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Morality: Biological, Social and Cultural Roots

Vasil Gluchman

Abstract
Morality bears certain elements connected to genetic, or biological determination to the protection and sustenance of human life on the one hand; however, on the other hand, includes a social and cultural superstructure regarding protection and sustenance of human life, which, in many situations, can even be in contradiction to our biological determination and can be the decisive point in our morality.

Keywords: sociobiology, evolution, morality, biology, culture, society

Introduction

The origin and development of morality is one of the essential issues not only in ethics, but also religion, cultural anthropology, sociology and, more and more often, biology, neurobiology or sociobiology, as well as in a vast number of other disciplines. In the past, morality was usually presented in two ways: either as a religious view interpreting the origin of morality as a divine manifestation of mercy towards man, where God gave him rules for behaviour, i.e. morality; or, as the result of the social and cultural development of mankind. From the 19th century, opinions interpreting the origin of morality in the context of evolutionary theory have been put forward more and more, searching for parallels between biological and cultural evolution. With the enormous development of biology and especially genetics in the second half of the 20th century, new efforts have been made to interpret morality as a result of natural-biological processes. Works such as those by Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Robert Wright and other representatives of sociobiology, are encompassed in this area.

Evolutionary Origin of Morality

In the presented article, I am going to try to analyse some of the multitude of most recent works and contributions on the origin of morality (and humanity as one of the core moral values) in the context of evolutionary theory. The

ideas of the author of evolutionary theory, Charles Darwin (1809–1882), are the starting point for my reasoning. According to Darwin, compassion is the keystone of social instinct[1] and it is probably enhanced by selfishness, one's experience and imitation. If we express compassion for others, we assume there is a reward out there waiting for us. According to the above opinion, compassion is one of the most important sentiments in all animals and it helps them survive in the community, which also supports natural selection. In man, an important role is also played by sense. We acquired social instincts at an early developmental stage and they instigate our actions; however, it is rather our desires and the judgment of our relatives than our instincts that determines our actions. As love, compassion and self-control are supported by our habits and an important role is also played by rational judgment, man should base his decisions regarding correct actions on the norms and requirements of society and not on temporary joy or pain (Darwin, 1874, p. 124). Hence, in Darwin's understanding, morality takes on the role of an institution for our functioning and existence in interaction with others on the one hand and a habit which we have naturally acquired in the process of our coexistence with others on the other. An important role is played by sanctions, including religious sanctions, which increases its obligatory force and enforceability.[2] Robert J. Richards claims that, according to Darwin, moral judgments are based on social instinct and their development has four stages: from proto-human, via intellectual, verbal to moral, respecting needs of others, by which man achieved a true human status and became a moral being (Richards, 1999, pp. 142–143).

Darwin presents the opinion that it is the common welfare of a community rather the common welfare of mankind which is a criterion of morality. Well-being and happiness of an individual is generally the same thing, which also means that a content and happy tribe is more successful than a miserable and unhappy one. Higher laws of morality are based on social instincts and are connected to the welfare of others. They are also supported by the acknowledgment of our fellow man and by our sense. Lower laws especially relate to ourselves (Darwin, 1874, pp. 136–139). This idea corresponds considerably with my typology of morality, or, humanity. What I call the

[1] In connection to the above subject, John McKenzie Alexander, for instance, points out that it is impossible to identify Darwin's idea of social instinct with Kant's understanding of moral law in us (Alexander, 2007, p. 21). I agree with this idea; we all have a certain idea of morality; however, it does not mean that it is identical in all of us from the viewpoint of this moral idea.

[2] John Teehan, equally, holds the view that religion can play an important role in spreading evolution mechanisms and morality by means of sanctioning moral rules and, in this way, becomes the driving force to spread moral codes enhancing cooperation and refusing cheating. Religion, in his view, not only supports moral mechanisms, but is also a strong signal for cooperation (Teehan, 2006, pp. 756–757).

natural-biological dimension of morality is, according to Darwin, lower morality and my social is his higher morality. It could be argued whether it can be called higher and lower morality; however, the nature of such classification is acceptable. Individual stages of morality development could be characterised by means of the first stage, i.e. selfishness, followed by sensible egoism, i.e. the realisation of the need for cooperation with others for the sake of mutual benefit, and altruism as a moral obligation could be the highest stage.

The need to help our fellow man, feel compassion for him and pay heed to his opinion, i.e. social instinct, served man as a primitive rule to distinguish between good and bad. With the development of mental abilities, he was more and more concerned not only with benefit, but also the happiness of his relatives, which, as a result, lead him to gradual expression of compassion for people of other races, the mentally and physically challenged and, finally, also towards animals. Thus, the level of morality increased in comparison to early stages in the history of mankind (Darwin, 1874, p. 141). I would go further than just social instincts, since I consider life as the essential value, which man had to protect and support. Based on this, social instinct then developed. Social instinct was probably preceded by the instinct for self-preservation.

It is possible that sense of morality is the most distinct and significant difference between man and higher animals (Darwin, 1874, p. 143). The question, however, arises whether whole evolution or the evolution of nature, man and society (including morality) can be considered a trial and error "experiment". It is probably possible in nature to a certain extent; however, when society and morality are concerned, this most likely is not fully valid. Jaroslav Flegr points out that it is absurd to evaluate the evolutionary strategies of organisms from an ethical viewpoint and, also, base the justification of human behaviour on evolutionary patterns of competitiveness within the species. In his opinion, in the animal kingdom, laws of ethics have no meaning and, conversely, in human society, they should always be superior to biological laws (Flegr, 2007, p. 325).

According to Darwin, our predecessors back in the old days were influenced by the praise or criticism of their fellow men. Clearly, members of the same tribe agreed with actions that they found beneficial for the common good and denounced those which they saw as bad. By being good to others – doing what I want to be done unto me – is the essence of morality (Darwin, 1874, p. 149). I hold the opinion that the Golden Rule of morality actually lies in reciprocal altruism. John Teehan considers kin selection and reciprocal altruism the founding pillars of the approach to morality (Teehan, 2006, p. 751).

Darwin came to the conclusion that although a high moral value only provides an individual and his children small, or even zero, personal advantage, it increases the number of mature people in the given tribe and such progress in the moral level of the community in question is undoubtedly an advantage to other tribes (Darwin, 1874, p. 150). In this understanding, morality is a significant factor in the evolution of man, society and especially mankind as a whole. Despite such great appreciation of the role of morality in the development of man and mankind, Darwin came to the cognition that he would rather be the young of a monkey who bravely springs to the rescue of an attacked keeper or the offspring of an old baboon who jumped among a pack of dogs to protect his young, than the child of a savage who enjoys torturing his enemies (Darwin, 1874, p. 708). That is a truly interesting metaphor prioritising virtuous actions over species affiliation. It can serve as another argument in my reasoning comparing human and animal dignity. Paraphrasing John Stuart Mill (albeit in a contrary spirit), it could be said: "It is better to be a noble animal than a ferocious man".

Current Debates on Origin of Morality

Richards claims that Darwin formulated an ethical theory of elegance, power and nobility. He holds the opinion that human behaviour, interpreted in the spirit of Darwin's theory, can meet ideals contained in the Western ethical tradition. In his opinion, Darwin believed that man is a virtuous being and morality had become the essence of his nature. He was convinced that man should respect the needs of others and approach their fulfilling selflessly. His theory, thus, stands outside of the classic British ethics of the period, which was primarily utilitarian. According to Richards, Darwin's understanding of morality is rooted in his theory of community, which is an approximation of German romanticist theories, especially Schelling's thesis stating that an absolute mind produces an individual mind, including its moral structure (Richards, 1999, pp. 144–145).

McKenzie Alexander, however, asks the question whether the pressure of evolution on morality is of a biological or cultural character (Alexander, 2007, p. 278). According to him, our moral beliefs equally relate to the history of evolution and our cultural context (Alexander, 2007, p. 291). By cultural evolution he understands changes in opinions over the course of time. These changes can result from various factors: experimentation with behaviour (cultural analogy of mutation), conscious imitation of other people's behaviours (cultural analogy of reproduction), deliberate guidance of one's own children (another cultural analogy of reproduction) or incidental change

in opinion without a significant influence on human well-being (cultural analogy of genetic drift) (Alexander, 2007, p. 19).[3]

He believes that morality offers the possibility for most people to be sufficiently satisfied throughout a major part of their lives. The structure of society determines how people function together, how they learn and what they do to meet their goals. Social structure is, thus, a significant factor influencing morality, including our moral theories (Alexander, 2007, p. vii). Moral heuristics assists us in searching for effective strategies of behaviour in the life game (Alexander, 2007, p. 275). It seems to me that here, in a way, morality itself has become the means instead of the end. It is truly questionable whether morality can be the end. It probably cannot, as we are not only concerned with respecting certain norms, rules or principles; it is, primarily, the goal for all these moral tools, or strategies, to serve as instructions for a right life, or a good life, i.e. in order to live a meaningful life. This becomes the goal or purpose and morality should foster it. Morality cannot be understood as the purpose alone. We would make it hypostatised and it would cease to be a vital force, or energy, and become a mere inanimate idol. Morality should be a living organism changing with and reflecting the development around it, responding to the changes mankind as a whole goes through, such as our cognition, experience, etc. I truly believe that morality with its principles, rules and norms is an outcome of evolutionary development and the reason it has survived is that it is a successful strategy.[4]

Richard Joyce, for instance, also holds a similar opinion on the relationship between genetic and cultural evolution. He claims that individual genetic evolution and group cultural evolution may serve as positive examples of genetic evolution not only producing highly social beings but also creating ultra-social beings also significantly influencing their genetic equipment. In this connection, we could talk about cultural-genetic co-evolution (Joyce, 2007, p. 43). He is of the opinion that "... morality came about in order to serve society" (Joyce, 2007, p. 65). I believe there is a need to point out the difference between the natural, biological, and conventional basis, or contents, of morality. This would require a distinction as to what is natural and what is conventional in the contents of morality. In contrast to Joyce, I hold the opinion that morality cannot be reduced to mere relationships to others, or to

[3] This appears to be a highly interesting analogy between biological and cultural evolution.

[4] An identical viewpoint can also be found in John Teehan, who wrote that, from an evolutionary viewpoint, morality means the ability to solve social conflicts and enables social life and cooperation. This is essential for people, as we are social beings connected to a long line of other social beings. Life in groups enabled our predecessors to better defeat the dangers and challenges of everyday life (Teehan, 2006, pp. 748–749).

the regulation of such relations; morality must also contain rules or responsibilities to ourselves. According to Joyce, an important part and task of morality is the support of social regulations, as deviations are the subject of a morally negative response from our fellow men (Joyce, 2007, p. 66). I am, however, of the opinion that this is only the secondary task or purpose of morality, since its primary purpose is protection and support of life and its development, i.e. humanity. The need for society and social relationships formed only subsequently. Frans de Waal expressed the idea in a similar way claiming that human virtuousness, as we know it, would quickly collapse if it did not place human life in the spotlight (De Waal, 1997, p. 215).

Joyce is of the opinion that chimpanzees, for instance, and other animals can have certain beliefs but these do not regard moral issues (Joyce, 2007, p. 78). This viewpoint, however, presumes conscious manipulation with moral notions, beliefs, etc. Nevertheless, I do not believe that mankind in the very beginning used moral notions, language or judgment consciously. It probably took a very long time for our great ancestors to get to such a developmental stage. Still, they behaved in certain ways before, albeit unconsciously. Does it mean we cannot, in reference to their previous development, speak of morality at all? I do not find it possible to identify morality, or the existence of certain norms regulating behaviour, with awareness and conscious behaviour based on its acceptance by society, including the upbringing of children accordingly. De Waal considers it doubtful whether other beings besides the human species can be called moral beings; on the other hand, many sentiments and mental abilities, which are the keystone of human virtuousness, developed before our species appeared on this planet. He claims that should morality as a fully developed human system cannot be found in animals, but should these human abilities be broken down into individual constituents, many of them can also be found in animals (De Waal, 1997, p. 210). Nancey Murphy even gave the opinion that she does not believe there is a possibility to explain the origination of morality without searching for its predecessor in animals (Murphy, 2006, p. 992). There is number of similar statements such as those found in Lee Dugatkin, Bruce N. Waller, etc.[5]

[5] At present, genetics, neurology, biology, zoology, ethology, etc. bring newer and newer findings about the genetic similarities between man and other members of the animal kingdom, about similarities in brain activity, behaviour and actions with many animals from the ranks of primates or mammals and not only from these. Lee Alan Dugatkin, for instance, studies relatedness, reciprocity, secondary solidarity and group selection as examples of cooperation between animals. He pointed out the ability of animals to punish each other for the breaking of existing rules (Dugatkin, 2002, pp. 459–476). In a different study he proved that animals also use imitation and that memes play a highly significant role in biological evolution (Dugatkin, 2000, pp. 67–70). Similarly, Bruce N. Waller holds the opinion that animals are able to base

A much stricter position with regard to the relationship between biological and cultural evolution is held by Jesse J. Prinz who claims that culture, above all, is the basis of morality. Culture can be the cause of morality, its consequence or the reason for it. This, then, means that culture is the source of our values. Without culture, we would have no values, including moral values. Hence, morality can be perceived as a cultural construct (Prinz, 2007, p. 185). Is morality a biological or cultural product, or is it the result of the influence of both these factors? I suppose we could even add individual psychological points. Prinz further claims that if our values are shaped under the influence of culture, support culture and serve cultural goals, they are, very probably, also shared by other people. By entering moral discourse, we become members of culture and coordinate our behaviour with that of others (Prinz, 2007, p. 185).[6]

His belief that moral values were undoubtedly influenced by historical factors, although not always rational or noble, can be accepted to a certain extent. Each moral value must be perceived as a cultural artefact with its history, which needs to be discovered (Prinz, 2007, p. 219). However, unlike McKenzie Alexander, he claims that there is a substantial difference between genes and memes. In contrast to biological evolution, beliefs are not necessarily shaped by something akin to accidental mutation. They can be shaped intentionally. It is not obvious whether the idea of replications can be applied here. Transfer of beliefs is not a matter of mechanical reproduction; it is often transferred intentionally. Cultural transfer is, many a time, horizontal as well as vertical. Cultural elements can be spread among individuals of the same generation. In cultural transfer, there is no clear equivalent for the difference between genotype and phenotype (Prinz, 2007, p. 222).

Based on that, Prinz came to the conclusion that there is no innate morality; our biological predispositions have no power over the values of cultural origin. Moral predispositions cannot be considered as moral rules

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their intentions and actions on altruistic motifs, hunger or thirst, as well as desire; likewise, people can act in this way (Waller, 1997, p. 343). Marian Stamp Dawkins claims that general emotional states of pleasantness or suffering enable animals to use various behavioural strategies to a much larger extent, which provides them with the possibility to improve their health, or fitness. By monitoring the consequences of their behaviour, they can build a complex system of answers. Emotions are, therefore, an essential condition for learning reinforcement in animals (Dawkins, 2000, pp. 883–888). Likewise, Nathan J. Emery, in his studies, points out the existence of similarities in the behaviour of mammals and birds, especially in the corvid family. He found similarities in the cognitive abilities of the members of corvid and primate lines, including similarities in manipulation with tools, social reasoning and complex memory (Emery, 2004, p. 181).

[6] However, the question arises whether the biological base of values can be completely ignored.

without being processed culturally. “Evolutionary ethics” is a myth (Prinz, 2007, pp. 245–246). Flegr, similarly, states that no evolutionary theory can justify unethical behaviour of people. In his opinion, it is not superficial analogies with natural processes to decide on what is morally acceptable and what is not, it is always ethics. Certain behaviour cannot be justified by our animal predecessors behaving in the same way. In his view, evolutionary biology can help us navigate the issues of morality and ethics by pointing out the need to subject our behaviour to ethical norms understood with our sense and not our natural instincts originating in the process of individual natural selection. Sometimes, these instincts can be in conflict with ethical principles and occasionally also with the biological needs of an individual, society or even the whole human species (Flegr, 2007, p. 511).

According to Prinz, evolution does not produce features that are the best but only good enough. Darwinian realism tries to reduce moral good to biological good, which, however, changes its nature. The notion of biological good has a different sense and meaning to moral good. Evolution does not assign morality any special status, be it positive or negative (Prinz, 2007, pp. 258–259). The question arises whether, for certain moral norms or requirements to be accepted, they must enable one to achieve the best, the maximum. Does good enough not suffice? I think it does. I agree with Prinz that the whole of morality cannot be reduced to an incidental game of genes, completely excluding free will. On the other hand, by no means do I think that there is a threat of moral and biological goods being considered identical. I assume that his argumentation line is on a different level from mine and he lacks an emphasis on the value of life. Evolution is a truly primarily natural process; however, as opposed to Prinz (and Flegr) I hold the opinion that it also has cultural implications which cannot be avoided.

It could then be speculated to what extent the origin of morality could actually be influenced by biological and social, or cultural, determinants. It is an indisputable fact that our striving to survive, to preserve ourselves and reproduce is genetically determined; thus, we also consider our struggle for survival and reproduction natural. This was only possible in a social community, since this environment created many more opportunities for achieving the given goal. In the course of development it became obvious that an individual needed a community of people to survive and reproduce because a community was able to provide better protection from enemies threatening his life and gave him many more opportunities for reproduction than in the case of his existence outside of it.

Biological and Cultural Roots of Morality

The functioning of communities, in their primary form, was based on uniting individuals with the primary goal of life protection from outside enemies. Another purpose of communities was the effort to join forces in gathering food, i.e. a better chance to survive, and a third reason was better opportunities for reproduction. Teehan points out that, if we consider on the evolution of morality, we do not mean processes regarding conscious motifs or even intentional reasoning. What we mean is cognitive and emotional predispositions, sometimes called epigenetic rules, which can lead people to altruistic actions (Teehan, 2006, p. 752). On the other hand, life in a community and the advantages it brought for an individual inevitably lead to the need to accept other members of the community, as the survival and reproduction of every single member was only possible provided the others took part in it. In connection to this, Teehan points out another aspect concerning cooperation bringing about certain disadvantages, as all must share common threats and the need to support the good of the team (Teehan, 2006, pp. 748–749).

In the book *Man and morality (Človek a morálka)*, I wrote: "The realisation of certain values being significant for maintaining the life of an individual and human community gave birth to the right to accept and protect these values, or the right for them to be fairly met" (Gluchman, 1997, p. 120). Now, I would add that this realisation does not have to be clearly formulated in order to become the stimulus for actions aimed at life protection, the striving for survival and reproduction. Genetic, or biological, necessity gave birth to the first social customs with the aim of protecting the life of a community, which was transformed into the form of moral norms regulating the behaviour of individuals in the given community and in relationship to others outside of it, who were, actually, enemies in the battle for survival and reproduction. Therefore, our morality is primarily biologically based on our effort (or the effort of our genes, as sociobiologists, new Darwinists and evolutionary ethicists claim) to survive and reproduce, which, in the course of development, has been transformed into social customs and moral norms protecting and promoting essential values concerning life, its protection and sustenance.[7] Had we stated that all our morality is only based on our

[7] To refer to a common primarily biological moral basis, Marc D. Hauser uses the term moral grammar. He holds the opinion that there are universal qualities of the human mind that overcome a range of cultural variations. In his opinion, morality should be perceived in the same way. By accepting major intercultural differences, we find out that social norms are supported by universal moral grammar, which enables every child to grow up within a narrower framework of possible moral systems. He claims that to speak of the biological perspective of

genetically, or biologically, determined striving to survive and reproduce, we would reduce the whole of morality to mere fight for life, which does not reflect reality. I consider the value of life of an innocent person the highest, although not absolute, moral value (Gluchman, 1997, pp. 117–139; Gluchman, 2013, pp. 111–130). Similarly, De Waal states that with regard to a general spread of moral systems, morality must be an inevitable part of human nature (De Waal, 1997, p. 2).

Apart from these biological aspects connected to a greater or lesser extent to life protection and sustenance, morality also contains a vast number of other social, or cultural, aspects which are at the very first sight in contradiction to the classic Darwinian struggle for survival. The protection of and aid to the weak, old, ill and helpless, the prohibition of theft, lying, cheating, adultery, the refusal of lex talionis (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth), contraception, abortion etc., all this can serve as an example that morality cannot be reduced to genetic or biological aspects. They do play a significant role and hold an important post in our morality. Nevertheless, it is mainly thanks to them having acquired an adequate social and cultural form of customs and having become part of morality that it is based on them; however, it has outgrown them considerably, as it is by means of moral norms that it regulates our moral relationships, sometimes contradictory to the conclusions resulting from our genetic, or biological, determination. Helping the ill, poor, starving, and all those in need can be used as an example of this.

This biological aspect was, thus, undoubtedly the primary source for the origination of morality and this still functions as the basis of our morality and virtuousness at present, as the main condition for any morality or virtuousness is the existence of the human species alone. The social, or cultural, aspect has gradually developed as another source of morality based on the biological and, in the course of the historical development of mankind, it has become a more dynamic source for morality than the biological aspect alone. Morality and virtuousness are predominantly social and cultural phenomena, since they are an outcome of social and cultural factors to a much larger extent than biological factors. Based on biological and social, or cultural, factors, free will and moral freedom have developed, and these can function as another source

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morality means that universal moral grammar contains abstract principles for making decisions on which actions are forbidden, allowed or compulsory. The above principles, however, lack specific content. There are no principles dictating which particular sexual, altruistic or violent actions are allowed. He points out that, in our genome, we cannot find anything determining such types of actions. It is up to every one of us and our cultural origin, what moral system we choose. Universal moral grammar is a theory of principles enabling children to build a broad, albeit, in the end, limited extent of various moral systems (Hauser, 2008, pp. 455–457).

of forming the moral character of a person, especially on an individual level, i.e. the level of virtue of an individual, with a certain impact on social and cultural aspects, including morality (depending on the level of moral maturity and the type of moral agent). Moral freedom, on an individual level, can become the most dynamic factor for forming the moral character of an individual, as the efforts of an individual for moral cultivation of his own conscience can be a decisive factor of moral maturity. Free will and moral freedom are, in their ultimate form, manifested through (social) consequences resulting from our reasoning, decision making and actions, or behaviour. Hence, consequences (and especially social consequences) are the most significant factor characterising the state of morality and virtuousness. Therefore, morality, or virtuousness, cannot be reduced to a single resource, as their functioning is the outcome of interaction between the biological, social (or cultural) and mental. Such pluralism in the approach to the perception of resources for the origination and development of morality and virtuousness enables a more complex explanation and understanding of how morality and virtuousness function than in the case of reducing them to one of these resources.

Social and Cultural (Moral) Roots of Humanity

If we tried to apply this approach to some particular manifestations of morality and moral values, such as humanity, we have to state that a vast majority of man's behaviour, usually referred to as human, concerns a biological, or natural, dimension of our behaviour, which we share with other animal species, especially mammals and primates. This concerns behaviours regarding life protection, sustenance in ourselves, our offspring, relatives, friends and acquaintances. We behave towards these people (provided we respect and support their lives, interests and objectives) essentially in the same way as the members of various animal species, especially mammals and primates. Such behaviour, in spite of being vital and desirable, is in no way an exclusively human matter; thus, it is nothing exceptional which mankind could use to justify an exceptional status in comparison to other mammals and primates. The essence of our behaviour is biological or natural. Mankind, however, has assigned it a moral value and it is disputable whether it was right. What is specifically human and not based on biological or natural, but exclusively moral predispositions, is our behaviour regarding the protection of various disabled forms of human life. This, equally, relates to the behaviour and actions towards strangers or completely unknown people, if it is aimed at protection or sustenance of their life, property, physical or mental integrity, their objectives and intentions contributing to life protection and sustenance.

What attitude should we, however, adopt towards human behaviour and actions, which, as we have concluded, have a biological-natural, and exclusively moral, or social and cultural, basis? Do we consider them inhuman or non-human? Do we consider human life, parents' care for their offspring, help to our relatives, friends and acquaintances, or even self-sacrifice for their benefit, a biological matter of course, or a mere biological-natural phenomenon having nothing in common with morality just because it occurs in the animal kingdom? How can we then differentiate such behaviour and actions from their converse forms, i.e. behaviour and actions resulting in killing, rejecting one's offspring or disinterest in one's children, using and exploiting others for our own benefit? Would this also be called a biological-natural phenomenon, for it is also found in the animal kingdom? By doing so, we would place behaviour which supports life and such that destroys it on the same level. By doing so, we would erase something essential not only for our life but for nature as such. Especially, if we claim that man, unlike most members of the animal kingdom, possesses sense, free will and conscience, as Darwin pointed out; thus, in his opinion, man has the sense of morality.

I believe that this is why we must differentiate between specific behaviour and actions of man that, although having biological-natural grounds, involve a positive moral dimension connected to human life protection and sustenance, and behaviour and actions with the same biological-natural grounds, but involve a negative moral dimension. In the animal kingdom, life protection and sustenance on the one hand and destroying or killing on the other has no moral dimension or impact. In animals, manifestations of one or the other type are natural forms of behaviour and actions and do not evoke any major reaction from representatives of the animal kingdom. The impact is only momentary and closely locally restricted. When a human community is concerned, the reaction is much broader, and, due to media, usually exceeds the local area where the action was performed, especially if such behaviour is concerned which suppresses or directly destroys human lives.

That is why I suggest that we speak of humanity in all those cases where human life is protected and sustained, as this has a positive impact on human life. To be more accurate, those cases where protection and sustenance of one's own life or those of our relatives, friends and acquaintances (biologically-naturally based humanity) is concerned with a moral dimension and impact. It stands in contrast to manifestations of life protection and sustenance in relation to strangers and unknown people, which have a true moral value of humanity and are, thus, an outcome of our cultural evolution, our moral development. This would mean we accept all positive behaviour and actions towards other people. The value of help, protection and sustenance of disabled forms of human life as well as help to, support and

protection of unknown people must especially be highlighted, as such behaviour and actions exceed our natural biological framework, or grounds, which we share with many other members of the animal kingdom. In a similar spirit, De Waal formulated the idea of altruistic actions into the metaphor of a floating pyramid, where the lifting force that keeps the pyramid afloat is given by available resources. The part above the water level stands for the extent of our moral actions (towards strangers and the unknown, as I named it). The higher the pyramid sticks out, the greater the extent of altruistic help and our commitment. Depending on what society can afford, the pyramid can reach enormous dimensions, but its basic shape remains. According to him, altruism is restricted by the weight of the load, or the commitments that man or society is able to bear (De Waal, 1997, pp. 212–214).

Hence, in the first instance, by humanity we mean specific, natural-biological characteristic behaviour typical of mankind, while, in the other instance, a moral quality is concerned, which, although it has features similar to the first one, is still different in the object of its application, or realisation. Despite understanding humanity as a natural-biological quality of man in the first instance, this perception cannot be identified with the biological conception of humanity presented by, for example, Teodor Münz. While in his understanding all man's behaviour and actions are human (Münz, 2002, p. 101), this view only considers human actions aimed at protection and sustenance of human life. Should this view of humanity not be marked by speciesism, we have to equally admit that the animal kingdom, especially mammals and primates, that this protection and sustenance of their own lives and those of their offspring, relatives and other members of their herd, flock or pack is a natural-biological quality of their species and it could be called animality equal to forms or manifestations of human behaviour, as a natural-biological, but not moral, quality typical of the human species.

To sum up, it could be stated that by humanity we understand all forms of behaviour and actions aimed at protection and sustenance, i.e. development, of human life. Taking regard to what the object of our behaviour and actions is, we distinguish humanity as a natural-biological quality and a moral quality. The moral value of the first type of actions and behaviour is determined by our biological, or social, relationships towards our relatives. In the second case, the moral value of our behaviour and actions towards strangers, or unknown people, is a pure manifestation of our virtuousness. In the first case, protection and sustenance of life is the outcome of our essential value tendencies, including moral values resulting for us. In the second case, our behaviour and actions for the benefit of strangers, or unknown people bring a surplus moral value. The basic form of humanity, therefore, lies in the protection and sustenance, i.e. development, of our own life and those of our

family members, relatives, friends and acquaintances. It is the alpha and omega of our behaviour and actions, which creates the essential natural-biological framework for our morality. This results in basic rights and duties regarding human life protection and sustenance. On the other hand, protection and sustenance of the lives of strangers and unknown people is an additional moral value, which creates a new, higher quality in our behaviour and actions towards other people. This truly concerns humanity as a moral quality, or value. It is something more, something specifically human and, in any case, worthy of respect and admiration. By such behaviour, man proves that he is able to, at least to a certain extent, exceed the natural-biological framework of his determination.

Conclusion

It could, thus, be stated that morality bears certain elements connected to genetic, or biological determination to the protection and sustenance of human life on the one hand; however, on the other hand, includes a social and cultural superstructure regarding protection and sustenance of human life, which, in many situations, can even be in contradiction to our biological determination and can be the decisive point in our morality.[8] This is how I reasoned when I wrote in the work *Man and morality (Človek a morálka)* that he bases his reasoning on man on Spinoza and Fromm, who understood man as a rational being able, by means of his own strength, exceed the limits defined by his biological nature and enforce social human nature. The activity of man, which is an inevitable condition for enforcing his social nature, is an important aspect of this process (Gluchman, 1997, pp. 15–16). This, however, does not mean the rejection or denial of our biological nature. This means that man as a moral agent (in my understanding predominantly a reflective type of a moral agent), in the process of moral reasoning, decision making and acting,

[8] Should we presume that everything regarding man is connected to life and, thus, the whole life of man is primarily a biological matter, we then have to accept that everything in the life of man (including ethics and morality) is biological in its form, as we deal with life (albeit in various forms and to various extents), especially human life. If we perceive the social aspect in the context of striving for our survival, life sustenance and reproduction, we can then consider the social aspect biological, or a form corresponding with our genetic determination. If we contemplate about a social context with such behaviour and actions of man as abortion, contraception, or suicide, then social is biological, as it concerns human life, but it is not a form of behaviour and action corresponding with our primarily genetic determination. If the social aspect is, however, understood as a mere form of the biological, this would mean a serious reduction of the social, including morality, to issues regarding our survival, life sustenance and reproduction. In spite of these issues being highly significant for man and mankind, we do not reduce our behaviour and actions to solving these issues. Therefore, I consider the social aspect in ethics and morality much broader and more significant than the biological aspect.

is able to exceed, in a positive sense, the limits given by our biological determination and carry out more than just that which results from our determination.

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Evolutionary Ethics in the Light of Extended Synthesis

Adrianna Wozniak & Stefan Konstanczak

Abstract
The program of Evolutionary Ethics (EE) is based on the assumption that our moral features constitute adaptations and as such are to be explained in terms of the evolutionary process of natural selection. However, the fundamental assumption of EE was seriously put into question: the level of analysis relevant for moral features is essentially ontogeny and culture, while the explanation using natural selection applies to the level of phylogeny and genes (Sober, 1995; Ayala, 1995; Okasha, 2009). To the discussion on the validity of the program of EE we propose to bring the recent program of Extended Synthesis (ES, Pigliucci & Muller, 2010), because it attempts to account for the role of the ontogeny in evolution. We conclude, nevertheless, that ES fails to properly account for the importance of ontogeny in evolutionary processes because by extending the notion of inheritance it (con-)fuses the notions of unit of inheritance and of unit of selection (against the well-known distinction made by Hull, 1980).

Keywords: evolutionary ethics, ontogeny, inheritance, selection

Introduction

An evolutionary explanation in the neo-Darwinian spirit is an attempt to account for a given functionally identified trait either in terms of natural selection (that is of non random, discriminating sampling) or in terms of genetic drift (that is of random, indiscriminating sampling)[1]. Such explanatory attempts typically seek to identify conditions under which the trait in question may have been favoured by natural selection and therefore to identify causal, selective processes which have led to the spread and prevalence of the feature within a given population. This explanatory strategy, offered by the evolutionary paradigm, turned out to be highly inspiring for a wide range of disciplines, including social sciences, and within it philosophy[2] and ethics. It

[1] The neo-Darwinian theory of evolution is described as a theory of forces (e.g. critically by Matthen & Ariew, 2002), where natural selection and genetic drift are considered as alternative forces, contrary to the Darwinian theory of evolution, where the two forces are considered as consecutive (Beatty, 1987).

[2] E.g. evolutionary epistemology of theories (exploring the idea of natural selection to describe the dynamics of the evolution of science, ideas and theories; evolutionary methodology, Campbell, 1974) or evolutionary epistemology of mechanisms (exploring the idea of natural

is the program of Evolutionary Ethics (hereafter EE) which will be discussed here. EE claims that we can functionally distinguish features, here labeled *moral features*, which gather a range of specific behavioral and cognitive traits; such moral features should, according to EE, be considered and analysed as any other biological adaptation, that is, as any other trait or organ resulting from the process of natural selection. The working hypothesis here is of an adaptationist kind: if moral features are there, they must have conferred some selective advantage to their bearers: «our moral sense is an adaptation helping us in the struggle for existence and reproduction, no less than hands and eyes, teeth and feet» (Ruse, 1995, p. 97; cf. also Flew, 1967). Within EE, the knowledge of our evolutionary past, as mammals and hominids, is a prerequisite for the development of scientifically grounded ethics (Wilson, 1978; Sagan & Margulis, 1995).

Both the adaptationist program itself and its relevance to ethics met with several criticisms. One of the best known regarding the adpatationist program concerned the notion of natural selection as an optimizing principle (Gould & Lewontin, 1979). Applied to ethics, this criticism addresses the question of whether a moral feature has already increased the fitness value of its bearer in its evolutionarily incipient form (moral features as adaptations) or whether the moral feature became adaptive in its evolutionarily subsequent and transformed form (moral features as exaptations; for the latter version cf. Ayala, 1995). Typically quoted objections regarding the very program of evolutionary ethics date back to the beginning of the 20th century to the famous naturalistic fallacy (Moore, 1903), pointing that from talk about what there is (a mere description of facts), we imperceptibly and illegitimately go to talk about what there ought (or ought not) to be. However, one fundamental problem for EE can be traced back to even earlier times, namely, to the very origin of the Darwinian idea of evolution by natural selection. Suprisingly, the problem was only relatively recently explicitly formulated by Sober (1995).

The problem consists in the fact that evolutionary theory fails to account for the role of learning processes/nurture in evolution. As Sober explains, cultural selection/transmission and genetic selection/transmission are two distinct processes: the first occurs faster than the second; what is more, the first cannot fully account for and is not reducible to the second: "biological selection produced the brain, but the brain has set into motion a powerful process that can counterreact the pressures of biological selection [...]; natural selection has given birth to a selection process that has floated free" (Sober, 1995, p. 158). According to Sober, culture "overrides" biology and cultural

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selection to describe the evolution of cognitive apparatus, evolutionary theory of knowledge) (Bradie, 1986).

evolution “swamps” biological evolution, whereas the latter does continue to operate, but at some other, namely genetic level (Sober, 1995, p. 158; cf. also Ayala, 1995, p. 123).

In this paper, we propose to examine Sober’s argument in the light of the recent Extended Synthesis. What the latter is we will explain in details below. Now, it is essential to note that while Sober argues that evolutionary theory fails to account for the role of the learning process/culture/nurture in evolution, Extended Synthesis’ claim is that the evolutionary theory fails to account for the role of ontogeny in general, that is of *all* developmental processes running from the egg’s fertilization to death. Let us explain where exactly the problem for EE lies once Sober’s argument is widened in that way.

Evolutionary theory is supposed to answer the question of how a trait, once it has appeared, reappears in the subsequent generation and then further in phylogeny. If the trait has a genetic basis, then the case seems a regular one: explicable by and consistent with neo-Darwinism. Yet, the neo-Darwinian paradigm fails if the trait in question *does not have any genetic basis* whatsoever, but stems entirely from ontogeny. That is why, *grosso modo*, evolutionary theory fails to account for the role of ontogeny in phylogeny. And that is why evolutionary theory could not account for ethics and moral features, because the latter certainly *canno*t be fully explained solely by the genetic make-up of individuals; on the contrary, social and cultural contributions seem, if not more, then at least equally important in the development of moral features.

It seems, however, that the program of Evolutionary Ethics could enjoy further, apparently undisturbed, development without philosophers feeling the urge, in the first place, to resolve the doubt concerning the relevance of the adaptationist stance in regard to ethics: «the question is not whether biology – specifically, our evolution – is connected with ethics, but how» (Ruse, 1995, p. 93). Yet, in this paper we argue that the doubt only took a latent form and is far from being resolved. Moreover, and most importantly, we argue that recent conceptual changes in evolutionary biology (summed up in Pigliucci, 2010) lead to a closure of the latency; the goal of the paper is therefore to determine at which point Extended Synthesis reopens the question of whether evolutionary biology can be relevant for ethics at all.

The kind of conceptual changes evolutionary biology undergoes, and why they revive the question of the relevance of the adaptationist stance in ethics

The conceptual innovations to evolutionary biology mentioned above have recently been labeled Extended Synthesis (Pigliucci, 2010, hereafter ES). ES criticizes neo-Darwinism (aka Modern Synthesis, ~1940) for reducing phenotypes to genotypes (for doing so at least de facto, e.g. in modeling, if not expressis verbis[3]) and for minimizing, therefore, the role of ontogeny in evolution. Indeed, biology was divided into developmental biology, studying the origin of variation, and evolutionary biology, studying the fate of variation (Gilbert, 2006). In Mayr's wording (1961), developmental biology was there to explore proximate causes (to describe ontogenetic processes: immediate causes at physiological and morphological level), while the task of evolutionary biology was to explore ultimate causes (to describe distal, evolutionary causation). ES consists of Evolutionary Developmental Biology (hereafter Evo-Devo) and the theory of Niche Construction (hereafter NC, cf. Day et al., 2003). Both include ontogenetic variations into the set of factors responsible for inheritance; according to Evo-Devo, it is not only genes that are heritable but also epigenetic, behavioural and symbol-based factors. The theory of Niche Construction adds the fifth element of inheritance, namely ecological factors.

Thus, in the light of this new perspective that Extended Synthesis offers, what is the scope and what are the limits of evolutionary explanations regarding ethics? First, some ethical questions are not *a priori* determined by evolutionary theory. These are questions related to the moral value of the principle of natural selection. Let us see why. The notion of natural selection is based on the reasoning that because the environment has limited carrying capacity, not all individuals of a growing population can survive to reproduce[4]. Yet, the premise that not all individuals can survive to reproduce, does not *a priori* determine whether violence or cooperation is intrinsic to the process of natural selection, or whether selfish rather than altruistic individuals win in the struggle for existence. One can observe both positions within one and the same paradigm of evolution by natural selection. Some use the notion of natural selection to support the view that selfish individuals

[3] In principle neo-Darwinism rejects the *all-or-none* position regarding the role of genes/environment in determining phenotypes.

[4] This relation, famously formulated by the British economist Thomas Malthus, between a population's size and the quantity of resources available in the environment the population occupies, inspired Darwin's idea of natural selection according to which species adapt to the environment.

behave in ways that increase their own chances of survival and reproduction (not those of others), while altruistically behaving organisms reduce their own fitness and thus are at a selective disadvantage vis-à-vis those who behave selfishly. "It is extremely doubtful whether the offspring of more sympathetic and benevolent parents, or those who were most faithful to their comrades, would be reared in greater numbers than the children of selfish and treacherous parents of the same tribe. On the contrary, the bravest, most self-sacrificial men would, on average, perish in larger numbers than other men" (Darwin, 1871, chpt V, our emphasis).[5] Others use the notion of natural selection to support an opposite conviction: there is no *a priori* reason to suppose that evolution would have favoured selfish organisms rather than altruistic ones, because the more altruistic organisms are, the higher the frequency of their genes. As game theory models have shown, mutual cooperation yields the highest evolutionary payoff: if the benefit received is larger than the cost incurred, then individuals engaged in altruistic behaviour out-reproduce those who do not (Trivers, 1971; Dawkins, 1976, 1982; Alexander, 1987). This holds for related[6] as well as for unrelated individuals. Indeed, to support the view one only needs to consider cooperative individuals as superorganisms whether individuals are related (in the case of social insects, Wilson, 1978; Dawkins, 1978, 1982) or unrelated (cf. Wilson & Sober, 1989); altruism and cooperation can even be seen as an organizing principle not only within but also across species (cf. symbiosis, e.g. Sagan & Margulis, 1995).

If no moral value is *a priori* related to evolutionary explanations, then what kind of phenomena does EE explain? Let us take the widely known example of reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971), where the latter stands for cognitive mechanisms designed through the process of natural selection to deliver benefits to others (including non-relatives) whenever such actions are reciprocated at some point in the future. The question which arises in the light

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[5] Darwin was puzzled by the phenomena of workers in social insect colonies (like ants, wasps, bees, termites, etc.): workers spend their life energy tending the larvae, constructing the nest, keeping intruders at bay, foraging for food or serving themselves as food supply, etc. Yet, workers are sterile, that is, they do not leave any offspring of their own: the value of their individual fitness is zero.

[6] As posits Hamilton's notion of inclusive fitness, according to which fitness should be measured in terms of copies of the genes of the individual and of copies of the genes of its relatives. The notion of inclusive fitness gave rise to the famous equation expressing that genes for altruistic behavior will thrive as long as $c < br$, where: c stands for the cost to the altruist in terms of the number of copies of their genes, b stands for the benefit to the recipient, and r stands for the degree of genetic relatedness. Indeed, worker ants share genetic material with their sisters bearing copies of their own genes. In terms of copies of genes transmitted to next generations, two worker sisters equal three worker daughters.

of our analysis is whether EE explains altruism at all. Doubt arises when we realise that by altruism, in the vernacular sense of the word, we understand a disinterested behaviour, actions done with the conscious intention to help others. However, the theory of reciprocal altruism does not refer to altruism as understood in everyday parlance. This is because evolutionary biology does not explain developmental processes, and therefore evolutionary ethics does not apply to the conscious level (Okasha, 2009). For instance, Okasha argues, social insects do not have conscious intentions (either for promoting their own fitness or the fitness of others).

In order to rescue the relevance of the evolutionary paradigm for the explanation of moral features (or of any other ontogenetically determined trait), one can argue, as Okasha does, that the theory of evolution does not put into question those feelings motivating us to behave altruistically (like love and friendship are genuine feelings); as Okasha's line of defense goes, the theory of evolution merely explains that having these feelings results in a higher inclusive fitness.

Note, however, that Okasha's argument can be convincing only if one implicitly[7] keeps using the dichotomy between nature/nurture. The very discussion around altruism and related questions shows that EE still uses, just as neo-Darwinism does, the dichotomy nature/nurture, or in other words genetic/ontogenetic, and finally biological/cultural evolutions (cf. e.g. Ayala, 1995, p. 123). Will Extended Synthesis bring anything new to the problem we have just sketched?

Problems within the Extended Synthesis itself

ES presents itself as an alternative to the adaptationist program (which is old enough to have changed in response to several criticisms). Even though ES revives the old debate on the potential role of ontogeny/culture/nurture in phylogeny/biology/nature, it is a recent program. Yet, for the time being at least two criticisms can be addressed in regard to ES. The first one is that although ES proposes an extended view on inheritance, it *de facto* proposes a view on evolutionary causality. We will now explain why this is so with an

[7] Implicitly or explicitly, although it seems very improbable to meet a biologist who would acknowledge that genes alone are sufficient for a trait to develop (cf. Dawkins' argument against genetic determinism and for genetic selectionism 1976, 1982), or that organisms develop without their environments (cf. the eminent neo-Darwinist Maynard-Smith, 1962: "No animal, no plant can live in the vacuum. A living organism exchanges continuously substances with its milieu. The tree absorbs water and mineral elements by its roots while it lacks water and it absorbs carbon monoxide by its leaves. A mammal absorbs water and nutritive substances in its intestine and oxygen in its lungs. Without these exchanges the life is impossible").

example often used by the theory of Niche Construction. NC claims that transformations brought by the organism to the environment modify local selective pressure and that, thus, species generate feedback loops on further evolutionary changes in their own lineage. For example, if the ability of web construction appears at generation *n* of a spider's ancestors, it generates selective pressure acting on the variation available at generation *n+1*; the ability of web construction determines the fitness values of variants appearing in subsequent generations, e.g. the ability to distinguish females from prey on the basis of web vibrations they respectively cause. We argue that this example clearly shows that postulating the existence of a parallel, ecological system of inheritance does not bring anything constructive; the issue here is a different notion of evolutionary causality, where species do not get adapted to the environment, but where species "guide" evolution by generating or re-directing the selective pressure operating at subsequent generations.

The second criticism is related to the first: by extending the notion of inheritance, ES includes ontogenetic variation into the set of factors responsible for fitness. ES claims that if heredity is a bias occurring within the offspring generation that maintains and ensures the fitness of the parental generation, then heredity depends not on the replication of the gene alone, but on the reappearance of all the factors that contribute to the fitness of the parental generation. By this claim, ES fuses the notions of unit of inheritance and of unit of selection (the well known distinction made by Hull, 1980). ES takes what Lewontin (1970) defined as the unit of selection (in Hull's parlance: interactor), for the unit of inheritance (in Hull's parlance: replicator). It seems that this conceptual fusion can lead, rather, to confusion (cf. the exchange 2004 between Dawkins and Evo-Devo proponents).

Concluding remarks

The validity of the program of Evolutionary Ethics relies on the relevance of evolutionary theory to explain ontogenetically determined features, which is how we typically understand moral features. In the introduction we have listed some fundamental criticisms targeting both the adaptationist program and the idea of applying it to ethics. The weak point of the EE program lies in the premise that evolution explains biological/genetic features, while many traits originate in culture/ontogeny, so that their reliable reocurrence across generations requires the reoccurrence of these cultural/ontogenetic factors. Extended Synthesis' attempt to reconcile culture to biological processes without recourse to Lamarckian-like concepts of inheritance, is certainly not new (cf. Baldwin, 1896), but is still very much needed. Extended Synthesis' conceptual strategy to account for non biological evolution is to extend the

notion of inheritance so that it covers all factors contributing to the reliable and cross-generational development of features.

On the grounds of Evolutionary Ethics, the extended notion of inheritance does not seem to solve anything. Sober's point was that evolutionary theory already fails to account for culturally determined features, such as moral features (1995). He already argued that proximate causes bear features of ultimate causes, because they «guide» evolution, by co-generating selective pressure. Sober explicitly argues that the brain and its products (like culture) do not play the role of a passive, proximate mechanism (Sober, 1995, p. 158) and that "culture is often a more powerful determiner of change than biological evolution" (Sober, 1995, p. 155). Sober already considered that culture "overrides" biology, and that cultural evolution "swamps" biological evolution, whereas the latter does continue to operate, but at some other, genetic level (Sober, 1995, p. 158; cf. also Ayala, 1995, p. 123). Sober's goal, however, was to pinpoint a serious difficulty that the above implies for EE; by keeping the dichotomy between ontogenetic/genetic evolution ES does not seem to bring any solution to the difficulty whatsoever. In addition, as we have shown in the section Problems within Extended Synthesis itself, ES deepens the nature/nurture dichotomy by misusing the concepts of unit of inheritance and of unit of selection.

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The Value of Life

Petr Jemelka

Abstract
The topic of this short essay is the basic axiological question (the value of life) and its reflections from biological level (definition of life) to the applications in philosophy and ethics (esp. bioethics and environmental ethics). We embrace life as an independent value, existing through its own realization. This text is an attempt to find a way to span the difference between the biocentric and anthropocentric ethical approach.

Keywords: life, value, bioethics, environmental ethics, philosophy

Life is and always has been a boundless topic for philosophy and science. Everyone who has received the traditional and standard form of philosophical education obviously generally associates the term "life" with human life. The dominant philosophical (and ethical) tradition has thus truly acceded to this question.[1] The existence of other living creatures has often been pushed somewhat to the sidelines – either as a result of thematic accents conditioned by the times, or wholly intentionally.

Of course, certain exceptions to this traditional approach may be acknowledged. It should be noted that in the philosophical tradition we can see a broader view, which does not merely involve a purely anthropological perspective (e.g. A. Schopenhauer, but also the pragmatist C.S. Peirce or the positivist H. Spencer).[2] One definite genius behind this change in viewpoint was undoubtedly F. Nietzsche. All his efforts to reassess values (and his

[1] One typical example is existentialism.

[2] In relation to this we should add that in "retrogression", some aspects of the philosophy of life (a certain hylomorphism of vitalism, the organicism of holism, the cosmic dimension of pantheistic tendencies) have actually reinforced anthropism. These have become linked with the teleological point of view and a focus on the final interpretation of history and the world (the universe). Of course, the philosophy of life has also been a major source of inspiration behind the paradigmatic metamorphosis of the natural sciences in the 19th century. Specifically, in the life sciences (in biology), this has meant a divergence from the abstracting disassociation of living beings from the context of the environment (the emergence of evolutionism and ecology). Ultimately this has resulted in a shift from speculation in this field of science, too (just as modern philosophy is characterized by a distaste for metaphysical speculation – something that vitalists, positivists and phenomenonologists all agree on).

associated concept of the Superman) were based on the notion that only the animal way of existence can be authentic, pure and good. Ultimately, therefore, Nietzsche wanted to resolve (change) human affairs by a return not to oppression, but to the advocacy of human naturalism as animalism (including brutality).

Another (and nowadays perhaps even more inspiring) approach was that of vitalism (neovitalism – H. Bergson, H. Driesch), which attempts to change the ontological interpretation of the phenomenon of life (from a substantial to a processual concept). Here, life is a universal event which involves us all. This approach can serve as a certain incentive for the following considerations, even though we do not consider the espousal of vitalism to be meaningful (particularly for epistemological reasons).

Let us now shift towards an axiological point of view[3] and try to outline possible answers to the question of where the *value of life* lies. Or, better still; let's look for the answer to the question of why life can be considered one of the most crucial values.

This modest difference in phrasing is a reflection of the fundamental difference between the substantial and processual approaches to the question of life and also provides a certain degree of ethical inspiration. The contemporaneous argument about bioethical and environmentally ethical problems now evidently goes beyond the *axiomatic* form of key initial theses such as "life is the paramount value" or "life is one of the paramount values" – a formulation for which there is no clear justification. Ethical maxims derived from this axiom lack real cogency, which is particularly apparent from the viewpoint of the aforementioned (relatively new) bioethical discourse.

It is this discourse which above all others complicates the original (traditional) anthropocentric perspective. Nowadays, if we want to answer the question of why we consider *life* as a value (in fact, one of the highest values), it will evidently be appropriate to consider the phenomenon of life in a broader sense, and not merely as a form of human existence. This is obviously nothing new nowadays. It will perhaps not be a mistake if the following interpretation is not an account of the existing variations of this ethic/ethos (from anthropocentrism to bio- or ecocentrism). We will try to take a somewhat different viewpoint of the question of the value of life.

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[3] See also Muraca's reflection on the central role of axiology in environmental ethics (Muraca, 2011, pp. 381–391).

Let us begin with the following "naive" question: What is value? What do we mean when we talk about values, value scales, value orientation, etc.? Here we can perhaps say that value is what is (or becomes) important for someone. These are things, objects, but also ideas, thoughts, inventions, which are of significance for a certain subject (they are perceived as desirable, important). At the same time they also make *sense* (they are understandable, transmissible, communicable) – they are therefore potentially shared by more than one subject (over time).

It is clear that the process of assessment is closely associated with cognition. However, it is not completely identical to it (as assumed by, for example, the positivistic version of axiology). In the assessment process cognition is linked with activity, with action, with intentionality and striving for value; it is not reflection, but empowerment and signification.[4]

This clearly brings us to the crucial question of the actual ontic status of values. In the history of thoughts on this problem we can see two alternative answers. The first is the objectivist approach (more or less based on Plato); the second is a theory relating to the status of values as regards the activities/actions of a subject.

This dichotomy may then be manifested, for example, in heteronomous and autonomous versions of the interpretation of morals. In general it is this aspect of values which predicates the autonomy of the subject in a particular philosophical (ethical) concept. The subject (as we have already mentioned) is usually understood to mean *man*; however, we should not overlook the general definition of this category, which is based on the embodiment of activity.

* * *

It would not evidently be appropriate to explore the current definition of the phenomenon of life in order to reveal tendencies enabling us to comprehend it in a more apposite manner (i.e. as non-speculatively as possible). However, we face a problem right from the start. We intuitively know what *life* is (after all, we are all alive). However, it is evidently difficult for the science of living to give a more specific definition. The existing definitions of life thus primarily reflect the contemporaneous factographic and interpretative level (Ruiz-Mirazo et al., 2004). In many cases, however they are merely tautologies (*life is the form in which living organisms exist*) and offer nothing in practical terms (*life is the absence of death*). Attempts to define life most commonly take the form of lists (a list of the different types

[4] It is otherwise pointed out by Richard Rorty (Rorty, 1979).

of living organisms or, even more often, attempts to list their characteristics). Sometimes efforts to define life take recourse in the application of other disciplines of science (physics, chemistry, system theory, information science, cybernetics, and now also semantics).

Here it is appropriate to draw attention to the suitability of accepting the general methodological need for a systemic approach, which incorporates the dimensions of structure, function, and development. This leads us to favour the following definition (F. J. Varela): "... a physical system is alive if it is capable of transforming a flux of external matter and energy into an internal flux of self-maintenance and self-reproduction" (Barbieri, 2003, p. 28).[5] A more accessible formulation is this: "Not only must a body be capable of repairing itself when something breaks down, but it must be repairing itself all the time, it must always be demolishing and rebuilding its own structures, i.e. it must be capable of *permanent self-production,* or *autopoiesis*" (Barbieri, 2003, p. 28).[6] What is now important for us is that this means of defining life expands on the aforementioned need for a systematic approach by adding the context of conditions.[7] Based on this we can make a further interpretation.

Most of all we should concede that every living organism exists *contextually* – within a certain environment with which it is permanently confronted. It is therefore actively forced to reflect on the conditions in which it lives (while it is always only able to tolerate a certain range of such conditions – so-called ecological quantivalence).

This active reflection on its conditions is a necessary prerequisite for its integrity. It is the prerequisite and manifestation of the living entity's resistance to disruptive forces, to disintegration, to "dissolution" in its environment (this is *death* in the most ultimate sense of the word – therefore the idea of death does not need to be so awful).

Organisms are therefore partially restricted in respect to their environment, although at the same time they are part of that environment – through very intimate ties. They are "flowing," and are not constituted by anything that does not originate in their environment. Through the creative (autopoietic) activity of living organisms this environment is constantly incorporated into

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[5] For the full version of Varela's definition, cf. Appendix (Barbieri, 2003, p. 262; primarily in Rizzotti, 1996, p. 149).

[6] F. J. Varela is the co-creator (with H. Maturana) of the concept of autopoiesis (cf. Maturana and Varela, 1973; Varela, 1994).

[7] "A living being is a being which is able to sustain itself by constant regeneration of body parts and whose persistence consists in the constituation of an organized body through constant meteorological change taking place across a stable body boundary" (Schark, 2012, p. 28).

the living system and that which are returned are metabolic products, thermal radiation, sounds, and other signals.

Therefore, we can say that life is associated with the permanent assessment of stimuli – internal and external information. Life is a reaction to what we recognise (from the macromolecular activity of enzymes to cellular, tissue and organ functions, the behaviour of the individual, modification, and species adaptation). Onto- and phylogenesis can thus be understood as an individual form of the processes of discovery and assessment, which serve to preserve life in the individual and general (generic) sense of the word.

In this broad view, assessment is not merely an exclusively human form of awareness or relationship to facts. In a certain more or less elementary form, assessment relates to every living entity as a manifestation and as a means of striving to preserve integrity, to preserve *life*. Life is therefore also a value "from below." Of course, we are well aware that it would be neither appropriate nor beneficial to get bogged down in a naturalistic reduction of our view of the phenomenon of life. Life (and therefore also assessment) is bound to *needs* at a whole range of levels (from the elementary biological level to the socio-cultural level, from generic constant levels to individually variable levels) – it thus takes on various qualitative levels, determined both generically and individually.

Our sole intention here was to show that for every living creature life is a value which it strives to maintain fully and permanently, even though that creature does not in itself possess awareness.[8] This means that every living creature in some way plays a part in the *signification of the world.* From this perspective, therefore, life is not gravitation towards an external static value, but is in itself the value, which is constantly replenished – by living. From this perspective it is truly a universal (super-human) value. In our approach, therefore, this is another definition of *life as a value* - neither as a *gift*, nor as of importance solely to human interests. We embrace life as an independent value, consisting in life itself and only existing through its own concretization.

In relative terms, man only differs in one respect, in that he is aware of his existence (including an awareness of his own individual finality). It is from this fact that his efforts to volitionally overcome biological and social determination are based. The human form of the realization of the value of life adds to this elementary (biological) level by self-projection into existence (being), by a conscious effort to fill that existence with sense and meaning, intentionality – an effort to go beyond what is given. It also incorporates the desire to leave a trace, to pass on something of oneself and one's values – not

[8] This was noted by Arthur Schopenhauer; however, his interpretation was negative and pessimistic (a perpetual source of suffering).

merely in the form of genes. This attempt is the source of culture as a specifically human generic characteristic.

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The thoughts outlined above were motivated by an effort to further consider the issue of environmental ethics (or bioethics).[9] It was particularly an attempt to find a way to span the excessively marked difference between the bio-centric and anthropocentric approach. This results in a variety of hierarchizing interpretations of life, which are, however, immensely speculative.

It was our intention to supplement the more or less abstract arguments of environmental ethics with more specific ideas – including the definition of the pivotal value. Through the difference between the anthropocentric and bio-centric ethical line this is an attempt to offer grounds for argument which are not content with mere axioms, but which strive to give reasons for *why* life is a value. In this attempt there is perhaps a way to making ethics more optimistic and also therefore to answer the question of whether or not these days ethics has any sense, value and significance (Samuelsson, 2010; Carter, 2011).

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[9] In the broader sense of the word we consider bioethics to be a concept which also encompasses environmental ethics.

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Patient–Doctor Relations in Antoni Kępiński's Axiological Psychiatry

Aleksandra Bulaczek

Abstract
The author of the article helps to understand the patient-doctor relation in the light of axiological psychiatry developed by the Polish psychiatrist, Antoni Kępiński (1918–1972). Kępiński was a doctor who, with great dedication and reverence, fulfilled his duties towards patients. First of all, he paid special attention to the uniqueness and specificity of the level of contact between a doctor and a patient and pointed out its friendly character. The article also introduces the sources of the axiological psychiatry developed by Kępiński, which can be found in the philosophy of dialogue. In the light of the Cracow psychiatrist's work, one can notice that his philosophical anthropology was saturated with the influence of dialogue thought. According to Kępiński, only a specific kind of emotional relationship based on empathy and trust can be the key to complete knowledge of a man fighting with mental illnesses.

Keywords: Antoni Kępiński, patient-doctor relation, axiological psychiatry, philosophy of dialogue

Antoni Kępiński (1918–1972) was one of the most interesting figures in the history of Polish psychiatry. He became famous not only as a distinguished doctor, but also as a sensitive humanist entering in his books fundamental questions of philosophy of man, such as the meaning of life, the experience of suffering and fear. Besides his intensive work in the Psychiatric Clinic of Collegium Medicum in Cracow, Kępiński kept in touch with many prominent representatives of Polish philosophy. First of all, he highly valued and repeatedly emphasised the precision and clarity of thought of the phenomenologist Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) who contributed to ontology and aesthetics. Kępiński was particularly close to Ingarden's version of phenomenology, and categories of empathy seemed to be the key to complete knowledge of men with mental illnesses. It is worth mentioning that category of empathy was a popular topic among 19th-century philosophers and psychologists, but, first of all, it aroused particular interest among phenomenologists such as Husserl and Scheler. One of the earliest followers of Husserl and his first assistant in Freiburg, Edith Stein, analysed category of empathy in her doctoral dissertation entitled *On the problem of empathy*. In her doctoral thesis, she defined empathy as someone else's experience of consciousness in general. According to Stein, empathy is defined as an act in

which foreign experience is comprehended. Moreover, she described empathy as how human beings comprehend the psychic life of another man.

Category of empathy was a specific kind of emotional relationship which Kępiński applied during his therapeutic meetings. It was a great way to get to know another man which is found in philosophical phenomenology. That is why the most popular Polish philosopher and Catholic thinker, Józef Tischner (1931–2000), used to say that Kępiński knew about man more than Freud, Heidegger and Lévinas combined.

Certainly, Antoni Kępiński was a doctor who fulfilled his duties towards patients with great dedication and reverence. First of all, he paid special attention to the uniqueness and specificity of the level of contact between a doctor and a patient and pointed out its friendly character. But even though care for patients took most of his time, he was also committed to scientific studies—in his books he commented on the meaning and value of life, nature of humanity, thereby becoming a philosopher. Nowadays, the heartless and instrumental treatment of patients is criticised, and deeply humane treatment of patients by the Cracovian psychiatrist should be perceived as worthy of imitation. That is why we analyse the motif of the relationship between the doctor and the patient with respect to the axiological psychiatry developed by Kępiński. We also highlight the philosophical inspirations of this Cracovian psychiatrist, where the main focus was the dialogical position.

Axiological psychiatry

In the light of the Kępiński's works we can notice that his philosophical anthropology was influenced by dialogical thought. It is evident mostly is his descriptions of relations between a doctor and a patient. Accepting respect and love for another man and making it a fundamental moral obligation pushed Kępiński into the consideration that the relationship between a doctor and a patient is one of the most beautiful interpersonal relations, where interaction between subjects is based on the notion of equal partnership and dialogue. Only a special kind of emotional relationship based on empathy could be the key to a full comprehension of the nature of another human being, especially if he/she is struggling with mental illness, an experience beyond normal human understanding and perception. Kępiński was surely a perfect example of Tischnerian "agathological man", a man who is facing another person, capable of reciprocity, for whom the most important thing is being-for-another and being-with-another, who is sensitive to the possibility of evil and who is directed towards good. Tischner argues that good embedded into human nature can only be manifested when it is shared with another person. Certainly, Kępiński's stance was a perfect example confirming the words of the author of *Philosophy of drama*.

Similarly to Tischner, Kępiński's consideration of human fate always had consoling character, showing the way of internal and interpersonal order, based upon hope and love. In one of the articles dedicated to the Professor we read: "[...] hope, hope in general, is the ability to understand good and expectations for it, and appears to be, from Kępiński's point of view, one of the most essential factors of mental health; loss of ability to feel hope is the first sign of mental illness" (Michalski, 2010, p. 226).

Kępiński's understanding of the category of hope can be pictured using the example of neurotic fear. In psychiatric practice, fear is a central issue, because it is a basic element of almost all disease syndromes. The symptom of emotional disorder, which is connected to taking strong medications, is a feeling of closely indeterminate anxiety when it comes to the future. In brief, for a patient struggling with fear, future time has a destructive character: the sufferer does not have the courage to force his way through the darkness of the future, becoming helpless before the dark of the unknown. This man is unsure of the surrounding world. He does not know what will become of him tomorrow, what the new day will bring. Vagueness of the future increases the anxious, tense state, intensive unrest and dread. The future frightens, becomes black and, from its darkness, "emerge monsters of death and catastrophe". The future does not bring hope, only uncertainty and doubt. "Man"—as wrote Tischner—"instead of walking down his road feels obligated to find the hideout in the space. In his hideout he protects himself from the world and from others. The future does not promise him anything special, the memory of the past shows only his failures, space does not invite him to make a move" (Tischner, 1989, p. 471). Therefore, loss of hope is one of the fundamental symptoms of anxiety. That is why, in psychotherapy, the important thing is to restore in the patient the belief in recovery, overcoming fear and faith in a better tomorrow. The psychiatrist has, therefore, the responsibility to minimise the indeterminate anxiety of the patient through the restoration of hope, that he will overcome a chaotic and unknown future, and not to be defeated by it. To be able to give hope to the patient, the doctor must firmly believe that he can cure sickness. Kępiński wrote: "Against all obvious facts, doctor must have at least a spark of hope till the end. Deprivation of hope, taking a pessimistic stance is usually quickly felt by the patient and it comes down to a mental and physical breakdown. The doctor must also believe in his skills and the methods that he uses" (Kępiński, 1987, p. 314). Elsewhere, Kępiński writes: "The sick can read a death sentence for him from a doctor's face, therefore the doctor must not lose hope" (Kępiński, 1992, p. 114).

Next to the doctor's flowing faith in the victory against illness, an important factor in fighting against mental illnesses is a proper emotional attitude towards the patient. Kępiński used to say that the best medicine for a

patient is the doctor himself, his heart-warming words, and his attitude of love. "Love—as wrote Kępiński—is one of the strongest antidotes for the feeling of fear, that is why it plays a very important role in relations between a patient, a doctor and a nurse" (Kępiński, 1987, p. 315). In *Psychopatologia nerwic* (*Psychopathology of neurosis*) the Cracovian psychiatrist writes: "What psychiatrists and psychiatric personnel can give to a patient is understanding and a bit of heart. Maybe it sounds mawkish, but nevertheless it is the truth. [...] All methods can prove fallible if the essential attitude to the patient is inappropriate" (Kępiński, 1972a, p. 254).

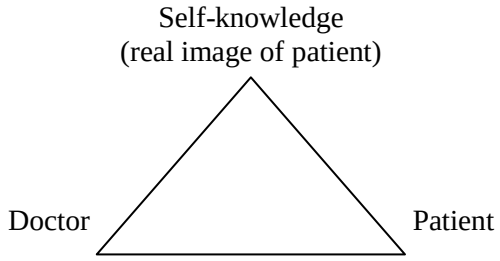
Without a doubt Kępiński propagated the rule of dialogue and opted for a horizontal surface to interpersonal contact. Tischner writes about Me-You relations whereas Kępiński, because of the character of his profession, put this relationship into the model of doctor-patient. "What attitude doctors have towards patients—writes Kępiński—can be easily recognised through their way of talking to them and about them" (Kępiński, 1972, p. 254). The so called horizontal surface of interpersonal contact, which was mentioned earlier, is nothing more than a kind of dialogistic stance, the source of which is in the observation that another human (You) has the same axiological foundations as Me, so thanks to that special form equality between subjects becomes reality. However, it is not easy to maintain this kind of horizontal relationship. As the Cracovian psychiatrist remarked: "Humans, as any other animal, have the tendency to rise above anything else; to be more important than others, to have better social standings in groups; with that he has more chances to have better conditions to live, to find a better mate. Both fundamental biological laws are engaged in a tendency to extol" (Kępiński, 1972, p. 264). It can be said that the horizontal surface of contact is not something easy to develop, because the laws of nature are not always in favour of its creation and preservation. The opposition of a horizontal surface of contact is a curved surface, in which the objectification of participants in dialogue happens. "In the curved surface—writes Kępiński—another person becomes an object, because when we are higher than someone else, we can control him to some extent, he relies on us" (Kępiński, 1972, p. 265). Furthermore, Kępiński states: "It is not difficult to feel above a mental patient, especially one with a serious mental illness, one whose abnormalities excluded him from society. Even the most humane psychiatrist, sometimes thinks that he is better than his patient. It is of course self-pleasing, but at the same time it automatically changes the surface from horizontal to curved. In a sense, patients become worse and doctors become better. Watching from above, it is easier to judge, to condemn, to correct, to adjust, to manipulate, etc. It is also a pseudoscientific attitude, where everything is known about a person; it is easy to classify and predict his/her behavior, everything becomes

clear, because it matches with descriptions in books" (Kępiński, 1972, pp. 264–265). Kępiński however pointed out that the patient can place himself on the curved surface with relation to the doctor. Here we encounter a phenomenon called "regression to childhood": patients often have the need and will to return to dependence and a feeling of security. According to him, such a regression can only be guaranteed by the doctor. A man with an illness tries to find the doctor's protection, help and trust. Very often he becomes like a little kid trying to search for support and understanding in a person who can be his surrogate family. "Not seldom—writes Kępiński—a patient calls his doctor "father" and it is the most beautiful honor for him" (Kępiński, 1972a, p. 265).

In his clinic, Kępiński put into practice the fundamental postulates of medical ethics, which relied on a general obligation to kindness and active striving for another person's good. That being said, he was not interested in codified medical deontology, but deontology without a strict rule book and any constraints, which emphasised freedom and trust for another. Kępiński believed in the potential moral strength of the doctor as someone blessed with natural moral order. Moreover, he was fully aware that too much codification can change a *moral person* into *legal person*. Kępiński's deontology is characterised by ethical rigorism, evident from the claim that the doctor is the only one who takes moral responsibility for his actions and no one can take this responsibility away. This strict deontology served for the good of the patient, who in the eyes of the doctor should be of the highest value. "In the psychiatrist's hierarchy of value—writes Kępiński—the most important thing is to help those people that are struggling with psychological suffering, when he meets them in the professional area" (Kępiński, 1988, p. 8). The Professor accepted Kant's imperative forbidding treating people like objects, and stressed that man is an absolute value. Kantian rigorism thus has a particular appeal for Kępiński. The categorical imperative — "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction" (Kant, 2005, p. 48) moved Kępiński with its clarity and humanism. That is how the fundamental moral law of Kant's ethics became—next to the commandment of love for another—the main moral norm, which Kępiński complied with in his private life as in his profession.

During the meetings with patients Kępiński often employed the following image of a "therapeutic triangle": "Let us create a triangle. Our mutual contact will be its base, me with you, the top will be you, because we will talk about you, as if painting your portrait". It can be said that the top of the "therapeutic triangle" was a real image of the patient that was created on the basis of self-knowledge and self-reflexivity.

The model of the "therapeutic triangle" can be described as follows:



This kind of approach in psychotherapeutic practice led the patient to a correct sense of values, because it helped him to experience values properly, to give him a meaning to life and to give him hope to reclaim his sense of reality. To make things easier for the patient, the doctor—according to Kępiński—should be a heroic figure, who believes in his wisdom and the effectiveness of his therapy. The patient, who senses this kind of heroism in the doctor, involuntarily finds something similar in himself and the strength to fight with an illness. This attitude from both sides resulted in mutual involvement and in creating a unique bond based on trust.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of epistemological stipulations of the Cracovian psychiatrist implies that the most valuable thing about understanding another human, for Kępiński, is intuitive-emotional cognition. This type of cognition allowed insight into the interior of another human being and experience of his consciousness. "Empathy" lets a doctor penetrate the emotional world of the patient and to understand its contents. This intuitive-emotional cognition became the backbone of axiological psychiatry. Although Kępiński underlined the inscrutability of the interior of human being; nevertheless, he used to say that comprehension of another human being is always a fascinating journey into the most secret state: the soul of another man.

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'*Non-finito*' Sculpture Technique and Codes of Ethics

Ender Büyüközkara

Abstract
Capable of being otherwise, human actions are in the field of variability and probability, not of constancy and necessity. Therefore it is not possible to find any fixed and complete set of moral rules and ethical principles, in accordance with which one can act morally. All those kinds of rules and principles are disputable – theoretically at least, and every new circumstance encountered in life requires a new deliberation and practical reasoning for deciding what is to be done, so that the decisions taken are not unquestionable either. Nevertheless, this situation does not preclude attempts to set moral rules and ethical principles as guidelines leading actions, behaviours, and conducts; it is a matter of fact that the history of humanity is full of numerous examples of such attempts. Codes of ethics, which play a key role in professional ethics, can be regarded as reflections on the aforementioned general rules and principles in professional life. From this aspect, they also seem disputable and questionable, and they cannot offer a complete prescription fulfilling all the necessary requirements either, yet they fill a great gap in finding solutions to problems that occur in various forms of professional life. Another similarity between codes of ethics, and general moral rules and ethical principles, is that they are all based on an account of humanity and morals; especially, it is impossible to establish a normative ethical theory or to write a worthwhile code of ethics without any philosophical account of humanity and morals. This paper attempts to offer such an account through a philosophical interpretation of '*non-finito*' sculpture technique and thus to provide a philosophical foundation for any codes of ethics.

Keywords: professional ethics, codes of ethics, '*Non-finito*' sculpture technique, Michelangelo, perfectness, intermediate being

Introduction

Our lives, full of choices and actions, contain limitless probabilities and possibilities. Every time we choose one alternative from many, we shape our lives; it means that the paths we choose are nothing more than the preferences that can easily be otherwise.

An impressive example of this situation is found in Jean-Paul Sartre's conference text *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*. Here, he mentions a student of his who seeks him out in adversity (Sartre, 2007, pp. 30-31): The student's older brother is killed in the German offensive of 1940, and he has a wish to avenge him. To compound matters, his father breaks up with his mother, and she has no one except her son. Consequently, he has to make a decision between two alternatives: staying by his mother's side or going to

England to join the Free French Forces in the hope of taking revenge for his brother … Let us try to speculate about what he might have done in the face of this ethical dilemma. He might have remained by his mother's side, or he might have joined the Free French Forces, leaving his mother alone or finding someone else to look after her, or, even, he might have committed suicide without being able to cope with this adversity. Whatever decision he made, it is obvious that what he chose could be otherwise, for the plurality of alternatives lead to the possibility of choices and actions being otherwise.

As a result of this situation, choices and actions reside in the field of variability and probability, not of constancy and necessity. Another argument in favour of this claim can be found in the differences between the moral values of the actions which seem to be identical at first. To give an example, let us compare two fictional theft cases as follows: Mr Thief is a healthy person who is able to work, but he never looks for a job and earns his living by stealing, seeing it as the easiest way of making money. As for Mr Hungry, he is a hearing-impaired person who cannot find any job, although he is always looking, and having spent all of his family inheritance, one day he steals a piece of bread due to hunger. Now, for sure, the usual activity of Mr Thief and the *ad hoc* action of Mr Hungry are both theft. However, it is equally clear that the moral values of these actions cannot be regarded as the same, for the conditions effecting the actions, such as the character of the agent, his intentions, the efficient cause of action, and its end, are quite different in each case. As seen in this example, finding a certain classification of actions, according to which the moral values of the actions can be determined, should not be expected. Rather, what we have is just a world of variables and probabilities dependant on conditions.

From what has been said so far, it is obvious that it is not possible to find any fixed and complete set of moral rules and ethical principles, by means of which one can distinguish good and evil under all circumstances. Because of the uncertainty in the nature of human actions, all those kinds of rules and principles are disputable and questionable, and every new circumstance requires a new deliberation and practical reasoning for deciding is to be done, that the decisions taken are not unquestionable either. In other words, ethical universality is nothing more than an unattainable and unreachable ideal. Nevertheless, it does not mean that we are doomed to live in a world of absolute relativity, where everyone, being ruled by selfish desires, might try to do whatever he or she wants. On the contrary, throughout history, there have always been attempts to set general moral rules and ethical principles, which are mostly society, religion or philosophy based, as guidelines leading actions, behaviours, and conducts.

Codes of ethics, which play a key role in professional ethics, can be

regarded as reflections of aforementioned general rules and principles in professional life. From this aspect, they also seem disputable and questionable, and they cannot offer a complete prescription fulfilling all the necessary requirements either, yet they fill a great gap in finding solutions to problems that occur in various forms of professional life.

Another similarity between codes of ethics and general moral rules and ethical principles is that they all are based on an account of humanity and morals; especially, it is impossible to establish a normative ethical theory or to write a worthwhile code of ethics without any philosophical account of humanity and morals.

In the rest of this paper, I shall try to offer such an account through a philosophical interpretation of '*non-finito*' sculpture technique and thus to provide a philosophical foundation for any codes of ethics.

A Philosophical Interpretation of '*Non-finito*' Sculpture Technique

The lyrics of the song *One of Us* written by Eric Bazilian and originally released by Joan Osborne opens with the following question: 'If God had a name, what would it be?' If this question was to be answered, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the upmost alternatives would be 'the Perfect' because the state of absolute perfectness is already comprehended in the concept of God.

Obviously, from this point of view, it can be stated that nothing, except God, can be qualified as perfect in the strict sense of the word; all the other uses of the term, such as 'perfect car', 'perfect house' or 'perfect wife', bear a solely metaphoric meaning. Yet there is something special in the case of human beings. Religiously speaking, it is only and solely human beings whose essence is directly connected with God. It reads in the *Torah*: 'And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them' (Genesis 1:27), and similarly in the *Qur'an*: 'Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His Spirit and made for you hearing and sight and hearts; little do you thank' (As-Sajdah, 32:9). This direct link to God provides man with a privileged position among the other existents, and with the opportunity of resembling 'the Perfect' by using the faculty of thinking, i.e. *nous*, because it is what the human soul participates in in God's own image, His Spirit. As Aristotle states in his *Peri zōiōn geneseōs*, only *nous* enters the body from outside and only it is divine (Aristotle, 1958; Bekker, 1831, 736^{b} 27-28). Be that as it may, no matter how close the resemblance is, it is impossible to reach to the level of perfectness.

A similar conclusion can also be derived from a scientific explanation of the subject matter. As far as it can be known, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, namely

modern *Homo sapiens* are the last links in the chain of evolution. Having reached the peak of the faculty of thinking, they became different from their primitive ancestors, and have in effect been using this faculty for thousands of years, they have made great progress in science, technology, and art, so that they have become able to change nature in many ways. Nevertheless, compared with the mysteries of the fascinating and dazzling structure of the universe, this partial victory over Mother Nature is too far removed from the state of being perfect.

Both the religious and the scientific considerations above point out that the human being is neither perfect nor totally deficient. Due to the faculty of thinking, he has a mode of being between perfectness and absolute deficiency. Put differently, he is an intermediate being between the infinite and the finite.

Hitherto not a single word has even been said about '*non-finito*' sculpture technique, and, naturally, one might ask what the relevance of the explanations above to the present subject matter is. My reply would be: '*Non-finito*' sculpture technique seems substantially as a product of the tension that the consciousness of both the ideal of perfectness and the fact of intermediateness creates in the sculptor's soul.

A general explanation of the technique, which was pioneered by Donatello and was later used by several artists, notably Michelangelo, Cellini, Bernini and Rodin, can be given as follows: It is a technique where the sculptor only carves part of the block of material, which makes the sculpted piece appear almost unfinished and leaves the sculpture looking almost stuck in the block of material. Needless to say, this technical description does not say anything about the intellectual background of '*non-finito*' technique. To reveal this background, it is necessary to travel into the sculptors' universe of thought. However, an inquiry concerning all the sculptors using this technique, or, even, only the aforementioned ones, would certainly exceed the limits of this paper. For this reason, I shall only look over the ideas of Michelangelo, who provides a wide field of study, leaving behind not only many *non-finito* sculptures, but also a number of poems where he gives us clues about his technique.

Without any doubt, the question concerning the reason why the sculptor used this technique lies at the centre of the presented survey. In his article *What Is Expressed in Michelangelo's Non-Finito*, Gilbert summarises various views about the '*non-finito*' factor in Michelangelo's works, in a wide range of opinions from technical approaches to speculative ones (Gilbert, 2003, pp. 57-62). In these opinions, we find several answers to the presented question, but they all are inadequate in terms of the philosophical background of the "*non-finito*" technique. For this reason, it seems more suitable to seek an explanation based directly on the sculptor's own views.

Michelangelo regards sculpting as a creative activity where the sculptor creates an image from a rugged block of stone by subtracting (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 96). According to him, "… marble to which the sculptor gives a turn or two, brings more than the rough old stone it used to be" (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 69), and what it brings after the sculptor's touches is a life in cold stone, a live face and limbs in the material used, a living form in the block of stone, which survives its creator, or, in other words, a face that must live in stone as long as possible (Michelangelo, 2000, pp. 120-121). However, it is not so easy to create such a long-lasting sculpture, for it requires a long period of experience to be able to attain a living image in the block of stone (Michelangelo, 2000, pp. 121-122).

According to Michelangelo, the creative activity described above is a product of the cooperation of manual and mental skill (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 120). In one of his most quoted stanzas, he says:

> "Nothing the best of artists can conceive
> but lies, potential, in a block of stone,
> superfluous matter round it. The hand alone
> secures it that has intelligence for guide" (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 96).

These lines evoke a pair of concepts mentioned before: material and form/image. What is new here is the Aristotelian thought of necessary harmony between the matter and the form of something. An artist can only actualise a form that is potentially included in the matter. As stated elsewhere, "… out of stone come noble forms or mean, depending on how imaginative the art" (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 63). Therefore a sculptor needs not only skilful hands to carve the material but also guidance of an intelligent mind to choose the form. Michelangelo, on the other hand, thinks that there is still something lacking in this combination, which can be completed by a kind of divine intervention:

> "If my rough hammer shapes the obdurate stone
> to a human figure, this or that one, say,
> it's the wielder's fist, vision, and mind at play
> that gives it momentum—another's, not its own.
> But the heavenly hammer working by God's throne
> by itself makes others and self as well. We know
> it takes a hammer to make a hammer. So
> the rest derive from that primal tool alone.
> Since any stroke is mightier the higher
> it's launched from over the forge, one kind and wise

has lately flown from mine to a loftier sphere.[1]
My hammer is botched, unfinished in the fire
until God's workshop help him supervise
the tool of my craft, that alone he trued, down here" (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 28).

The separation of heavenly hammer and sculptor's rough tool, which reminds one of the Platonic divisions between ideas and their imitations, indicates that any creative activity of an artist is rather far away from the self-sufficiency and perfectness of God's creation. For this reason, without the help of God, a work may remain unfinished in case of a grievous event such as the flight of a beloved person to a loftier sphere, namely death. Moreover, this need for divine intervention is not something peculiar to special conditions. In one of his poems, Michelangelo claims that it is not possible for the ignorant mind and sick eyes to ascend to the sky of divine beauty, which is a reliable guide in the vocation of an artist, unless provided by grace (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 102). Again, in accordance with this feeling of inadequacy, we find our sculptor-poet writing that the statue he carved is in fact heaven's own art, which is not mortal, but divine (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 121), and elsewhere, qualifying his art as poor and dead (Michelangelo, 2000, p. 11).
It seems that, being aware of divine perfectness and humanly insufficiency, Michelangelo is uncomfortable with the limited means of human nature, and this displeasure leads him to use his mind and hands in a way regarding inevitable imperfectness.
Based on the analysis of '*non-finito*' sculpture technique in the example of Michelangelo, the basic principles of the intellectual background of the technique can be stated as follows:

1. Only God is perfect; no other existent can reach the level of His perfectness and excellence.
2. Man, as a member of the world composed of matter and form, has both physical and intellectual powers.
3. By the guidance of mind, it is possible to gain accomplishments in every field of life, yet perfectness remains as an unattainable ideal.

Considering the principles above, it is seen that man is regarded as an intermediate being, for while on the one hand he is, as a mortal body, far away from divine competence, on the other hand, properly using his mind, he can

[1] „This evidently expresses grief for the death of an inspiring person, perhaps Michelangelo's brother" (Gilbert, 2003, p. 63).

spend a life resembling to that of God's as much as possible. From this point of view, morals spell a mere method or technique of living that enables one to live by keeping a balance between body and intellect, reality and ideal, deficiency and perfectness, etc. Therefore, it should not be expected to establish a state of morality that can provide the *beau idéal* of a moral agent.

'Unattainable Perfectness' and Codes of Ethics

In his article *Codes of Ethics* focused on corporate codes in historical, contextual and critical aspects, Benson makes some suggestions for improving the usefulness of codes, within the context of contents, publication and distribution of codes (Benson, 1989, pp. 317–319). In spite of the accuracy of his suggestions, what is most important for our present subject matter is the end that is aimed to be achieved by these improvements: '… the main purpose of codes is to educate employees as to the proper values of the organisation and of society' (Benson, 1989, p. 317).

Benson constantly expresses the ethical educative mission of codes of ethics, especially considering the poverty of and need for that kind of education in American society[2] (Benson, 1989, pp. 316–317). These codes, for sure, make a contribution to the process of moralisation, yet there are some problematical points: The authors of codes and the authorities responsible for their enforcement might also want for ethical education, since they are also a part of society. More importantly, even if the experts who do not need such an education write the codes, how successfully these codes can perform their educative task is still questionable, for they are fundamentally regulative professional rules, not general ethical principles, which lie, together with moral consciousness, at the centre of the process of moralisation. Nor can adding some extra articles to codes fill the deficiency. Rather, what is needed is a philosophical foundation dependant on a proper account of humanity and morals, which can guide people at every step of life, including writing codes of ethics or giving moral education in schools. Presumably, the account obtained from considerations about the intellectual background of '*non-finito*' sculpture technique is among the most important candidates for such guidance. To give a concrete example, a general outlook on the practice of this account in the field of codes of ethics will be beneficial in terms of the aim of this paper.

First of all, it should not be expected to find perfectness in any profession as the human being is not perfect. We can have, for instance, a notion of the perfect doctor, but it is nothing more than an unattainable ideal. In parallel

[2] This assertion represents the author's own idea. Note that it was written in 1989.

with this, none of the codes of ethics correspond to a fixed and complete set of professional principles and rules; they are all subject to change and renewal. Besides, these codes should be prepared in accordance with real conditions, as well as ideals. Therefore, some improvements should be made rather than ineffective attempts at perfection.

If the awareness of philosophical reference points for professional ethics and codes of ethics can be widely raised among all segments of society, I believe that we can come a long way in fighting against moral corruption and disorder in professional life.

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Peter Singer on Utilitarianism of Preference: Arguments for and against Euthanasia

Małgorzata Olech

Abstract
The aim of this article is to present an outline of the views of the contemporary Australian ethicist, Peter Singer, on utilitarian ethics. It is the intention of the author the show that he ponders with great commitment over contemporary bioethical issues, including those connected to euthanasia. From the point of view of the impartial observer, he also attempts to test our deep-rooted beliefs. He emphasizes the aspect that the principle of the sacrosanct value of human life is subject to be questioned in the course of everyday life, due to the fact that nowadays attempts to assign a disparate value to human beings are no longer arbitrary. Attention is drawn to the fact that the consequences of Singer's ethics may cause controversy.

Keywords: practical ethics, utilitarianism of preference, consequentialism, euthanasia

The Australian ethicist Peter Singer considers, with great engagement, modern bioethical problems. He shows, among other things, how utilitarian criteria of acting could constitute material bases of medical ethics. From the point of view of an unprejudiced observer, he attempts to test our deeply embedded convictions. He also shows moral duties towards others in a new light. Singer, similarly to many utilitarian ethicists, is convinced that moral problems born as a result of technological progress cannot find solutions in the deontological theory of the "holiness of human life". He strives to demonstrate the failure of its basic assumptions by giving interesting examples. He is also convinced that the rule propagating the inalienable value of human life is questionable from a practical perspective. In his opinion, attempts to assign another value of life to different creatures are not arbitrary today. Consequentialist ethics of "quality of human life" developing in medicine clearly undermines the meaning of traditional ethics of the "holiness of life".

Utilitarianism of preference

In his outline of viewpoints on utilitarian ethics of "Practical ethics", the author leads up to few basic questions. The most important one is to admit that reason plays a major role in ethics. Reason directs the choice of adequate activity, looks after proper arguments and reliable assessment of formulated

solutions. Elements of empirical knowledge, ones which may be verified, should belong to the system of moral convictions of which coherence is under assessment. Therefore, according to Singer, a utilitarian "can never be accused of a lack of realism or tightly sticking to ideas at the cost of practical experience" (Singer, 2003, p.19). In the focus of his considerations there should be attempts to distinguish between what is ethical and not ethical. A utilitarian may say that some people live in accordance with ethical standards if they can excuse their behaviour. But not every excuse is of moral value. For only such an excuse is of moral value when the benefits for the acting person are at the same level as the good of others. It results from the fact that thinking in moral categories, in contrast to a "pre-ethical" stage of thinking, "brings the idea of something more than an individual" (Singer, 2003, p. 25).

The basic task of ethics, according to Singer, is to assume a universal point of view from which we consider the interests of all creatures as equal and on these grounds we aspire to create a universal law. The question is that the generality of ethical assessments requires the fact that in moral recognition one should think not only about one's own interests but also surpass personal tastes and prejudice. The method of justifying moral rules cannot be based on referring them to a biased group. The approved rule should be the best for all those people whose interests have been taken into account.

Singer is against assessing every single deed within standards of utility. Being constant accountants we would live under the pressure of a situation. The two-level version of R.M. Hare's utilitarianism is close to this. In everyday life we should rely on our moral intuitions and follow a set of standard moral rules, solidified by years of experience. Only at a time devoted to philosophical reflection can we, from an indifferent point of view, criticize the everyday level of morality (Singer, 2006, pp. 168–173). The rule of consequence is connected with it. It concerns such ways of behaviour which will have the best balance of consequences; that is it will take into consideration, to the greatest extent, the interests of the people involved. Activities which take into account the highest good of all people involved do not have to deal only with increasing pleasure and decreasing of pain. Preferences refer to the object described as "the good of life" (Ricken, 2001, p. 201). The value of a deed is decided on the level of its coherence with preferences of all the people involved.

The philosopher bases universality of ethics on the deontological rule of equality, saying that my interests and those of anybody else mean the same. It seems that introducing this rule is hard to excuse as empirical ethics (Anzenbacher, 2008, p. 39). According to him, this rule does not impose actual equality of people but presents a definite way of treating them (Singer, 2004, p. 37). Thus, it constitutes a moral ideal. In some cases it may lead to

reverse the preference of one of the beings to multiply the other that is to create gaps between people of different welfare. They are situations in which equal consideration of interests leads to unequal treatment and non-egalitarian solutions, for example relieving pain or selection of accidents' victims. The basic aim of such activities, which might seem paradoxical, is an attempt to realize more egalitarian results.

In the hierarchy of beings offered by Singer, he distinguishes three types: without consciousness, consciously feeling and persons. The requirement to equally consider desires of beings able to have self-consciousness and feelings does not prove that they have equal moral rights. Not every human being is a person because the special value of a person is proved by rational nature. A given being is a person when she/he has "at this moment" all the features of being a person. (Anzenbacher, 2008, pp. 266–267). It wants to continue its own life because she/he feels satisfaction with fulfilling pleasures and desires, and she/he feels happy owing to this. Therefore, depriving a person of life is worse than only a being which consciously feels because it brings more serious principles of consequence. In the opinion of Singer, it is sometimes possible to deprive a person of life who does not choose death if it turned out that she/he would live an unhappy life. There are also situations in which high rank attributed to the respect for autonomy might be decreased because of some important interests.

Singer classifies newborn children, some intellectually handicapped people and some animals as those consciously feeling. In relation to the fact that they do not have self-consciousness at the moment, they do not have a strong claim towards life either, and therefore they cannot be attributed the right to life and respect for autonomy in its full meaning. But it does not mean that depriving them of life would be morally right. From a universal point of view we should value the life of these beings in relation to the pleasure which it may bring to them. However, if somebody's life, for example that of a newborn child is unhappy and full of pain, then one should diminish the amount of suffering in the world by effectuating euthanasia. Animals do not have a central nervous system and they belong to beings without consciousness.

Euthanasia

According to the author, there are three kinds. They are: voluntary, non-voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. Voluntary euthanasia is performed as a wish of an ill person. Non-voluntary euthanasia, in rather drastic cases, is performed against the will of a patient. It may also involve people who would be willing to express agreement to this but have not been asked to. Involuntary euthanasia shares some common ground with voluntary euthanasia because within its frames death is also regarded as an advantage

for the killed person. This notion is used by Singer as the killing of consciously feeling human beings. This euthanasia concerns situations in which there are terminally ill people, significantly disabled newborn children and elderly people and they have never had the ability to choose between life and death. In the range of this concept there are also included cases of killing beings who had such ability but they lost it as a result of age, illnesses or accidents, not leaving any preferences towards their present state which is deprived of consciousness. Singer is convinced that cases of killing newborn children might be considered as a justified end of human life. The philosopher thinks that we are able to justify euthanasia by giving consequentialist arguments when it deals with killing beings deprived of self-consciousness and the ability to give consent for death and in a situation when voluntarily self-conscious beings – on the basis of available and vital information – decide to end their life.

Singer, taking into account arguments in favour of justifying involuntary euthanasia, focuses on disabled newborn children. However, he thinks that what he says about them will also concern conscious beings; that is older children and adults corresponding in mental age with them because of disability. His considerations are based on the thesis: killing a disabled newborn child is not morally relevant to killing a person. Very often it is not a morally bad deed. A difference between killing a disabled and a normal newborn child does not lie in the right to live but in the emotional attitude of the child's parents. The quality of the parents' or child minders' life has an influence on the justified killing of profoundly retarded and seriously disabled newborn children. It decides if the life of such children will be worth further sustaining. Parents may justifiably regret that such a child was born.

The philosopher presents an attempt to justify the euthanasia of a newborn child, suffering from haemophilia. At first, he writes, we would be strictly against it because its life seems to be worth continuing. Depriving a newborn child of life contrary to its preferences would be morally bad. However, on deeper reflection we can change our mind. When we aim at a positive balance of all the people involved, that is first of all parents, an unbiased and rational attitude imposes another option on us. From the point of view of the "total" version of utilitarianism, the "substitutability" of newborn children might be perceived as an ethically acceptable solution. The death of a child with haemophilia could contribute to the birth, in its place, of a new being which would never otherwise appear. Therefore, according to Singer, at the assumption that the second newborn child would be healthier, the total sum of happiness will turn out to be bigger when a disabled child dies. Depriving the first child of a happy life will be predominated by giving a happier life to the second one. Such acting will be morally right for the sake of the realization of

possibly the best result. The argument of substitutability would be rejected in the case of adopting a child suffering from haemophilia.

According to Singer, if we seriously considered this argument we could use it in cases of more serious disability regarding the restrictions of prenatal diagnostics and try to use substitutability with regard to newborn children as their life, in a moral sense, has not yet begun. It would help parents to decide on their life and death on the basis of greater diagnostic knowledge. In Singer's opinion the presented attitude in the question of justifying involuntary euthanasia does not imply that it would be better if newborn children born with a significant disability "did not survive at all", and neither does it indicate a lack of respect and unequal treatment of disabled people for whom their life is valuable (Singer, 2003, p. 182)

Justifying voluntary euthanasia has a stronger ethical basis than that of the involuntary form. One should argue for rather than against – the philosopher thinks. Prohibiting euthanasia might be morally bad because of the predominance of bad consequences. Namely, a person may be afraid, not without reason, that her/his death might be unnecessarily long and chronically stressful. A very important reason for the moral acceptance of voluntary euthanasia is the very desire for the death of suffering among terminally ill people. According to the theory of rights the patient can resign from his/her right to life and say that he/she has got the right to end it. Attributing significance to the rule of respect towards autonomy in one's decisions, we are obliged to support the patient's decision, even on paternalistic ground. The author of "Practical ethics" thinks that non-voluntary euthanasia cannot be justified. All arguments against killing of self-conscious beings are of use here.

According to the author there is no "inner moral difference" between acting and omission, killing (active euthanasia) and allowing to die (passive euthanasia). One may pay attention to the fact that distinguishing between acting and omission is widely discussed in medical ethics (Hołówka, 2001, p. 112; Gert, Culver & Clouser, 2009, pp. 418–421). We are just as responsible for a deed as well as for its omission. Obviously, we have to remember that such cases of allowing to die happen that are not relevant to killing. If passive euthanasia is, in some situations, considered morally right behaviour, so then should active euthanasia also be justified as necessary and humane in some circumstances. Mostly external differences which, in normal conditions, we tend to treat as distinguishing between killing and allowing to die, decide that killing is for us a morally worse deed than allowing to die. As we cannot see the internal difference between acting and omission, it seems, according to Singer, that there is no sense in maintaining a strict division between active and passive euthanasia. Intuitional convictions seem to be against solutions of

deontological theories. From this point of view the author criticizes the "doctrine of double result". The distinction between negative intentional results and only foreseen results is artificial. Responsibility for all possible consequences of deeds weighs on us.

A great mistake is treating euthanasia as the first step on the "inclined plane" of evil in the direction of genocide – Singer claims. In his opinion the experience of Nazism cannot be, as many opponents of euthanasia would like it to be, the proper example of consequences of euthanasia. The scheme of the inclined plane is of no use here because of the fact that Nazi "euthanasia" and modern examples are ostensibly for different purposes. Therefore, according to Singer, we cannot compare mass Nazi murders with killings which prevent suffering. In the program of selection of patients to kill, propagated by the Nazis, the basic criterion was ability to work and racial origin. However, gradually moving away from the deontological theory of holiness of human life might bring a small but limited risk of negative consequences.

Final remarks

The problem of euthanasia still arouses a lot of controversy and accompanying emotions: there is little wonder why. We cannot stop talking about euthanasia, pretending that there is no problem because people who suffer demand it (Szulc, 2012, pp. 47–51). The issue of euthanasia cannot definitively be solved. Therefore, categorical solutions evoke anxiety, especially when they are expressed with the words of hate (Hartman, 2012, pp. 126–134). Practical consequences of Singer's ethics in the question of euthanasia remain the reason of many fierce polemics.

Let us start from the argument of the inclined plane. If we accept some forms of killing, psychological mechanisms accompanying them might develop moral harshness and lead to uncontrolled medical practices. If we, for example, as Singer wants, allowed involuntary euthanasia in legislation, can we foresee that tendency to kill gathers such a momentum that it will get out of our control in the end? Not long ago there appeared an article by Italian bioethics researchers, in which they tried to justify the euthanasia of healthy newborn children (Giubilini & Minerva, 2012). By legalizing euthanasia we may, on the one hand, as the philosopher thinks, control doctors more but, on the other hand, we are totally dependent on their competences and reliability of assessment of every situation. We agree with Singer that comparing Nazi "euthanasia" and the modern form of this is wrong. However, one has to remember that in the twenties of the 20th century in Germany we dealt with the program of "euthanasia" although it was not t incorporated in legal regulations. It took into consideration killing profoundly retarded newborn children and mentally ill people because they were a material burden for the

state. It is now difficult to say unequivocally if it had a direct influence on Hitler's program of euthanasia.

We think that most controversies arise from an attempt by Singer to justify involuntary euthanasia, and especially that of newborn children. Moral intuition orders him, as we know, not to attribute the moral status of a person to them. Our aim is not to discuss his "actualistic" understanding of a person. Moral intuition, its ethical protective structures tell us not to allow the legalizing of the euthanasia of newborn children with serious genetic defects. We think that substitutability of newborn children might arouse controversy. It seems more difficult to perform that Singer thinks. Man becomes a self-conscious being through the influence of his/her parents or child minders only around the second year of life or even later. Until this time he/she is a person only potentially, although Singer rejects the argument of potentiality. So, therefore, wanting to be consistent, he should actually not talk about euthanasia of newborn children and older children.

The implications of the substitutability argument do not seem as obvious as Singer writes. There is a chance of mistake in information regarding the preferences of parents and doctors and regarding the balance of advantages and losses, present and future, for we do not have certainty and maybe only a small probability, that killing a child with haemophilia or other genetic defects will lead to the birth of another and that owing to this everybody will have a better life. We can also assume as well, contrary to Singer, who bases his opinions on this topic only on assumptions, that perspectives of happy life are the same for a normal child as one with haemophilia. Owing to the development of medicine, the lives of such children and their parents does not have to be deprived of happiness, deep reflection and activity. In the opinion of the author of "Practical ethics", his attitude does not imply a lack of respect or unequal treatment of considering the interests of disabled children who "decided to live". We think that this conviction requires some clarification. It seems that we may rather talk about decisions connected with the continuation of one's life by people with acquired disability and sometimes by those who, in spite of congenital defects, were able to survive. Legalization of involuntary euthanasia would lead by definition to selection of newly-born children.

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Tyranny of Speed? Contemporary Ethics in the Light of Dromology

Tomáš Hauer

Abstract
Nowadays, modernization, development and adaptation in society is more and more linked to primarily dromocratic teletopy, i.e. the ability and readiness to connect to networks. The process of modernization received a new and powerful impetus over the last decade. This impetus is increasing the speed of information translation (transfer). However inseparable from networks and meta-networks speed is, it can be studied relatively independently in a given context, as indicated by P. Virilio in his dromologic research. Dromologic research of "man's status in the world" shows that man – his *perception*, his *language* as well as his *thinking* is substantially changed by the speed of information translation. Virilio devoted a considerable part of his work to the changes of *perception* of reality. He studied how a new way of perception of reality is created owing to ever increasing speed of sequential information transfer, how new aesthetics – aesthetics of disappearing – is formed thanks to cinematographic (i.e. visualized) division. The following text aims at showing that ethics, those issues concerning moral values, ethical standpoints and substantiations of various social dilemmas and conflicts overnight have rapidly ended up in a new element created by the speed of information transfer in networks.

Keywords: dromology, teletopy, logistic of perception, speed, technological devices

I

Man is constantly exposed to attacks from two dominant forces in the contemporary world, which organize and structure its logistic of perception: speed and technological devices. "The development of high technical speeds would thus result in the disappearance of consciousness as the direct perception of phenomena that inform us of our own existence. Cinema is not a seventh art but an art that combines all of the others: drawing, painting, architecture, music, but also mechanical, electrical works, etc." (Virilio, 1991, p. 104). Dromological research by Paul Virilio present a critical analysis of the consequences for our perception and logistics caused by polar inertia, inertia of absolute speed. Speed changes the field of our perception because it transforms the habitual understanding of the ontological characteristic of reality, i.e. time and space. "Speed treats vision like its basic element; with acceleration, to travel is like filming, not so much producing images as new mnemonic traces, unlikely, supernatural. In such a context death itself can no

longer be felt as mortal; it becomes, as in William Burroughs, a simple technical accident, the final separation of the sound from the picture track" (Virilio, 1991, p. 60). What is much more important for Virilio's concept of aesthetics of disappearance is the role of the unconscious disappearing of objects from our field of perception, aesthetics of disappearing, one of the consequences of *dromology*, is based on studying cinematographic effects coming from the area of art, film, television and video. "What is given to see is due to the phenomena of acceleration and deceleration in every respect identifiable with intensities of light" (Virilio, 1991, p. 19).

The philosophical background of Virilio's theory is neither G. Marcel's French existentialism, nor postmodernism, which is unequivocally refused by Virilio, mainly as far as architecture is concerned, but it is surprisingly phenomenology after M. Merleau-Ponty's interpretation. "Postmodernism is a notion that makes sense in architecture, through the work of Robert Venturi and so on. Since I am teaching architecture, to me, postmodernism is a suitcase word, a syncretism" (Armitage, 2000, p. 25),

Virilio summarizes his teacher and mentor Merleau-Ponty's influence on him as follows: "First of all, I was a pupil of Merleau-Ponty, of Jean Wahl and of Vladimir Jankelevitch, to name three French philosophers who were teaching at the Sorbonne at that time. The one to which I felt most attracted was quite naturally Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and his Phenomenology of Perception" (Armitage, 2000, p. 28). In many of his texts Virilio emphasises that speed is not a phenomenon, but a relationship between phenomena. The difference between contemporary society and societies of the past lies in the fact that earlier speed was mainly connected with transport, now it concerns relationships within information. "The question of speed is central. Speed and wealth go hand in hand. To give a philosophical definition of speed, we can say that it is not a phenomenon, but rather the relationship between phenomena. In other words, it is relativity itself. We can go even further and say that speed is a milieu. It doesn´t just involve the time between two points, but a milieu that is provoked by a vehicle. This vehicle can be either metabolic, consider the role of chivalry in history, or technical, the role of ship in maritime conquest, railroads or transatlantic planes – and it governs societies. The horse influenced history with the great conquerors, while the navy influenced colonization. The navy is a type of speed. Thus, for me, speed is milieu" (Virilio, 1999, pp. 13–14).

In the third chapter of the book *Polar Inertia*, Virilio again presents one of his variations on the topic – what is speed – as follows: "For if speed is not phenomenon, but only relationships between phenomena (relativity itself), we might adapt Bernard de Clairvaux by stating that light is the name for the shadow of absolute speed, or to be more precise, that the speed of rays of light

is the name for the shadow of the speed of light of electro-magnetic waves. We would be led to conclude that speed is useful for seeing, but above all that it makes "light" visible even before the object (or phenomena) that it illuminates. This is precisely the dromosphere. Not so much expansion of the universe brought to light by the famous red shift in the spectrum, but a purely relativistic recognition, that it is speed which enlightens the universe of perceptible and measurable phenomena" (Virilio, 2000, p. 45). Concerning speed, in the book *Pure War* Virilio claims as follows: "Speed is the unknown side of politics, and has been since the beginning, this is nothing new. The wealth aspect in politics was highlighted a long time ago. One usually says that power is tied in with wealth. In my opinion, it´s tied foremost with speed. Wealth comes afterward. People forget the dromological dimension of power, its ability to inveigle, whether by taxes, conquest, etc. Every society is founded on a relation of speed. Every society is dromocratic" (Virilio, 1997, p. 57).

Virilio's influential book – *Vitesse et politice* (Speed and Politics), analyses new problems resulting from the fact that the development of industrial capitalism has reached a stage in which wealth and power in society are interconnected with ever increasing speed. In view of Virilio's statement that wealth is an aspect of speed (Virilio, 1999, p. 49), it has become necessary to consider speed and all its aspects and consequences through a prism of a new discipline – dromology. In an interview with J. Armitage, Virilio comments on this: "Dromology originates from the Greek word dromos. Hence dromology is the science of the ride, the journey, the drive, the way. To me this means that speed and riches are totally linked concepts. And that the history of the world is not only about the political economy of riches, that is, wealth, money, capital, but also about the political economy of speed. If time is money , as they say, then speed is power. You see it with the velocity of predators, of the cavalry, of railways, of ships and maritime power. So all my work has been about attempting to trace the dromocratic dimension of societies from ancient Greece to our present-day societies. All societies are pyramidal in nature. The higher speed belong to the upper reaches of society, the slower to the bottom. The wealth pyramid is the replica of the velocity pyramid" (Armitage, 2000, p. 35).

Dromologic revolutions cause artificial acceleration of speed in the form of steam or the combustion engine, or, nowadays, nuclear energy and they immediately form both e.g. waging wars and kinds of communication. Vehicles of speed create new tracks and nodal points (ports, roads, airports, telecommunications etc.) through which things, goods, money, weapons, people or information will start flowing within a different structure. A territory is space across which speed, technology, politics, economy and

everyday life flow by means of vehicles of speed (transport, communication, etc.). Nowadays, both politics and the city are victims of nodal points through which the transport of things and transfer of information flow (Virilio, 1986, p. 7).

There is no ethics without certain relatively settled and legitimized ways of social behaviour, acting as its carriers. Nowadays, networks and meta-networks are more and more frequently becoming dromocratic carriers of ethical norms. The importance of their role for the creating and distribution of moral values and ethical standpoints in contemporary society is increasing. Virilio tries to point out (as far as forming present-day ethical theories is concerned) that we encounter a peculiar phenomenon in dromocratic teletopy. Moral values and ethical standpoints are no longer linked to a particular location in space. Although they are linked to the addresses in a network, these are, with a certain overstatement, nowhere geographically. Gradual release of moral values and ethical substantiations from the relationship to a concrete space of physical locations, and locating it in the virtual space of dromocratic teletopy establishes a brand new situation for ethical thinking. There is competition between the old space of locations and the new space of virtuality. This new situation will result in many significant consequences for ethical research.

We live in the epoch of direct substitution of clear perception by perception coming from the media hypertext sphere. Therefore, the term *substitution* in Virilio's theory works in the same way as the expression *simulacrum* for Baudrillard. The substitution does not hide the truth about something, but it hides the fact that there is nothing. However, above all, the basic principle of Virilio's dromologic research is the inadvertent movement of objects, located out of the reach of perception; the object can only be made perceivable, apparent and comprehensible on the basis of special operations. Virilio quotes Michelangelo: "They paint in Flanders to fool our external vision... the beguilements of the world have robbed me of the time accorded me to worship God" (Virilio, 1991, p. 36). Michelangelo perceived the power and role of illusion in art, the pure imitation of nature or a concrete model disquieted him. Aesthetics of disappearing changes time into sequential and information blurs. It often happens that we are absent-mindedly "staring" into space. We call it blank moments or momentary escape of the mind from the current "reality". Piknolepsia (from the Greek *pyknos*, frequent, plentiful), is one of the main terms in Virilio's aesthetics of disappearing. In the context of medicine, piknolepsia is children's paroxysmal disease manifested by rhythmic electric discharge in the brain and quick arrival. Clinical symptoms include sudden stopping an activity in progress, usually without losing the previous attitude. Fits are often accompanied by rhythmic motion of the

eyelids or lips. The usual duration is 5-10 seconds. Several fits like this can happen daily.

Virilio does not consider *Piknolepsia* a disease, on the contrary, he views it as a mass phenomenon of the contemporary period, as one of the main consequences of inertia of absolute speed. Virilio defines piknolepsia as "mass phenomenon" and describes the present-day postmodern subject, which is in a constant fit of moderate epilepsy, as piknoleptic. Contemporary technological prosthetic devices (television, the Internet, computers, tablets, so called smartphones, etc.) result in information transfer by the terminal velocity of light, inertia of absolute speed. Therefore, the dominant form of contact is telepresentation (from the Greek telé-distant, vize-vision). "Like the war weapon launched at full speed at the visual target it's supposed to wipe out, the aim of cinema will be to provoke an effect of vertigo in the voyeur-traveller, the end being sought now is to give him the impression of being projected into the image" (Virilio, 1991, p. 58).

According to Virilio, telematic vehicles pervading the contemporary film industry function by creating illusion, artificial reality, artificial day thus altering our own reality and our perception of what is real. "Film what doesn't exist, the Anglo-Saxon special effects masters still say, which is basically inexact: what they are filming certainly does exist, in one manner or another. It's the speed at which they film that doesn't exist, and is the pure invention of the cinematographic motor. Melies liked to joke, The trick, intelligently applied, today allows us to make visible the supernatural, the imaginary, even the impossible" (Virilio, 1991, p. 15). Virilio works with the term *optical clones* denoting a number of images of contemporary man. In this way he points out that in present-day society, man is not only the owner of his own body, but also of his image.

After piknolepsia subsides, man subconsciously resorts to using technological prosthetic devices, which are supposed to help him see the world like in childhood. "The film industry will enter into crisis when it ends production of the false day, when it alludes to verisimilitude" (Virilio, 1991, p. 63). For example, a lot of photographers confirm that their photographs are results of craving the re-establishment of piknolepsia. "To produce prostheses of subliminal comfort is to produce simulators of day, even of the last day, metamorphosis of the objects of industrial production where the ensemble of economic realities would be the relay for the cinematic function" (Virilio, 1991, p. 73). The arrival of speed has also brought about irretrievable change in the visual presentation of women, who have started to adapt to current societal demands and technical progress. "The disappearance of the woman in the fatality of the technical object creates a new mass language, a faithful reflection of the fascist language of the old futurist elite of the beginning of

the century, “the heat of a piece of iron or wood is, from now on, more exciting for us than a woman’s smile or tears...” (Virilio, 1991, p. 91). The first signifier was the manifestation of masculine features in woman’s clothes. The less impression of a fragile creature a woman gave, the more desirable she was considered. A typical representative of this fashion era is indisputably Marlene Dietrich. Women lost their fatality while fighting speed. Men, former hunters, nowadays collectors of luxurious vehicles, exchange their ideal of the femme fatale for fatally fast means of transport.

Nowadays, according to Virilio, film production is confronted with decline caused by man’s constant urge to travel. Film becomes a mere stage set as a substitution for landscape. One of the crisis manifestations is banality and triviality of topics. If a film depicts the same everydayness as advertising, it acquires the same value. Aestheticizing of tragic events is another manifestation of the decline of film. Television broadcasts anesthetize its audience to the horrors of war, holocaust or terrorist attacks, events thus becoming mere television programmes. “The cinematic motor has accustomed us to finding the mystery of movement in this transitory world natural, to no longer wonder how acceleration of amorous gestures can suddenly become murderous, how the Pavan dance of a falling or propelled body can become fatal. At the same time this vulgarized violence of movement, revealed by the distortion of vision, shows us its inconsistency; the violence of speed dominates the technical world but remains nevertheless, as in the time of the Sphinx, the basic enigma” (Virilio, 1991, p. 100).

II

The world is flooded with progress and development. What is invented now, in one particular moment, is obsolete the next. By means of the phenomenon of speed and disappearing, Virilio explains those peculiarities and shifts in human thinking and assessment. It is the speed that he “accuses” to be the carrier of power arousing the desire in people to get this power. Virilio quotes Rilke’s idea, “what happens is so far ahead of what we think, of our intentions, that we can never catch up with it and never really know its true appearance” (Virilio, 2010, p. 19). Thus the speed becomes the core of aesthetics of disappearing. According to Virilio, the first “vehicle of speed” was a woman. In this context he already mentions that tragic nature of acceleration of exaggeratedly increasing speed. “Already, in Speed and Politics, demonstrated how the modulation and manipulation of vectorial speeds (logistical police) were, in diverse military and revolutionary conflicts, the surest elements of mass cohesion in Europe and America. But at the same time I showed that the goal sought by power was less the invasion of territories, their occupation, than a sort of recapitulation of the world obtained

by the ubiquity, the suddenness of military presence, a pure phenomenon of speed, a phenomenon on the way to the realization of its absolute essence" (Virilio, 1991, p. 44). Even woman's movement is finished with an inevitable integral accident. Virilio considers orgasm to be that fault/accident. Another vehicle of speed, immediately after woman, is a donkey, and later a car – due to its fast movement.

However, the reality gradually contracts and it is replaced by virtuality, which, however, expands at the expense of reality. It is life in virtual reality, movement in static vehicles that completely hinders the development of communication potential. The total energy of man and his natural quality to develop personality owing to personal contact is so limited that man finds himself in the state of inertia. "The to conquer is to advance of Frederick II. Alexander's great haste in plunging ahead, thinking only of finding a limit to the indefinite expansion of his force of penetration, but also the driver's glance thrown at the speedometer of a racing car or military vehicle, as an existential measure of the being of the warrior, the vertiginous flow of time — perpetual assaults on distance also endlessly reproduce the original rite-of-passage, a resumé of the universe realized by the speed of the assault" (Virilio, 1991, p. 87).

In modern society, moral values, aesthetic standpoints and substantiations solving various social dilemmas and conflicts were linked both to real space and historical time. Space and time are basic ontological categories. Dromologic analysis considerably changes its content. It discovers their new dimension emerging thanks to the absolute speed of information translation. In other words, continuing modernization, which is according to Virilio one of the consequences of speed, constructs its new dimensions of space and time: dromologic teletopy and dromospheric chronology. Surprisingly, it is possible to live, communicate, do business, become rich, love, acquire a higher share in power and even wage war in these new dimensions of time and space. Another floor of society's life emerges. Nowadays, speed of development in society is more and more linked to primarily dromocratic teletopy, i.e. the ability and readiness to be connected. As Jean Baudrillard observed, the classical *esse est percipi* has been replaced by *to be is to be connected.* Not from a historically determined territory, but from anywhere wheresoever – and the last two expressions cannot be further specified. It is a new floor in what the Greeks called oikos. Old floors have not disappeared, they are only inhabited in a different way and mainly – they will be inhabited in a different way and life will be different there. Wealth and power are an aspect of speed. The distribution of wealth and power, which, to a large extent, unfortunately also means the distribution of happiness and health, is increasingly subjected to chronopolitics based in dromocratic teletopy of networks.

Virilio considers the human body a “machine”. “We haven’t pondered enough on the basic causes of the generalized evolution of technology: miniaturization, reducing to nothing or next-to-nothing the size of every machine, is not only to furnish replacement parts to the organism by placing them on the scale of the human body, it is also to create inside the person parasensory competition, a duplication of being in the world” (Virilio, 1991, p. 67). It is necessary to implant various programmes in man so that he could cope with this constant frustration. These include, for instance, prepared “scientific” or “professional” programmes, fitness centres, books, magazines, etc. Completely natural thinking has been replaced by this programmed thinking. It is a case of certain “instant wisdom”. Only those who are able to resist “programmed" thinking can retain natural perceptiveness.

With the arrival of mass industrial production of speed (means of transport, the media...) we move more and more in the virtual world, thus moving away from the real world. Virilio puts it simply that “collective thinking established by various telematic vehicles aimed at destructing original perceptions”. “In 1934 Walter Benjamin interrogates this photographic object, incapable of registering a barracks or a pile of garbage without transforming them. Transforming everything abject about poverty, it’s transformed it also into an object of pleasure” (Virilio, 1991, p. 47). In the world of mediated images heralded in the media, the original model loses its trustworthiness. Virilio thus points out frequently less visible negative impacts of the virtual sphere expansion. Loss of trust in “eye reality”, i.e. in what we can see with our own eyes, and ever higher dependence on an illusory view constructed by means of technological devices. As the author states, to hypnotize the masses, it is necessary to speak mainly to eyes. “Abel Gance loved quoting Napoleon: To magnetize masses, you must above all talk to their eyes, and he affirms that the future of the movies is a sun in each image” (Virilio, 1991, pp. 54–55). Virilio also ponders on how technology affects human conscience and sensory experience when conscience as direct perception of phenomena disappears due to high technical speed which destroys time and space. “We loved then those cartoons showing gracious little mythical characters, tearing themselves like cuttings from the paper sheet of the draftsman who created them, to haunt his apartment and perturb his work table, messing around in their turn with his pens and pencils. This congruence of eye and motor controlled everything from then on, right up to the very d6 “coupage of the script; a new truth of vision metamorphosed the rhythms of life itself” (Virilio, 1991, p. 59).

We find ourselves in a situation comparable to the time of our ancestors, when new railways tracks were built and railways were extended, when migration routes were changing according to new excavation of fossil fuels

and other raw materials, when urban agglomerations emerged around coking plants and ironworks. Nowadays, networks are extended and handling information is getting faster. Undoubtedly, it will have epoch-making importance for the process of transferring ethical standpoints, like the events of that time. Virilio's dromologic analyses need attentive and careful reading. The author's strong point is the ability to find relations among phenomena that are not seemingly related, Even if not all these connections can be considered relevant and convincing. Metaphors and discursive strategies presented by Virilio are indisputably elaborated and original. They reveal interesting parallels, thus enriching our social imagination. "In the last century we had already become aware of the paradox of speed. The train doesn't make voyagers of us but packages that are expedited... remarked Tolstoy. The hurried man of Morand ruminates. We need to find something even more idiotic to block the course of time completely, total abstention from all action. To say today that speed is obsolete is an untruth as obvious as that which consists in praising slowness" (Virilio, 1991, p. 104). Speed, we are still captured by speed.

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Relativism and Ethical Competence

Jaromír Feber & Jelena Petrucijová

Abstract
Nowadays we are increasingly confronted with the fact of plurality. The result of plurality is relativism. Moral relativism is related to cultural plurality (both intercultural and intracultural) and the impossibility of universalising any of the two. Ethical relativism is associated with a plurality of ethical concepts and the impossibility of privileging any of these. "Ethical competence" refers to skills of possessing a particular ethical theory that allows one to navigate through the moral world. Postmodern ethics formulates ethical principles and moral standards that regulate life in a pluralistic society in which relativism prevails.

Keywords: plurality, moral worlds, ethical competencies, moral clashes

Nowadays we are increasingly confronted with the fact of plurality. There is a fundamental question: How to handle the fact of plurality? There are two strategies available:

1. A totalising strategy that suppresses plurality and seeks to restore unity.
2. A post-modern strategy that cultivates plurality rather than suppressing it.

In contemporary Western society, the reluctance to introduce unity by absolutising certain moral positions prevails, as it would be offending the value of freedom.[1] Freedom, however, necessarily leads to relativism. Additionally, relativism is philosophically supported by the "crisis of metaphysics" that results from realising the fundamental inability of rationally justifying absolute values. Nonetheless, relativism does not mean the end of morality, but it certainly does put greater demands on ethics. Ethics, as a normative discipline, has more troubles today with creating and promoting generally accepted moral principles that might be able, in a desirable way, to regulate a social unit.

[1] Instead of a list of authors sharing the same opinion we offer Foucault's very symptomatic passage: "Man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body" (Foucault, 1977, p. 30).

One of the manifestations of relativism is the difference in defining basic concepts that we use as rational tools for handling ethical problems. Therefore, as an introduction, it can be considered appropriate to clarify the meaning of "relativism" and "ethical competence" to clearly outline what one wants to think.

Generally, it is useful to distinguish between the concepts of "moral relativism" and "ethical relativism". The difference results from the dissimilarity between morality and ethics. Morality can be seen as an area encompassing ethics, amongst others. Morality contains values and norms that determine what is considered proper in the culture to which we belong or with which we identify. Originally spontaneously arising morality has gradually become a subject of special theoretical reflection implemented in the philosophical discipline known as ethics; i.e., ethical theory is part of morality, is its institutionalised form (meaning it is a form of moral consciousness that is, in an organised and systematic manner, developed by relevant experts).

The process of spontaneous emergence of morality is not time-limited to the pre-reflexive period of human moral history. Rather, even today the process is part of the formation of morality. It can even be legitimately claimed that it is more important for creating morality than its institutionalised form, because the latter is actually regarded as acceptable to only a small fraction of the population. In his book *The great disruption: human nature and the reconstitution of social order*, the *The Genealogy of Morality*, F. Fukuyama asks where moral standards come from, giving a partial example of the spontaneous emergence of moral standards that people created e.g. to organise travel to work by private cars (called "slug collection" Fukuyama, 1999, pp. 155–156). It can be argued that similarly as partial standards arise under some specific social conditions, general moral standards emerge spontaneously as well under the conditions of social cultural life alone.

The concept of moral relativism is therefore a more general term, which also encompasses ethical relativism. Ethical relativism is associated with a plurality of ethical concepts and the impossibility of privileging any of these. Moral relativism is more generally related to cultural plurality, both intercultural and intracultural, and the impossibility of universalising any of the two.

"Ethical competence" refers to one's skills of possessing a particular ethical theory. Consequently, ethical competence is in the possession of "ethics experts", who have developed ethical theory and know how to use it. Adopting the value of plurality, something which most contemporary ethical concepts declare to belong to, however, assumes a new concept of ethics and

ethical competence, because that can no longer refer to a mere advocacy of universal standards of morality and as such are often no longer available.

Concerns are raised by, more generally, moral, as well as ethical relativism, because it is associated with the risk of moral chaos, resulting in the gradual decay of society. Morals are rightly considered an important civilising factor, i.e. one that contributes to the establishment of a social order. Not only is morality establishing order in relationships between people, but it also shapes the human personality. Contrary to that, the absence of morality necessarily generates nuisance and progressive social and personal destruction.

Concerns of moral relativism, however, are based on an illegitimate identification of morality with its absolutist version. The opposition between relative and absolute concepts of morality is not the opposition between morality and the negation of morality. Indeed, relativistic morality is one capable of, in a more adequate and chiefly equitable manner, regulating life in a society that organises itself on democratic principles. In this context, one can recall W. Welsch's thoughts, who in his lectures points out that the current Western democracy is developed as a guarantor of plurality, because democratic politics are based on values protecting plurality. Liberal democracy, in his view, can be regarded as an organisational form of legitimate ambiguity (Welsch, 1988, pp. 45–50).

Proof of this is the defining of basic human rights primarily as negative freedoms and in fact just as the rights on dissent (otherness) providing plurality. Classifying freedom as positive and negative, I. Berlin regards lack of freedom as the greatest social evil. Social lack of freedom arises, in his opinion, as a result of the positive concept of freedom. Following this concept means that individuals are enslaved in the name of higher (supra-individual) ideals, while a negative concept of freedom is liberating, because it is setting us free from the necessity to conform to the values that transcend us, enabling us to live our lives our way, that is, free (Berlin, 1969, pp. 47–100). Naturally, by emphasizing the requirement for individual freedom, Berlin did not aim at promoting evil; rather, he was convinced that it is the absolutisation of certain values, including moral values, which necessarily leads to evil.

In a democratic society in which we wish to live, there reigns plurality and freedom as an option to choose one's morality. Living in a free society puts on one great moral demands, because knowing what's what in the moral world is often difficult, which increases the risk of moral failure. An evil man is one who knowingly violates morality, usually because of personal gain or maliciousness. Sometimes, however, even people who do not think they are bad - quite the contrary honestly desire to be good people - behave badly.

Ethical competence is particularly an ability of presenting and explaining criteria allowing one to assess their steps correctly in terms of morals.

Moral development in the Western society can be interpreted as a gradual realisation of the fact that one cannot easily absolutise and universalise moral values of particular cultures, whilst showing at the same time how paradoxical any attempts at relativism is. As Western culture tries to overcome totalitarianism as an effort to absolutise certain systems of values that might establish a universal cultural-social unity, i.e. totality, this being done primarily through the concept of basic human rights, which is however to become a universal moral norm, it is totality that becomes a means of overcoming the totality, now meaning the one represented by the basic concept of human rights. While Western culture recognises that European ethnocentrism is nothing but a form of particularism, by defending universal freedoms it necessarily gets in the position of a bearer of universal morality, which however denies the original idea of freedom based on plurality. The very idea of radical plurality is probably paradoxical, because the defence of plurality is necessarily conducted from the universalist's position. Relativism, as a recognition of the principle of equality of diverse different morals, faces the necessity of superordinating such equality with the opinion of the guarantee of equality.

If, however, the idea of plurality and relativity of morals is termed to be paradoxical, then attempting to absolutise certain morality proves to be equally paradoxical since moral relativism is the logical consequence of the impossibility of absolute justification. Giving rational grounds for the Absolute is impossible since reasoning something means to submit reasons (arguments) that necessarily imply the matter being reasoned. The matter being reasoned is thus derived (secondary) in relation to the arguments used for justification. The Absolute cannot however be secondary, since it would only become something relative. Relative values are uncertain and potentially arbitrary, thus requiring justification using absolute values. However, anything that might justify absolute values is no longer available. The justification requirement is however even not applicable to absolute values, as these are necessary by definition.

Realising the impossibility of absolute justification prevents us from absolutising certain moral positions. This may include a "paradox of authority", which is highlighted by J.F. Lyotard in his *The Differend// Le Différend* (1988). Hegemony of certain morals is justified by certain authorities. But authorities require justification, too. The conclusion can be reached that the hegemony of certain moral positions is legitimised through authorities legitimised through legitimised moral positions. Quotation: "Attempts to legitimise an authority lead to a vicious circle (I am an authority

for you because you have authorised me to be), *petitio principii* (authorisation authorises the authority), the *ad infinitum* regression ("x" is authorised by "y" that is authorised by "z"), the paradox of idiolect (God, Life, etc. has determined me to exercise my authority, I was the lone witness to this revelation)" (Lyotard, 1988, p. 230). The quote lists the logical errors that people make when attempting to justify in an absolute manner.

In spite of the argumentation difficulties with absolutising certain moral attitudes, absolutising certain positions is however the most rational approach since absolute relativism denies itself (even relativism should be relative, otherwise it becomes dogma, which is a worse form of absolutism). Relativism, as recognition of absolute equivalence of different morals, leads ultimately to the denial of morality as such (even one in its plurality form). Everyone could, in the case of a moral failure, argue that there are diverse morals (which however also means that no morality as a binding standard exists), so why should I follow any morality? This in terms of morals might make absolutising the moral relativism not only counterproductive, but also self-defeating. Absolutising relativism logically leads to claiming that any human action is either always good or always bad. Both alternatives mark the end of morality, because it is conversely based on the option of being good or evil, and the need to choose between the two.

The basis for ways of handling the relativism issue that is considered productive is making the distinction between the two possible situations in which human actions take place: the "normal" and "abnormal" situations. The two life situations that are in principle possible also require different approaches of ethical competence.

Under normal circumstances, there is consensus on the appropriate conduct in the culture to which we belong or with which we identify ourselves. We behave normally, i.e. to the standards regulating the culture as a relatively autonomous unit. Disputes – if any – can be handled, because morality as a set of accepted standards is a valid criterion of moral assessment. (For example, a conflict between a teacher and a student in a university can be addressed because there is a consensus on the moral standard that regulates the relationship between the teacher and the student. What's more, moral standards may even be explicitly expressed in the relevant code of ethics). The moral assessment that complies with applicable standards can be considered fair. Under normal circumstances, absolutising moral standards is legitimate.

The situation becomes complicated when there is a lack of consensus. Such situations are to be referred to as abnormal. Under an abnormal situation, one cannot behave normally because there is no consensus about what is normal, i.e. there is a lack of consensus regarding the applicable

standards. In such cases, any moral assessment is more problematic. In this situation, any traditional concept of justice based on the assumption of the existence of generally applicable universal rules by which any conflict can be impartially judged is failing.[2] Abnormal situations require a new concept of justice - one that leaves the idea of universal standards and impartial judges whilst unable to leave the very possibility of moral assessment, as that would lead to the denial of morality, which would never produce justice. Though moral assessment, under abnormal situations, is not based on justification (or vice versa inability to justify) of action using applicable (recognised) values, the need to justify alone persists. Justification can no longer rely on absolutised standards, but must take into account standards having only a relative validity.

We will now try to indicate more specifically reasons for moral failure under both normal and abnormal situations, and concretise the concept of ethical competence that is to effectively prevent moral failure. The concept of J.F. Lyotard is to be followed, who distinguishes two types of moral conflict in his *The Differend// Le Différend* (1988): *litigations* and *différends*. *Litigations* and *différends*express a moral conflict in normal and abnormal situations. *Litigations* are controversies handled in the context of generally accepted morality, whilst *différends* lack consensus as different moral worlds collide.[3]

The root cause of moral failure, both under normal and abnormal situations, is the inability to consider the specific situation as being a moral type, i.e. an action falling within the area of moral assessment. It is assumed people behave badly because they exclude their actions from the sphere of morality, incorporating them into the realm of techniques. It is worth recalling the well-known experiment (called "Punishing teacher"), which was performed by the U.S. psychologist Stanley Milgram at Yale University in 1963. This experiment is interpreted here just as the inability to put a given action into the sphere of morality. Experimental teachers (regular students),

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[2] The lack of sustainability of the modern concept of justice is something highlighted by, for instance, T. Hauer, reasonably stressing the need for a new concept of justice that would better reflect today's "postmodern situation" (Hauer, 2010, pp. 195–210).

[3] There is litigation when opponents agree on the genre of discourse to bring into play to resolve their dispute. As a result of this basic agreement, one can prove that he has suffered damage and may be compensated for it. In contrast to litigation, a case of *différend* between two parties takes place when "the 'regulation' of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom." As a result, the wronged party is "reduced to silence" and "deprived of the means to argue". Lyotard describes these different ways of reducing someone to silence as "the silence of the witness, the deafness of the judges, and the inconsistency (insanity) of the testimony."

while accepting the moral value that people should not be tortured, excluded their action from the sphere of morality, putting it as part of the experiment into the realm of techniques. Students acted immorally (committing evil) stemming from the assumption that it solves a technical problem (testing the effect of punishment on increased learning effectiveness), and did not realise that their behaviour was necessarily a moral problem at the same time. Or, a more general example; while recognising the value of an individual in our culture (see Kant's categorical imperative: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1993, p. 91),[4] but in practice, the individual is often relegated to the role of means of achieving higher profits.

The question then is, when the action becomes a moral problem and falls in the area of moral assessment? The answer is simple: whenever it touches the values recognised in a given culture. An evil act is one that is contrary to recognised values and cannot be justified by values. This applies equally to negotiations in normal and abnormal situations. In an abnormal situation, although there is no consensus on moral values, because the moral worlds of different cultures do not match, but the problem continues to be a moral issue, and needs to be assessed so. Even actions contrary to the values of our culture need not be evaluated as evil as they can be successfully justified by the values of the culture which that individual adopts. It results from the above that the primary ethical competence to prevent moral failure is the ability to draw attention to situations in which the action must be assessed from a moral aspect. Ethics should reflect the world as a moral issue.

What follows are brief reasons for moral failure in a normal situation, providing partial ethical competencies that should prevent it:

1. The individual knows that their action falls within the area of morality, identifies themselves with the respective culture and knows that it is right to comply with its values; they however do not know exactly what they involve, unable to properly interpret or apply them. Here the ethical competence reflects knowledge of morality, and ethics fulfil their teaching function (educational). A specialist in ethics has a task to inform about the morals of

[4] To which, however, Sloterdijk raises criticism that any attempt to think "first" of others is doomed to failure, because thinking cannot leave its place in the self. Negating the primacy of self-love would mean distorting the real conditions; this initial misrepresentation also being something for which F Nietzsche blames Christianity. Bourgeois morality seeks to preserve the semblance of altruism despite the fact that all other bourgeois thinking is based on egocentrism, both in theory and in economics (Sloterdijk, 1998).

the respective culture, explaining the importance and sense of moral values and partial standards, teaching them to apply and cultivating moral habits, etc.

2. Another reason for moral failure is doubt about the correctness of the morals of the culture to which one belongs and the resulting question, if identifying with it is proper. Here ethics begins to fulfil their specific theoretical function. The theory's task is justification. In terms of ethical theory, this involves a dual rationale: the ethical theory should be a) explaining morality, i.e., finding the causes for its specific condition; and b) defending it, i.e. presenting reasons for acceptance and promotion of the same. Thus, the ethical theory is answering two basic theoretical questions: "Why is my culture's morality the way it is?" and "Why do I follow?" The ethical competence involved in this case is one of a theorist who is able to capture the essence of morality of the culture (as opposed to that of a teacher, the function of which is primarily educational).

3. Violation of the consistency of action can be considered a separate reason for moral failure. Although the individual identifies with the values of their culture and is ready to follow them, they are unable to arrange the values to form a logically consistent whole (i.e., system). The ethical competence involved here is theoretical as well. A theorist is able to systematically arrange and interpret morality. This is related to the theoretical ability of justifying the specific kind of arrangement (and especially a hierarchy of values and norms).

In abnormal situations, there is a conflict of autonomous moral worlds. Individual moralities are different in that they express a specific method of regulation of different cultures, which are characterised by some sort of autonomy. Attempts to assess one culture using criteria of a distinct culture are improper because it undermines the value of equality. This applies to promoting standards of one culture in a distinct culture, because it interferes with freedom as the right to a specific way of life of those who identify with that culture. Last but not least, attempts to condemn someone for conduct that is consistent with the values of the culture, with which the acting person in question identifies as improper, as it is unjust (denies the principle of giving everyone what belongs to them). It turns out that the recognition of moral relativism assumes, perhaps somehow paradoxically from some perspective, consensus in certain universal (thus absolute) values, as otherwise the value of pluralism and the relativism resulting from the same could not be justified. The values of equality, freedom and justice appear to be a minimum requirement. In an abnormal situation, ethical competence should consist in the ability to create a normative framework allowing fair solutions to moral conflicts stemming from intercultural or intracultural differences. In today's

world, characterised by a plurality of values, any similar competence proves to be important.

If the culture in which the value of plurality is regarded as the dominant one is referred to as a postmodern culture, then it makes sense to refer to the ethical theory that would theoretically form the foundation for the value of plurality as the postmodern ethics.[5] Postmodern ethics does not interfere with the content of different moral worlds, because it would thereby deny the value of plurality it promotes. Its standards have only a formal character.

Present below, as a proposal to consider, a list of (a) ethical principles and (b) specific moral norms that might regulate life in a pluralistic postmodern world dominated by moral relativism:

As regards (a) Ethical principles:

1. The principle of justification. Good is what can be justified by relevant values (i.e., there is a possibility of justification, in terms of both clarifying and defending). We can distinguish an active justification, when we ourselves are able to justify, and a passive justification, when we expect the same from others.

2. The principle of universality. Good is what is good at least for the members of my culture. This general argument of Kant's categorical imperative "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction" (Kant, 1993, p. 30) is interpreted here as a requirement to conform to the values that are capable, in a desirable manner, of regulating the society to which one belongs.

3. The principle of fairness. It is a personality's presumption of good. Good assumes conformity of individuals to the standards that are considered binding to that society. A good (honest) person is one who is acting as expected.

Postmodern ethics adds to these principles one referred to as

4. The principle of relativism. It means respect for the different and rejection of totalisation. It promotes the rule that our decisions in matters of morality should be accompanied by knowing that our decision is never correct

[5] Postmodern ethics is something covered by, among others, Honneth, who argues that "while in its early days the postmodern philosophical movement was clearly directed against any type of normative theory, this initially defensive attitude changed over time" (Honneth , 1994, p. 91). However, even though Honneth even refers to an "ethical turn" in postmodern authors such as Derrida or Lyotard, we are aware of the fact that postmodern ethics, in the sense of a complex theory, does not exist. The presented study is seen programmatically as it strives to contribute to the definition and justification of postmodern ethics as a theory that would be reflecting the plurality and moral relativism of contemporary society, drawing normative implications from these cultural phenomena that are dominant today.

to the absolute, but only relative extent. This implies necessary humility that protects the society from evil called fanaticism.

As regards (b): The listing of specifically postmodern moral standards forms the application of the postmodern relativism principle to the field of human conduct and is based on the assumption that ethics primarily involves a practical philosophy, i.e. a normative discipline that defines and justifies the standards of conduct. These allow moral evaluation, as well as having a prescriptive function. So-called descriptive ethics, which is defined more broadly as a theoretical reflection of the objective phenomenon of morality, is considered here to only be a preliminary knowledge that is to furnish us with arguments enabling the formulation of moral standards. A moral standard is then defined as a statement formulated by deontic operators: "is permissible", "is commanded", and "is prohibited".

Three standards are considered by in the present paper to be the main specific moral norms formulated by postmodern ethics to regulate life in a pluralistic society:

1) *It is permissible* to support different moral values, to live different moral worlds. One should however note that this applies when we want to keep ourselves on the ground of Good, in compliance with certain general ethical principles.

2) *It is prohibited* to absolutise one's (only relative and particular at all times) moral position, i.e., the "prohibition of totalisation".

3) *It is commanded* to take into account different moral demands when handling moral disputes.[6]

As a conclusion, it is necessary to return to the problem of ethical competence and make some kind of summary. It is clear that morality works even without its theoretical reflection and one can be a good man even without ethics. In general, however, thinking determines human life and theory can dramatically improve thinking through adding a systematic approach and particularly reasoning. Moreover, as an institutionalised form of thinking, it consistently relies on the knowledge accumulated by science, thus protecting us from the limitations of an individual, the dangers of dogmatism, prejudice, inconsistency etc.

In a normal situation (meaning one involving a traditional consensus on matters of morality), people automatically behave normally and spontaneously comply with the standards, i.e., what is considered normal in the group and for which they were brought up. An issue may occur if the individual still does not know what is right (is "uneducated"), and therefore

[6] Similarly, Welsch allocates two positive and two prohibiting requirements that he places amongst the standards of postmodern ethics (Welsch, 1996, pp. 39–41).

needs to be finished in terms of education. Alternatively, they know that but do not act accordingly and need to be moralised. When one knows what is good and right, then everything is just a technical problem - one just has to find effective means of enforcing desirable morality. In a situation where one is not sure what is good (because Good was not disputed), any special ethical reflection is not urgently needed, perhaps just in the form of developing academic discipline. For the practical regulation of life, a pre-reflexive intuitive moral sense is sufficient, one that is determined by education and enforced through social judgment.

However, the situation changes radically when the general (civilisation) consensus on fundamental issues of moral standards disappears due to, for example, intercultural contacts, disagreements between classes - i.e. conflicts arising from the antagonism of interests of various strata of society, the growth of intracultural plurality, ideological plurality, etc.). Subsequently, the pre-philosophical moral consciousness ceases to be sufficient and a special theoretical reflection is required, one offering more precise justification of moral standards that might provide reasonable regulation of social life.

"Ethical relativism" is a term used for the inability to privilege a partial ethical concept. Sourcing from a collective monograph *Etické teórie súčasnosti* (2010), which translates as "Present-day Ethical Theories", we can provide at least 15 different ethic systems (the number can even be significantly increased), which differ in how they define the subject of ethics and the method of theoretical reflection of the chosen subject. They differ in the methodology used and the divergence of views as to how ethical theory should be applied and what specific recommendations for practical life should be designed, if any. The basic divergence, however, relates to the manner of justifying certain moral positions. Every ethical justification is based on certain recognised values and the ultimate justification is the value that is considered critical. Many ethical concepts are compatible, because they are justified by common values, differing only in their application methods. In such cases, ethical competence involves the knowledge of relevant ethical approaches offered by different concepts along with the ability to combine these reasonably and apply as appropriate.

Ethical relativism, however, may exacerbate in the event of disagreement as to fundamental values. These events are what is reflected by Lyotard in his *The Differend// Le Différend* (Lyotard, 1998). Discourse is something which a moral conflict becomes when it cannot be solved on the basis of universal values because of participants to the controversy supporting incompatible versions of the world, thus using different values as they argue. Any determination of universal rules is considered only as absolutisation of a particular position that becomes injustice in relation to the different.

Hegemony of a position means injustice towards diverging positions, because of doing evil to those differing positions, i.e. action of such positions is not judged in accordance with the values with which they themselves identify.

A radical evil is committed if injustice and possible injury cannot even be articulated in the context of the values applied by the hegemony ("prohibited possible phrases", as it is specified by Lyotard (Lyotard, 1988, p. 227) in the spirit of the analytic tradition. As an example of absolute evil, J.F. Lyotard provides exploitation of hired workers who cannot articulate their harm within the capitalist system, because within such a system work is defined only as a commodity. [(Lyotard summarises: "This injustice results from the fact that any phrase universes and all of their linking are, or may be, subordinated to the finality of capital alone (but does capital represents any genre of discourse?) and assessed accordingly. Such finality is claiming universality, because it seizes, or may seize, any phrase. Injustice caused by capital to phrases will then be a universal injustice" (Lyotard, 1988, p. 273)]. Ethical competence, which in this context is offered by postmodern ethics, presents the ability of drawing attention to *différends*, preventing the *différends*. to turn into a *litigations*, i.e. preventing unjustified absolutisation of any version of the world with its respective values.

It is believed that every ethical theory is ultimately anchored by a worldview. "Worldview" refers to basic beliefs that determine the way one understands the world and what is also regarded its highest value. There are chiefly three alternatives that justify three possible fundamental ethical positions:

1. Man[7] can be considered the ultimate value, and then it is a secular humanist ethics. Successful formulation for the basis of such ethics is given, for instance, by Ricken in his *General Ethics*/*Allgemeine Ethik* (Ricken, 1989), which develops Kant's moral philosophy.

2. God can be considered the ultimate value - then it is a religious ethics. Man does not cease to be a value, but human life is subordinated to absolute values that come from God. Determining for ethics is then not the word of Man, but the word of God, i.e. Bible.[8]

3. Nature can be considered the ultimate value, and then it is a naturalistic ethics. Justifying values argues using human nature, the natural origin of

[7] In this text, possible different concepts of Man have not been reflected on deliberately, these also subsequently influencing potential different concepts of Man as a moral being (Petrucijová, 2011).

[8] Considered a complete self-expression of Christian ethics in its dialogue with other concepts and current social practice can be Karl-Heinz Peschke's book *Christian Ethics/Christliche Ethik* (Peschke, 1995).

morality, and in particular the need to subordinate human egoism to the value of Nature. Some formulations of naturalistic ethics resources can be found in representatives of so-called socio-biology or biocentrism-oriented environmental ethics (Petrucijová, Feber, 2009, pp. 228–232).

It is sure that we humans can never get rid of the human perspective when assessing anything, and, from this perspective, one is always the centre of its own world. Even in ethics, it is naturally about humans and moral regulation of their social life. The question however remains, whether one is sovereign in morality and ethics, or postulates values that transcend the person, and whether in this case that super-human value, to which one should conform, is God or Nature. Ethical competence in handling worldview disputes is the knowledge of the history of philosophy, it offering sensible ways of justifying different worldview positions.

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Selected Impacts of the Dispute between Liberalism and Communitarianism in Contemporary Ethics and Law

Peter Rusnák

Abstract
Modern democracy and human rights constitute an indissoluble unity. Liberalism and communitarianism open new discussions about the significance of justice in the current legal situation. State etatism is impossible to question. The question is to what extent it can be allowed in social and also economic spheres of everyday life. These very questions separate the politics, philosophy of justice and ethics of the 20th Century. Communitarianism judges and critically checks the fundamental ideas of liberalism. The dispute's meaning between liberals and communitarians is one of political and moral philosophy. Communitarians assume that strong individualism is an obstruction to effective operation of free society and accordingly also the legal state. Immoderate perception of the subject's role signification, one's own functioning in society and exaggerated effort of the realisation of one's own rights obstruct liberals from constituting an effective and justly operated legal state. The topicality of human rights theory in the context of ongoing discussions in the area of moral philosophy can also enrich other themes and problems which are found in current ethical thinking. One of the recurring themes in present day moral philosophy concerns comprehension of the human person's personhood. A more fundamental principle of individuation is my selection for the other and that is inherent to the ethical relationship to the other. The worth of my personhood is an important assumption for an authentic understanding of human rights. Personhood connected with freedom and the challenge to justice is that which express fundamental human rights.

Keywords: ethics, law, communitarianism, liberalism, discourse, values

One of the principal attributes of a modern democratic society is the declaration and observance of human rights. It seems that democracy and human rights create an inseparable unity. The concept of a modern democratic state that does not exercise human rights in its legal system is unthinkable and impossible. Despite the notion that human rights theory cannot inspire creative discussion about its importance, it is indeed its open-endedness and vagueness that stimulates new and inspiring possibilities in philosophical-legal and ethical discourse. Systematic human rights theory should deal with questions of the origins and legitimization of human rights, their relationship to legal determinism, possibilities for its modernization, revisions in the light of positive law and if violated, how they would be enforced and which

transgressed rights should take priority. Last, but not least, human rights theory also has to reflect topical discussion about the importance and value of justice in contemporary society.

The understanding of justice and the right to justice is as old as the human race. It is one of the most important moral imperatives for every individual as well as one that is fundamentally defined by the state. The demand for justice translates into the right to fair rules of life, clearly formulated social status and the right to a just social system. Liberal ideas of justice are still alive in real politics as well as in the concept of the legal state. In general, liberalism is considered to be an effective pragmatic ideology. It has gained an important position in the political system, and significantly influences modern and contemporary society. It is a political current that has a rich tradition and a special position in the social structure of the world. In liberal democratic society, every person has recognized inviolable rights – formulated by the general will of the people, hence the will of every individual. As both a legal and social expression of human freedom, human rights allow us to use our abilities and knowledge to achieve our desired goals. That is also one of the reasons why political powers should respect them. Society has to regulate some human relationships, because they are vital for its survival, stability and further development. The state brings order into our relationships. Statism is indisputable. The question is to what extent it can be allowed to enter social and economic life. These are the questions dividing 20th century liberals. Within liberalism, there are various ideas about what justice is. Liberals begin from various starting points and come to different conclusions about a just society, but never accept violence or violations of individual freedoms as a tool to secure justice. For instance, while on the one hand there are those who support the possibility of state initiated economic re-distribution, on the other, there are those who consider re-distribution to be a restraint of personal freedoms and thus prioritize a free economy over any state interventions. At the end of the last century, there was a new discussion about the meaning of liberalism, its legitimate extent and its influence on society, as well as about its main shortcomings.

Communitarianism critically evaluates basic ideas of liberalism. For a new understanding of the importance of human rights it is crucial to look at the discussion between liberals and communitarians dealing with basic questions of politics and law – discourse about justice, values, freedom, equality, community, political power, distribution, civic society and democracy.

The basis for the argument between liberalists and communitarians is political and moral philosophy. The critical text by John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971) is the key factor in the discussion. Many authors from various academic fields contemplate community identity, in political or moral

terms. Helena Hrehová thinks that "personal, national, cultural and religious identity presents a 'face of the society', its intellectual and willpower functions as well as its philosophical-ethical and educative aspects" (Hrehová, 2010, pp. 20–21). One of the key components of a contemporary post-industrial society is the accelerated individualization of subjects. Its existence can be traced to a breaking away from existing social bonds. This process is an epochal social change. Sociologists focus on specific research about how this social process has occurred. The freeing of social bonds enabled the growth of prosperity in personal activities and the strengthening of individualization. These changes are visible in postmodern ideas: in the multiplication of life orientations and the final superseding of universalist moral principles. As Eva Orbanová writes, "The phenomena of post-modernism enter diverse areas of human thinking and naturally don't avoid religiosity. Similarly to philosophy, a philosophy of life, art and religion, postmodernism emphasizes plurality, relativism, asymmetry, but mostly, eclecticism and syncretism" (Orbanová, 2010, p. 67).

An analysis of new life styles led to a wider discussion between the followers of liberalism and communitarianism – dealing with basic ethical, legal and political issues. The intention of questioning liberal theories and principles by communitarians is an attempt to prove that the decay of the society can always be traced to the very subjects that do not have strong bonds of social contacts. The importance of social context is evidenced by reflections upon the issue of identity in psychological, philosophical, and particularly ethical discourse.

The essence of liberalism is the strengthening of the basic rights of an individual, which has been criticized by communitarians for reducing the importance of social context in the state. Communitarians presume that securing basic individual human rights is not a sufficient factor for a fully functioning society. And although liberals show their support for the "social contract" that helps to establish justice within the society, it is not enough for communitarians.

Communitarians' critique of liberalists' theories can be divided into two streams. The first is characterized by a strong anthropological-philosophical critique. It is represented by Alasdair MacIntyre. According to him, it is liberalism that caused the decay of the importance of the state and society. MacIntyre agrees with the opinion that modernism led to the degradation of moral values. MacIntyre, influenced by Aristotelian tradition and the classical peripatetic theory of virtues, avows to the notion of *eudaimonia* (MacIntyre, 2004, pp. 176–193). According to MacIntyre, a person should behave virtuously and within moral values, because it is the only way to achieve

his/her real good. The happiness of a person is connected to his or her virtuous behavior (MacIntyre, 1993, pp. 173–199).

Less recognized, Charles Taylor represents the other stream. Taylor maintains that existence and the strong position of basic individual rights in liberalism leads to social and political consequences in the society. Similarly in Slovakia at one time, Taylor, together with Ľudovít Štúr criticizes individualism and liberalism, since, in his view they lead to abstract and inanimate liberty and equality. He also considers liberalism and individualism to be a manifestation of one's egoistic and individual interests (Krištof, 2011, p. 46). Consequently, Charles Taylor analyzes characteristics of negative and positive political concepts that enable him to describe different understandings of freedom more precisely. He emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in social life and their need for self-realization, while he understands freedom as a common good (Taylor, 2001, pp. 45–54).

Communitarians believe that strong individualism is an obstacle for the effective functioning of a free society and thus also the legal state. The exaggerated importance of the subject and its role in society as well as the zealous ambition to exercise one's rights prevent liberals (John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Robert Nozick, Friedrich August von Hayek) from constituting an effective and just legal state.

That is why communitarians try to formulate their own post-capitalist or anti-industrial understanding of justice and the value of law in opposition to strong liberal individualism. They elaborate on the discussion about the value of the legal state in the areas of moral motives and bonds, which are important conditions for the preservation of free institutions in contemporary democracies. Consequently, they explore to what extent individuals depend on social bonds while formulating their own identity. This allows communitarians to ask how possible forms of integration of social values could act against the destructive tendencies of ongoing individualization (using new forms of social solidarity) without disrupting radical values of pluralism in liberal democratic societies.

The present form of liberalism is widely respected as a correct form of ideology in the postmodern state. During its long-term evolution, liberalism formulated itself into a world-view that tries to emphasize the role of the individual and individual rights, advocating support for individualism and the need for freedom for each individual. "The Liberal approach, based on valuing freedom of expression, diversity of opinions and respect for individual freedom and responsibility had an influence on their opinions (in the thinking of New School, note by author) about the idea of Slavic mutuality and its contribution" (Martinkovič, 2011, p. 33). Liberalists come with the notion that every individual has the right to decide how to live and

make decisions based on their own opinions and interests. Liberalists promote the State's role in guaranteeing some basic human rights and freedoms, such as right to live, free speech and the protection of property. Liberalists respect the importance of the state, but in a minimal scale. The role of the state is to guarantee certain rights, but its intervention in these rights should be limited. Liberalists strongly refuse violence, as their vision of a state is strictly democratic. They also deal with the question of the structure of a society, characterized by providing law and freedom for all citizens.

Communitarians criticize liberalism, its ideology and values as well as the notion of individualism itself. They consider liberal theory to be selfish and blame it for emphasizing the autonomy of each individual and for the weakening of traditional values and principles of solidarity between people. According to communitarians, the society and legal state is important by reason of keeping social balance, as well as preventing totalitarianism. Communitarians support the existence of a state as a means to maintaining order and safety as well as the possibility to solve social issues. As Paul Ricoeur says, the "fulfilled life is with others and for others in just institutions" (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 202). Communitarians see humans as social beings, whose morality and character is formed through interaction with others. As the Czech philosopher Jan Sokol writes in his newest book, "only institutions can be a tool that connects and strengthens the influence of those individuals, whose voice would not be heard in modern mass societies" (Sokol, 2010, p. 190).

While seeking the best structure for a just society, it is important to recognize which institutional measures are necessary to provide for the inviolability of its citizens. At the same time, we also have to answer the question about which shared vision of the good is necessary for the functioning of a just state. Justice and solidarity become inter-connected in the search for economic and political rules and ethical values for the just state today. There is a new direction in the contemporary United States and continental thinking that attempts to create an integrating theory in the form of deliberative democracy that would pay as much attention to creating a unified society as it does to keeping the differences within. Liberalists as well as communitarians defend the institutional anchoring of participatory democracy and republicanism. The common goal is the modernization of western democracies. The seduction of a totalitarian State, or totalitarian practices in general, remains a threat. Discussions that lead to the final reinforcement of liberal positions, as liberal political justice are more and more a meta-value or a political principle (which results from its reflexive status towards concrete values). But if we want to be successful in our fight against growing social alienation and apathy in society, which are – according to communitarians –

the results of excessive liberalization, politics has to come back to questions about the meaning of existence, the value of the human being as well as human and citizen rights and freedoms. The arguments of communitarians are mainly based on the moral and political significance of social groups and of the state, and ask for the strengthening of civic society to protect the connection between the family and state once again.

While exploring the value of citizens' feeling of belonging, solidarity, identification and feelings of fellowship with others beyond the immediate family, we touch upon issues of political sociology and ethics. By providing a deeper understanding of the conditions needed for human rights, we understand this issue better, because liberal societies depend on communitarian solidarity, while communitarian groups can fully prosper only in a liberal and pluralistic environment.

The legitimacy of the national legal state is for now undoubted, even though nobody really has any strong and convincing reason for it. Robert Nozick thinks that national borders do not have any moral importance (Nozick, 1993, pp. 114–172). John Rawls' critics state that principles of justice should not be understood only within a particular national state, but should be used world-wide. So, at this phase, the discussion between liberalists and communitarians leads immediately to reflections about the concept of the legal state, as well as about contemporary human rights theories.

At the beginning of this study, it was stated that the discussion about the importance of human rights is still alive and part of an open dialogue in legal, political and philosophical thinking.

Human rights discourse is presently influenced by an ongoing discussion about the legitimacy of a legal (national or and international) state and about the differences in the understanding of justice between the liberalist concept of the state and the axiological approach of communitarians. The topicality of human rights theory (in the context of discussions about moral philosophy) can enrich other topics and issues uncovered by contemporary ethical thinking. One of the topics of contemporary moral philosophy deals with the notion of the uniqueness of a human being. Applying human rights in the context of a society could be summarized by the notion that rules based on equivalent and symmetrical relationships between people are important. "Liberal reciprocity is a morality of necessity – however, the ideal would be full self-sufficiency (*autarkia*) and independence, meaning a life lived in the 'natural', pre-social, ergo pre-moral state. The lack of natural resources, egoism (the negative nature of human desires) and the equality between people (the inability of one person or more people to use their power to manipulate others) requires collaboration and submission to the rules of

justice" (Barša, 2001, p. 82). However, we think that these rules are insufficient and their reasons remain unclear in concrete situations. Human rights are generally understood as rights for the human race, because they are dealing with humans as such (*animal rationale*).

Emmanuel Lévinas in his work *About uniqueness* suggests that there are some inaccuracies in this understanding of human rights, as well as hidden, although implied implications. The term 'human race' belongs to a metaphysical tradition (also for Lévinas) – ergo tradition, whose perception of an individual and members of the human race is based on their formal differences, while the 'individual' is different from the others. The difference: one is not another one, no matter the content. Everybody is different from everybody else. Everybody excludes all others and exists separately, for him/herself: [A] purely logical and reciprocal negativity in the society of the human race" (Lévinas, 1991, p. 209). So the individual is understood in classical Aristotelian metaphysics as existence, whose fundamental nature is "preservation in being" (*persévérance dans l´être*) – freedom, that is manifested as egoism. The freedom of individuals, members of the human race, collides and negates itself. The person, as a member of the human race, inevitably ends up in open violence (*bella omnia contra omnes*) – which is the antithesis of securing human rights. But the person is not only an individual, he/she is also unique – but not only when she/he is understood as a member of the human race, nation or group. It seems that unique is the other one, the one I am responsible for. After all, to love means to love somebody unique, unrepeatable. I cannot refuse the face that desperately asks me for help, this face is not one among the other ones, it became unique – I would consider its replacement with another one to be betrayal. Paradoxically, there is somebody else, who is more unique than the other one, and that is me. The face of the other one tells me that you, and nobody else, have to help me. My uniqueness is based on my irreplaceability, in the commitment, promise, that I and not anybody else, have to perform an act of mercy and love. Lévinas says: I am the chosen one. That makes me unique. The source of uniqueness is in being chosen in the responsibility for another.

The idea that the more fundamental principle of individualization (than individualization within the human race) is to be chosen for another, which is inherent to ethical relationship towards another, is quite unusual for Lévinas. He states that human rights belong to "I" and are not derived from others. Lévinas talks about "uniqueness from every different aspect, uniqueness logically indistinguishable from "I" (Lévinas, 1987, p. 160). "I", in my responsibility for others, am irreplaceable and unique. This uniqueness remains intact in its concreteness. Even in the middle of all restrictions of being, history and logic, I stay free. Uniqueness connected to freedom is that

tool that expresses and protects fundamental human rights. No person is too similar to another person. According Lévinas, everybody has to realize that the world is created just for me. In the context of his philosophy, it is not a call for egoism, but the opposite – I and irreplaceable I (I and nobody else) have the responsibility for the real: responsibility for the real future, for the "possibility to handle it" (Lévinas, 1997, p. 31), which cannot be done alone, but in relationship with others. In a relationship that starts "in meeting with the other one, that is different, in which the 'I' is not lost in the sharing through the undifferentiated 'us', but it is the secret of relationship, in which the flow of possibilities goes beyond the boundaries of the possible and in which is the possibility for a new life, fertility" (Svobodová, 2005, p. 99).

In conclusion: life and the still evolving concept of human rights today also draws from the prolific discussion between communitarianism and liberalism about the importance and new understanding of the value of justice in contemporary society. The question of distributive justice, the level of statism, possibilities of value based politics, invisible hands of economic utility, as well as the justification of axiological challenges in civic society – all of these elements influence contemporary human rights theory. It seems as if the classic concept of human rights, as self-evident and guaranteed by society, can be seen as obsolete. It will be important to consider not only the classical premise of individual rights, but especially the value of one's uniqueness for a new understanding of human rights. Even though humans are part of the human race, their belonging to the human race doesn't challenge their uniqueness or their absolute incomparability and dissimilarity to other members of the race. A person is unique in front of the face of the other that lays claim to him/her. Being unique, humans have freedom, despite the external restrictive circumstances, while this freedom is a glimpse of the absolute. Based on this glimpse, I can say that the world was made for me, because I am chosen to be responsible for another. That can take away my uniqueness, the base for my freedom. The value of my uniqueness is an important condition for the authentic understanding of human rights. Uniqueness connected with freedom and a call for justice is what is expressed and protected by fundamental human rights.

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Conference Reports

COST Action IS1201, Scientific Kick Off Meeting – Disaster Ethics 25th – 26th April 2013, Dublin, Ireland

On 25th and 26th of April 2013, the Dublin City University, Ireland, hosted the Scientific Kick Off meeting of COST Action IS1201 on Disaster Ethics. The meeting was the first initiative to plan and formulate the future agenda of the four years long project Disaster Ethics (ends in late 2016) funded by EU COST Action (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) and to discuss it with members of the COST Action from over 27 member countries.

The conference had two main goals which, together, were supposed to stimulate the overall discussion. Firstly, four working groups were established to cover some of the main areas of research in disaster ethics; namely the working group in healthcare ethics, in research ethics, in ethics and governance, and working group reflecting the relationship of bioethics, culture and moral theory in the context of disaster. Their aim was to discuss their next steps (workshops, conferences, internships) and to fix the working plan for the first year of the project. Secondly, the main lectures and speeches introduced some of the disaster ethics topics.

The program of the meeting was divided into two days and four keynote lectures. Internationally recognized researcher presented their research outcomes and experiences from different professional and academic fields in the context of disaster. The first presentation, *Refugee Background Communities (Post) Disaster: The Canterbury Earthquakes and Implications for Research,* addressed the topic of research ethics in the disaster and the post-disaster communities. Dr Jay Marlowe (University of Auckland, New Zealand) presented his experiences with conducting research in Canterbury, New Zealand, after earthquakes in 2011 and the ethical issues arising from it. The special interest was paid to how different communities in Canterbury region reacted to the post-disaster events. The afternoon presentation was given by Dr Chiara Lepora whose paper on *How disasters expose the limitations of standard ethical guidelines?* referred not only to the activities of organization *Médecins sans Frontiéres* but to the theoretical approaches to institutionalization of medical ethics and its possibilities in the disaster context, too.

On the second day of the conference, two more keynote presentations were given, first one by Professor Michele Landis Dauber (Stanford University) and the latter by Dr Andreas Reis (WHO). The first paper, *The Sympathetic*

State, historically reflected on the social politics of United States of America and its unequal approach to minorities in the case of disasters (either socio-economical, political, or environmental). The final presentation introduced WHO`s activities and their following publications and workshops in the area of ethics in epidemics, pandemics, and public health crisis. All of the presentations were followed by the discussion panels to which contributed members of the Action as well as other, non-member participants.

Three participants from Slovakia took part at the Scientific Kick Off Meeting in Disaster Ethics: Vasil Gluchman and Katarína Komenská from Institute of Philosophy and Ethics at Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, and Peter Sýkora from the Cyril and Methodius University in Trnava.

Those, who are interested in this project and its future events (e.g. conference in October 2013 in Tel Aviv, two planned workshops in the second half of the year 2013, etc.) and have expertise or experiences in ethical issues in the context of (bio)ethics and disaster, are welcome to contact chair of the Action, Dr Dónald O´Mathúna, or visit the website of the Action www.disasterbioethics.eu. There is an ongoing application process for accepting new members of the COST Action.

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Emerging Ethical Issues in Science and Technology 30th – 31st May 2013, Bratislava, Slovakia

On 30th and 31st May 2013, a conference on new and emerging ethical issues in science and technology was held in Bratislava. This conference was preceded by a *World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology* (COMEST) meeting, which was held from 27th to 29th May 2013. Both of these important scientific meetings were co-organized by UNESCO and the *Slovak bioethics commission at the Slovak National Commission for* UNESCO.

The main aim of the conference was to organize a meeting of prominent international authorities from a wide range of social and natural sciences. The purpose of the meeting was to identify emerging ethical and moral aspects closely connected to the rapid development in science and technology. More specific goals were formulated during the opening ceremony by *John Crowley of the UNESCO Division of Ethics and Global Change* and one of the senior conference coordinators.

Crowley pointed out the need for a broader discussion on contemporary scientific research, our capability of its practical application (from the UNESCO activities point of view), and our possibilities of ethical reflection of those issues. The goals identified during the opening were used as a framework for the conference program and the individual presentations held in five sections.

The first session, *Nanotechnology for Development*, was chaired by *Rajaona Andriamananjara* (newly elected president of COMEST - *Commission mondiale d'éthique des connaissances scientifiques et des Technologies*). The session was aimed at possible uses of nanotechnology for further development, and its potential to expand or minimize the differences existing in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. The positive and negative potential of development of this new technology was discussed from an ethical point of view. Session panelists were: Dr. Saeed Sarkar and Prof. Beitollahi from Iran, Prof. Marie-Hélène Parizeau, Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Université Laval (Québec City) and Prof. Stefan Luby, Senior Scientist from the Slovak Academy of Science and Center of Excellence. Panelists were asked to present their opinion on the most emerging ethical issues in science and new technology. For all the scientists, the answer lay in targeting the long term development and to consider potential negative consequences of their work. The goal of science must be the promotion of sustainable development which must reflect all of the social and natural aspects connected with the research.

The next session was closely connected to the former one and it focused on applications of nanotechnologies to water. The discussion sought for answers to questions such as: What are the primary barriers to nanotechnology in water applications? What are the health, environmental and/or ethical risks to be considered in water application of nanotechnology? Panelists discussed potential problems and benefits of water treatment with the help of nanotechnology in developing countries.

The last session of the first day of the conference aimed at exploring the major ethical issues and principles of development and use of robotics in military and civilian applications. The dominant feature of this session was a presentation by *Noel Sharkey*, a prominent British computer scientist and expert on robotics. In his presentation, entitled "*Ethics of modern robotics in surveillance, policing and warfare*", Sharkey pointed out some of the most emerging issues in relation to the increased use of robots in today's world. Issues were divided into the two main fields: robots as carers (robotic nurse assistant) which take care of children and elderly people, and robots as autonomous robotic systems in the military service.

The second day of the conference was focused on two important issues, *Ethics of the information society* and the issue of *scientific responsibility*, and their mutual connections. Both sessions had taken up on the UNESCO report *Ethical and Societal Challenges of the Information Society*. Discussions on those topics were extensions of those ones which emerged at the last *World summit on the Information Society*, held for the first time in Geneva in 2003. The aim of these sessions was to examine ethical and social dilemmas in the field of information ethics.

The opinions of the Slovak scientific community on those issues were represented by *Prof. Vasil Gluchman*, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov and the Head of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, *Prof. Viera Bilasova*, director of the Institute of Philosophy and ethics and member of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics at University of Prešov, and *Dr. Lubica Lacinova* from the Institute of Molecular Physiology and Genetics, Slovak Academy of Science. In the first morning session, Prof. Gluchman presented a paper, "Ethics in the Age of Information", on information ethics and the new, increasing responsibility of the scientific community. In the second, afternoon session, Dr. Lacinova reminded the audience about the unrealistic demands on scientific work, such as the value of neutral evaluation and she emphasized the emerging need of social and economic evaluation of scientific work. Prof. Bilasova offered new ideas on ethical aspects of responsibility in scientific practice. She mentioned the issue of mystification in science and the need for institutionalization of scientific responsibility in today's world.

The closing ceremony of the conference *Emerging Ethical Issues in Science and Technology* was presented by *John Crowley* who thanked all the participants of the conference and previous participants of the eight COMEST meetings. Crowley called for future cooperation and mutual help in establishing an information network and closer collaboration.

Ján Kalajtzidis received his PhD in Ethics at the Institute of philosophy and ethics (Faculty of Arts), University of Presov in Presov (2008-2011). He currently holds the position of a Senior assistant and has been teaching the following courses: Business ethics, Introduction to applied ethics, Professional ethics and Contemporary ethical theories. He specializes in Business ethics (with focus on the financial sector) and consequentialism.

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28th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH CARE (27-30 August, 2014)

Debrecen, Hungary

BIOETHICS AND BIOPOLITICS (CALL FOR ABSTRACTS)

The term "biopolitics" is either used as a philosophical or sociological term referring to the works of Negri, Agamben, Rose, or Foucault, who focused on the contemporary style of governing populations through biopower, or as an umbrella concept referring to public policies regarding applications of biotechnology and the life sciences. Both usages suggest, that biopolitics is a central concept for modern societies.

At the same time bioethics has become increasingly interdisciplinary and ever more politicized. Bioethical issues figure in presidential campaigns and parliamentary elections. Bioethicists are advisors for governments and frame recommendations for public policies. Bioethics and biopolitics have become deeply interwoven activities.

These developments call for reflection on the relation between bioethics and politics. If bioethics and biopolitics are highly interwoven, then how should we understand their relationship? Does politics corrupt bioethics? How does bioethics affect policy-making? How has bioethics been affected by its role in policy-making? Abstracts addressing these issues in the following categories will be favoured, although work on other topics can also be submitted.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS
Biosociality; Biocitizens; Biopiracy; Frankfurt School and biopolitics; Biopower and globalization; Foucauldian heritage.

HISTORICAL AND EMPIRICAL ASPECTS OF BIOPOLITICS
Population policies; Eugenics; Public health; Medicalization; Reproductive control as a form of biopolitics.

THE ROLE OF BIOETHICS IN BIOPOLITICS
Intergovernmental organizations in bioethics (UNESCO, WHO, Council of Europe, etc.); Human rights law and bioethics; Bioethics in the policy-making

process; Advisory bodies and commissions; Ethics committees; Deliberative processes and bioethics.

BIOPOLITICAL ISSUES AND BIOETHICAL PERSPECTIVES
End-of-life decisions; Reproductive medicine; Research with human beings; Organ transplantation; Patients' rights; Justice in healthcare; Conflicts of interests; Human enhancement.

This conference will be organised by the European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare (ESPMH, see http://espmh.org) and the Department of Behavioural Sciences, University of Debrecen, Hungary. The programme of the conference includes plenary sessions as well as parallel sessions. Anyone wishing to present a paper at the conference should submit an abstract (500 words maximum) before March 1, 2014. The Conference Programme Committee will select abstracts for oral presentation. Please send abstracts by e-mail to: Professor Bert Gordijn, Secretary of the ESPMH, Institute of Ethics, Dublin City University, Dublin 9, Ireland (E-mail: bert.gordijn@dcu.ie).
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Call for Papers

Dear colleagues,

within the project *The Status and Perspectives of Professional Ethics in Slovakia* as well *UNESCO Chair in Bioethics*, the Department of Ethics – Institute of Philosophy and Ethics and University of Prešov Press publish a journal *Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe)* paying special interest to Central European countries, however, not only to them. Journal *Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe)* is already indexed in databases *Philosopher´s Index*, *PhilPapers* as well as *Google Scholar.*

The articles are peer reviewed and should fulfil the high standards of expertise comparable with other academic journals of similar interests and authors must guarantee a high level of language in the submitted papers. As the goal of the journal is to present the results of local research to the worldwide scholarly and academic community, the journal must demand the highest standard of quality of the published articles.

It will be also possible to publish book reviews and conference reports in the field of ethics and bioethics in Central Europe (mainly in the Visegrad countries). The journal is being published twice a year in a double issue format.

Submissions of articles should be a maximum of 20 pages in length (including footnotes and bibliography), i.e. 36 000 signs including spaces. The abstract should not exceed 15 lines. The maximum length of the book review is 5 pages, i.e. 9 000 signs including spaces. The formal criteria should follow the requirements presented in the journal.