický problém* (Natural World as a Political Problem) (Praha: Cs. spisovatel, 1991), p. 190; R.J. Dalton and M. Kuechler, (eds), *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990); they also stress the unsuitability of modern institutional form of policy in the articulation of new needs (inclusive of the need to solve the ecological problem of regulating the interaction of society with nature. New social movements, though unique, can always be overcome by the devouring mainstream of institutionalized policy.

37. N. Luhmann, *Ecological Communication* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989); defines ecological communication from two viewpoints: a) the unity of differentiation of the system of society and its environment, and b) the self-referential operations produced within the society (*autopofesis*) (N. Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 7). The communication of ecological problems in society can be connected with the role of the ecological movement as a pressure group with its influence on the public and the government as well as on the politicians' decision making in the framework of the competition of the power-based conflict of interests. For the sake of considering and solving the eco-problems the government is to create the "mechanisms of research and discussion" as is stated by J. Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (London: Duckworth, 1974), p. 97.

38. N. Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

39. U. Beck, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.

40. N. Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

41. A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), p. 17.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

43. N. Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

44. L. Milbrath, *Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); C. F. Ferkiss, *The Future of Technological Civilization* (New York: G. Braziller, 1976), W.T. Anderson, *op. cit.*

45. W.T. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

46. V. Belohradsky, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

47. R. Dahrendorf, *Moderny socialny konflikt* (Modern Social Conflict) (Bratislava: Archa, 1991).

48. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

51. L. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, 155, 37 (March 1967), 1203-7; J. Black, *Man's Dominion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970).

52. L. Steffen, "In Defense of Dominion," *Environmental Ethics*, 4 (1992).

53. R. Attfield, *Environmental Philosophy: Principles and Prospects* (Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1993); J. Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (London: Duckworth, 1974).

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Chapter IX
The Ecological Motivation of Ethics and the Moral Critique of Society

Vlastimil Hála

The first part of this study considers various aspects of the ecological inspiration of theoretical (philosophical) conceptions of ethics or practical philosophy. The second part concerns how certain theoretical starting points have had an impact on practical questions of social and political life in the Czech Republic since the democratic revolution of 1989.

Ecology and Ethics in Theoretical Context

The last quarter century has been marked by the rapid and many-sided development of ecologically motivated thought. This has penetrated even into the theoretical area of philosophical conceptions, and not least into conceptions of ethics. There, ecologically motivated thought not only has affected such thinking in the theoretical areas directly related to the problems of natural science, such as evolutionary ethics, but also has had an impact on the theoretical conceptions of philosophers whose general starting point is the intersubjective conception of ethical themes. These thinkers feel themselves compelled to reflect on the assumptions, character and consequences of their ideas as confronted by the very facticity of the ecological crisis. In this way they arrive at the question of whether, how, and to what extent it is possible to draw into the sphere of philosophical ethics the kinds of problems that have emerged as theoretically and practically urgent with the ecological crisis and, more widely, with ecological themes as such.

One such problem is the question of how, at the level of theoretical reflection, one may grasp and interpret the relationship of human to nature as a whole and to non-human beings, principally animals, which together also enter into the composition of nature. But it is also impossible to avoid the problem of our relationship to plants and even the inorganic substances which are in origin linked to organic substances. Examples of thinkers who have posed such questions without being primarily oriented towards ecology might include G. Patzig, J. Habermas and E. Tugendhat.[1] Particularly in German philosophical literature, there have been surprising attempts to update and adapt various traditional philosophical motifs and the intellectual legacy of the past. The Kantian tradition, particularly, is being used anew to serve the needs of philosophical reflection on ecological themes. Thus, for example, G. Patzig[2] speaks about a "practical philosophy within the bounds of pure reason." He discusses, in a way similar to such thinkers as Habermas[3] and Tugendhat,[4] the philosophical interpretation of our relation to non-human beings on the basis of Kant's definition of the ethically relevant. Another example of the adaptation of Kant's and Habermas's motifs is Otto's[5] "plaidoyer" for a soberly conceived and cultivated anthropocentrism, which is the basic position of this author as well, taking account of the longer term interests of man. Like T. Hayward,[6] it tries to interpret moral relations to non-human beings on the basis of a deepened understanding of what is characteristically human. V. Hösle likewise brings Hegel's objective idealism up to date in a surprising way as the central philosophical support for an adequate grasp of the human relationship to nature.[7]

Czech thinkers, too, have made similar attempts. Examples include Kohák's adaptation (*inter alia*) of Husserl's motifs,[8] Šmajs's attempt to use Hartmann's conception of the layeredness of

being (*Seinsgeschichteheit*),[9] and also the philosophizing reflections of practical ecologists, among whom we should mention J. Vavrousek, who — inspired by Albert Schweitzer and more recently by Al Gore — has been seeking stimuli for changes in human value orientations towards spiritual values compatible with the idea of long-term sustainable life in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.[10]

An earlier study "On the Significance of the Relationship between Morality and Legality" mentioned the dispute between the anthropocentric and biocentric approaches. In this context I wish only to indicate the pregnant summary of this problematic made by R. Kolár. On the basis of an assessment of the abundant philosophical literature devoted to this theme, he emphasized the organic linkage of both approaches. An adequately conceived biocentrism must include both approaches: an adequately conceived biocentrism must include awareness of the necessary anthropocentric starting position of humankind; and, conversely, any seriously considered anthropocentrism must integrate the broader biocentric perspective.[11]

A cultivated anthropocentricism which in accord with H. Jonas[12] takes into account the long-term perspective of human needs and interests seems better justified on the theoretic level and more easily applied on the practical level. A one-sidedly manipulative and thoughtless conception of human interests threatens nature itself,[13] which from the ethical point of view represents an historically new situation. The new imperative, which Jonas here (with reference to Kant) puts forward, is then: "Act in such a way that the effects of your action should be compatible with the continuance of truly human life on earth."[14] Our interest in the continuance of nature is in this way motivated anthropocentrically as an unavoidable starting point, i.e., a perspective which allows us to pose such questions at all. The "subject matter" which appears within this perspective, however, includes the whole realm of nature. In other words, it is necessary to realize that we cannot disengage ourselves from our relationship to nature. In this context the Austrian proponent of evolutionary ethics, F. Wuketits, suggests that our relationship to animals and plants cannot be entirely disinterested and unrelated to matters of utility, whether in terms of aesthetic or scientific interests.[15]

The ecological crisis itself is obviously another, and very pressing, factor which sharpens our perceptions of nature and its importance. In this way nature emerges for us as a universal value and source. Our relationship to it, and to the creatures which inhabit and compose it with us, is then a philosophical theme *sui generis* and a stimulus to a present day reconsideration of the meaning of the value-oriented ethics which we find in classical forms in the works of M. Scheler, N. Hartmann and H. Reinner.[16] Here it is possible to go further along the abandoned path which recently has been gradually rediscovered (see e.g., E. Havel Cadwallader),[17] necessarily leaving aside in the meantime the question of the role that could be played in this context by ecological motivation.

The understanding of the relationship of man to nature at the level of philosophical reflection can, of course, also be influenced by scientific hypotheses and theories. Here, for example, we could point to the example of Lovelock's "Gaia" hypothesis, which regards the earth as a unique connected whole, a being. Self-evidently this conception is radically biocentric in a strong ontological sense with immediate axiological consequences. In the framework of such a conception we are still, in a very strong and concrete sense, integral parts of nature and of its particular formation, the earth. We are not competent to judge the scientific value of this frequently discussed concept, but these and similar questions and philosophy have had considerable impact upon journalism and political "discourse".

Essentially the same idea was expressed by the writer Ludvík Vaculík in his proposal, entitled "We Want Another Constitution!" addressed to the Federal Parliament in 1990. There he writes:

"The earth with all that it has is a unique being, as part of universal being: a being older, bigger and stronger than we are."[18]

He then argues that the constitution should include the formulation of an independent right of nature and the beings which inhabit it with us, as something which does not derive from our interests and our conception of nature as an environment for humans. This independent nature is thus the subject of its own rights, which nevertheless have to (must be, could be) formulated by human. It is precisely this idea that, on the contrary, Premier Václav Klaus rejected when he declared that nature "has not given us a mandate" to speak for it. As is clear, the paradoxical nature of our existence in the world continually forces us back into the area defined by the co-ordinates of the dispute between anthropocentrism and biocentrism, if in different versions and with different modifications.

The question of whether it is possible and proper for man to formulate the needs and rights of nature is linked to the character of what, in Heideggerian terms, may be called existence (*Dasein*), which is "always already" being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*). In this "always already" position that we "handle" the world, and somehow grasp, we interpret and formulate the status, needs and even "rights" of what we call "nature" and all that belongs to it. Of course, we cannot point to a "mandate" given to us by nature if we wish to formulate something relating to nature. The question is clearly a wider one: Is there anything at all for which we have a "mandate"? After all, we do not have a mandate in this sense to manipulate nature and use it to serve our own needs. Nevertheless, as "earthly" beings we cannot act in any other way in this context than as beings surveying the whole of being from our "anthropocentric" position; we cannot even not formulate that which we regard as desirable for nature and the creatures which compose it. We must, of course, be very circumspect in doing so, since our formulations of "the interests of nature have no claim to validity in an ontologically strong sense.

In this context a certain analogy may help. It is well-known how important a role is played in Kant's philosophy by the approach encapsulated in the expression "as if" (*als ob*). Kant uses this approach to express his critical circumspection in relation to the metaphysically strong assumptions involved in that which exceeds the bounds of our intellectual capacities. Whether the world is structured "as such", the problem of the existence of God, and other such questions are precisely the kind to which we can give no positive theoretical answer. Nevertheless, they are questions which we cannot avoid posing, because our reason (*Vernunft*) always necessarily breaks through the bounds within which our "understanding" (*Verstand*) moves.

This paradox in human understanding is partially resolved in the field of practical reason. Perhaps the character of our "speaking for nature" could also be grasped using this expression "as if". We might then say that thanks to our (perhaps undeservedly) privileged position in nature and towards nature we have the "privilege" of formulating in an *as if* manner interests and rights of nature and non-human beings which cannot speak for themselves. In so doing, however, we must be soberly "anthropocentrically" aware that it is we human beings who are interpreting and formulating these needs and rights. The phrase *as if* here expresses also a humble distance (standing-back) from the possibility of an affirmatively strong expression of that which exceeds our capabilities, but on which we must, nevertheless, fix our attention. Like Kant, we here come up against a problem which is essentially metaphysical in character and thus not positively soluble.

In addition to the general questions of the character of our relationship to nature, another significant problem is the question of the possibility of taking up a moral relation to non-human beings — especially animals. While this possibility seems clear to us on the basis of our pre-reflective intuitions, it entails some serious theoretical problems. Kantianism, utilitarianism and

emotivism are among the philosophical approaches which should help to solve them. Philosophical interpretations are here often very sophisticated and involve very fine nuances. From the point of view of our study it is the more general layers of this theme which are of interest.

The key theoretical problem in this context is that of the possibility of extending the sphere of intersubjectivity. That is, to extend the sphere of moral action to animals in an area where — in contrast to that of relations between people as mature responsible individuals — there is no full reciprocity, since animals do not have obligations to us analogous to those we have to them. In Anglo-Saxon philosophy this relationship often is defined as a relation "between moral agents and other (non-rational) beings,"[19] or "moral patients". This has also attracted the attention of philosophers who are not especially ecologically oriented, such as G. Patzig and J. Habermas. Patzig speaks of the "morally analogical character" (*moral — analoge natur*) of our relationship to animals,[20] basing his approach on the extension of moral obligations. Habermas tends toward a stronger definition based on our moral intuition[21] and theoretically on a definition of the interaction between people and animals which includes even "non-verbal gestures" (*nicht-sprachliche Gesten*)[22] and which therefore retains an intersubjectivist basis of theoretical justification.[23] K. Ott relies on Habermas in what is essentially an application of the starting point of discursive ethics to the ecological field. The extension of moral action — on the basis of the extension of the referential level of moral judgements to include "moral patients" (i.e., creatures which cannot behave to us reciprocally in the moral sense) — is considered by Ott to be "methodological anthropocentrism."

The anthropocentric approach does not, of course, exclude the philosophical legitimacy of the biocentric viewpoint. It is, for example, possible to share P. Taylor's view of animals as "teleological centers of life" which have "inherent worth" or "intrinsic value".[24] But I would then ask whether this transcendence of the conditionality of his own species of which man is capable in his view of other animals, and this recognition of the independent value of animals, is not made possible only by the "privilege" of the anthropocentric starting point of our perspective? This reality is evidently also more concretely conditioned biologically. If it is an essential attribute of each organism to act on its surroundings by its own "self-presentation,"[25] does not the character of human self-presentation imply, *inter alia*, a privileged capacity to take a "global view"?

Here it is possible to return to Ott, who has correctly pointed out that our relationship to animals as the creatures nearest to us is partly conditioned by our understanding of them as exemplars of a species.[26] In any case, we cannot detach ourselves from our "practical interest" in nature.[27] The essential anthropocentric dimension of our relationship to animals and nature in general is manifest in other respects too. For example, by brutal behavior towards nature and its creatures we offend the moral convictions of those for whom nature as such is a value in itself.[28] Or, as Kant would put it, we dishonor our own humanity.

The encompassing of creatures in the context of a wider definition of humanity, which is implied by these ideas, is also a major problem of value ethics at the theoretical level. To identify the progressive gradations of the transition between animals and man requires the kind of broader interpretation of what is human, in which there is already built-in a relation to nature in general and living creatures in particular. The difference between a moral claim in relation to that which is specifically human — i.e. an intersubjective relationship — and a moral claim in relation to that which is as it were on the road to the human (and is thus both conditioned by the human in terms of connection, and derived from the original independently raised claim) has been expressed by T. Hayward as the difference between an "actual consideration" and "bare considerability".

Another important dimension of the human relation to nature is the aesthetic. Beauty as a "symbol of morality" is already the great theme of the *Critique of Judgement*. According to Kant

the aesthetic by its very nature points beyond itself towards the ethical. These questions are also analyzed by K. Ott who interprets them as testimony to the relevance of human interest in nature.[29] With reference to F. Kambartel, K. Ott[30] asserts that the defence of nature is thus understood as the defence of the human world. Just as this aesthetic relation, which can again be further interpreted in various ways, is inseparable from the "anthropocentric" starting point, the same is true of man's whole evaluative approach to nature, when nature is assigned an inner, objective value. It is always man who aesthetically perceives values, judges and such like. And man, as stressed above, is always already existing in the world and is a being anchored in nature. On the margin we should note that in describing the character of the human relationship K. Ott, like the present author, uses the expression *als ob*, which undoubtedly derives from a common Kantian inspiration.[31]

If the problem of the relationship between anthropocentrism and biocentrism is carefully thought through, one cannot resist the impression that the difference is not one of strict opposition and sharp polarization, but one of varying emphasis in attempts to grasp the place of man in nature and his relation to it. The anthropocentric position seems better justified on the theoretical level and, perhaps even more significant, is easier to apply in practice.

By stress on the practical and axiological dimensions of ecological problems we reach the themes of the second part of the study, which is concerned mainly with some particular implications of the conception of "long-term sustainable life" thanks to the influence of its main proponent and propagator, Josef Vavrousek.

The Problem of Value Orientations and the Conception of Long-Term Sustainable Life

The collapse of totalitarian socialism in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s was caused not only by it inefficiency, but also by the inner bankruptcy of values of its self-justifying ideology. For this reason, and especially for the first period after the democratic revolution, Czechoslovakia was characterized by a heightened sensitivity in relation to moral-ethical questions. This was significantly expressed, for example, in the resonance of the moral accent in politics that is typical of Václav Havel and in the broad acceptance of his viewpoint with its tendency to "non-political politics", an idea reaching back to Masaryk. With the building of a standard pluralist political democracy, the accent on the moral dimension has now tended to decline in attractiveness and sometimes it has been exploited to the benefit of particular political interests. It has been accompanied also by a certain undervaluation of the independent legal dimension in the building of a democratic state based on law, as I argued in detail in the preceding chapter. This process is inevitable and there is no point in sentimentally regretting the disappearance of the mood of society in the first period after the democratic revolution. It also became rapidly apparent that the majority in society — if not very "consciously", and to some extent under the influence of the regime — decided for a standard "capitalist" development. With this choice society essentially identified itself with what Th. Nagel has called "libertarianism."[32]

This trend, especially associated with V. Klaus, became attractive by holding out the prospect of the prosperity of a market economy "without qualifying adjectives". Moral accents to a considerable extent "migrated" from the sphere of the shared political life of civic society into the individual sphere as questions of individual choice from different variants of value orientations. In principle, the state maintained "value neutrality" in relation to particular schemes and projects for the optimal arrangement of interpersonal relations. In opposition to this "value-cool" definition of the role of the state and as a result of dissatisfaction with the prevailing orientation of a society

accepting this liberal definition, often characterized as a "consumer orientation" or "consumerism," there has been a range of attempts to formulate alternative projects, both in the theoretical area of philosophical thought and in the more practical medium of political concepts. It is not possible to describe these attempts in detail here, but I should like just to draw attention to the inspiration deriving from T.G. Masaryk, both its somewhat metaphysical side and his emphasis on the social dimension of politics. His dispute with liberalism is perceived as attractive in both these aspects of his legacy. This view sees liberalism as a morally indifferent world view emptied of values, which cannot provide support for those seeking an orientation in life.[33]

Another important counterpoint to liberalism is the conservative Catholic position which lays emphasis on the traditional value order of Christian Europe. This current of ideas includes very diverse views and has a rather "aesthetic" ring, not entirely without a fashionable "odor" of "aesthetic" nostalgia for the Austro-Hungarian monarch. At the other end of the ideological spectrum, we find the liberal market-consumer orientation being subject to criticism from non-orthodox Marxism, stressing the emancipatory aspects of its doctrine and concentrating on a criticism of the fetishistic conception of private ownership. This current has gradually ceased to be politically perceptible and has moved over into the field of philosophical critique.

The idea (gradually developing into a more elaborate conception) of long-term sustainable life crystallized in the Czech Republic in the first half of the 1990s in a certain degree of isolation from the criticisms developed in direct relation to particular world views. In the Czech Republic, this idea is motivated: 1. ecologically in the precise sense of the terms, and 2. in connection with the philosophical interpretation of value orientations and preferences. These two aspects are closely inter-related and create a broader framework for the whole concept. We could perhaps say that while the ecological motivation arises out of the worldwide context of consideration of the real and immediate situation of ecological crisis, the general value-philosophical motivation is crucially linked to the Czech tradition. There are dangers in attributing to them some supposedly necessary inner logic (e.g., Hus, Comenius, Masaryk, Patocka, and perhaps Palacky or Havlíek). However, emphasis on the relevance of the moral viewpoint in criticism of social reality, linked in the modern age with a critique of liberalism in its morally neutral aspect, plays a central role in Czech thought; at the very least it can be identified in Masaryk and Patocka.

As far as the mainly ecological motivation is concerned, we are dealing with a many-sided and complex phenomenon. Attention should be drawn to the analyses and hypotheses of the "Club of Rome,"[34] to the formulation of long-term sustainable life by the General Meeting of the UN of 1992 on the environment and development, in which J. Vavrousek actively participated,[35] and to the ideas of the American Vice President, Al Gore, whose book, *Earth in the Balance*, was published in Czech as stimuli to the concept of long-term sustainable growth, regarding the pressing reality of the ecological crisis itself, including the "prospects" that it offers.

The concept of long-term sustainable life differs from the attempts already mentioned to offer alternatives to a consumer-market orientation by its greater openness and the fact that it expressly puts forward no more defined and concrete social and political project, no more specific world view or model of an anxiological type.[36]

The core of this concept, in it most general sense, is the idea of conscious humility, which is contrasted not only with the consumer-market model, but also with the one-sided exclusivity of an anthropocentric relationship to the world. J. Vavrousek in the outline of his ideas below, significantly entitled "Searching for Human Values Compatible with Long-term Sustainable Life,"[37] looks for alternatives to the prevailing attitudes of European-American civilization towards key aspects of human life: the relationship of man to nature and of the individual to

society, the flow of time and the meaning of history, men and women's relationship to the meaning of their own lives, freedom and responsibility, the level of our knowledge, future generations, different views and different civilizations and, finally, our relationship to the things we all have in common.[38] Vavroušek sees the general starting point of his conception in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, in which he sees the embodiment of the idea of conscious humility with an emphasis on the renunciation of "inessential things". The conception of long-term sustainable life, which had an impact not only through its intellectual appeal but also through the personal, practical commitment of its author, alas now dead, has thus gained an almost eschatological dimension.

This present search for inspiration in the values of the past, driven by attempts to reverse or at least to moderate the flow of the future, naturally brings with it a whole series of question marks. The general idea of long-term sustainable life has come to a crossroads. Either it must be conceived radically, as an appeal to an overall system of value orientations and preferences, and so as an appeal aimed at the inner transformation of people, or it must be defined soberly, "technologically" as an appeal for the application of ecological approaches as regulative factors compatible with the prevailing orientation of society and influencing its gradual cultural development.[39] While the radical conception may be personally sympathetic, the second conception has the better society-wide prospects. The appeal to an internal transformation of values is weakened within the second conception as the idea of long-term sustainable life "comes to terms" with the reality of our basically market-consumer world.

The problem of the radical and the moderated conceptions is not, of course, the only problem brought by any attempt to apply the idea of long-term sustainable life. Another question is that of understanding the "real output" of this conception, and to whom this appeal is addressed. This is internally related to the preceding question. An appeal for a radical transformation of value orientations, structure and preferences can naturally be more easily addressed to the inner life of the individual than to the society-wide and political sphere as areas where it can be applied. If we do not want to decline to the Utopian level, it is necessary here to set reasonable goals which we can reasonably expect to have a chance of being widely accepted and fulfilled in real life.

As is usually the case with major new conceptions, the most difficult problems emerge when we try to think through their inner intellectual components. In the present case this is the idea of conscious humanity as the crucial core of the conception of long-term sustainable life.

As has already been said, J. Vavroušek found the source of inspiration for an attitude of conscious humility in what is generally regarded as the Judaic-Christian tradition. Here there naturally arises the question of what, more particularly, is meant by this tradition. We can grasp this in an essentially dual way: either in the narrower religious sense with intrinsic transcendental and metaphysical implications, or more generally as a symbol or synonym for a humanistic and, in the wider sense, generally desirable ideal value orientation. The key in such a definition is not then the particular religious foundation, but the orientation towards values which from the interpersonal point of view have an indubitably positive character, such as love for those closest to us, the suppression of egoism and, of course, the renunciation of "unnecessary things". This last example, however, immediately poses a problem, since it is hardly likely that we can gain a consensus on what is "necessary".

The interpretation of what is understood by the Jewish and Christian tradition, which is not defined and distinguished in Varousek's projects in any detail, conditions to a major extent both the meaning and the importance of the idea of conscious humility. It is not in this tradition an aim "in itself," and not the intrinsic goal of human behavior and the formation of interpersonal relations. It is related essentially to the religious dimension which is the universal foundation and

binding perspective of human life. This foundation relativizes the values and meaning of earthly life and all its possibilities of material wealth. The sacrifice of unnecessary things and any kind of sacrifice — even of life, as we hear, for example, in the words of the medieval Hussite chorale — are related always to the prospect of eternal life. If we were to regard the Jewish and Christian tradition as a source of inspiration in this narrow sense, it would be necessary to give more specific reasons for regarding this founding religious context as essential also from the point of view of the concept of long-term sustainable life with its appeal to the value orientations and preferences of human beings in their intersubjective relations and relation to nature.

If, however, we understand the Judaeo-Christian tradition in the wider sense of its general humanistic orientation towards desirable values, then we should have to broaden the field of inspirational sources for the idea of conscious humility. These would definitely include, from ancient philosophy, such traditions as Stoicism, Aristotle's idea of moderation, and Platonism with its relativization of the importance of the terrestrial world of phenomena. The Enlightenment idea of tolerance and of different social Utopias should also not be omitted.

Since the conception of conscious humility is not merely something desirable and elevated but to be considered in the pragmatic contexts of social and political life, it is necessary to create a broader, more universally defined basis than can be subsumed under the phrase "Judaeo-Christian tradition", and one which would expressively be open to intellectual currents and world views outside this tradition. Such a basis could be created perhaps from that extended concept of humanity, including a relationship to nature and living creatures, of which I spoke in the first part.

The question of biocentrism and anthropocentrism has practical dimensions, as well as the theoretical aspects already considered. The biocentric motivation of value orientations, with its radical demand for a change of perspective, is evidently too dramatically at variance with the direction of the large majority in society. This is strengthened by the fact that a post-communist society is only now laboriously trying to reach the living standard of developed countries. Thus the biocentric perspective has no real chance of having a serious impact in social and political contexts.[40] By contrast, the position of cultivated anthropocentrism which focuses on human interest in "the continuation of life and nature" has a chance of having at least a partial impact. The creation of legislative instruments regulating human relationships to nature can assist in the moral refinement of the legal sphere.

The viewpoint of ecological ethics must enter the "pragmatic field" of political reality and attempt to push through at least some ecologically relevant positions using "pragmatically comprehensible" argumentation. The proponents of ecologically oriented thought must attempt to show, for example, that the preservation of biological species, a cautious relationship to mineral wealth, and suchlike, and in general the preservation of the universal meaning of nature for man, is in the long run "pragmatically" and in terms of "utility" advantageous for human society.

Those who are trying to secure a "reorientation" of people's value orientations and preferences have a tendency to see this task as an appeal to humanity or society as a whole. Another conception is, however, available here, and that is the encouragement of value orientations that are not in tune with the prevailing market-consumer trend, and the "gaining of space" for "minority" value orientations and life styles. A major feature typical for the moral field in general is orientation toward the defence of the weak.[41] In our case this means the defence of those who are ever more "marginalized" by the aggressive model of our existence, and whose space for self-realization and development of their own life style grows ever more narrow, such as pedestrians, hikers and other "quiet beings". The non-aggressive lifestyle of these people, most of whom are more perceptive about the reality of the ecological crisis, is also beneficial "as if" from the viewpoint of nature, and

from the viewpoint of its preservation. This likewise is the general condition for, and framework of, human life. "The ecologically traumatized" can scarcely force a change in the value orientations of their fellow-citizens, but they ought to make stronger efforts, within the framework of a consciously achieved solidarity, to struggle to defend a minority living space in a world basically formed by the market-consumer orientations of the majority.

Ecological standpoints conceived and pursued in this way as expressions of a preference for non-consumerist values (spiritual, moral and aesthetic) deprive political opponents of ecology and ecologists of the chance to defame ecologically oriented thought as something aimed against democracy and in the direction of "great totalitarianism." Politically this ecological orientation is also a legitimate part of the spectrum of a pluralistically structured society. This part is not entirely defenseless even though it only has at its disposal a very "low key" repertoire of ways to create its overall profile.

In conclusion, striving for a moral formation of interhuman and natural reality is an essential aspect of humanity as such. We human beings are not, of course, only "spiritually free" entities, but are conditioned both sociologically and biologically.[42] In this sense, despite the frequent assertions of moral philosophers, we are not entirely in control of ourselves. Awareness of the fact that our capacity "morally to impregnate" reality is limited does not, naturally, mean a plea for moral indifference and the levelling down of all values. It is simply a sober rejection of unrealizable illusions.

Notes

1. G. Patzig, *Ökologische Ethik — innerhalb der Grenzen blober Vernunft* (Göttingen, 1983). G. Patzig, *Ethik ohne Metaphysik* (Göttingen, 1971). G. Patzig, *Gesammelte Schriften I, Grundlagen der EThik* (Göttingen, 1994. J. Habermas,*Erläuterungen zur Diskursethik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1991). J. Habermas, *Moralbewubtsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (Frankfurt a.M., 1983). E. Tugendhat, *Vorlesungen über Ethik* (Frankfurt, a.M., 1993). E. Tugendhat, *Probleme der Ethik*(Stuttgart, 1987). E. Tugendhat, *Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt, a.M., 1992).

2. G. Patzig, *Ökologische Ethik*.

3. J. Habermas, *Erläuterungen*, p. 220 and n.

4. E. Tugendhat, *Philosophische Aufsätze*, pp. 188-189, 381-382.

5. K. Ott, *Ökologie und Ethik* (Tübingen, 1993).

6. T. Hayward, "Kant and the Moral Considerability of Non-Rational Beings," in *Philosophy and the Natural Environment*, pp. 129-142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

7. V. Hösle, *Philosophie der ökologischen Krise* (München, 1991).

8. E. Kohák, *clovek, dobro a zlo* (Praha, 1993). (*Man, God and Evil*)

9. J. Šmajs, *Ohroñená kultura* (Brno, 1995). (*Endangered Culture*)

10. J. Vavroušek, *Hledání lidských hodnot slu…itelných s trvale*

11. R. Koláøský, Filosofický èlovíka a souèasná ekologická krize. (Spor antropocentrismu a biocentrismu), *Studia humanistica*, 1992, n.4, p. 33-56 (*The Philosophical Definition of Man and the Current Ecological Crisis. The Dispute between Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism*). See also, R. Koláøský and O. Suša, Ekologie a humanismus (K problému ekologického humanismu), *ibid.*, pp. 121-131. (*On the Problem of Ecological Humanism*).

12. H. Jonas, Das Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivlsation (Frankfurt, 1984).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

15. F. Wuketits, Verdammt zur Unmoral? Zur Naturgeschichte von Gut und Böse, München (Zurich, 1993), pp. 230-231.

16. M. Scheler, Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik, 5th, edn. (Bern, 1966).

17. E. Hauel Cadwallader, *Searchlight on Values. Nicolai Hartmanns' Twentieth Century Value Platonism* (University Press of America, 1984).

18. L. Vaculík, "Jinou ústavu!", *Závod s casem, Texty z morální ekologie*, trans. and eds. by E. Kohák, R. Kolárský and I. Michal (Praha, 1996), pp. 191-194. ("We Want Another Constitution!" in *Race against Time, Texts of Moral Ecology*).

19. See T. Hayward, *op. cit*.

20. G. Patzig, *Ökologische Ethik*, p. 13 and n.

21. J. Habermas, *Erläuterungen*, p. 220.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

24. P.W. Taylor, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature," in *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1981), pp. 197-218.

25. See also K. Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 140 and n.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 151 and n.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-137.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

32. See also E. Tugendhat, *Philosophische Aufsätze*, p. 352.

33. See *Spor o smysl ceských dejin 1895-1938*, ed. M. Havelka (Praha, 1995), (*The Dispute on the Meaning of Czech History*).

34. D.L. Meadows, (u.a.): *Dynamics of Growth in a Finite World* (Cambridge, 1974).

35. J. Keller, *Premýšlení s Josefem Vavrouškem* (Praha, 1995), pp. 32-46, 128-140.

36. Al Gore, *Zeme na misce vah, Ekologie a lidský duch*, trans. J. Jarab (Praha, 1994). (*Earth in the Balance, Ecology and the Human Spirit*).

37. J. Vavroušek, *Hledání*, pp. 41-51.

38. *Ibid.*, cf. J. Srov Keller, *Premýšlení*.

39. For a defence of the biocentric standpoint see E. Koháh, "Clovek, dobro a zlo", in *Závod s casem*, s. 153-188. On this problem see also: *Sociální souvislosti ekologické krize a jejího prekonávání* (Praha, 1994). (*Social Aspects of the Ecological Crisis and Its Solution*). For the defence of the anthropocentric standpoint see especially P. Jemelka, *K nekterým otázkám vztahu civilizace a prírody*, pp. 21-33. (*On Certain Questions of the Relationship between Civilization and Nature*). See also J. Keller, "Výzva konvencnímy myšlení," *Listy* 25, n. 5, pp. 12-16. (*Challenge to Conventional Thinking*).

40. *K tomu viz Sociální souvislosti*.

41. J. Habermas, *Erläuterungen*, p. 14.

42. K. Lorenz, *Takzvané zlo, prel, A. Veselovská* (Praha, 1993). (*So-called Evil*).

Part IV
The Human Person

Chapter X
A Time of Titans: Reflections on the Philosophy of Present History

Bohumír Janát

The situation of the human race is now the same as it has been from the beginning because all mortals stand — according to the deep providence of God — before the choice between the highest and the lowest, between justice and sin, between life and death.　*John Amos Comenius*

Jesus, not Caesar, I repeat — that is the meaning of our history and democracy. *Thomas Garrigue Masaryk*

There are things worth living for and suffering.　*Jan Patocka*

We shall try to raise a question of the spiritual substance of the 20th century and to do so from a perspective of Czech philosophical thinking and historical experience. There are three thinkers in the Czech tradition whose philosophy, according to Roman Jakobson, has achieved universal significance: Comenius, Masaryk and Patocka. Each endeavored profoundly to reflect the substance of European and generally of human history; each engaged in the great political action of his time; and each achieved a more metaphysical or ideal triumph after his death than did the concrete political accomplishment of his goals.

Comenius did not succeed in removing the Habsburgs from the throne of the Bohemian kingdom in the 17th century. He died in exile, having seen the disaster of his political effort. But he had attained the reputation of "the teacher of nations" and he inspired generations of Czech thinkers, Protestant as well as Catholic.

Masaryk, the founding Father of Czechoslovakia, and, in Patocka's words, "the only Platonist in history who succeeded in really establishing a state", decided, while meditating by the grave of Comenius on Dutch soil in 1914, to declare openly an intransigent fight against the Habsburg monarchy. This fight resulted in the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic which — though it was a stable island of democracy in the Middle Europe — endured only 20 years before being ended by the Munich dictate of 1938 and the Nazi occupation in 1939. Masaryk's moral, spiritual and political heritage was progressively dismantled in the following 50 years of brown and red totalitarian power.

After his lifelong creative *bios thoretikos*, Patocka made his great major appearance as author and spokesperson of Charter 77. In a short time he was dead (March 13, 1977) in his 70s, like Socrates a martyr of human conscience, hounded to death by the Communist secret police.

According to these three paradigms of Czech historical destiny one could expect an elegy in Czech sentiment and thinking. But here we have to do rather with a drama of spiritual victory, of courage and hope, and of creative crisis. For Russian film director Andrej Tarkovskij, crisis is a sing of health and of one's search for oneself. The "tragic sense of life", typical of the Middle European mentality, expresses a genuine desire for higher and truer forms of political existence and spiritual being.

Comenius, at the age of 77 wrote in his late work, *Unum necessarium*: "Again and again I praise you, my savior, because you have not given me my native country and home on the earth; but you have made the earth for me a place of exile and wandering." This eschatological orientation

of mind is evident in Masaryk's lifelong emphasis on seeing things "sub specie aeternitatis". The same philosophical depth is at work in Patocka's declaration of the *care for the soul* (Socratic *epimeleia tés pscyhés* in contrast to the Nietzschean *Wille Zur Macht*) as the essential principle of Western civilization because the soul is the indestructible part of human nature that has to do with truth, goodness and eternity as final goals of being.

One of the most significant features of the 20th century could be the radical transformation into the various secular *eschatologies* of the religious eschatological orientation of an authentic Christian outlook. The most typical was the Nazi Empire which was to last for a thousand years and the communist rule by Soviet power which was to last forever and ever. Along with the issue of secular eschatology we are confronted now with speculation about a posthistorical stage of development when certain victorious political and economic principles are supposed to be forever invincible.

Whereas the transcendental eschatological perspective of life and history had kept the aggressive force of human conquest under control by respect for something above, with bonds of humility, modesty and wisdom, secular civilization has unleashed the inner tendencies of human nature. Since the era of Enlightenment one can hear the *eritis sicut Deus* in Western culture in an ever louder voice. The Nietzschean *Ubermensch* has come upon the stage of world history, the human question for God has been transformed into the conquest of the world, and the age of the humans becomes more and more a time of titans.

One can see this in the many megalomanic projects of our century: we have experienced in our collective historical consciousness two World Wars, the Nazi holocaust and the disastrous Communist attempt to build socialism, we have been witnesses of the very expensive and unfruitful conquest of cosmic space and we have lived for many years under the threat of nuclear war. Now we can see a holocaust directed against nature and the environment and many problems which seem to overwhelm the possibilities of individual responsibility and choice.

Masaryk was perhaps the first to speak — especially in connection with criticism of modern German thinking of the Kant-Hegel-Nietzsche tradition — about "metaphysical titanism". By this term he understood that unhappy human endeavor to assume an absolute position and take the place of God. This endeavor is accompanied by a great upheaval of human passion and emotion, by glittering intellectual irony and finally by desperation. "The titans are angry", Masaryk says, "they ironize and finally, they despair." As the way out of this crisis Masaryk suggested Christianity, i.e., Jesus's religion of humanity and love.

Nevertheless, as Patocka once noted, this century, in its real concrete historical course, is closer to Nietzsche's voluntarism than to Masaryk's idealism. Trying to give a philosophical characterization of the 20th century, in his last work, *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History*, Patocka describes three great mutually interconnected fundamental historical movements acting as a factual dynamism of the modern age: total mobilization, permanent war and the accomplished revolution of secularity. Total mobilization — a term used by German writer Ernst Jünger who called our century the age of the worker and of total mobilization — means an activation of all human and natural resources for some historical political purpose. The accumulated energies must be released and the most effective way of releasing energies is war. But war not only loosens energies, it also changes the metaphysical horizon of human life.

German psychologist, Kurt Lewin, described this change in his article "*Kriegslandschaf*" published in 1917: from the point of view of an artilleryman, one really sees no higher transcendental dimension. For example, a village destroyed by artillery fire has lost all the forms of human presence and its human stories of intimacy with God, with neighbor and with nature;

stories of love and desire, of acting and waiting. A church tower as a mere strategic point ceases to express by its verticality its authentic message, *sursum corda*. The farmers' houses are no longer dwelling places for humans, but military covers and shelters, etc. The wartime countryside loses its heavenly dimension and its endlessness to become radically finite in terms of the aim of defeating the enemy and occupying his territory.

This process of permanent war can continue in a period of relative peace in the form of fighting ideologies, projects and visions, of industrial devastation of nature, and of the instrumentalization of human beings. The result of this process is what Jan Patocka calls "the accomplished revolution of secularity", that is, a victory of the passing values of everyday life over the transcendental view of eternity; it is the victory of seeing "*sub specie mortis*" over seeing "*sub specie aeternitatis*."

If there is no eternity for people then "*carpe diem, post mortm nulla voluptas*" prevails and the life of enjoyment or *bios apolaustikos* finally wins over the life of action (*bios politikos*) and the highest level of the human being, the life of contemplation (*bios theoretikos*), which represents the authentic dimension of care for the soul. This process of "total mobilization, permanent war and the revolution of secularity" erupted at large in Patocka's opinion with the World War I, but its roots reach deeply into the European philosophical tradition. The ruling principle of this process, Patocka calls "the Force" which he writes purposely with a capital "F". He does not say exactly whether this means simply Heraclitus's *Polemos*, Nietzsche's *Wille zur macht*, Heidegger's *Gestell* or that already sentenced "Prince of This World" spoken of in the Gospel of Saint John.

When Patocka attempts to identify philosophically the reason for the victorious march of nihilism through the history of the 20th century he points to the absence of a universal, morally obligatory truth which stands above the autonomy of human reason and will. In Patocka's analysis, every great European war had its leading idea, e.g., the period of the crusades was carried under the conviction of the supremacy and inner truthfulness of Western Christianity over Islam and Byzantium as well; the Thirty Years War was due to a decision to end the conflict in Western Christianity; the spirit of the Napoleonic wars was a belief of the Enlightenment in human reason as the new organizing force which could rule over the world; and the wars of the 20th century were initiated and led by "the slowly emerging persuasion that there is no factual, objective meaning of the world and of things, and that it is the work of force and power to put such a meaning into effect."[1]

It is not by chance that these insights of Patocka's correspond deeply with those of contemporary thinkers. Philosopher, Michael Novak, in his Templeton Address of 1994 expressed the persuasion that "Truth matters" as the first lesson which the 20th century, history's bloodiest, has taught us: relativism, rather than one moral, universally valid truth, is spread by "those who prepare the jails of the 21st century." Surprisingly, in a way similar to Patocka, Albert Gore grasps the substance of our time when in his *Earth in the Balance* he speaks about our moral duty to stop the march of an inexorable destructive force inherent in our civilization which casts its shadow over the whole earth, destroying the environment and human souls as well.

Patocka tried to suggest a solution of the crisis of modern humanity in what he called the "solidarity of the shaken". The shaken are those who have gone through the experience of the front, facing directly the inhuman Force, and in the moments of this confrontation have discovered something like *lux ex tenebris*. They found values which transcend the values of everyday life and came to realize the vanity of secular enthusiasm which always promises future prosperity and asks for present sacrifices. They achieved the solidarity of the suffering that can say no to the measures and campaigns which create the permanent state of war. The shaken are those who can bring the

peace of the sabbath to the incessant business of the will-to-power: first in their own souls, then on a broader range.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, as a participant on the front in World War I described something like a strange transfiguration of enmity into friendship. Similar solidarity of the shaken was experienced by Albert Gore in the months of the healing of his son, Albert, after an automobile accident. According to Gore most help came from people who knew what suffering is.

On this point Patocka distinguishes what he calls "spiritual man", on the one hand, and "intellectual man", on the other. Recalling the old difference between the philosopher and the sophist elaborated most clearly by Plato in his dialogue, *The Sophist*, Patocka outlines three ways, alternatives or archetypes of the spiritual life:

- the radical pursuit of truth in conflict with *polis* and death (Socrates),
- withdrawal from this conflict into the *vita philosophica*, that is, an exodus from the forum to the academy (Plato), and
- a capitulation or resignation of truth to become a sophist, i.e., an intellectual using one's manipulative, instrumental intelligence in the service of any state power.

For Patocka there is no other alternative.

The most authentic spiritual life is found in living in conflict as a spiritual person who remains an advocate of transcendence and permanently confronts this world with an insight of other worldliness. The spiritual person does not cease to live in an eschatological perspective, but challenges every attempt at a secular eschatology. Hence, in his way, he embodies that freedom from politics which is, in Hannah Arendt's words, "politically perhaps the most relevant part of our Christian heritage."

It is true that Patocka presented this vision of the spiritual being living in radical conflict in the heavy days of Communist oppression. Nevertheless, he openly declared that these ideas resulted from his 79 year experience with life in the 20th century. The ideas of care for the soul, living in truth, solidarity of the shaken, non-political politics, and power of the powerless constituted the philosophy of *Charter II*. This now can be considered as a unique treasure of the Middle European spirituality of the 1970s and 80s.

Twelve years and eight months after Patocka's death came the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. For a generation born under Communist rule, the great event of that November '89 was almost miraculous because many people had come to believe that Communists — as they again and again repeated and as many realities of those times seemed to testify — would be in power forever or that removing them from power would lead to a global catastrophy or at least to tremendous bloodshed.

Suddenly millions of people in my country saw the breakdown of that "eternal" Communist power as though under a stroke of a higher force. I shall never believe that event to have been the result either of perfect secret political management or of historical chance. For me it was not a revolution of human political forces, but a *revolution* of the way truth could appear genuinely, a tiny and brief sample of its future eschatological manifestation.

Nevertheless, in the ordinary course of history truth does not come, as Kierkegaard saw, as power, but in the disguise of humiliation and suffering. Similarly, in many human stories the king comes first as a beggar to examine the people. From a philosophical point of view there is no more radical an antithesis to power than suffering. But there are two ways to approach suffering: 1. to avoid suffering by means of power, i.e., to transfer the weight of existence to others, or 2. to

transfigure suffering into a positive value, i.e., to accept one's own cross and to be liberated thereby.

Communism as a titanic ideology of our time brought a tremendous deal of pain to the nations of Middle and Eastern Europe and to Russia. However, it was not only a meaningless road and simple deviation of history, but a way of knowledge and experience, of awakening from the deadly titanic dream.

Some people — first of all the former Communists, and now enthusiastic capitalists — would like to dream of a future better and more prosperous than the often proclaimed shining tomorrow; they would like to continue their revolution of secularity. But our historical experience has taught us a lesson that the only real and necessary revolution is an act of *metanoia*, i.e., Peguy's moral revolution, Havel's existential revolution, or Masaryk's revolution of heads and hearts.

When French Cardinal Aron Jean-Marie Lustiger visited Prague several months before the event of November 1989 he addressed a hope to the nations which had experienced the painful experiment of Communism in their own body. Thinking especially in terms of Christian faith, he spoke of a mission to be sent from this territory Westward. He was not alone in expecting some fresh moral, spiritual and cultural impulses from those who lived long decades in the shade of the Moloch of Communism and whose prayers, suffering thoughts and actions contributed to the historical fall of that blasphemous status. I think it not an effusion of "Slavonic messianism" to say that this mission and sage still awaits its fulfillment.

Note

1. See Patocka's essay, "The Wars of the 20th Century and the 20th Century as a War" in *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History* (Praha: Academia, 1992), p. 128.

Chapter XI
Philosophy and the Metaphysical Vision of a Just World Reflections on Justice in the Present Spiritual Atmosphere of Middle-Eastern Europe

Bohumíir Janát

Justice is the mathematics of humanity.   *T. G. Masaryk*

The heart of one who respects only the secular life becomes more and more hardened before the awareness of his or her own mortality.   *Jan Patocka*

I believe that this secular world, discovered by the Renaissance, will again cease to be the final limit of our desire.   *Emanuel Rádl*

When President Jimmy Carter entered the White House in the beginning of 1977, he began his inaugural address with a verse from the prophet Micah who recommends to every human being in any historical, political and existential situation three fundamental values: justice, mercy and humility (Micah 6:8) Carter raised one of the most powerful ideas of Western civilization, the idea of human rights, i.e., the natural right of man to live in freedom and dignity. By this act he opened, in the sphere of high politics, the final phase of the process that resulted in the fall of communist totalitarianism in the countries of the Eastern block.

At that time in Czechoslovakia an authentic human rights initiative set out on its road. Its name was *Charter 77* and its philosopher, Professor Jan Patocka, saw the crisis of contemporary humankind more deeply and broadly than the boundaries of the Eastern world. He stressed the priority of ethics over politics, and the preference for morality over any pragmatic utilitarian calculation, because, as he said, "There is no morality for the functioning of society; morality exists in order for man to be a human being." At the same time he warned against placing confidence in ideology and technology and against believing in the expanding possibilities of affluence.

In Bohemia at that time, there began something which the world observed with attention, respect and perhaps hope. In those heavy times of political repression and moral corruption, in the conditions of an occupied and spiritually violated country, the idea gained strength that only justice and morality open the space for life in truth, freedom and dignity. The idealistic ethos of that time, that of preference for the spirit and values over secular powers and forces, was expressed in Carter's dictum that "America is free not because it is rich and powerful, but it is rich and powerful because it is free."

Looking now from the perspective of the present, one thing is evident: moral idealism, after having led its adherents (one-time dissidents) to political triumph, is losing its strength; the very precious space of magnanimity and authenticity attained with great effort and sacrifice now is being closed once again. A new sort of pragmatist, self-conscious and assertive in the persuasion that they speak realism relieved of illusions about human beings, declares ethics to be a hindrance or occasionally a useful instrument. The spirit of the new ideology, whose divinity is described as something really superhuman, i.e., "the non-personal, non-directed, systematic mechanism of the Market", which calls one to subjugate oneself to its laws with no possibility of understanding its

substance, this spirit of idolatry, was expressed in the thought of a clerk who represents the Czech republic in the International Monetary Fund. In very non-biblical, even anti-Micahean terms he wrote in *Lidové noviny* (*The People's Newspaper*) on June 18, 1993, "It is probably the foremost advantage of the system of free enterprise that the material position of individuals and the distribution of incomes are not dependent on considerations of morality and justice." In other words, let the idealists think of morality and justice, practical people are to use their spiritual potentialities to maximase their profit because, according to this strange "philosophy", the meaning of life in the capitalist system is one's material possessions.

If now the economy and state, reflecting a materialistic ideology, begin again to predominate the stronger is our duty to raise the question of justice, the more important it is to search the realm of values. Those who promise first bread and material prosperity, and only then human dignity and spirituality, usually fail — as history many times demonstrates — in both dimensions. This truth was shown in a very simple way by Dostoevski more than a hundred years ago. There is a moment in Dostoevski's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, when the oldest brother Dmitrij, suffering unjustly in prison, is tempted by the young ambitious intellectual Rakitin who visits Dmitrij and says: "Stop your vain metaphysical considerations about the meaning of life, guilt, suffering and God's will and mercy; instead do something to improve civil rights or at least to stop the rise of the price of beef." Dmitrij's response is very plain: "Well, but you — if you live without respect for God — will raise the price of beef as soon as you get it into your hands and you will earn one ruble for every kopek." Similarly, those who eliminate the idea of justice from the space of political and economic thought and who make economy the central issue of social life, consciously or unconsciously unleash an inhuman or finally anti-human strategy.

Socrates Versus Nietzsche

Besides the living, spiritually open mind, the greatest force of philosophy is its own tradition in which a certain permanence of the basic situation of the thinking spirit is manifest. For the sake of this invariability it would be difficult to submit philosophy to the principle of progress of the Enlightenment: we could hardly say that Hegel is a greater thinker than Heraclitus, Husserl than Plato, or that Heidegger reached a higher position on the road of wisdom than Kierkegaard. The scope of a thinker's written works and the level of popularity in his or her own time is not significant. The basic value of philosophy is wisdom (*sofia*, *sapientia*, *prudentia*) which stands above that very variable entity called the spirit of the times (The Hegelian *Zeitgeist* or *Weltgeist*). It seems very probable that the difference between the duty to think against the spirit of the time and willingness to think in accordance with the spirit of the time is the difference between philosophy and ideology, the difference between looking for wisdom and sophistry. This is the fundamental distinction between a questing openness and a decided self-certainty. Nevertheless, it is true that not every openness becomes a love of wisdom and not every resoluteness ends in ideology and sophistry. Moreover, everybody who opens himself at the same time decides for something and thus every decision opens us for something. The question is rather our relationship to time and eternity, to death and immortality, to endedness and endlessness; the issue is our relationship to earth and to heaven.

In the history of thought we should hardly find a more archetypical confrontation of these two polarities of basic philosophical attitude than that between Socrates and Nietzsche: the first with his principle of care for the soul (*epimeleia tés Dsychés*), the other with his principle of the will to power (*der Alle zur Macht*). The substantial contradiction of these two can be expressed in two

theses. For Socrates the greatest evil is to act unjustly and to leave this world with a soul devastated by acts of evil; for Nietzsche, it is to subdue the life of morality, which stands upon a distinction of good and evil and necessarily supposes the coming of futural justice and another time more perfect than this secular one. In Plato's dialogue, *Gorgias*, a rhetorician and politician named Kallikles raises against Socrates nearly the same arguments as would Nietzsche 23rd centuries later.

In the fourth century before Christ, Kallikles — according to Plato's presentation — believes that "Laws are the work of weak people to deter strong and beautiful people from having more" and that "Nature itself shows that it is just that the better one has more than the worse one and the powerful more than the less powerful." (A similar opinion is expressed in the Old Testament *Book of Wisdom* where those who do not respect God's law say: "Let our strength be they yardstick of virtue, since weakness argues its own futility." Wisdom 2:11). In the end Kallikles advises Socrates to leave philosophy and to perform instead "the beautiful music of deeds" with which one can win one's own respect, social position and possession, while through philosophy in the rhetor's opinion — one "dwells in an empty house". (*Gorgias* 483-486) Socrates is forced to defend himself with deeper considerations about what success and unsuccess really are and in the final stage of this dialogue he uses as the highest philosophical argument a story: he tells an eschatological myth that puts the highest judgement and the act of the highest justice into the world beyond the boundary of death where the genuine value of our lives and deeds will be clearly manifested. "That is, dear Kallikles," says Socrates, "what I have heard and what I believe is the truth." Note that at this very crucial moment myth and faith are the highest argument of philosophy.

Some suppose Nietzsche to be the philosopher in whose thinking the modern age reached its zenith and the postmodern era began. In any case, he expressed directly a terrible truth of the substance of the 20th century, and radicalized the idea put more modestly by the ancient opponent of Socrates. According to Nietzsche, the substance of life is a violent, powerful, unscrupulous, morally indifferent and wildly progressing stream of the will to power, whereas faith in the immortality of the soul is only an otherworldly illusion. After death — as Nietzsche's alter ego, Zarathustra, states — there is no reward and no penalty because the soul dies just a little sooner than the body. Morality, according to this author, is a sign of degeneration (vital decline); the authentic life stands beyond the categories of good and evil and is a permanent conquest and overcoming of self. The meaning of the earth is not man, but superman, namely, he who understood and accepted the death of God and grasped eternity by courageously stepping into the circle of "the eternal return of the same" (*die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*). The last word of Nietzsche's philosophy is then the circle of Hindu *samsara*, not the linear orientation of European history aimed at eschatological fulfillment.

The hardest word Nietzsche uttered to the heart of European civilization is his prophecy about the coming of nihilism, that is, the coming of an epoch after the loss of all transcendental horizons when Western history will collapse into low business, commerce, politics, intrigues and anxious efforts, all in the shadow of catastrophes, universal uncertainty, revolutions and wars. In this skeptical light Nietzsche also perceives Western democracy. Churchill considered it to be metaphysically the worst, but from the point of view of real possibilities the best. It is a form of government whose roots, according to Socrates, are in the spiritual value of faith in justice, for the accomplishment of which, however, this world is not the final boundary.

The English author C.S. Lewis, similarly to Masaryk, sees the substance of the conflict of democracy with totalitarianism to be precisely in the issue of immortality. Lewis leads his argumentation by a simple consideration: if endedness given by the limited temporal scope of the

human sojourn on earth is the absolute destiny of man and if life after having fulfilled its time enters nothingness, then more permanent entities like state, civilization, society, culture, nation, historical order, political regime or any other supra-individual form have greater value and significance than man. On the other hand, "If Christianity is right", Lewis argues, "then an individual is not only important but he is absolutely important, because he is eternal, while the length of existence of state or civilization, in comparison with him, means nothing but a moment."

The Dictatorship of Prosperity and the Tyranny of Numbers

The loss of the value of eternity, the darkening of the metaphysical horizon of human life and the disappearance of the transcendental orientation of human culture can be seen as among the deepest characteristics of our civilization. A French philosopher, Julien Benda, sees the substance of this situation in the treason of intellectuals who, in the last few centuries, had begun to abandon their basic duty to think of things '*sub specie aeternitatis*'. Nevertheless, if eternity as faith in eternity is lost, then there is only one answer to the question about the meaning of human life, namely, maximization of profit, power, glory, riches and enjoyment. The second of the four cardinal values or virtues in Greek is called *sófrosyné*, in Latin *temperantia*; our equivalents are modesty, the simple life, self-limitation and humility. In a world limited by death, these are in the way and are affected by the odium of being nonmodern, reactionary or naive. If the substance of nihilism, as Nietzsche prophesied, is the loss of eternity, immortality and faith in justice, then the nihilistic world which some call postmodern (Francis Fukuyama has even coined the term post-historical) really has only one driving force, namely, the will to power. This is substantially a nihilistic principle, because the will to power requires nothing other than itself, nothing except its own growth and escalation, nothing more than its eventually self-destructive triumph. If the subject is in danger, then the will to power says: give me freedom or death — or more modernly "socialism or death" as per Fidel Castro.

In European civilization and perhaps in all world civilizations, there are deep-rooted positive values like charity, altruism, cooperation, solidarity, friendship, empathy and the ability to make sacrifices. For this reason the will to power cannot manifest itself in its authentic self-centered appearance, but only in the disguise of an intention to build general prosperity, a rational and practical world order, that is, in the disguise of vital interests and historical necessity. The will to power obviously must make unity out of plurality and it cannot cease in its endeavor to engage in its projects as great a number of people as possible. The declared goal of this process becomes prosperity, expressed in the slogan that the one who has the most toys when he dies wins. The basic instrument for attaining this goal is number. Values are degraded to prices, everything is numbered: money, people, natural and human resources. The mathematical obsession transforms even public opinion into a percent of election preferences. Even such unquantifiable values as political and moral responsibility are expressed in percentages. The party with more votes has more responsibility and thus more power. European politics since the French revolution has come to the conclusion — as the philosopher, V. Belohradský, once formulated it — that it is better to count human heads than to cut them off.

A number, as Heidegger notes, has principally a unifying power: for instance, three trinities so different as stars in the sky, apples on a tree or books on a desk can from a mathematical point of view be brought to a common denominator through one common number. This, however, can catch at most the quantitative dimension of some phenomenon; saying anything about its substance is beyond its ability. Thus a civilization based on numbering becomes, in spite of steadily more

perfect computers, daily more empty and spiritually superficial. Finally it becomes a system of dominance of the greater numbers over the smaller. A person staring at a computer terminal becomes a genuine image of modern solitariness, an image of a being captured in the autistic circle of computing.

In the world dominated by numbers, the power of the fiscal bureaucracy grows because the pure essence of money is a number which, through the institution of credit, can increase and multiply itself. C.S. Lewis notes that three great civilizations, namely, the Old Testament Jewish one represented by Moses, the classical one embodied in Aristotles, and the Christian one represented by the great mediaeval teachers, all agreed in prohibiting usury or lending money for interest. Yet this is the principle which enables the contemporary economic system to function. Nevertheless, the assertion of money as morally pure, nearly almighty and above the natural world is successful in our present time. In the Czech lands today Vespasian's ancient dictum that "money does not smell" (*pecunia non olet*) has even found its modern version in V. Klaus's basic theorem of morally indifferent economism: "I do not know the notion of dirty money". The concept of money as a sensible and just instrument for the distribution of social property is rejected as a contamination of strictly economical thinking. But if something in human society ignores the principle of justice, the situation is similar to a strange, autonomous and unfriendly system beginning to act on a living organism. What can philosophy do in this situation in order to be faithful to its mission?

Earthliness, Faithfulness and Transcendence

A basic duty, and also the greatest chance for philosophy, seems to be the endeavor to bring an impulse of spiritual magnanimity, to free the human mind from purely materialistic interests, and to ask higher, deeper and more general questions which can break out of captivity in anxious uncertainties, banalities and everyday sorrows. Socrates did precisely this when he first listened to the standpoint of any of his contemporaries, but he never remained at this level and he endeavored by asking about the highest good to direct the human spirit towards the truth that is a final and enduring goal for thought and for all human beings. "The substance of evil", says the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, "lies in its temporality, that it doesn't aim at a final and eternal goal."

The generally shared philosophical creed of European thinkers since the Renaissance could become Nietzsche's pathetic challenge: "Remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak about supra-earthly hopes." In the name of this idea metaphysics should be discreditated, idealism should be rejected, Christianity should be depreciated. The mission of philosophy should be limited — according to this radical earthly pathetism — to the task of uttering general and forever valid doctrines similar to Comte's law of the three stages of the progress of knowledge: from theological fiction through metaphysical abstraction to the final stage of positive scientific knowledge. The essentially creative force of metaphysical desire ought to be wasted in the words of Jan Patocka in "constructions drawn from the green cathedra": the place of metaphysics and the higher spiritualities ought to be occupied by economy, politology, sociology and other practical sciences. In this situation the greatest enemy for philosophy becomes a politician, economist or scientist refusing to question the issue of meaning. All are strengthen by the Nietzschean ethos of "faithfulness to earth" and "contempt of supra-earthly hopes." All finally will be united in a silent agreement by the nihilistic current of the will to power. This current could wash away Europe in her authentic meaning as the headland of spiritual openness, eternity, transcendence and faith in

justice. To face this danger, the philosophers can do only one thing: hold on to their mission, not let themselves be silenced, deceived and calmed, keep to their duty to question the genuine sense of often frivolously uttered notions, sentences and slogans.

To illustrate what I want to say let me take a small excursion. On August 25, 1993, Czech television presented a programme named "At the Invitation of Radio Free Europe;" the main subject was

the question: What does the idea "Return to Europe" mean for us?. One of the participants, a philosopher Václav Belohradský, tried to do his duty. He indicated that the motto "Return to Europe" is, for nations plagued by the experience of communism, just a mystifying sophism. Communism, he noted, was in a certain sense a legitimate child of the European tradition; he mentioned its roots in Plato's vision of the ideal state, in Christian eschatology and doctrine of salvation, and in the thoughts of the French Enlightenment thinkers (*illuminati*). and of German romanticism. He also quoted Solzenitsyn's words that the Russians became the first sacrifice of communism. Belohradský simply presented a broader historical horizon, pointing out the facts and opening up a space for deeper reflection.

It was interesting to see the faces of the economic ministers who were the other participants of the debate. Their assertive and self-conscious appearance dwindled the speech of the philosopher. The immediate reaction on the minister of commerce and industry was that of a fresh capitalist convert looking for a replacement of the devastated shelter of the communist party, the reaction of the expert without an authentic persuasion who probably would be quite willing to transform the Czech economy in accord with Islamic fundamentalism were the Shiites to be masters of Central Europe. Formally he accepted Belohradský's statement with respect, but estimated it as high thinking not accessible to a practical man. But he showed no reaction to arguments that could help him understand his past and present ways. Having decided not to accept any deeper authentic question, he rode on in the assertive saddle of one who knows very well what Europe is, what we have to do and where it is necessary to lead people again.

Beyond the Horizon of Self-Certainty

Outside the canon of Nietzsche's titanic order there are thinkers in every nation; among Czechs they include Comenius, Masaryk and Patocka. If we look for the identity of Europe in such thinkers, then we see that their faithfulness to earth does not mean betrayal of heaven; that their faith in justice has never given up in the face of the lamentable reality of time; that they aimed at eternity and at the same time could show right, adequate and concrete action; and that they could present in their thoughts and actions authentically enduring values. Our civilization can hardly invent any new value and add it to Christianity's seven basic values, four classical (cardinal) values represented by wisdom, modesty, courage and justice and the three theological values of faith, hope and love. These values, as virtues established by perseverance and tradition, create the substance of Europe. They are the basic conditions for what an ecologist calls sustainable living and what Christians call eternal life. It is impossible to destroy, complete or transform this table of values. Nevertheless, it is possible to give a chance to their antipodes: stupidity, covetousness, cowardice, wickedness, scepticism, resignation and hatred.

There is something like a metaphysical decision for one or other alternative when a human creates his or her world. Approximated to the level of politics, a great deal of truth is contained in an idea of the philosopher, Karel Kosík: the idea of a metaphysical democracy that leads democracy above the level of social democracy where the issue is justice in the division of things

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necessary to human needs. The higher metaphysical level was also what Masaryk intended when he spoke of democracy as the life opinion according to which one founds, builds and creates a human world. But a human founding of the world has one problem: for a human being the world in some way is always already here; man did not create it nor does he direct it. The world has its great point *alpha* and its great point *omega*, its dawn such as its eschaton, its great and irreversible history, its future that very probably hides an essentially new quality. Nevertheless, by his decision man founds his world or, rather, his home on the shore of what is passing or on the side of what is eternal. In the limited time of our earthly sojourn we decide the question of eternity,

The strongest argument of the modern age against metaphysics, idealism and Christianity is unfaithfulness to this world, betrayal of earthliness, sacrificing the natural to the supranatural. Indeed, Plato's parable of the natural world as a cavern of manacled captives in the twilight play of shadows, the sentence of Paul of Tarsos that friendship with the world means enmity with God, or Comenius's principle of contempt for the world (*contemptus mundi*) — all these visions seem to express some substantial negative moment in relationship to what apparently is naturally given once and for all as the structure of human existence. The modern age responded to this metaphysical other-worldliness in the name of its "Positive" ideal by various projects of secular eschatology, i.e., by that unhappy idea that it is possible to establish a just world on the earth by only human forces. The fall of the communist totalitarianism, which represented perhaps the most extreme project of secular eschatology, has encouraged liberal thinkers to keep to the opinion that rejects the idea of justice in the name of the freedom of the individual, the idea of transcendental moral principles, and even just faith in the final victory of good over evil. Nevertheless, liberalism also has its metaphysics in its idea of the perpetual ages of everyday life in economic and political circles (from election to election, from recession to boom, from boom to recession). Liberalism has its vision of the world of a permanent human nature in that good and evil will struggle forever; and, last but not least, liberalism also has its divinity and present day liberals worship their velvety Moloch of the Markat. He is supposed to save the unity of the world from decomposition into the isolated interests of individuals, and he is supposed to assure a certain existence of justice in a sphere where thinking about justice in its universal human moral and spiritual meaning is almost prohibited.

Perhaps in confrontation with those who believe in the economy and adore the market and who would be called by Václav Cerný "rulers of the present moment", it is necessary to explore the old truth that the substance of Europe was created in difficult times by those who had a sense for the transcendental origins of human morality and who believed in a just world. The motive power of this faith was never prosperity nor duty, but a force which is inexorable in human life and transcends all the fatal real, objective necessities. The name of this force is hope.

Notes

1. Translation by Christian and Leslie Rook.
2. Stefan George, *Poems*, trans. Carol North Valhope and Ernsit Nlorwitz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1943), p. 239.
3. J. Pieper, *Missbrauch der Sprache — Missbrauch der Macht* (Zürich, 1970, p. 18.
4. *Frontiere de la poésie* (Paris, 1936), p. 22.
5. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York, 1953), p. 3.
6. R.P. Blackmur, "The artist as hero", in: *Art New*, 1961, September, p. 20.
7. "La crise du concept de literature", in: *Nouvelle Revue française*, February, 1924.

8. J.P. Sartre, on the literary courage of the Czech author Milan Kundera.

Patocka's Ethical Naturalism: The Primacy of Value over Fact

Aviezer Tucker

There are four possible philosophical positions regarding the relations between fact and value, "is" and "ought." In Book III, Part I of his *Treatise of Human Nature* David Hume distinguished ethical and natural properties and from this distinction deduced that it is impossible to deduce "ought" from "is." In the argument that ensued G. E. Moore and Russell held Hume's view.[1] Post-modernists hold that it is impossible to make a distinction between value judgements and judgements of "truth."[2] Ethical naturalists like some utilitarians, pragmatists, and Searle hold that "ought" can be deduced from "is," that ethical judgments can be reduced to factual statement.[3] Jan Patocka takes the fourth possible position, claiming the relative primacy of "ought". Patocka held that the knowledge of any truth, of any "is," presupposes the practice of "ought"; science and metaphysics presuppose ethics. Accordingly, "ought" corresponds with the Platonic "is"; it is absolute, eternal, and independent of the human subject.

Lyotard (following Levinas) claimed that Heidegger went wrong by promoting ontology above morality.[4] Patocka's "natural moralism" (the antithesis of ethical naturalism), holds that the knowledge of the truth presupposes the practice of ethics. This will be shown to have enabled Patocka, the spokesperson for Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 of human rights, to escape the pitfall of ethical nihilism into which Heidegger so willingly fell, though Patocka's metaphysics was influenced by Heidegger.[5] Patocka claimed that human authenticity is moral, and our ability to live in the grand presence of truth assumes our authenticity. Hence, it is necessary to understand first what Patocka meant by human existence and human essence.

The Human Movement

Patocka attempted to understand human existence as a movement:

. . . Let us try to understand existence as a movement, from the standpoint of a movement. What will its meaning be, what shall we gain thereby for understanding the phenomenon of existence? And in turn, what can existence contribute to understanding movement? (MHE 279)[6]

In a dynamic reformulation of Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, Patocka attempted to understand human existence as a "movement in the world":

The "natural" world is a world of movement; the key to it is movement in the world, the movement of the worldly being. (NWP 269)[7]

Following his teacher, Husserl, Patocka attempted to abolish the Cartesian subject/object distinction between an objective world and a perceiving subject (MHE 277-279). Instead, he assumed the world to be constantly changing, a process or movement: "Our purpose here is to attempt a philosophy which takes movement as its basic concept and principle" (MHE 277).

Movement-in-the-world is a submovement within a whole that, like Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, is capable of comprehending and understanding the truth of the whole. Patocka's

concept of "movement" begins from that of Aristotle: a dynamic realization of potentials and possibilities, a process of change toward a goal. Fusing Aristotle's self-moving psyche and Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, Patocka created the notion of human movement-in-the-world. In order to adapt Aristotle to Husserl's phenomenological conceptual framework, however, Patocka had to change the meaning of Aristotle's "possibilities" that are realized in motion. "Possibilities" can no longer be the range of changes that can occur to an unchanged objective substrate. Following Husserl's understanding of the intentional aspect of human existence, possibilities in the course of realization are projections beyond the given, what Husserl called a "horizon." For Aristotle, self-movement is the essence of the human psyche. The same is true of human existence in Patocka's interpretation:

To understand existence as movement means to grasp man as being in and of the world. It is a being that not only is in the world, as Heidegger puts it (in the sense of understanding the world), but rather is itself a part of the world process. This movement, precisely because it is precisely something that, though in the form of the movement of existence, is a being that understands itself (understanding possibilities in their realization); it is a being that makes possible clarity, understanding, knowledge, and truth (MHE, pp. 279).

The natural world is the evident, that is, unproved and primitive moving whole of which human movement is a part. Therefore our perspective on it can never be extra-mundane or from without in an objective fashion. One's movement in this world is never absolute, but is always from a standpoint (NWP 268).

The Three Movements

Patocka's concept of the movement of existence is divided into three movements (MHE 274): "acceptance," "defence," and "truth". Each has its distinct original form, thematic sense, dominating dimension of time, Jaspersian boundary situation[8] of existence, and Heideggerian inauthenticity (EH, pp. 43-49).[9]

The First Movement

The first and most basic sub-movement of human existence is that of sinking roots to anchor oneself in the world (MHE 274). This takes place in a "home," where needs are fulfilled through the mediation of others (NWP 268-269). It is an instinctive-mechanical finding of oneself in the world and finding the world — sensing it and sensing oneself as a part of it. As persons enter the world they have to be received and achieve harmony with it. Naturally, mechanically, they adapt to the world, while feeling the indifferent strangeness of the world, and seeking "justice" in acceptance, co-existence, and harmony with it by the creation of space for the new being. In this sense the acceptance of the infant into the family is doing justice to the infant (EH 43-44). This movement depends on a co-movement of acceptance by another person giving safety, warmth, protection and kinship. In terms of temporality, this movement is connected to the past; it is a primordial movement in a primordial past (MHE 274-276).

This first movement aims at happiness; it is the pursuit of pleasure. Since pleasure is dependent to a large extent on luck, the first movement is a call for the purposive in the contingent (a call for finding its purpose, pleasure, in a non-purposive, contingent world that does not always

give pleasure). The contingency of life, chance and luck, are the boundary situation of this movement (MHE 282). Life on a rudimentary-instinctual level is possible based on this elementary movement, but there is no freedom in the first movement since its goals are instinctively given. Escape from the instinctive is possible only in the next two movements.

The Second Movement

The second movement of defense, self-extension or self-projection is devoted to the sustenance and reproduction of life through work. Temporally this movement is associated with the present. By moving in this way, humans consciously and actively come to terms with the world, constituting and assuring their continued existence in it. This is the realm of objectivity where the means of life are procured in the work place:

The movement of self-extension is not merely one of self-extension of oneself or of a community, but rather also one of creating our nonorganic body, of extending our existence into things. This is the realm in which we live primarily; it is the realm of meaning. According to Heidegger, in this realm of meaning our world is one of tools (*Zeuge*) which point to themselves and to our possibilities of work and creativity. (MHE pp. 276-277)

The realm of objectivity changes historically with the change of socio-economic formation. People engaged in this movement are reduced to the average anonymity of the social roles they play in pursuit of survival. The content of the roles changes from one historical period to another, according to the stage of historical development. But being reduced to their roles, people always are less than their complete selves; engaging in this movement is not human existence in its full scope. Yet, this movement goes beyond the pleasure-seeking instinctive first movement by being a self-abdication, accepting the risk of one's life and work for the sake of others. The boundary situations of this movement are considered by Patocka to be inevitable: struggles, suffering, and guilt. Its inauthenticity is failure to understand oneself and others, loss in roles and anonymity. Work is forced on us, coerced by need; therefore it is not an expression of freedom. Existence proper and freedom can be found only in the third movement (MHE 276-278). Patocka notes explicitly that his concept of work as belonging to the second, which is less than the third fully human movement, opposes Marx's concept of man.[10]

Patocka's assumption that work is something less than fully human can be questioned. For example, Masaryk, the first president-philosopher of Czechoslovakia had a very different appreciation of work. Patocka disregards the possibility that work may be a fulfillment of human nature. Certainly, the work of the artist, the philosopher, the writer, and the inventor cannot be considered anonymous or inhumane. Patocka's complaints about the reduction of human existence to role fulfillment in modern societies, echoing the writings of such other existentialists as Sartre, certainly have truth in them. Still, Patocka is more sweeping in his criticism, assigning all work to the second movement, irrespective of its character. Perhaps Patocka's outrage against labor may be ascribed partially to anti-Marxist fervor, brought about by the legitimacy that Marxist ideology gave to the central control of work by state bureaucracy which indeed destroyed the possibility for self-fulfillment through work.

The Third Movement

The third (human) movement of existence in the narrower sense of the word, self-transcendence, is free. Through this movement, men break from their bondage to the earth and transcend their everyday existence. Accordingly, its temporal dimension is the future. The third movement is that of human authenticity, unconcealment of life, and of wakefulness. It is achieved by Heidegger's self (*Dasein*) recognizing its finitude as expounded in the later parts of his *Being and Time*. This movement leads to the discovery of truth, to transcendence of particulars and recognition of the whole. This is the dimension where people create meaning and values. The third movement is a culmination of the first two which shakes them off and acquires new and authentically human significance. The first two movements are necessary conditions for this third one, whose role is to integrate all the movements of the soul into a harmonious authentic whole. Yet it can be done only by recognition of our finitude, facing death (MHE 277):

Thus at the center of our world the point is to reach from a merely given life to the emergence of a true life, and that is achieved in the movement that shakes the objective rootedness and alienation in a role, in objectification — at first a purely negative movement, one that shakes out bondage to life, setting free without revealing anything further; then with a movement that positively presents the essentia l— as life universal, giving birth to all in all, evoking life in the other, a self -transcendence toward the other and with him again to infinity (NWP p. 263).

The negative element of human authenticity is eminently clear here, though its positive counterpart is quite vague. Yet, it is clear that transcendence is achieved through freedom and strife. Patocka assumed that free relationship is one of mutual threatening and that free life is a conflict. The conflict of Heidegger's wakefulness is a provocation for counterattack:

Only the defense against the primary repression, against the might which only now becomes what it is, brings about the revolt. The revolt need not always manifest itself as physical violence; that is present secondarily, as a consequence, even though closely linked to the fact that wakefulness is always finite. Wakefulness is a renewal; it is an authentic unconcealment of life (NWP p. 266).

Care for the Soul

In Patocka's unpublished manuscript on Socrates, virtue is equated with the third movement, with being human. As an Heideggerian, human existence for Patocka is an absent place where things can appear, Patocka was aware of the problematic nature of his recommendation. Therefore, instead of prescribing a set of characteristics as "virtuous human nature," Patocka considered the activity of knowing, the awareness of being human as problematic and of seeking, to be the nature of humanity and the most basic virtue. Being aware of the problematic issue of human existence and seeking self-awareness is care for the soul, a term Patocka borrows from Socrates's *Apology*:

The Delphic injunction to know thyself does not call for introspection and its results, but for an awareness of self as a task. The first step here is to recognize that the sense of being human is not obvious and self-evident, but rather something to be sought —the Socratic ignorance. The second stage is "the care for the soul" — the seeking of its good. . . . So it is not the possession but the seeking of the good that is the perfection of the human mode of being — and Socrates's charge to all subsequent philosophy.[11]

Being human is not a biological given, but a kind of movement that has to be nurtured and protected by Socrates' "care for the soul."[12] For Heidegger "Care is the Being of *Dasein*."[13] Still, there are basic differences between Socrates-Plato and Heidegger. In Socrates-Plato the care is of the soul, which is quite a different entity from Heidegger's *Dasein*. Socrates described the mission of the philosopher as "searching into myself and other men," (*Apology* 28e) which is practiced by the Socratic method of arguing:

For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul (*Apology* 30a-b).

At the end of the *Apology* Socrates repeats the same idea, but mentions virtue instead of the soul as the object of care:

When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue . . . reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care (*Apology* 41e).

Patocka fused the two Socratic cares and argued that care for the soul as self-searching into human existence is virtue. For Heidegger, *Dasein*'s Being is care, concern with itself and other things. "Caring" and *Dasein*'s degree of authenticity and openness are co-dependent. *Dasein* cares about itself by achieving authenticity through confrontation with its finitude. Patocka's "care for the soul" is much closer to Socrates' than to Heidegger in three aspects: First, Patocka talks throughout *Plato and Europe* of "care for the soul" and not of "care as the being of *Dasein*;" second, Patocka accepted from Socrates and Plato that the practice of care for the soul, of search for the meaning of human existence, is the Socratic method:

What is this act of investigation? What is this call for reflection? Plato called it, after Socrates, care for the soul, through care for the soul, the soul becomes what it can be: one, without contradictions, excluding all possibilities of splitting into contradictory parts and, through it, stay in contact with that which is durable and stable. . . . Philosophy is care for the soul in its proper essence and the element to which it belongs. . . . The care for the soul is deployed through a questioning thought. It is it itself in the form of a dialogue . . . in which usually there are two participants, but it can also take place within the soul between me and myself.[14]

Third, Patocka accepts from Socrates the explicit virtue-ethical aspect of care for the soul, an aspect that exists, at most, implicitly in Heidegger:

It is true that Socrates is not provocative in his practice of care for the soul. He insists thus in *The Apology*; he-himself is not provoking, but the very fact of his existence is a provocation in the eyes of the community. . . . The man who is oriented, in the full sense of the term, toward the quest for truth, the man who examines that which is good, without knowing that which is good positively, but by simply refuting false opinions, will appear necessarily the most wicked and most obnoxious of men, although in reality he is the better. On the contrary, he who adopts the attitude of the crowd

will appear to be the better, although in his most profound essence, he represents the worst. The conflict between the two cannot be terminated but in the ruin of the good man.[15]

Patocka interprets Plato's concept of *arete* as the general excellence of being authentically human. *Arete* in Plato is equated with "essence." Thus every thing has its *arete*, but only human beings have the dualism of human choice either to realize their true essence or not:

In the early apyretic dialogues of Plato . . . *arete*, the excellence (it could be said also the "authenticity") in question . . . is objectively and intellectually inseparable from authenticity, from excellence in general. . . . *Arete*, authenticity, appears thus as in opposition to the multiplicities of weaknesses and inauthenticities. . . . The dualism of which one talks each time one mentions the name of Plato is in the first place the dualism of interior possibilities in which man always exists in a manner either of being truly, in its full sense, that which is in his essence, or to realize that essence only in a feeble and purely formal fashion, in a form that supports decline. An alternative analogy exists equally for other things, for the animal, the organ, the instrument; the animal also has its *arete*, an organ like the eye is either an organ that functions well, in its full sense, or a defective organ, and the same thing goes also for the instrument. Nevertheless, man exists in this duality in a specific manner, as he relates to it always expressly, as he possesses knowledge about it, and "responds" to it. But what is man in his essence? What constitutes his being? That question, without being explicitly posed by Plato, is constantly present in his thought. Our most important issue, the problem of our manner of life, is endowed with meaning as much as anything that is essential to us; the being within us, is tied to this question. We give to this core of essence in us the name psyche, soul. Likewise, philosophy, in its receiving of the task of posing explicitly, of experimenting and of resolving the question of our manner of life, can be defined as care for the Soul.[16]

This has to be differentiated from the existentialist assertion that there is no such thing as "human essence." By claiming that there is such an essence, that essence is virtue, and that there is a free choice either to realize that essence or not, Patocka is making a small and yet vital step beyond the pole of Heidegger's philosophy that leads into the humanist camp. This small step is the source for the difference of philosophical, moral, and personal paths of Heidegger and Patocka.

Patocka divided "care for the soul," the third movement, into three grand currents, differentiated according to their distance from the self: First there is a general investigation of being, an onto-cosmological investigation of truth leading to life in truth." Second, care for the soul within the community is justice, the creation of a community in which search for truth is possible. Third, this care is elucidation of what the soul is. This study of the interior of individual life is achieved through confrontation with death and the question of meaning (PE, pp. 96, 105-107, 193).

Living in Truth

For Patocka, following Heidegger, human beings are that part of Being to which it shows itself. (Though Patocka never uses Heidegger's "*Dasein*," but instead uses Plato's "soul," nevertheless he does so in a sense that has some of the characteristics of *Dasein*.) This soul, by its very essence, is oriented toward discovering and unveiling truth. The soul's perception of truth lacks ulterior or utilitarian motives. By its very nature, the soul is presented by that part of Being

which shows itself. If the soul repudiates this aspect of its essence, it will corrupt and lose itself. Patocka believed that care for the soul began with the discovery of truth as distinct from mere manifestation in pre-Socratic philosophy. Both the founders of idealism and its pre-Socratic materialism, Plato and Democritus, differentiated between truth as profound, total and eternal presence, and manifestations. Both see the task of the soul as transcending the crooked manifestations to reach the truth (PE, pp. 61-100).

The soul which fulfills its task and discovers truth can live in the grand presence of truth; it can live in truth. The source of the expression "life in truth" is most probably "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John: 14, 6) This expression appears also in Kierkegaard and Husserl.

Still, the source of the expression is not so important since Patocka gives it a new meaning. As the essence of personhood is the ability to apprehend the truth, as differentiated from manifestations, the choice to realize the potentiality for human life, to search for the truth, is the only authentic choice. A person who makes that choice to realize authentic nature, is living in truth. Since the soul is an a-subjective movement, the appreciation of the truth is not a passive appearance of truth in a perceiving subject, but a dynamic life in truth, a dynamic Being-in-a-true-world, as differentiated from alienated inauthentic life in falsity. Human authenticity as life in truth began with the Greeks. Democritus thought that truth is atoms and void, while Plato recognized truth to be at the top of the hierarchy of being, in the higher ideas. Nevertheless, the characteristics of truth (eternal, total) as well as the relation between truth and the soul, are common and thus constitute the foundation of Western civilization (PE, pp. 81-100).

The discovery of the pure, eternal and total truth is achieved, according to Patocka but unlike Heidegger, by the Socratic method, by the dialectics of dialogue, internal or inter-personal (PE, pp. 96, 101-103). Life in truth is achieved in two stages, discernible in Platonic dialogues: First, as a skeptical analysis rejecting false assertions and contradictory arguments. In effect, this delivers the soul from confusion, discordance, and contradiction. As Socrates puts it in the *Gorgias*, he would rather endure anything than be in disaccord with itself or contradict itself. At the second stage the soul discovers the pure truth, through a gradual educational process as described in the *Republic*. The soul achieves more than knowledge in this process, more than skeptical intellectualism. That part of the soul that lives in truth becomes like it eternal and pure, as is discussed in the *Phaedo*.

The soul can choose whether to engage in an activity that leads it to pure truth, which would make the soul itself virtuous, possessed of *arete*: pure, free of confusion, unified and identical with its authentic nature. This releases man from his dependence on corporeality, from the infinite indeterminacy of desires, and the inevitable decline of his body, and leads him toward the pure eternal existence of truth. Since for Plato ideas are the measure of all things, knowledge of these ideas, of truth, leads to the virtue of being measured in our desires; it prevents their becoming infinite, and therefore unsatisfiable. Following Plato, Patocka claimed that as the ideal geometrical figures in geometry are limits of infinite surfaces, so the knowledge of ideas limits the infinite evil desires. The model for the man who lives in truth is Socrates. The model for the man who chooses to avoid truth is Callicles of the *Gorgias*: tyrannical, undisciplined, dissolute, unruly, like Danneides's barrel that can never be filled (PE, pp. 229-230, 281-291).

Patocka adds here stipulations about the meaning of human existence beyond the strict interpretation of his definition of "care for the soul" as the posing of the question about the essence of man. Still, there is no reason to object to stipulating that the essence of man, besides asking the question about the essence of man, is his ability to distinguish truth from manifestations, unless

one is a phenomenalist, i.e., an extreme empiricist who believes that sense data are reality. Further, even Heidegger accepts that *Dasein* learns about itself through Being-in-the-World, and hence the learning about the world teaches one something about oneself.

Justice

The implicit normative element in Heidegger's philosophy becomes explicit as a humanistic ethics in Patocka's thought. Patocka accepts that human authenticity is good, and inauthenticity evil. He also claims that human authenticity, the essence of man, as care for the soul is its ability to conceive truth, to live in truth. Hence, ethics has to protect the right to practice life in truth. In his Platonic moments, the practice of life in truth is the practice of dialectics. Hence, freedom of speech and argument is the foundation of justice.

Thus, "ought" is presupposed by the knowledge of "is". Without human rights such as freedom of speech, publication, argumentation etc., the truth or "is" can never be discovered. Patocka may be the only philosopher who assumes that "ought" is more basic than "is." In this sense, ethics is not the product of humanity; rather humanity is the product of ethics. Morality is necessary for life in truth, for human authenticity. Immoral humans, are inauthentic and vice versa. This view can be called "natural moralism," as the reverse of "ethical naturalism."

By making a humanistic leap beyond Heidegger, into defining the essence of man positively, and (at times) giving truth a Platonic meaning, Patocka created the ethics and ethical commitment that Heidegger never had. Its implication for the argument about Heidegger's involvement with Nazism supports Ferry and Renaut's argument against Lacoue-Labarthe, namely, that Heidegger failed morally because he was not humanistic, and not as Lacoue-Labarthe claims, following Derrida, because he was too humanistic.

When Patocka writes about the obligation of philosophers to search for the truth and create a society where care for the soul is possible, when he talks of the life, death and legacy of Socrates, there is, in light of Patocka's own later personal moral undertaking, a touch of the Socrates of the *Apologia*, *Crito* or *Phaedo*. In hindsight, Patocka is explaining the reasons for his own death and his obligation to maintain his human virtue, his care for his soul, his life in truth, and attempt to create a community where care for the soul and life in truth are possible. Care for the soul as life in truth is the basis of the human movement in Patocka's world. Yet, in some communities, care for the soul imperils the self it cares for. In such communities being human, caring for our souls and searching for truth may lead to death, as in the life of Socrates. Socrates's care for the soul was not aimed at provoking the Athenians, but the very existence of care for the soul constituted a provocation in their eyes. Like Plato's Socrates Patocka accepted that the struggle between the virtuous person who is oriented toward the truth and searches for the good and the worst person who maintains an appearance of goodness, must end with the death of the good (PE, p. 97). In effect, Patocka accepted that the struggle between himself and the Czechoslovak tyranny will end as Socrates's struggle with the remnants of tyranny as it did in Athens. He accepted that his very practice of care for the soul, of search for the truth and for the good would constitute a provocation. This he said in underground seminars, collected and published later under the title *Plato and Europe* and yet he did not budge from being himself, caring for his soul as a human being and searching for truth as a philosopher.

One of the prime tasks of philosophy, according to Patocka, is to create a community that makes care for the soul possible, in which people who practice care for the soul can survive. Freedom within the community is freedom for the truth. Patocka interpreted Plato's project in

the *Republic* as exactly that: creating a state based on care for the soul and its main component, life in truth. Plato's ideal state is dominated by an ascending-vertical movement toward the psyche's proper being, spiritual, eternal and authentic. This was also the task of the Stoics who attempted to create a universal state founded on care for the soul. Patocka therefore admonished Democritus for being an egoist, an intellectual isolationist, because he had advised a person who wants to preserve the purity of his soul to avoid practical matters, not to distinguish himself in the community, and hence not participate in the creation of a community where care for the soul can be practiced (PE, pp. 91, 98, 115, 296-297).[17]

Justice is the idea of a community where the care for the soul and the search for the truth are possible, and where philosophy and philosophers can survive. This has been challenged numerous times in history, from the Athenians who committed legal murder against Socrates, to contemporary dissidents. Yet, Patocka was committed to the Socratic injunction to prefer suffering injustice to acquiescing in it. As much as truth is eternal and absolute, so is justice the precondition for the discovery of truth. Therefore Patocka's natural act of justice was to attempt and create a just community in the unjust social environment in which he found himself. Patocka's factual assumption in his discussion of ethics is echoed in the philosophy of Popper, who otherwise differs from Patocka as much as one philosopher can differ from another. But Popper also argues that a free community of scientists is necessary for the falsification of theories.[18] Under totalitarian regimes, such a free community is impossible, and hence scientific progress also, as the Lysenko affair proved in the Soviet Union. Patocka reached his normative conclusion by making three assumptions:

1. Normative: it is good or desirable for people to be authentic;
2. Metaphysical: authenticity is life in truth (as a component of care for the soul); and
3. Epistemic: Plato's epistemology is correct; true knowledge (*episteme*) can be achieved only through Socratic dialectics.

Popper, I suspect, may be sympathetic to assumption 2, and postulate his own description of scientific methodology instead of Platonic epistemology in 3. However, since Popper did not discuss human authenticity, he has no ethical system comparable to Patocka's.

That ethical system explains fully Patocka's support and involvement with Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. In 1977, at the Socratic age of 70, Patocka, Vaclav Havel, Jiri Hajek, and others, many of whom were either philosophers or had training in philosophy, signed Charter 77, a document written primarily by Patocka, calling for the implementation of the Helsinki covenant on human rights in Czechoslovakia. Human rights, of course, include freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of gathering; therefore they allow the practice of the Socratic method, and hence life in truth and care for the soul.

The event that led immediately to the creation and signing of Charter 77 was the arrest of the members of the rock group "The Plastic People of the Universe." The lyrics of their songs were, as was said in the USA of another "musical" group, "2-Live-Crew", explicit and offensive. The Czech authorities, like those in Florida decided to stop the corrupting influence on Czech youth of this politically incorrect group by arresting them. The Charter called for their release according to universal and absolute principles of justice, human rights are which ensure care for the soul in the community:[19]

If human development is to match the possibilities of technological instrumental reason, if progress of knowledge is to be possible, humankind needs to be convinced of the unconditional validity of principles which are in that sense "sacred," valid for all humans and at all times, and capable of setting out humanity's goals. We need, in other words, some-thing that in its very essence is not technological, something that is not merely instrumental: we need a morality that is not merely tactical and situational but absolute. . . .

No society, no matter how well-equipped it may be technologically, can function without a moral foundation, without convictions that do not depend on convenience, circumstances, or expected advantage. Yet, the point of morality is to assure not the functioning of a society but the humanity of humans. Humans do not invent morality arbitrarily to suit their needs, wishes, inclinations and aspirations. Quite the contrary, it is morality that defines what being human means.[20]

Being human, the fundamental virtue for Patocka, means to care for our souls by living in truth and creating a just society where care for the soul is possible. This is what defines, and is presupposed by, being a human being absolutely. It is important to note here that the Patocka of the Charter is Husserlian, not Heideggerian. He argues that science and technology cannot create morality, not that they prohibit its possibility. We are told that morality is the basis for knowledge, that is, absolute human rights and freedoms are necessary for the discovery of the truth through dialectical argumentation.

The relevancy of Charter 77 and Patocka's ethics on which it is based go far beyond the confines of Czechoslovakia. Contemporary philosophies of human and civil rights attempt to find the correct balance between the right of free expression and other rights, such as the right of privacy or the right to be unharassed verbally. This ethics claims that the right to argue about the truth, verbally or in print, far exceeds all other rights because arguing about the truth, or life in truth, is the essence of the human. Therefore Patocka would have objected to all restrictions on freedom of expression, from speech-codes at universities to restrictions on artistic expression, as in the "2-Live-Crew" case, and to gag rules on the press. He would recommend to those who find certain expressions "offensive" to argue against them and thus become authentically human.

In effect, the choice of a philosopher in an evil society is between being his authentic moral self, living in truth, and suffering the consequences, on the one hand, and becoming inauthentic, dehumanized, and evil, on the other hand. Vaclav Havel said it even better:

The inability to risk, *in extremis* even life itself to save what gives it meaning and a human dimension leads not only to the loss of meaning but finally and inevitably to the loss of life as well.[21]

In other words, the choice of a philosopher in an unjust society is between death which preserves what makes him human, and the death of his humanity, that is, of his capability to live justly and authentically in truth. Justice in the community is absolute human rights:

The idea of human rights is nothing other than the conviction that even states, even society as a whole, are subject to the sovereignty of moral sentiment: that they recognize something unconditional that is higher than they are, something that is binding even on them, sacred, inviolable, and that in their power to establish and maintain a rule of law they seek to express this recognition.[22]

This is why Charter 77 struggled to implement the Helsinki covenant on human rights, which Czechoslovakia's communist government had signed and given the force of law.23

Notes

1. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903); Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

2. Thomas Platt defended this view in his "The Facticity of Value and the Value of Fact," in the ISTI conference in Helsinki.

3. Herbert Spencer, *The Data of Ethics* (London, 1880); J.S. Mill, *Utilitarians* (London, 1863); John Dewey, *The Theory of Valuation* (Chicago, 1929); J.R. Searle, "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'" *Philosophical Review*, vol. 73, (1964).

4. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, trans. Andreas Michel & Mark Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

5. On the relation between Patocka's philosophy and political commitment and sacrifice see: Aviezer Tucker, "Sacrifice: From Isaac to Patocka," in *Telos*, No. 91 (Spring 1992), pp. 117-124 and Aviezer Tucker," Patocka vs. Heidegger: The Humanistic Difference, *Telos*, No. 92 (Summer 1992), pp. 85-98.

6. Jan Patocka, "The Movement of Human Existence: A Selection from *Body, Community, Language, World (MHE)*, in Erazim Kohak, *Jan Patocka: Philosophy and Selected Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 279.

7. Jan Patocka, "The "Natural" World and Phenomenology," in Erazim Kohak, *Jan Patocka: Philosophy and Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 269.

8. Kohak, in his anthology of Patocka, translates what is translated in the English translations of Jaspers as "limit situations," as "border situations". I use the two expressions interchangeably.

9. Jan Patocka, *Essais heretigues sur la philosophie de l'histoire (EH)*, trans. Erica Abrams, (Lagrasse: Editions Verdier, 1981). See my review of *Essais heretiques* in *History and Theory*, Vol. 31 No. 3 (1992), pp. 335-363. On the three movements see also Jan Patocka, *Le monde naturel comme un problem philosophique* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 176-178.

10. Patocka purposefully assigned what Marx regarded as the essence of man as secondary, even animalistic. Cf Marx's *homo faber*: "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life. (*The German Ideology*, part I).

11. *Kohak*, p. 50.

12. Care in general is expounded in the *Euvthyphro* 13; for care for the soul see the *Apology*.

13. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 180/225-230/273 (the first pagination is of the standard German edition, the second of the English edition).

14. Jan Patocka, *Platon et L'Europe*, (*PE*) trans. Erica Abrams (Lagrasse: Editions Verdier, 1983), pp. 96, 101.

15. *Ibid*., p. 97.

16. *Ibid*., pp. 281-282.

17. Jan Patocka, "Negative Platonism: Reflections Concerning the Rise, the Scope, and the Demise of Metaphysics — and Whether Philosophy Can Survive It (Circa 1955)" in *Kohak*, p. 182.

18. Karl Raimund Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1963).

19. For a first hand account of the development of Charter 77 see: Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, trans. by Paul Wilson (Hew York: Knopf, 1990), pp. 125145.

20. Jan Patocka, "The Obligation to Resist Injustice," in *Kohak*, pp. 340-341.

21. Vaclav Havel, "Anatomy of Reticence," in *Vaclav Havel or Living in Truth*, p. 183.

22. Jan Patocka, "The Obligation to Resist Injustice," in *Koha*, p. 341.

23. Vaclav Havel's ethics is derivative from Patocka's. However, he discusses in further detail human rights which he calls "absolute authentic values," or "the aims of life," like the right to live in dignity, free expression of being, a sense of transcendence over the world of existence, the right to express individual, group, or spiritual interests, the right to avoid humiliation, the right for privacy, freedom of expression, and the right for legal security. Havel's absolute values are a return to responsibility and the giving of meaning to terms like justice, honor, treason, friendship, infidelity and courage, which are the hidden source of all the rules, customs, commandments, prohibitions, and norms that hold within us. See Aviezer Tucker, "Vaclav Havel's Heideggerianism," in *Telos*, No. 85 (Fall 1990), pp. 63-78.

"Person" as the Central Concept in the Human and Social Sciences:
An Interpretation of Edmund Husserl's Thought
on the Human Person in *Ideen II*

Vincent Shen

Scholars in the humanities and the social sciences sometimes worry about the fact that their enterprises are considered by both men on the street and scientists as scientifically less valuable than the natural sciences. In the order of science, natural sciences are regarded as higher than social sciences and the humanities. Many scholars in the human and social sciences even fake natural sciences as a paradigm of their methodology in order to render their intellectual enterprises more "scientific". In this paper, I will argue, by analyzing E. Husserl's position in *Ideen II*, that human and social sciences have their proper value and that the concept of " person" is central to these studies on man. The multiple dimensions of the human person will be clarified in order to make manifest the essential problematic with which both the human and social sciences are concerned.

The Concept of Person as Distinguishing the Natural and Human Science

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, one of the most original trends of 20th century philosophical thought, proposed, in his *Ideen II*, the concept of "person" as fundamental to the human and social sciences. The subtitle of *Ideen II— Phaenomenolo-gische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution —* shows that the most important preoccupation of Husserl in this book is the question of constitution. This is taken by Husserl to be the key problem for delineating the relation between the natural and human sciences . In his analysis of this problem, Husserl's discussion of the concept of person gives a criteria of discerning these two kinds of science. He writes, in a letter to Albrecht dated August 2, 1917: "Duty demands that I bring to completion and publication my labors of so many years, especially since they provide the scientific foundation for a reconciliation between the naturalistic world view that dominated the epoch just expired and the teleological world view. But the teleological world view is the definitively truer one."[1]

This text shows that Husserl, in tackling the question of constitution, had gotten rid of the limited view that science is the natural sciences and also has transpassed their naturalistic world view. He now considers as truer the teleological world view of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.

This is a critical continuation of Dilthey's position. Through an epistemological approach he made a distinction between *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft*. He claimed that the epistemological operation of the natural sciences consists in explanation, which is a causal determination of a particular natural phenomenon by a universal natural law. As to human sciences, their epistemological operation consists in understanding, which is a mental grasp of the unique meaning implied in human activities and their products. Meaning is constituted in the expression of the life of each individual, society or historical epic. The process from life to expression is creativity, whereas the inverse process from expression to life is understanding. Dilthey's epistemological approach has also some metaphysical and anthropological implications: that nature is a system of causality, in which all natural phenomena are determined in a causal

way; whereas the human person is a teleological being, whose life has to realize itself through all kinds of expressions.[2]

For Husserl, Dilthey had not seized upon the importance of phenomenological reduction. Dilthey's clarification of the relation between natural and human sciences by the epistemological distinction between explanation and understanding is still, in some sense, limited to the naturalist attitude. It is not enough to treat natural sciences and human sciences as two contrasting types of science. On the contrary, the spiritual world tackled within the human sciences is for Husserl much truer than the natural world tackled within the natural sciences. This truer reality could only be seen after the operation of phenomenological reduction. On this point, Husserl differs from Dilthey, but continues Dilthey's distinction between teleology and determinism. Hence his position is a critical continuation of Dilthey.

In *Ideen II*, Husserl emphasizes that a pertinent understanding of the relation between natural and human sciences presupposes the operation of phenomenological reduction. Otherwise, the natural scientist, keeping to his naive attitude (or naturalist attitude as Husserl would call it), could not enter the spiritual world of the human sciences. It is not enough to put natural sciences and human sciences in contrasting or oppositional position by means of such categories as "meaningfulness versus causality", "uniqueness versus universality" "expression versus determination". Instead, there must be first of all a radical change of attitude. Only after turning radically from the naturalist attitude towards the transcendental attitude could one understand the spiritual world. That is why Husserl says:

He who sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, and, as it were, through the eyes of, natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences. Such a one does not see persons and does not see the Objects which depend for their sense on personal accomplishments, i.e., Objects of "culture". Properly speaking, he sees no person at all, even as he has to do with persons in his attitude as a naturalist psychologist.[3]

Dilthey already feels the need to get rid of the naturalist and psychologist attitude of looking at the person in order to grasp the objects of the human sciences. But his methodology is not radical enough to the extent of retreating the problem of constitution through the method of phenomenological reduction. Husserl points out that: "Only a radical investigation, directed to the phenomenological sources of the constitution of the ideas of nature, body, and soul, and of the various ideas of ego and person can here deliver decisive elucidations and at the same time further the rights of the valid motives of all such investigations."[4]

Husserl's discussion of the problem of the constitution of the person functions as the key towards a more plausible distinction between natural science and human science. The natural scientist studies nature under the naturalist attitude. If the psychologist studies man under the same attitude, he treats the human merely as natural being, not as a person. Only by changing attitudes, from naturalist towards personalist can one enter the realm of the human sciences. By this affirmation of the person the human sciences differ essentially from natural sciences. Moreover, man's knowledge of nature, and therefore his natural science, is also the result of the human's constitution as a person, not only as a natural being. In this sense, the naturalist attitude is inferior to, and even a kind of self-forgetfulness of the personalist attitude; it is even the result of self-forgetfulness of the person himself. Husserl says:

Upon closer scrutiny, it will even appear that there are not here two attitude with equal rights and of the same order, or two perfect apperceptions which at once penetrate one another, but that the naturalist attitude is in fact subordinated to the personalistic, and that the former is acquired only by means of an abstraction or, rather, by means of a kind of self-forgetfulness of the personal ego."[5]

Husserl's concept of person-forgetfulness as explanative of the genesis of the naturalist attitude, and of natural science as an effect of this attitude, is quite similar to Martin Heidegger's concept of Being-forgetfulness, explanative of the genesis of modern technology. Their difference consists in the fact that Heidegger posits the Being-forgetfulness on the ontological level, whereas Husserl posits the person-forgetfulness on the personalist level; for Heidegger's philosophy is a philosophy of Being, whereas Husserl's position pertains to the philosophy of subjectivity.

According to Husserl, the person is constituted of three levels: of body, of ego and of intersubjectivity.[6] In its strict sense, person is limited to that of subjectivity, but in its broad sense his ego must be concretized spatio-temporally in a body and live with others in a kind of intersubjective relationship. This is quite different from the idealist and egologist position that we find in Husserl's "*Ideen I*" and "Cartesian Meditations." Compared with the positions of these works, the ego of *Ideen II* is a more worldly, not unworldly ego; it is a being-with-others, a dialogical ego rather than an isolated Self or ego of monologue. Here, any discussion on the social dimension of man must be derived from the intersubjective relationship between the human persons. Now, let us explore successively the dimensions of body, of ego and of society according to the discovery of Husserl in *Ideen II*

The Bodily Constitution of the Human Person

Discussion of the constitution of person must begin from its bodily dimension. The main reason for this is that when we study the human, the phenomenon of the human person as such cannot appear without the human body. In other words, man is also his body appearing *hic et nunc*, even though our attitude towards it should not be limited to the naturalist position. On the one hand, if there were no body, then no human person would appear. On the other hand, to see man as person, we should switch from our naturalist to our transcendental attitude through the method of phenomenological reduction. A human person's body is not limited to a mere physical thing with sensible organs. Body, as living expression of the person, has many psychic and spiritual characteristics which could not happen elsewhere, but only here in the body. Body is the locus in which these psychic and spiritual characteristics appear. But the reality of these psychic and spiritual phenomena is not limited to body. Husserl is quite aware of this paradoxical situation. He says, "The excess of reality beyond the mere physical thing is not something that can be separated by itself, not something juxtaposed, but something in the physical thing."[7] Those psychic and spiritual properties could have their physical expressions only in the body; that is why the natural scientists would try to determine those psychic and spiritual phenomena by spatial and physical properties. In fact, although those psychic and spiritual phenomena must manifest themselves through the body, their reality seems truer and finer. Only by switching from the naturalist to the transcendental attitude could one grasp the truer and finer reality in the same locus of phenomena.

These psychic and spiritual operations, including states of consciousness, kinds of representations (such as images, concepts judgements, theories . . . etc.,) and evaluations are intelligible by themselves without any necessary reference to the body in which they happen. In

other words, psychic and spiritual contents in themselves do not contain any spatial or physical properties. Their intelligibility does not rely on the physical characters of the locus in which they happen. Husserl clearly affirms that:

The soul is in the Body and is there where the Body presently happens to be. What also is there are such and such groups of states of consciousness, such and such representations, stirrings of thought, judgements, etc.; consciousness in itself . . . is thinkable without a nature . . . and consciousness is not positable as something of nature; it is absolutely non-spatial.[8]

The above discussion could make us sure of one thing: those states, properties and operations intimately related to the human person, phenomena that we characterize as psychic and spiritual, by themselves are non-spatial, non-physical, but in the meanwhile they could only be localized through our body. Body then could be seen as the localization of the human person.

Besides space, there is time. Generally speaking, Husserl distinguishes between "cosmic time" (or objective time) and "phenomenological time (or experienced time). For him, phenomenological time has priority over cosmic time. The operation of our intentionality operates always in the experienced temporal process. Husserl's philosophy shows its worldliness in *Ideen II*: not only does the human person have to be localized in body, it has also to be temporalized through body. To localization corresponds temporalization. This is the second reason why Husserl highly evaluates our body. It is because of our body that our experienced time could be integrated into the cosmic time, and thus could also be measured like cosmic time:

Pure consciousness is a genuine temporal field, a field of 'phenomenological' time. This must not be confused with "Objective" time, which is constituted, along with nature, by consciousness.[9]

The states of consciousness then have, in conformity with the constitutive sense of the coincidence of their time with the time of physical nature, a time that is measurable through primordial manifestation by the use of instruments.[10]

Husserl's discussion of the bodily dimension of the person shows that the person is spatialized and temporalized through body and thereby relates itself to physical nature. But even though it has to manifest itself through Body, that is, have its embodiment in the spatio-temporal nature, still it has higher and truer existence over physical nature. For the intelligibility of its existence is thinkable and understandable without any necessary reference to physical nature. This is the first contrasting thesis of Husserl on the subject.

Husserl's second contrasting thesis concerning the relation between Body and Person is that, on the one hand, the body is mine, and, on the other, it is in some sense the other for my Ego. The Body is mine, mineness is its first characteristic. "The body is my body, and it is mine in the first place as mine 'over and against' my object, just as the house is my object, something I see or can see, something I touch or can touch, etc. These things are mine, but not as component pieces of the ego."[11] In other words, I can possess many things, for example, house, money, clothes . . . etc., but these objects are not part of my ego. On the contrary, my body is part of my ego. I am my body and my body is mine. The mineness of my body is beyond everything else I own. But, seen from the other side, my body is different from my Self. In Paul Ricoeur's words, "My body is the original other of my Self." Not every experience of my self could be reduced to the experience of my body.

Sometimes the capacity of my body does not follow the wish of my heart. My experiences of bodily resistance and insufficiency prove the otherness of my body.

In his *Soi-meme comme un autre*, Paul Ricoeur points out two intriguing insights on the relation between body and person: 1. Our body shows that otherness is also constitutive of the Ego, not as added from the outside as the egologist would proclaim;[12] 2. The experiences of our body consist mainly of passive experiences through which our Ego is mediated to the world.[13] In fact, Ricoeur's position has its origin in the *Ideen II* of Husserl which most clearly articulated the phenomenological description of the contrast between the mineness and the otherness of our Body.

Ego as the Center of a Surrounding World

Transferring from the bodily dimension to the ego in its proper sense, is in fact, according to Husserl, to step from the passive to the active ego. "We find, as the originally and specifically subjective, the Ego in the proper sense, the Ego of `freedom', the attending, considering, comparing, distinguishing, judging, valuing, attracted, repulsed, inclined, disinclined, desiring, and willing ego: the ego that in any sense is 'active' and takes a position. . . . Opposed to the active ego stands the passive."[14] This means that ego in the proper sense is the active, free ego. This is the center of the subjectivity of a person, of which no empirical data are available. Only intuition through phenomenological reduction could be aware of its existence. Therefore, we need a radical change to the transcendental attitude in order to grasp the phenomenon of person in its proper sense. The above-mentioned otherness or alterity of body demonstrates only the transcendence of the phenomenon of person over that of body. Person in the proper sense is to function as the subjectivity of the surrounding world. As a person, I am the subject of my *Umwelt*. That is why Husserl says:

The concepts of Ego and surrounding world are related to one another inseparably. Thereby to each person belongs his surrounding world, while at the same time a plurality of persons in communication with one another has a common surrounding world. The surrounding world is the world that is perceived by the person in his acts, is remembered, grasped in thought, surmised or revealed as such and such; it is the world of which this personal ego is conscious.[15]

As the subject of his surrounding world, Ego corresponds to his surrounding world. The so-called "person" is just this subject which perceives, feels, evaluates, struggles with and acts in this world. Husserl gives his first definition of the term "person" in correlation with the surrounding world: "A person is precisely a person who represents, feels, evaluates, strives, and acts, and who, in every such personal act, stands in relation to something, to objects in his surrounding world." For the person, the surrounding world does not have an in-itself status, as in the case of everyday belief and in the natural sciences. The *Umwelt* is a world not in itself, but for me. Only in a subject is the status of the world completely changed in this way: from in itself to for-me. In other words, it becomes an object of my intuition, representation and evaluation. This is also the world that Heidegger characterized as *Zuhandenheit* which emphasizes the usability of the things in the *Umwelt*.[16] But Husserl is more scrupulous in that he considers the *Umwelt* as object of intuition, representation and evaluation. It is only when it serves as the object of evaluation that we can derive the usability of the *Umwelt*.

The subject is a center of unceasing activities, through which he objectifies the surrounding world in different ways and thereby constitutes different meanings of the *Umwelt*. The ego could

actively understand, explain, evaluate them, could make choices among them, accept them or resist them. In other words, ego as an acting center is the source of all theoretical and practical intentions.

From the naturalist attitude, the given from the surrounding world is seen merely as stimulus or as constituents of the chain of causality. From the personalist attitude, it is now seen as an object for me. It is now an object which motivates my intention.

This position of Husserl in *Ideen II* on person as the center of my activities excludes any interpretation of Husserl's subjectivity as unworldly, static, pure ego. For instance, Ludwig Landgrebe in his *Major Problems in Contemporary Philosophy* criticizes Husserl that, first, Husserl's philosophy is a kind of philosophy of subjectivity; second, Husserl's egology neglects the existential facticity of man; and third, the Husserlian ego has a static, speculative tendency.[17] Landgrebe uses the Heideggerian concept of facticity as remedy to Husserlian egology, and he refers to Max Scheller's idea of person as the center of acts to replace the Husserlian static, speculative ego. But, in fact, as we could see from Husserl's analysis in *Ideen II*, person for Husserl is the center of the execution of acts. What Scheller does is not, as Landgrebe would suggest, the fulfillment of Husserl's project, but its application.

The Social Constitution of the Person

As stated above, the Husserlian person is not limited to the egologist philosophy of subjectivity, but is now situated in the surrounding world. But in this surrounding world, there are not only things, but other humans. Besides one's relation to things, there is one's relation to other humans. In other words, one is situated not only in subject-object relationship, but also in subject-subject relationships, that is, in intersubjective relationships. Under the naturalist attitude, this relationship is not seen as interpersonal, but as a kind of subject-object relationship for the human is seen and studied as an object. For Husserl, this attitude commits three errors: first, on the moral dimension, it treats a human being as a mere thing, not as person related to the moral order or as a member of a moral association; second, on the legal dimension, it treats a human person not as a subject of rights, but instead as without rights, just like a mere thing; third, on the theoretical dimension, it treats a human person not as subject of a common surrounding world, but as a mere annex of natural objects.[18]

One could associate with other humans in a personal community through one's capacity of comprehension. Many persons together cannot only understand things of their common surrounding world, they could also understand one another. The first kind of comprehension is an understanding of the surrounding world. The second kind is that of the person. By the first kind of understanding each person could serve as the motivating power of another person. By the second kind of understanding, multiple persons could communicate with each other in order to achieve mutual understanding:

In this way relations of mutual understanding are formed: speaking elicits response; the theoretical, valuing, or practical appeal, addressed by the one to the other, elicits, as it were, a response coming back, assent or refusal, and perhaps a counter-proposal, etc. In these relations of mutual under-standing, there is produced a conscious mutual relation of persons at the same time as a unitary relation of them to a common surrounding world.[19]

Here the term "common surrounding world" designates not only the physical, natural world, but also ideal worlds such as the possible world of mathematics, because, for example, people could study mathematics together.

Husserl's idea about "communicative acts" in *Ideen II* proves that, first, he is not limited to the egologist philosophy of subjectivity but even criticizes that kind of philosophy. For him, it is by abstracting mutual understanding and communicative acts that we think of a sheer solitary subject and therefore also of a purely egoist surrounding world.[20] Second, it shows that Husserl situates "communication" in the relation of one person to another. I suppose we could retrace J. Habermas's theory of communicative action to Husserl's discussion in *Ideen II*. For Habermas, the relation between man and nature is that of technical control, whereas the relation between man and man is communication. But communication in Habermas's sense is merely linguistic and intellectual; the process of argumentation is taken by him as the model of communication. Communication in Habermas's sense is a kind of argumentative communication, a process of confronting thesis with antithesis and of searching for consensus in a commonly acceptable higher proposition. But communication in Husserl's sense is not merely intellectual and linguistic, it includes also evaluative and practical processes such as love and counter-love, hate and counter-hate, confidence and reciprocal confidence. Husserl says:

The persons who belong to the social association are given to each other as 'companions', not as opposed objects but as counter-subjects who live 'with' one another, actually or potentially, in acts of love and counter-love, of hate and counter-hate, of confidence and reciprocated confidence, etc.[21]

These words of Husserl give us a clear ethical dimension of communication, not only a description of an intellectual debate. Husserl uses the term "communicative acts" precisely for the process constitutive of the social dimension of the human person: "Sociality is constituted by specifically social, communicative acts in which the ego turns to others and in which the ego is conscious of these others as ones toward which it is turning, and ones which, furthermore, understand this turning, perhaps adjust their behaviour to it and reciprocate by turning toward that ego in acts of agreement or disagreement, etc."[22] On the level of communicative acts, our relation with nature and the physical world suffers also a radical change. Here the physical world becomes the common object of our dialogue and our studying- together. "Even the physical world has a social character in this apperceptive inclusion; it is a world that has a spiritual significance."[23] In other words, nature could become, on the personalist level, the surrounding world constituted by our common projects of scientific research and artistic creativity.

Communicative acts are not limited to interpersonal relationship, but could be extended also to inter-community relationship. "It should be noted here that the idea of communication obviously extends from the single personal subject even to the social associations of subjects, which, for their part, present personal unities of a higher level."[24] Step by step, Husserl's vision becomes clear: it is by the personalist attitude, after a radical change through phenomenological reduction, that humans should reconstitute authentically their relationships with things and other humans. Then, as authentic subjects, they should communicate with other authentic subjects in order to form an authentic social community. Through this authentic social community, human culture and history could be authentically reconstituted. This is quite similar to the procedure Husserl proposes in the "Cartesian Meditations". The ways of thinking in these two books differs in that the "Cartesian Meditations" emphasizes more the egologist approach and is more on the side of transcendental

idealism, whereas *Ideen II* takes the position that society, culture and history are to be constituted in the process of intersubjective communication.

If we compare Husserl's discussion of communicative acts with that of Habermas, we find easily that the ideal conditions of communication proposed by Habermas — legitimacy, sincerity, truth, and understandability — are but formal conditions. On the contrary, Husserl proposes in *Ideen II* the act of empathy as a transcendental condition of communication. Husserlian empathy is quite similar to Confucian *Jen* through which man could easily understand the motivations of others: "It is a matter for the experience of empathy, in its unfolding to instruct me about a man's character, about his knowledge and abilities, etc."[25] Besides, a person could also grasp, through empathy, something like the Hegelian Objective spirit and understand the unity of meaning: "To perform an act of empathy means to grasp an Objective spirit, to see a human being, to see a crowd of people, etc."[26] In other words, the empathy between man and other men functions as an existential substantial condition in Husserl's theory of communication action. In this sense, it is much more touchable and realist than those formal and argumentative conditions in Habermas's theory.

Empathy, not only could constitute interpersonal relationship, but can be extended to the relationships of marriage, of friendship and of social community. Man could extend his empathy to his married partner, to his friend, and even to the life of the borough or even of larger society. On this point, Husserl's philosophy is quite similar to the Confucian extension of *Jen* from family relationship to the society and to the state.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the Husserlian concept of person helps to clarify the distinction between the natural and the human/social sciences. It proves also that it is not legitimate to reduce human sciences to natural sciences. On the contrary, we have to see natural sciences as situated in the context of human communication. Man's relation with nature and other men must be reconsidered in the multiple dimensions of his personality.

Boethius once defined the concept of person in this way. This definition includes two aspects of the person: its individuality and its commonality. Under the influence of Aristotle's hylemorphism, Boethius bases human individuality on *hyle* (matter), and his commonality with others on *morphe* (form), which is human rationality. Both intellect (*intellectus*) and will (*voluntas*) are seen by the Scholastic philosophers as rational.

The scholastic concept of person has done well in founding Western civilization on a philosophical recognition of human dignity. But, in facing the demands of the post-critical era, the critical attitude implied in Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction seems inevitable. Further, the Scholastic emphasis on the individuality and commonality of human person is not enough for envisaging the complexity of the human situation in the modern world. On this point, Husserl's explanation of the constitution of person in terms of body, *Umwelt*, ego and the intersubjectivity is more pertinent to the situation of the person in our day. He points out that the human person's individuality consists in the localization and temporalization of the human body, whereas one's commonality with others consists in the intersubjective relation constitutive of the human person. This commonality is not limited to human rationality. The holistic attitude we find in the Scholastic inclusion of both intellect and will in human rationality reappears in Husserl's comprehensive vision of person. For him, merely theoretical considerations of the human person are not enough. We have to take into consideration the evaluative and practical dimension of

human person. Human sciences, as sciences of the human person, must be sufficiently integral to include all the dimensions of human personality. Husserl's philosophy, taking the concept of person as central to all human sciences, has already given us a promising foundation for our efforts in humanistic studies.

Notes

1. K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik: Denk-und-Lebensweg Edmund Husserls* Nijhoff: The Hague, 1977), pp. 212-213.
2. Vincent Shen, *Essays on Contemporary Philosophy* (Taipei: Lih Ming Co., 1986), pp. 301-302.
3. E. Husserl, *Ideen II* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1952), s. 191 also: *Idees directrices pour une phenomenologie et une philiosophie phenomenologiques pure de la constitution*, Traduit par E. Escoubas (Paris: PUF, 1982); *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Second Book, tr. by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989).
4. *Ibid.*, s. 173.
5. *Ibid.*, s. 183.
6. *Ibid.*, ss. 49-51.
7. Husserl, *Ideen II*, s. 176.
8. *Ibid.*, ss. 177-178.
9. *Ibid.*, s. 178.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, s. 212.
12. P. Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), p. 367.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 369.
14. Husserl, *Ideen II*, s. 213.
15. *Ibid.*, s. 185.
16. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972), s. 69.
17. Landgrebe, *Major Problems in Contemporary European Philosophy*, trans. by K.F. Reinhardt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 34-37.
18. Husserl, *Ideen II*, s. 190.
19. *Ibid.*, s. 192.
20. *Ibid.*, s. 193.
21. *Ibid.*, s. 194.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, s. 196.
25. *Ibid.*, s. 228.
26. *Ibid.*, s. 244.

The Writer's Mission and Politics[1]

Karel Vrána

I learned then sadly to desist: where words default, no things exist.   Stefan George[2]

This chapter deals with the self-evident fact that between the writer and the human community there exists a definite sociologically, psychologically, politically and historico-culturally definable relationship, as well as definite and respectively definable rights and responsibilities. In times like these, when socially engaged art has become almost a virtue and a myth, who would venture to question the writer's responsibility to society or vice versa? Yet, in the apparent self-evidence and seemingly problem-free nature of the above-mentioned relationships, there lies concealed an explosive difficulty of unsuspected, dramatic tension and with aggressive relevance.

The writer can become a blessing for the human community but also a curse, a salvation but also a disaster. The ancient wisdom *corruptio optimi pessima* is applicable here above all. The writer possesses a magnificent, immeasurable, powerful charisma, if it may be so described. This charisma of the writer carries with it a tremendous, fateful power capable of bringing both salvation and disaster. The great writers have always been aware of this fact. They often were not only intoxicated by this charismatic power, but also pressured by its burden. The sad and humble Franz Kafka experienced his literary charisma again and again as a kind of religion. For him, writing became a prayer — a desperate, radically uncertain search for salvation. It is certainly no coincidence that the Christian *Heitsgeschichte* reveals itself and unfolds within the humanly written Word of God.

The "world's powerful" are also very familiar with the power of the writer's charisma — they have always known of it, they have always feared it, and they have always attempted, to this day, to utilize its power for their benefit. They have been and still are intelligent enough with their instinct for power to know that they cannot successfully rule the people without the writer, without his writings and his language. Even Stalin knew that his power would not have been total or secure enough if writers, as engineers of the human souls of the new socialist being, had denied him their participation.

What Exactly Is a Writer?

I shall begin by refraining from giving a specific, so to speak, terminologically exact definition of the writer, even provided such a definition exists. For our purposes, it suffices to describe him very generally, but also very fundamentally, as a "steward of words" (M. Heidegger), a shepherd of the language, as a "leiturgos" of writing — or more concisely, as a sculptor of the written word.

His art of writing is not determined by a special "something". It is not the subject matter, nor the material in itself that shapes the literary work of art, but the "how", that is, the molded, consummated, cultivated form. The writer can — *ceteris paribus*— choose anything at all to be the subject matter of his art: the whole of nature, the whole of history, heaven and hell, holiness and sin, etc. He makes his choice according to his own personal needs, according to his preferences and leanings. But what ultimately matters in his work is that he write well and consummately, that his writing possess a perfect, artistic form and structure.

One can hardly question these very fundamental sentences, and yet they sound, in the very least, provocative. Therefore, they must be further deepened and expanded. Let us rephrase it in this sharpened manner: "A writer is defined as such if he has internalized this conviction: it matters not what one thinks or writes".[3] The sophist Gorgias as well as André Gide would sign their names to this sentence without reservations. After all, even I could sign my name to it, but not "without reservations", not without making another entirely fundamental distinction. The deciding factor is the "how", the being-so of the literary work of art.

We cannot reduce this "how" of writing exclusively to the work's grammatical structuring, its perfection of style, and its good literary construction. Certainly these factors belong to the art of writing, as well. But the primary duty of the writer lies in this very "how". The art of writing, as such, concerns itself primarily with the beauty of the language, with the aesthetic values of the work, but not with the moral perfection of humankind. This is true, but there is more. The "how" in literary art has yet another, deeper, more radical dimension. I shall refer to it — using the words of J. Maritain (14-15) — as poetic or creative intuition. Both of the following factors together form the charisma of a significant writer: aesthetic ability, or the *techné* in the Aristotelian and Thomistic sense (*recta ratio factibilium*), and poetic, creative power, an almost divinatory and prophetic power with which he is able to summon up the deep secret, the ultimate dimension of objects and events in his work. About this second and deeper dimension of the "how" in the literary work of art, J. Maritain says, "*Cette divination du spiritual dans le sensible . . . c'est bien ca ce que nous appelons Poésie*".[4] About the two-dimensional, bilateral structure of this literary-artistic "how", the same philosopher writes:

By Art I mean the creative or producing, work-making activity of the human mind. By Poetry I mean, not the particular art which consists in writing verses, but a process both more general and more primary: that intercommunication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human self which is a kind of divination. . . . Poetry, in this sense, is the secret life of each and all of the arts.[5]

With these considerations, I believe we have deciphered the inner structure of the writer's charisma. From here, we can explore new questions. Most importantly, we can now assert that the value and significance in a work of literary art is not only dependent upon the perfection and quality of its form, of its aesthetic, "technical" (in the fundamental Greek sense) intuition, but also — and no less — upon the quality, pureness, truthfulness, and existence of its poetic, creative intuition: that is, upon how the writer perceives and experiences his subject matter, in which perspectives and horizons his language lives, and in which source his heart finds its resource. Around this poetic, creative source of the writer — and generally of every artist — heaven and hell, angel and devil, have been wrestling throughout the ages. André Gide wrote a sentence worth considering: "The devil collaborates on every work of art." Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he tries again and again to play along and participate — and, unfortunately, often enough is successful. Incidentally, it is no accident that even such great and significant writers as Dante, Dostoyevsky and Goethe were able artistically to portray the world of sin better, more convincingly, and more intriguingly than the world of grace and holiness. Dante's *Il Paradiso* is artistically weaker than his *L'Inferno*: the evil characters, the demons, in the work of Dostoyevsky are more vivid, realistic and full-blooded than is a character like Alyosha. The artistically most difficult form of literature, which is also the weakest when considered in a historical context, is hagiography.

In a word, the source is the decisive factor. Through it, the writer is already engaged with either the truth or the lie: the source makes him an accomplice, regardless of whether or not he wants to be, whether or not he realizes it; and, within it, are the roots of his responsibility to society, to his fellow human beings. Now, we can also understand why a work "can be perfectly produced", why something can be perfectly said, wisely worded, exceptionally written, portrayed . . . and yet at the same time be considered, as a whole and in light of its significance, to be false, or even bad, inferior, disgraceful and disastrous. Of course, the reverse is also true.

On the basis of this fundamental differentiation between the "*techné*" and the "*poiesis*", the artistic skill and the creative, poetic intuition in the writer's charisma, we can understand two further issues and problems. The poetic source, if strong and deep enough as is the case with the great poets and writers, can never become completely polluted, deteriorated or poisoned. There are blessed moments in their lives when the poetic source unexpectedly produces pure, refreshing waters from its hidden depths. The Italian lyricist Salvatore Quasimodo, for example, wrote poems that have true, deep, religious meaning even though he had deliberately and publicly confessed to atheism. We are able to establish similar truths regarding several Czech Communist writers and poets such as Vaculík Kundera, Klíma, etc. We can even observe their inner poetic transformation as a kind of conversion. A true, deep, significant source can penetrate even a swamp, can flush out the poison. And, most importantly, a true poetic source, cannot be organized.

Let us now consider the second matter: our analysis of the writer's charisma enables us to call the writer's temptations by their actual names. A discussion of this follows.

The Writer's First Temptation

The first temptation in literary art is related to the first dimension of the writer's charisma, to its specific, aesthetic structures: design, arrangement, style, the internal rhythm, its own characteristic melody, its artistic quality and its persuasive "magical" power to charm the person. This temptation, like every other, can be accepted or rejected, for in its foreground lies a great truth and a great justice. The temptation exists not in that which it affirms, but instead in that which it negates. It affirms the truth and justice of the literary "*techné*"; it even makes this truth and this justice absolute. But at the same time, in the very same moment, it reasons that the second dimension, the source and its quality, its purity for the writer, are totally meaningless, of no importance or worth. The temptation claims even more emphatically that the concern for the purity of this source, for truth and being, for the horizons and perspectives, for the consequences of the work of art on the fate of humanity — that this concern has a negative effect on the writer, limits and even destroys his freedom and his rights, degrades and smothers his art. "*Pour pouvoir penser librement, dit Renan quelque part,*" writes André Gide, "*il faut être sur que (ce que) l'on écrit ne tirera pas á consequence.*" And elsewhere, the same author says, "*C'est après le repas qu'on appelle l'artiste en scéne. Sa fonction n'est pas de nourir, mai de griser*" (intoxicate).

We must further investigate the nature of this temptation and focus on its damaging powers. It pollutes the words, the language itself, in a very special, not easily detectable, manner. Where does this temptation occur? We can ascertain the following: when words, language, and writing are raised to an artistically higher level and quality, or in other words when they are actually cultivated, in the same exact moment they become threatened. We stand there as if facing a dialectical shift: the self-glorification, consummation, and self-satisfaction within language — and generally within every form of art — eventually unfold as radical destruction and degradation, as

the corruption and death of language itself and, thereby, as the destruction of literary art. But we must look even more closely.

In order to see the truly radical and actual nature of the corruption of language we must understand the essence of language. The writer's temptation and the resulting endangerment of language impact on more than simply one specialized area of human existence and on more than one sector of human society; they affect the whole of life and being. The existential secret behind language and words is that, within it, the being finds its home. Language depicts the intellectual sphere in which human existence and human fate reveal themselves: through language and in words, the human beings can understand themselves, find their "home", learn to recognize their own identity, experience their truth and overcome their alienation. Therefore, if language is endangered or corrupted; the whole of our existence is affected. This mightiness, dignity and impact of language illustrate to us the extent of the writer's responsibility.

In this text, we are not investigating the structure of language abstractly, as does metalinguistics, but are instead concerned with its existential meaning and value. In this existential respect, language has a double function:

1) Language illuminates the truth of reality; the sense of being enters our neighborhood and we can hear its voice; through language, the objects of our world are revealed, clarified and made accessible to us. Through language, we inhabit the world of people and things. It even shows us the pathway to God; and within language, the interface with reality takes place.

2) When we speak and converse, we give names to objects and facts; this, of course, always happens for someone, for a "you", and in the context of a "we". Human words also have a communicative, dialogical function, a conversational character. Language is an original product of human existence: as we speak, we not only describe something, we not only discuss a fact, we not only utter a reality, but we simultaneously address, converse and encourage.

These two functions of language are intimately related: either both are good or both are corrupt. The truthful and revealing character of language emerges in dialogical conversation; and, vice versa, the character of the dialogical conversation in language is rooted in the language's relevance to reality. Language that is not concerned with the reality of things and is not anchored in being, is empty and therefore able to communicate only this emptiness. Meaningless speech destroys itself; the language of nothing is the nothing of language. This type of speech inevitably becomes a partnerless conversation. With these thoughts, we have inadvertently touched upon the writer's temptation.

How does it actually occur that the language loses its relationship to reality, thereby bringing about its own corruption? The development of this corruption coincides with — and is identical to — the above mentioned process in that the aesthetic structure is affirmed and glorified while the poetic charisma is negated. It is the same temptation, the same destruction of language and of literary art. If the language closes itself off from within, honoring, worshipping and enjoying itself alone, if it shakes off its structural connection to reality as an intolerable, enslaved burden, if it rejects the fountain and the standard of being and in so doing, regards itself as absolute and holy, it inevitably and simultaneously becomes indifferent towards truth and towards all transcendental and normative values. Literary art has a magnificent, almost magical power. It can intoxicate and seduce the person who possesses it, can pretend to him that it is the foremost, the ideal, and the only absolute. In fact, it convinces one that it is one's only salvation, one's entire well-being, and one's magnificent, divine freedom. If we consider this first temptation of the writer in a theological

light, we are able to recognize that it is actually a special manifestation of humankind's original temptation: *eritis sicut dei*, that is, the radical rejection of every norm, of every dependency, of every connection to the transcendental in the name of an imaginary, longed for and absolute freedom and power. Here lies the deepest root of the temptation: the original lie, for the human language is not the divine *logos*.

The emancipation of language and words from the truth and from the standardized order of being began in a historical perspective quite innocently. At first, one wanted to defend the right of language — and generally the right of every art — to its autonomy, to defend this right against all subordination and against every reductive force that separates art from reality. Rousseau and the romanticists probably intended to do just that. One sought legitimate freedom from all moral teachings. Art became aware of its own dignity and power and could no longer tolerate being simply a didactic medium. In order to survive and flourish, it needs its own identity and "purity" (Hans Sedlmayr).

The scholastics say, whoever "*nimis probat, nihil probat*". Therefore, the boundaries were soon crossed and the famous myth of "*l'art pour l'art*" evolved. Even this myth demanded that art inhabit its own universe and look down indifferently from its ivory tower upon the other spheres of human existence. But this absolutely pure and self-satisfied literary art (the one and only form of art) had soon grown weary of itself; even it was tempted to want to rule. Thus an epochal paradox occurred: a dialectical transformation in which literary art emerged from its "splendid isolation" in order to rule, and to rule not only in its own aesthetic realm of beauty and in the legitimate areas of its own world, but in the whole of life, for whose well-being it was now responsible. On this theme, R.P. Blackmur once noted that. in the era of Romanticism, Byron, Goethe and Hugo declared themselves heroes who were greater and more powerful "than any of the heros in their works". Arnold believed that poetry would become the world's salvation because it, alone, in his opinion, would be able to give expression and fulfillment to the entire spiritual life of humankind. Afterwards, came the *poéte maudit* and the *voyant suprerge* glorified by Rimbaud. Soon, writers and artists were asked to consciously assume the task of creating and shaping the conscience of a society that had no conscience.[6] This was only one step towards the establishment of the writer as priest. Jaques Riviére was right in saying that the literature of the 19th century had become a kind of miracle-seeking magic.[7] J. Maritain remarked humorously about this dialectical transformation of art: "The ivory tower is the world's cathedral, Pythia's temple, Prometheus's rock, and the altar of the supreme sacrifice."

At the same time, though, this art of writing, which had been thought of as absolute and divine, destroyed and abolished itself. The time had come for it to learn that it could not single-handedly save humankind and its world. Thus, in order to preserve its sacred mission, it began to look around for other sources, means and especially new allies. It found them before too long and, this time, in the mode of political, secularized and inner-world messianism. These allies gradually developed into new rulers. Not only did they demand from literary art a say in the creation of a new

world and a new humankind, but they made art into their servant and began to dictate how it should think and write. The circle closed, and the disastrous fate of pure, absolute art, of language, that had been emancipated from the truth of existence, was fulfilled. Herewith, we have come to the writer's second temptation, to his second act of betrayal.

The Writer's Second Temptation

The sophists of every time -- beginning with Gorgias through to the 20th century (A. Gide, etc.) — have proclaimed, asserted, and even emphasized that it does not matter "what" a true writer writes for he is absolutely autonomous. With his freedom, he has no desire, and is unable to subordinate his art to any truth, moral or political movement or ideology. He serves himself alone, his own charisma, and his own literary ego. He concerns himself — so they tell us — only and exclusively with the art of language, with its beauty, with the boldness of imagery and the splendor of style. They say this clearly and openly, and yet we cannot believe them. If we are unwilling to accept that they, in these very sentences, are trying to deceive us, we must at least assume, on the basis of historical experience, that they are deceiving themselves. Incidentally, even Gorgias had to confess to the inquiring Socrates that writing meant to him "something other" than the perfection of discourse. André Gide, in his writing, whose high aesthetic value cannot be denied, was inflamed with a kind of apostolic and missionary zeal to defend and justify his dubious lifestyle to the human community. Literary art, as an art form which has been emancipated from truth and become indifferent to *éthos*, is evolving inevitably into, and actually always has been, an instrument of power. If words lose their original communicative abilities, they degenerate; they become alienated through a different mission, a mission which does not fall within the sphere of truth and language, but within the realm of power, control and coercion. Now, we must describe this second alienation of language in greater detail.

Language's communicative and dialogical dimension is based upon and supported by its relationship to reality; the two stand and fall as one. When language that has separated itself from reality no longer communicates — and, in this case, it is incapable of communication — the human relationship between the speaking and listening, writing and reading partners inevitably and fundamentally changes, Therefore, we can quite easily imagine wherein exactly the writer's responsibility, his blessing or his betrayal of human society, lies. If a writer is fundamentally unconcerned with the truth and therefore uninterested in communicating, but instead concerns himself only with the perfection of his writing, yet nevertheless turns to the listening and reading human community, he no longer regards this audience as a community of people. The reader, for him, is not a partner or a participant; no dialogue takes place, no conversation, no cooperation. Within this degenerated language, no communication results, no communion, no community. What emerges instead?

Plato, the father of European philosophy, spent a lifetime working on this very problem. Wherever individuals no longer communicate in accord with truth, they speak deliberately in accordance with what others want to hear. Plato used the Greek Word "*peithó*" in this context. It has been usually translated as *Schmeichelei* or "flattery", but perhaps we could convey the Platonic expression more clearly and strikingly as "language manipulation". The human being who uses this type of speech is reduced to subject matter, to object, material, and device. We do not speak with objects. We handle, shape, or use them as tools to perform a function in order to meet another objective. Thereby, the human being is no longer the aim of speaking and writing. Language that has been stripped of its communicative, personalized-dialogue dimension is alienated; it has been internally disturbed and robbed of its soul. It evolves into a disastrous and sinister device, into a method of wielding power.

Now, we must turn our attention to the modern day manifestation of language corruption and to today's betrayal of the language, today's Platonic "flattery (*peithó*)". The same, so to speak, time-spanning and "eternal" language temptation reveals itself in thousands of historical forms; it constantly disguises and redisguises itself, for its adherence to fashion and to modern form is a part of its agenda. Without a mask, it cannot enter history, and for this reason, it is extremely

difficult to expose its structural mendacity. Nearly all areas of our existential sphere are nowadays affected and occupied by the corrupted and corrupting language.

The primary, most conspicuous and familiar manifestation of language manipulation and management — even mutilation — is advertisement. We are living in a society in which everything, or nearly everything, has become, or is threatening to become, a business. The myth of technology exists purely in the conviction that everything can be produced. But that which can be made and manufactured can also be organized, ordered, purchased and sold. The language of adverting is constantly communicating — it speaks to us as well as at us — but its intention is to persuade us, to control our thoughts, desires and needs. It is aimed at something other than truth, the liberating truth. Although we must not play down this form of language corruption, we must also not regard it simply as the only demonizing form. There is as well "saying what people want to hear".

The situation immediately becomes much graver in another sphere which I shall very vaguely refer to as the entertainment industry. Here, the "flattery" itself of linguistic manipulation and the art of persuasion is offered and sold as a piece of merchandise. The entertainment industry appeals to my weak, dark and compulsive side and does so "for good reasons"; it soothes my conscience so that I may better enjoy and digest the offered products. Especially in this respect, today's consumer is very discriminating: he demands perfect merchandise; in other words, everything I read, hear and purchase must be logical, ethical and acceptable overall. The literary product itself must openly demonstrate its perfection, its essentialness and its earnestness, The writer who wishes to be successful in this demanding entertainment world must have a tremendous knowledge of psychology and sociology. He must know how to identify the appropriate time and atmosphere for selling his literary product. And, above all, he must know how to appeal to the great diversity of human instincts: not only to sensuality, vanity, and curiosity, but also to such deep and dark inclinations as cruelty, vindictiveness, hunger for new ideas, enjoyment of emotional shock, and enthusiasm for the radical as well as the definitive. In this context, we shall consider the word and the language in their broadest, but also most essential, sense as a system of signs and symbols that are capable of communication and able to convey a certain message. Not only speeches and books belong to this system, but also songs, pictures, etc. The larger, more powerful and more perfect these journalistic devices become, the larger, deeper and wider can be their beneficial — or also destructive — effects on the human community, and the greater and more burdening becomes the responsibility of the writer, of the language-using author. There is no one special zone which falls under this influence. Fate, the well-being or devastation of a society, is decided through language and words, through which truth grows, blossoms and bears fruit — or if not truth, then lie.

The risk of language corruption and the ensuing threat to sound human coexistence are not only extensive and quantitative, but also intensive and qualitative. Disguising this risk and threat also belongs to the structure of the entertainment industry and its language system. A complete falsehood is often made to look like truth. Even in the concrete case of a novel, a film, or a philosophical and theological discourse, it is often extremely difficult, if not simply impossible, to differentiate between the true illumination of truth and the deceitful manipulation of language. For this reason, the profession of literary, theater, or film critics is so demanding and critical, as well as so important. Their courageous loyalty to truth and their ability to read and to differentiate the wheat from the weeds becomes a declaration of their love for language and humankind! They are the examiners and, in a certain sense, also the judges of our language world. This world has nearly grown — and is still growing — into a monstrosity and seems like an unfathomable and entangled labyrinth. For our society, skilled and knowledgeable literary critics who courageously uphold the

truth are, especially in the present day, companions or, as I almost want to say, our language's "guardian angel". At the same time, in their courageous guardianship of the language's purity, they stand for our freedom and our entire authentic human existence. From literary critics as well as all cultural critics, we expect this contribution: to restore a name, their original names, to "things", to the humiliated, polluted, wounded and betrayed things, and clearly to differentiate between true dialogical human communication and pseudo-leadership — the misuse of power, the manipulating and flattering tyranny of the "entertainment industry" — between truth-based dependency (the obedience of and respect for good and, legitimate authority) and "serfdom".

The writer's temptation to manipulate and corrupt language becomes especially evident in the realm of "political" life. It would be nearly impossible to expect otherwise, simply because both the economic sphere with its advertisement and marketing language and the complex world of the entertainment industry with its often highly cultivated language usage are inseparable from the political reality; they are not distinct, purely autonomous areas, not extraterritorial regions. None of these areas of community life is isolated from the others by sealed, hermetic borders. Rather, they form a linguistically unified world. The philosopher Joseph Pieper, from Münster, noted:

Once journalistic language is fundamentally neutralized against the standard of truth, it becomes a specially crafted tool, waiting to be picked up by a ruler and deployed for any power objective whatsoever. But, in addition, it creates by itself and from itself an atmosphere of epidemic disease-readiness and susceptibility to tyranny.

Of course, the opposite is also true. Healthy language, anchored in the truth of matters, sets a limit for political power. This language cannot be manipulated and misused for the autocratic aims of the ruling power and therefore forms a healthy sphere of freedom and personal dignity.

Language corruption and the writer's temptation are manifested in the political arena by ideological propaganda. Even Plato knew that the "*peithó*" — the flattering art of persuasion — is sibling to the violent tyrannical exercise of power, to the "*bia*". Coercive, manipulated and manipulating words and a politically governed and controlled language inevitably evolve into an essential element of, or a necessary tool for, totalitarian or totalitarianism-inclined political power. The totalitarian ruler is, by nature, impatient as well as deeply and instinctively insecure and allergic to any power beyond their own reign or control. Above all, such a ruler is very mistrustful of the human beings, for the totalitarian ruler does not believe that they will consent voluntarily and enthusiastically to his or her power schemes. Not believing in the power of truth, such rulers must believe in force and threat, and use them to meet their objectives. Constant political instruction, ideological education and re-education, the management of human bodies and souls, and even the creation of a new type of human beings, all are objectives of totalitarian power. Unfortunately, these matters are not simply abstract scientific hypotheses; they belong to a harsh and tragic experience of our century, our day — and our Europe.

Yet, in order to satisfy the totalitarian dream and madness, to secure and promote their lies, totalitarian rulers and pharaohs also need words and language — or, in more concrete terms, the writer and the art of writing. They expect and demand from the writer a great and significant achievement: to place the realm of words and language at their disposal for political objectives — and, thereby, to help them govern completely and totally the whole of humankind. Because the threats and threatening, the force and coercion, the manipulation and management of humankind must not reveal the ruler's naked and true selves the writer and literary artist is commissioned by the pharaoh to mask this brutal and violent face of totalitarian power and, at the same time, to

convey the seriousness of this threat and force. The pharaoh demands perfect and advanced mastery of literary art: the ability to make coercion seem simple and sweet for the people under its manipulation and threats; it convinces them that at stake are actually their well-being, their true freedom, a historical necessity, the welfare of their children, and the only true future.

But we have yet to complete our definition of the entire disaster for which the enslaved writers — the literary artists who have sold themselves to the pharaoh — is partially responsible. At first, their duty lies in the complete and masterful flattering and masking of reality. Naturally, not a single surface detail shall be missing; in order to appear believable, the whole work must also give its audience the impression of perfect objectivity and the sense of being completely informed. But there is more. The perfectly planned and logically connected linguistic masking of true reality, the cunning, feigned objectivity and artificially-produced sense of being well-informed — which represent the pharaoh's greatest and ultimate wish as well as the sophistic, sold-out writer's greatest masterpiece — creates an apparent actuality, a fictitious reality that "seems so remarkably real", as Pieper put it, "that it is nearly impossible to detect how things actually stand."

Finally and worst of all — the end toward which a totally governed and manipulated society is being steered by the rulers and their sophistic language artists — is the Babylonization of human existence and community life. I have therewith voiced the final and key word. Babylon is not only a historical reality and experience; it is also a para-historical temptation and threat. Babylon is the "city of nothing", as Isaiah said, the city of prostitution, the total lie, the total manipulation of the human, of the living and the dead, of the past and the future, of thoughts and emotions. And in the Babylonized society, this is organized in such a perfect or, it is tempting to say, scientifically perfect manner that the lie becomes unfathomable. The real, genuine, undamaged world and existence have fallen so deeply into the forgotten that they are not simply unavailable to the average person, but are — and this is the worst part — nowhere to be found.

How is this Babylonization of the human community possible? The degeneration of political power and its transformation into a totalitarian and totally manipulating force are subterraneously connected and made possible only through the corruption of words, through the ideological misuse of language — or in other words, through the writer's act of betrayal.

This, we must not forget: the totalitarian Babylonian political power has always used, and still uses, charming promises, economic incentives and threats to compel the writer to corrupt and manipulate language. Babylonian rulers have few problems with so-called language puritans, confessors to the pure and absolute art of writing. In their artistic creed, we find the claim that pure, entire, free and undamaged art must be indifferent to any values that transcend the art itself, indifferent to the truth, to aesthetic standards and to religious perspectives. Alas, a language that is void of truth, or literary art that has lost its connection to transcendental values, is — for totalitarian political power — a ripe and well-formed tool that can be employed with relative ease by the enterprise of Babylon. This fundamental indifference towards truth and the fundamentally neutral stance towards other non-artistic, non-aesthetic values, propagate the values of the political powers and prepare the ground for tyranny.

Totalitarian power faces a much greater challenge with the writers who are not indifferent towards truth, towards their consciences. The creed of these writers claims that there are values and perspectives beyond the purely aesthetic ones which are equally important. The Babylonian power was able, however, to seduce some of these writers with the promise that, in their cooperation, they would find the very element in which they wholeheartedly believed: the realm of truth and freedom. At first, they accepted this promise and participated with great enthusiasm. But even these writers experienced a moment of truth, the moment in which they recognized the

great Babylonian lie. Withdrawing from their alliance with the Babylonian power, though, was very difficult The power is always the provider; it reigns over everything in its land and it can destroy a disobedient writer. We do not have to look into the past to find an example of this, nor do we have to leave Europe in order to see a dramatic, unfair and harsh battle over words, language and the writer.

What happens if the writer, in spite of all enticement and threats, says "No" to the virtually all powerful totalitarian ruler -- or if one wants to divorce oneself from the ruler after the turbulent weeks of honeymoon? What can happen if a writer no longer says what his or her provider wants to hear, no longer wants to produce and deliver lies for him? What happens if the writer sees through the total existential lie and apparent reality of the Babylonian power structure and wants to make known this distressing but also liberating experience? And what happens if one foresees a new hope at the horizon of one's creative intuition and human longing and spells out her great name, Jerusalem, the city of language and truth, of being and freedom?

Then one begins to feel the courage to speak out against the rulers and their manipulative, literature-governing bureaucracy: "In the name of realism, they have prevented us from portraying reality; in the name of youth cults, they have not allowed us to be young, and in the name of socialist joy they have strangled true human happiness from our hearts."[8] A complete discussion of this subject would be far beyond the scope of this essay. It is a great, dark and often tragic story, a tale of powerful temptation, of language corruption, of lies, and of the writer's act of betrayal — but, at the same time and above all, it is a great tale of loyalty to the extent of martyrdom, a tale of the courageous "no" to the Babylonian lie, a "no" in which a strong "yes" lives and breathes, a "Yes" to Jerusalem. Finally, it is a tale of our hope. If a cultural community has writers and artists who profess truth and freedom, it may and should have hope in spite of its political helplessness.

The realm of freedom for our speech, our writing, our artistic creation, our beliefs and for life in general requires not only a guarantee "from outside", on the part of the democratic self-establishing political order. Instead, the realm of freedom is also formed, as well as defended, "from the inside out." As I have tried to demonstrate, freedom is threatened not only "from the outside", but also "from the inside", by language corruption: by the corrupting of the character of truth and of the dialogical dimension of language. The defenders, the guardians and shepherds of the language are, more than anyone, the writers. They are partially responsible for the well-being of language and therefore for the healthy life of society. Their betrayal of language evolves into the betrayal of freedom and humankind. Writers, in an entirely fundamental and principle sense, have always been — and their charisma has a very special relevance in the present day — authors, "*auctors*". They did not make gains for Rome; in other words, they were not the commendable ones who won new provinces for the Roman Empire. Instead, they were the ones who nurtured and defended the human language in its entirety and, thereby, made gains for the empire of truth, freedom and being, "*augetur*" — not only for themselves, but for us all, for the entire human community. Even if writers must reside in Babylon in internal exile, they live through their heart and through their language in Jerusalem, in the city of being.

Notes

1. Translation by Christian and Leslie Rook.
2. Stefan George, *Poems*, trans. Carol North Valhope and Ernsit Nlorwitz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1943), p. 239.
3. J. Pieper, *Missbrauch der Sprache — Missbrauch der Macht* (Zürich, 1970, p. 18.

4. *Frontiere de la poésie* (Paris, 1936), p. 22.

5. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York, 1953), p. 3.

6. R.P. Blackmur, "The artist as hero", in: *Art New*, 1961, September, p. 20.

7. "La crise du concept de literature", in: *Nouvelle Revue française*, February, 1924.

8. J.P. Sartre, on the literary courage of the Czech author Milan Kundera.

Acknowledgments

Gratitude is expressed first to the team of Czech researchers who have developed this volume. They reflect the rich heritage of their people, the bitter lessons from the period of lost freedom and the rich endowment of such leaders as Comenius, Masaryk and Havel who light the path ahead for us all.

Miloslav Bednár has succeeded wonderfully in weaving these rich elements into an insightful and progressive whole.

Appreciation is extended as well to Vincent Shen for bringing to this task a rich cross cultural perspective.

For the work of manuscript preparation and proofreading thanks are due as well to the generous and devoted work of Nancy Graham and Hu Yeping.