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## Contents

### *Articles*

<b>Viera Bilasová</b> Ethos and Slovak History .....	5
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<b>Oresta Losyk</b> Mnemonic Paradoxes of Human Dignity .....	15
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<b>Michal Bizoň</b> Responsibility – Reciprocity or Asymmetry? (Responsibility in Martin Buber's Thought) .....	33
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<b>Matej Cíbik</b> Rawlsian Constructivism and the Conception of Human Rights by Ladislav Hejránek .....	41
--	----

<b>Josef Kuře</b> Jonas' Contribution to the Notion of Care .....	49
--	----

<b>Rudolf Novotný &amp; Zuzana Novotná</b> Bioethical Principles in Clinical Medicine .....	67
--	----

<b>Martin Gluchman</b> The Aspects of Physician Relationship to Patient's Autonomy .....	73
---	----

<b>Katarína Komenská</b> Concept of 3 Rs as a Normative Basis for Professional Codes of Conduct of Scientists Using Animals in their Research .....	81
---	----

<b>Anna Remišová, Anna Lašáková &amp; Zuzana Búciová</b> Ethical-Economic Dilemmas in Teaching Business Ethics: The Slovak Experience .....	89
---	----

### *Book Review*

<b>Marta Gluchmanová</b> Stephen R. Palmquist, ed. (2010): <i>Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy</i> . Berlin & New York: De Gruyter .....	105
--	-----

<i>Books Received</i> .....	109
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## **Ethos and Slovak History**

**Viera Bilasová**

### **Abstract**

The paper is focused on a philosophical-ethical analysis of the history of Slovakia in terms of ethos of the European and world history. The methodological basis of the considerations is a reflection of the contribution of Slovakia as a subject of the history of mankind to the development of humanistic values in the fields of science, culture, economy and policy. Such values include human freedom, equality, justice and tolerance. Based on the analysis of the place and role of Slovakia in European and world history, even though it is a relatively young and small country, the way in which it participated in the creation and defense of fundamental values of the humanistic ethos in history can be considered unique. A part of every historical consciousness is the consciousness of guilt and responsibility for historical evil. A critical self-reflection of historical guilt and acknowledgment of historical responsibility can be considered a part of the ethos of Slovak history.

**Keywords:** ethos,<sup>1</sup> history, ethics, morality, reflection

The theoretical and methodological roots of the irrational, relativistic and pessimistic philosophy of history are the loss of faith in human reason, universal human values and human progress. History may thus appear to be a random cluster of events without logic and sense with the predominance of evil over good, falsehood over truth, injustice over justice, betrayal over fidelity. From this point of view, even the development of science, technology and economy seems to have brought more violence, cruelty and destruction. The proof of this are, especially, the world wars in the 20th century, in which the technology of destruction and killing reached such a level that man was able – unfortunately, even prepared – to destroy oneself (chemical weapons, nuclear bombs, rockets, etc.). The evidence of the irrational understanding of history is also the fact that the impending suicide of mankind during the Cold War accompanied by the arms race was not eventually prevented by human reason or moral inhibitions, but only by the fear of a nuclear catastrophe for mankind. Only the economic exhaustion of

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<sup>1</sup> Ethos can be understood as a belief or faith in the existence and validity of morality, which affects people's behaviour and actions, as a certain universal basis for morality. At the same time, ethos is an expression of this morality that gives human acting sense and importance. Ethos of the age also becomes the expression of moral awareness of each individual, while morality is perceived as an obligation which motivates a human to act correctly. At the same time, the strength of ethos of the age often operates as an "invisible" vital stream which allows the revitalization of positive values and supports a correct life orientation. The strength of morality, its values and its holders are thus seen as a paradigm of human destiny that brought us to the 21st century (Bilasová, 2012, pp. 14, 23).

the USSR during the arms race ultimately led to the search for more rational principles of the solution to the world's problems.

Thus, evil is also a part of human history, which is manifested as a deficit of freedom, truth and justice. Its holders are generally political systems and states which do not serve man, but above all the interests of powerful groups pushing forward their own selfish interests. Authoritative political power and wealth in the hands of usurpers change society, nations and states to the holders of evil and "anti-ethos". The aim of such a power is primarily the enslavement of a human being, control over the population and entire nations. Evil acquired its institutionalized form in history, whose most transparent forms were slavery and serfdom, or in modern times fascism, racism and communism. Despite the apparent prevalence of violence and evil over freedom and justice, there was not any despotic ruler in the history who would have succeeded in achieving his ultimate goal – the liquidation of freedom and justice. Eventually, "Evil Empires" disappeared under the pressure of freedom and the struggle for justice. The history of mankind is not only the struggle for power, wealth or survival, but it also includes the development of the human spirit, economic and technological progress. And even though the development of education, science, technology, and economy does not automatically lead to moral progress, freedom and justice, it implicitly involves a moral mission. Freedom and justice are born only in the fight against oppression and injustice. Evil in its manifestations such as wars, rebellions, uprisings, or revolutions represents a specific historical form of the struggle of man, a social class or a nation for freedom and justice. Thus, history does not lose its ethos even in the periods of the cruelest crises and wars, when man may lose faith in goodness and justice, when it seems that evil and violence have definitely won: "The past plays an important role which with the energy of its beginnings helps – although often in a transformed and estranged form – to keep the configuration of values, norms and rules that are specific to a given order of life" (Novosád, 1997, pp. 63–64).

Ethos of human knowledge, science and technology in the history of mankind is interwoven with economic, social and cultural progress. Man and mankind, however, do not bring freedom, justice and well-being automatically and inevitably. On the contrary, the larger the scientific, technological and economic potential in the hands of despots and dictators, the more evil, violence and threat they bring to man and all mankind. Totalitarian regimes with their despotism are trying to get rid of the science, technology, culture and economy of ethos and exploit them to suppress freedom and justice. These values, however, resonate not only in consciousness and attitudes of the individual subjects struggling for political and moral goals, but also in the spiritual realm of human society. Science, philosophy, culture or arts are in their essence autonomous and also free in political contexts and in their creative activities they manifest themselves as

holders of universal human values based on truth, creative freedom, justice, and humanity. They help to maintain and develop ethos even in the conditions of unfreedom or oppression and through the moral consciousness of individuals also to support its routing. In addition, the authentic values of philosophy, science, religion or arts carry in themselves the messages of a universal human and global ethos. Ethos, despite the complexity and contradictions of historical contexts, provides in addition the hope that humanism, as the most natural expression of the human race, will ultimately establish itself in the cohabitation of people, nations and the entire mankind. Ethos is of a growing importance especially when searching for one's own path and its realisation are associated with such human acts, which are associated with a moral acting. We are often asking "how do people find in themselves the phenomenon of responsibility for others, moral conscience and the unceasing Sisyphean effort to seek answers, explain and justify our acting?" (Machovec, 1998, p. 35).

Ethos arises from the freedom of human existence and its desire for self-realization in creativity, truth, happiness and love. Man can carry out this self-realization only in the community of other people and throughout history. Therefore, a historical ethos is consistent with the history of freedom, faith, truth, and justice. Ethos of the history of individual communities is then a participation in human emancipation through a free and righteous society, state or nation. Ethos itself is not created only by states, peoples, religions and cultures, but also by moral personalities of historical or global importance along with millions of nameless personalities as the holders of moral values. Through their active lives, these moral subjects cultivate and develop traditions, thus ensuring the continuity and vitality of ethos in the development of human society. The freedom of the whole as well as the freedom of the individual is of equal value. The society has no right to deprive individuals of freedom for the sake of "higher" goals. This ethical postulate forms a philosophical and generally theoretical basis for acting of many personalities of the national and global ethos. It stems from the fundamental principles of morality in human relations and respect to promote freedom and justice in all spheres of human society. The specific realization and fulfillment of these principles cannot be carried out at the expense of free self-realization of man, including the degree of responsibility for one's own social contexts so that the ethos of culture, policy, religion or economy was not subjected to hidden forms of violence or oppression on the part of social structures. Its strength lies in the intensity of humanity, freedom and justice enforcement. At the same time, ethos is anchored in the attitudes of pluralism, openness and tolerance that allow the participants of events to also regulate their decisions and actions in the right direction in historical contexts. Therefore, for the current period, which is often called the postmodern period, which rejects universalism of values and principles at the expense of promoting individual interests and values, it

does not hold that it can be considered the loss of ethos, but rather its new historical form.

Every historical epoch, every nation and state are the holders of their own ethos, which contributes to the humanization of society and develops the values that make up its historical heritage and at the same time allow it to create its current manifestations and forms which are marked by both temporal and spatial discontinuity. Ethos of European nations and states as a whole can be measured primarily through the development of science, education, culture, technology, economy, policy and law, which in their own ways served the development of humanism, democracy and human rights. The crucial values remain free man, nation and state, democracy, justice and tolerance. In connection with the formation of the current global ethos it should be noted that while the European ethos has served as a basis for European integration on its own values without the interference of world powers, the global ethos is the result of interactions of these powers, their interests and values. Globalization brings qualitatively new opportunities and some difficulties for the further development of science, technology, economy, policy, etc., but only in the service of democracy, freedom and respect for human rights. Only in this form can we speak about the human sense of the processes of existence, which confirm the interconnection with ethos and its values.

The history of Slovakia is an integral part of European and world history. Up to the 19th century, until the Slovak nation had been formed (in 1918, Slovak statehood was established within the Czechoslovak Republic), Slovakia did not have historical subjectivity. This does not mean, however, that people living in this territory and longing for national freedom, social justice and state sovereignty did not have their ethos and were not involved in European and world history. From a narrow historical view, before the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Slovak people were a co-subject primarily of Central European history, on the creation of which they substantially participated within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>2</sup> Ethos of this period was reflected primarily in its folk forms – development of Slovak national consciousness in the struggle against forced assimilation (national revivalists), maintaining the unique values of folk culture, folk traditions, but also the fight for social rights (people's revolts and uprisings, the highwayman tradition, observing of the Christian faith, etc.). Thus, besides important personalities, ethos was created and also shaped by the folk strata. This morality as an expression of ethos of that period was based on humanistic culture and humanistic tradition. Folk songs, tales, customs and habits, in which people expressed their desire for freedom and justice, are an indispensable and unique part of Slovak as well as European ethos.

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<sup>2</sup> It refers to the territory of Slovakia perceived in a historical context as the territory that was not geographically, politically or culturally independent and was a part of Hungary.



Ethos propagated by the folk tradition became a decisive factor for obtaining national sovereignty, state independence and social justice in the history of Slovakia because in Slovakia neither nationally oriented nobility nor the clergy had been formed. Nationally oriented intelligence was also relatively weak and inconsistent, which in addition was subjected to a systematic Magyarization. The folk ethos was deeply rooted in the Christian faith, tradition and national sentiments. The strength of the folk ethos in Slovak history was also manifested after the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic. The desire for freedom, peace and justice formed the platform of the Slovak democratic ethos, which withstood even forty years of Communist totalitarianism. In the national maturation, the moral phenomenon was undoubtedly an important constitutive element contributing significantly to the search for balance between the national, the state and the civil in Slovak society. The efforts to form the national identity<sup>3</sup> led gradually to the creation of civil society awareness for which ties to European values traditions, which included Christian values, values of European humanism and democracy, were important.

Ethos of Slovak history was also determined by the complexity of interests of the European powers for which the territory of present-day Slovakia and its inhabitants were often only an object and a part of their power interests. Even the birth of Slovakia as a subject of European history in 1918, after the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic, was the result of an agreement of the victorious powers after World War I. It should be noted that although the agreement was the expression of the Slovaks' will, national freedom and statehood were marked by the interests of the victorious powers. In these intentions, internal and foreign policy of the state was developed. Later on, based on the will of Germany, the Slovak State was established (1939), which, however, was not the expression of the will of democratically minded and oriented Slovaks. From this point of view, the Slovak State became *de jure* the subject of international law, but was not a part of the democratic ethos in European traditions either. Although the starting point was not simple, there were all the preconditions to restore and develop positive ideas and values of the democratic ethos in case of favourable international circumstances in Slovakia after World War II. Unfortunately, the Slovak ethos of pre-Munich Czechoslovakia was not subjected to deeper reflection. In spite of that it left traces on the democratic

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<sup>3</sup> The processes of the formation of Slovakia as a political entity and their reflection can be identified mainly in the literature of the period concerned, which had the character of romantic patriotism with an emphasis on the idea of Slavic reciprocity or a messianistic idea of salvation, etc. This literary message is the expression of an intellectual effort and activities of "patriots" who manifested their will to become the subject of history and in particular their determination to change the contemporary situation. It was above all a moral decision that led to national self-identification in the difficult conditions of multiethnic Hungary (Pichler, 2003; Schwanitz, 2011; Novosád, 2010; Mináč, 1993; Városová, 2003).

ethos of Slovakia that was being formed. Significantly, this resulted in the Slovak National Uprising in 1968 in an attempt to democratize socialism and culminated in the “velvet” revolution in 1989. The lack of a critical self-reflection of the history of Slovakia after the break-up of Czechoslovakia, taking into account the values of the democratic ethos, left negative marks on the Slovak historical consciousness. The Slovak public was disoriented especially in the issues of patriotism and nationalism, Slovak statehood, clericalism, confessional affiliation, the Holocaust, Aryanisation, but primarily in the issues of democracy and totalitarianism. Here, also, it is necessary to look for the reasons why communist ideology and propaganda relatively easily seized this agenda and imposed its own idea on the democratic public according to which only the communists and the Soviet Union contributed to the defeat of fascism and only these forces were able to ensure the future of Slovakia based on the principles of peaceful security and social justice.

The awareness of one’s own fault for the evil perpetrated in history should be a part of the historical consciousness of every nation. Its recognition evokes the need for self-reflection, humility and apology. In Slovak history, the unwanted heritage from the period of the breaking up of Czechoslovakia (1939) deserves special attention, when a considerable part of German fellow citizens and a part of the citizens of Hungarian nationality became the “Fifth Column”. The application of morally unacceptable right of collective guilt by the Czechoslovak government after 1945 has become the unwanted heritage of modern Slovak history. The participation of the Slovak State in the genocide of its own citizens of the Jewish religion and Aryanization of their property as well as the genocide of Romany citizens also deserves moral condemnation. The indifferent attitude of a large part of the Slovak public to such anti-human acts must also be condemned. The collaboration of a significant part of the citizens of Slovakia during the Slovak State and later under communism also remained unreflected and morally unassessed. In terms of European history, ethos of Slovakia is also burdened with moral compromises<sup>4</sup> of European democratic powers with Nazi Germany (the Munich Agreement) and Communist Russia (the Yalta Conference). These compromises significantly weakened European and Slovak ethos of the 20th century and became the source of survival for various forms of moral evil in Slovakia even in the 21st century.

This year 1948 interrupted the evolutionary process of the development of Slovak society and its inherent moral self-reflection and catharsis in the postwar period. After 1948, a violent reversal occurred in ethos formation. Against the desintegrated and weakened ethos, the Communist Party (CP) installed a politicized and ideologized form of morality and ethics, whose

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<sup>4</sup> In Munich, the Western powers sold Central Europe to Hitler in order to redeem peace and in Yalta they contributed to the legitimizing of the Soviet domination of Central Europe “in exchange for promises that have never been fulfilled” (Rupnik, 2009, p. 67).

strategic goal was the destruction of the values and ideas of the democratic ethos, its representatives, democratic traditions and ties with the European ethos. The result was that for many years to come, due to a polarized morality with the systematic features of communist ideology and policy, communist and non-communist, atheist and believer, patriot and “internationalist”, worker and member of the middle class, etc. opposed each other.

Special attention should be given to the consideration of the impact of the events after 1948, which divided Europe and its democratic ethos by “the Iron Curtain” and caused the Cold War. This had a negative impact on the emerging modern ethos in Slovakia which was reflected in two ways. The natural spiritual ties and resources of its European orientation had weakened. The Iron Curtain significantly limited the spiritual flow between Slovakia and Western Europe. The other level was represented by a spread of fear of war, which according to the CP was represented by Western European countries. During the Cold War period, the values of the European democratic ethos as well as the traditional ties, under the influence of communist propaganda, changed to evil in the form of socialist homeland betrayal, security and peace, which were punished by the repressive authorities of State. Communist propaganda benefited from economic, political and military steps that Western states took against Slovakia during the Cold War (sabotage, economic embargo, etc.) These actions had a negative impact not only on the state and the CP, but on ordinary citizens as hostages of “the Cold War”, too.

The policy of Western states “to withhold” the onset of communism in Europe also served the Stalinist ideology to create the feeling of threat and of which it drew down and justified its aggression against the people. In the 1950s, Stalinist forces through the repressive tools of the Party and State attacked democratic forces. The decision makers as the holders of the democratic ethos were persecuted and branded as traitors and nationalists and in trials many of them were also sentenced. A moral consequence of communist ideology and policy was the disruption of the moral integrity of the public and humiliation of its self-confidence, which ultimately introduced hypocrisy, duplicity and indifference into human relationships towards the manifestations of evil in society.

The spontaneity and force with which self-reflection of Slovak society associated with moral mobilization and integration of the public was developed showed that, in spite of the huge Stalinist repressions in the 1950s, the democratic ethos or its supporters in Slovakia were not eliminated. The democratic forces in the CP and society focused on moral cleansing from Stalinism or Neo-Stalinism and were seeking the European path of building socialism on the principles of humanism, democracy and openness. This also corresponded with the selection of the means of social

revival and humanization – peaceful, democratic and above all moral and ethical.

In spite of everything, democratic reform was suppressed by military forces (1968) and the subsequent normalization process hampered the formation of the Slovak democratic ethos for the next two decades. Normalization was aimed at demoralizing, disintegrating and isolating the representatives and followers of freedom and democracy in Slovakia. The aim of the normalization was the resignation of society to freedom, democracy and humanism and its result was stagnation in all areas of social life. The fact that majority of the representatives and followers of “socialism with a human face” in Slovakia and Bohemia was not able to reflect their political and moral naivety after the occupation (August 1968) not even during the normalization can also be considered a moral paradox of that period. They preserved belief in the democratization of real socialism and its utopian ideals. They understood the unreformability of communism and its anti-democratic nature only after the collapse of Glasnost and Perestroika in the Soviet Union, which resulted in the chaotic disintegration and extinction of communism in the countries of the former real socialism, including Slovakia. After Gorbachev had refused to use repressive power to rescue communism, the democratic public delegitimized its political power and the liquidation of communism was a sort of a moral revolution – as an expression of the democratic ethos.

The year 1989 can be considered a manifestation of the power of ethos in Slovakia and its interconnection with the democratic traditions and values of modern Europe. At the same time, however, it should be noted that this process was accompanied by many moral compromises. They manifested themselves mainly in the fact that the public was influenced by the morality of survival, pragmatism, passive resistance, tolerance applied to evil and the lack of self-confidence in the fight against communist morality and ethics. The weakness of the ethos was demonstrated not only in 1968 which was looking for its fulfillment in the reform of socialism, but also in 1989. The public and the representatives of the Velvet Revolution were not prepared to fight out primarily a moral struggle with the totalitarian power until the end. They were not prepared to cleanse society and to form moral values, ideas, principles and rules based on which political, economic and legal transformation of the Slovak society and the integration into European structures should have been carried out. The bodies which would be able to carry out the transformation of society along the lines of the values of the democratic ethos were missing. In addition, political power was seized by the careerists of the former structures and “businessmen” of the so-called gray economy, including criminal elements. Slovak capitalism and democracy of the 1990s were born not only without the ethos, but without the moral and legal minimum as well. Therefore, they were accompanied by the stealing of state property, corruption, clientellism and Mafia criminal

groups. The source and the criterion of the emerging national capitalism was the struggle for power and wealth without democratic rules and with no morality. On the contrary, political power and wealth were misused for anti-democratic, immoral and inhumane goals. In 1998, the democratic forces in Slovakia for the second time showed their strength and disrupted the power of post-totalitarian, nationalistic and corrupt forces that strived to direct Slovakia outside the mainstream of integrating Europe on the values of its ethos. Through Slovakia's entry into European political, economic and security structures (the EU and NATO), conditions were also created for the moral integration of Slovakia. After these historical steps by Slovakia, it was revealed in full force that it might have been the subject of European history and the European democratic ethos. It was also thanks to this that Slovakia as a relatively young country was integrated into Europe without any hindrance.

It was strongly confirmed that no state autonomy or its length are a contribution for the historical development of the nation (the so called Slovak State 1939 and the totalitarian period between 1948–1989). Only the free and democratic development of Slovakia forms its authentic historical subjectivity, it means that only independence based on the values of the democratic ethos can become a part of European history. A failure to understand this theoretical and methodological principle of historical analysis along with reflections of the historical inferiority complex is the reason why Slovak historiography and historical consciousness are impoverished in terms of the appreciation of Slovak contribution to European history.

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# Mnemonic Paradoxes of Human Dignity

Oresta Losyk

## Abstract

The article focuses on an analysis of semantic and culturoscopic senses of interrelated processes of remembering and forgetting in human consciousness. It has been proved that conscious memory means the active self-reflection of a person or a community upon the choice of value directives towards acts and actions connected with identification and representation of one's own authenticity. The research demonstrates that conscious (true) memory is realized only through the prism of ethical coordinates that reflect the dignity of a person/community as moral agents.

**Keywords:** ars memoriae, remembering, oblivion, human dignity, mnemonic paradox

*'Moral ideals are not pinks of perfection like sparkling crystals. They are plastic forms that often change with passing time, still remaining similar. Sometimes they emerge on the surface of life, others times they remain in the shadows'*  
(Mykola Shlemkevych)

*'The criterion of morality cannot be placed outside the human'*  
(Vasil Gluchman)

## Introduction

The concepts 'memory' and 'dignity' are over two thousand years old. Without any exaggeration, a vast bibliographic catalogue devoted to specialized (medical, psychological) and interdisciplinary-humanitarian (historical, sociological, anthropological, philosophical and art-critical) studies of the phenomenon of human memory is constantly enriched by new publications (Baussant, 2009). The basic monographs which laid down the foundation for modern methodology of *memory studies* in humanities were written a few decades ago.<sup>1</sup> However, numerous valuable and innovative articles let alone opinion-forming discussion panels (including those in periodicals or in TV studios) or solid transnational projects have arisen on their theoretical bases.<sup>2</sup> In other words, 'memory' as a concept and as a discourse is always of active interest both for individuals and for communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See: selected bibliography of Aleida and Jan Assman, Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Cambridge University's research initiative 'Memory at War' which invites young scholars to analyze "the dynamics of cultural forms of memory and the interactions of these forms inside and across Poland, Ukraine, and Russia" (see: <http://www.memoryatwar.org>); or projects based on the newest methodology, 'European Network Remembrance and Solidarity', are devoted to discursive understanding of tragic pages of 20<sup>th</sup> century history as solidarity agreements between European nations (see: <http://www.enrs.eu>)

Mankind's heritage has accumulated a few good definitions of 'dignity' as well. It actually follows the historical development of philosophical and ethical thought of Western and Eastern civilizations, has attracted artists and writers since ancient times, it is also present in applied dimensions in our everyday life (courts, hospitals, schools, media etc.) (Nora, 2002, pp. 4–5). Contemporary research which aims at deepening and widening the understanding of dignity "only points out numerous problems but suggests no solutions" (Gluchman, 2008, p. 88). It is possible to explain it either by referring to a post-non-classical transformation of epistemology or by appealing to the postmodern transgressive worldview. But this unexpected un-circumstantiality and even disparity of viewpoints concerning the initial interpretations, first of all, of human life shows the necessity of searching and developing its meaningful potential which corresponds to today's challenges.

So, notwithstanding their deep entrenchment into the history of ideas, the concepts of 'memory' and 'dignity' remain open to interpretation. Moreover, they mutually cross and coexist in the same spheres of human life as moral, social and private ones. Memory and dignity together legitimise the processes of individual self-identification, constitute the condition of collective existence and shape a scale of values of the cultural existence of a person and of a society. Their features are noticeable even on the physiological level: for the recording of recollection or forgetting processes special laboratories exist; and the state of human dignity is resounded in inner calls of conscience (pride, repentance, solidarity, sympathy, offence). These are the main features of a human, hence the loss of memory or dignity by all means will lead to degeneration, depersonalization, negative totalisation and, as a result, to the final destruction of the personal 'I', national 'We', and the divergent 'Other'. And on the contrary, the presence of memory and longing towards dignity are dominant premises and indispensable companions of the authentic – (self)conscious, responsible and free – human life because they fill a mere physical existence with moral challenges which are to be met.

### **Presence of the Absent vs Absence of the Present**

In order to model the cooperation between memory and dignity in the processes of cultural entrenchment of a person as a morally conscious subject, we should begin from the consistent semantic reconstruction of these notions. In the Indo-European language family, in the most ancient tongues in particular, the word 'memory' was connected with conscious thinking. To remember was to save, to fix, in other words, due to the work of the mind, to reproduce (recollect), to maintain and to transfer some experience. The proof of the unique importance of the concept 'memory-as-treasury' can be found in spiritual – mystic, religious, ethical, philosophical



– experiences of all civilizations, and also in the verbal and visual monuments of world art.

The English scholar Frances Amelia Yates laid down the foundation for the whole trend of interdisciplinary cultural studies and devoted a special place among divergent mechanisms of storage, transfer and synthesis of traditions in the history of ideas to the phenomenon of memory. In her famous monograph, which is translated into numerous European (and other) languages, entitled *The Art of Memory*, consistently, in seventeen chapters which are organized according to historical chronology, the scholar produced proofs based on reasoned analysis and scientific interpretations, that “the history of the organization of memory touches at vital points on the history of religion and ethics, of philosophy and psychology, of art and literature, and of scientific method” (Yates, 1966, p. 389). That is why she undoubtedly referred to this marginal and, during the last few centuries, forgotten topic, as the extra-temporal ‘nerve knot of European civilization’ (Yates, 1966, p. 368).

The most substantial period and efflorescence of *ars memorativae*, by Yates, was the time of Ancient Greece and Rome. From a minimum of preserved sources (in fact – only one anonymous treatise *Ad C. Herennium libri IV* that is directly devoted to the analysis of memory as an experience of vital importance; and to methodological instructions for developing mnemonic skills) we get to know that this art has gradually migrated from the reign of mythopoeia (Orphic anthems about the sacred gift of remembering, the meditative metempsychotic trainings of Pythagoreans) into the sphere of rhetoric (the ‘divine’ impact of ‘mnemonic exercising’ upon Cicero’s formation of virtues, the systematized methodological instruction of Quintilian), and became an organic, though not a dominant, constituent of the antique classical philosophers’ ‘golden treasury’ (Plato’s anamnesis as a bridge between real and reflected cognition, Aristotelian attention to imagination which makes it possible to structure the process of thinking within the temporal paradigm, the mosaic of Hellenic interpretations of elapsing).<sup>3</sup>

Later “this most elusive art all through its history” was thoroughly Christianized: Augustine viewed memory (as well as Understanding and Will) as a quality of the soul “which is the image of the Trinity in man” (Yates, 1966, pp. 48–49). In the mediaeval system of *artes liberalis* memory plays an important role, supporting moral benefaction. Its didactic – both verbal and visual – function was to help a Christian “to direct oneself in the paths of remembrance, reminding him of the ways to Heaven and to Hell” (Yates, 1966, p. 77). The religious background was filled with mnemonic practices, based on the Antique tradition and improved by scholars, with ethical senses, intensified with the powerful ability of gothic architecture

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<sup>3</sup> See: Yates (1966): chapter I, *The Three Latin Sources for the Classical Art of Memory*, pp. 1–26; chapter II, *The Art of Memory in Greece: Memory and the Soul*, pp. 27–49.

and sculpture and to create images: memory moved between so called 'memory signs' (shrewdness, kindness, cruelty, cunning, haughtiness, obedience, fear, generosity et al) and its duty consisted in moralizing remembering the past in order to obtain "prudent looking forward to the future" (Yates, 1966, p. 62).

Later, due to the analytical and creative searching of Giotto, Dante and Petrarc, renaissance memory was filled with humanistic tendencies but "the world in which printed books appeared ruined the conditions by which it would be possible to possess such a memory" (Yates, 1966, p. 125), whose methodology was developed by the philosophers from the past.<sup>4</sup> In the succeeding centuries the art of memory underwent metamorphosis "turning from the method of remembering encyclopedic knowledge and reflecting the world in the memory into the auxiliary tool used by creating encyclopedia and world comprehension in order to get new objective knowledge" (Yates, 1997, p. 368).<sup>5</sup>

The Ukrainian philosopher Lidia Starodubtseva delved more deeply in her monographs into earlier retrospection of spiritual sources of memory and its place in historical and cultural dimension (Стародубцева, 1999; 2003). Her comparative studies (which put the accent on philosophy, theology, cultural anthropology, literary and art criticism) set out, as their main objectives, to systematize existing ideas on memory in order to create a new branch of humanitarian knowledge – mnemonic hermeneutics of culture, which equates the notions 'culture' and 'memory' (Стародубцева, 2004, p. 30).

Starodubtseva emphasizes, in the suggested methodology, that it is impossible to analyze the essence and meaning of memory without the parallel consideration of another fundamental worldview concept – oblivion. Starting with the archaic and ending up with post-modernism, 'metaphysical archetype' opposed to memory remains its inseparable satellite. Primeval rituals already used syncretic symbolism in ritual recollections and sacral initiations, so that, periodically with the help of 'second birth' ceremonies , it would be possible to turn from chronologic (profane) time into the dimension of the 'eternal inception' and 'eternal recurrence', again and again with the help of mysteries to reproduce the cosmogonic cyclicity of reality, the unity of the past and the contemporary; and finally the place of a human being in the grand scenario of the next in turn Primeval World Renewal.<sup>6</sup>

If, according to Mircea Eliade, one views mythical memory as knowledge, "this person is able to remember himself and possesses more

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<sup>4</sup> See: Yates, F. A. (1966): all the chapters are devoted to Renaissance forms of memory, namely: chapters VI–XVI (pp. 129–367).

<sup>5</sup> It is quotation from the Russian translation of the book.

<sup>6</sup> See: Malinowski, B. (1954): *Magic, Science and Religion: And Other Essays*. New York: Garden City; Lévi-Strauss, C. (1958): *Anthropologie structurale*. Paris: Plon.

valuable religious and magical power than the one who knows the origin of things (...) In other words, he becomes the owner of his fate” (Элиаде, 2000, p. 89). Ignorance of rituals and also refusal to participate in them meant total worldview disorientation and inevitable – both symbolic and real – death, because a person has lost the right to *regressus ad uterum* (return to sources), that is the right to memory, which together with oblivion provides the option to cyclically renovate and renew the senses of its existence.<sup>7</sup> Memory is possible only because exists oblivion and in a similar manner, oblivion is inconceivable without memory. Their anti-gnomic opposition is based on the fact that the object of the work of memory is something that needs remembering (the forgotten) and the object of the efforts of oblivion is something that is kept in memory (Стародубцева, 2006, p. 79).

Conditions of memory and oblivion are not autonomous; hence a paradoxical and inspirational relationship appears. They are interconnected due to the fact that the processes of forgetting and remembering flow from one level of consciousness to others, because “the borders of what is kept in memory and what is being forgotten are constantly movable” (Стародубцева, 2006, p. 81). This interaction defines the trajectory of human individual thought and the rhythm of ideological changes in world history. Perpetual dynamics produces a conventional, symbolic mnemonic border which functions according to the mirror principle; “anything can be either forgotten or kept in memory in an absolute sense, but only as regards to the movable mnemonic border” (Стародубцева, 2004, p. 47). The pulsating ‘memory threshold’ creates the situation in which irreconcilable contradictions are simultaneously separated and united. They mutually permeate and mutually repel each other because “there exists neither remembering without the forgotten nor oblivion without what is kept in memory, each of them exists due to its opposite”. Intense mnemonic circulation avoids static fixation or identical repetitions, it is “multivariate and differently directed” (Стародубцева, 2006, p. 80). Starodubtseva defines the intangible plasticity of the mnemonic labyrinth using the words of Nicholas of Kues *complication contrariorum, cointidentia oppositorum* because “the dynamics of mnemonic relations projected onto the

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<sup>7</sup> Contemporary psychoanalysis clearly shows that the need “to settle scores with the past” with the help of different models of remembering is characteristic of a human being regardless the place of living – be it either the primitive world or the high-tech era. In his turn, the philosopher Paul Ricoeur suggested his own interpretation of Freud’s specialized therapeutic experiments. Based on the idea of the value of active working memory (‘realization of memory is its application’) this honorable contemporary thinker made an attempt to compare the clinical development of individual traumata of psyche and consciousness, caused as a result of painful events in the past; and broader – positive and negative – mnemonic techniques, that direct cultural, national and political self-identification of collective identities (see: Ricoeur, 2000, pp. 82–111; Лосик, 2011, pp. 43–53).

metaphysical conceptual level is higher than any duality, beyond all meaningful oppositions and philosophic dichotomies (...) The act of remembering is contradictory itself: it strives for affirmation of what exists no more and aims at turning nothing into something. Similarly, forgetting is contradictory as well: it strives for destruction of what exists and aims at turning something into nothing. That is why the union of memory and oblivion is beyond formal logic and does not fall under the law of the excluded middle (...). In the mnemonic dimension ‘before’ and ‘after’ can become interchangeable, the valuable can lose its value, the living can die, the dead can resurrect, ‘here’ and ‘there’ can easily change place. Any statement can be inverted and at the same time both direct and the inverted remain true” (Стародубцева, 2006, p. 80).

Moreover, the inner tension of this mnemonic spinning can expose consciousness to metamorphosis. It lies in searching for the direction which would unite the bipolar mnesis-process of individual and collective remembering-forgetting (Стародубцева, 2004, pp. 9–50). Starodubtseva calls this way out ‘the mnemonic paradox’.<sup>8</sup>

### **What will not Sink into Lethe**

The above mentioned movable ‘memory threshold’ is constantly being crossed according to the *itus et reditus* principle that is the dual motion of consciousness (falling into oblivion and return to memory). We can represent semantic contrasting of memory and oblivion on three levels: psychological, epistemological and ontological; each of them corresponds with three oppositions: conscious/unconscious, true/false, existence/non-existence (Стародубцева, 2004, p. 40). Mnemonic paradox becomes the epicentre of contrasting the present and the absent, the conceivable and the inconceivable, the real and the fake. Thus, memory and oblivion gain a teleological connotation: they become key cultural universals, the most significant guidelines of the self-identification of the conscious ‘Ego’, the main coordinates of worldview, special cultural mechanisms of historic being. Mnemonic paradox reflects the characteristic ability of human existence: that is striving for the truth (pic. 1).

memory → truth ← oblivion  
(pic. 1)

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<sup>8</sup> She finds similar analogies which show the supra-temporal – synchronic and diachronic – features of mnemonic paradox in numerous cultural and civilizational traditions (Egyptian, Zoroastrian, Brahmanic and Buddhist, Taoist, Jewish and Islamic). The abovementioned religious doctrines redirected cosmocentric mythological ideas of memory into the Theocentric dimension in which the short-term historicity of human memory can only exist against a background of a eternal transcendent Absolute Path (Стародубцева, 2003).

Mnemonic practical experiences of contrasting memory and oblivion are devoted to the search for life-asserting values which symbolize the Blessing, the Absolute and the Truth. Yet, non-existence, nothingness and eternal emptiness remain their constant opposites. But without those challenges that provoke our consciousness, memory is unable to really assert adequate human consciousness filled with existential and moral senses. In contrast to oblivion, memory “reminding the person of his/her real predestination, gives meaning to every moment, calls upon for turning to the truth” (Стародубцева, 2004, p. 23). At the same time, oblivion is not to be associated only with evil, delusion, sin or death. This would lead to the extreme and wrong simplification both of *ars memoriae* grandeur and human ability to make a choice.

The following semantic evidence helps to prove it. The notion of ‘oblivion’ has, generally speaking, common interpretations in Greek, Latin and Old Slavonic. The waters of Greek Λήθη symbolized negative – destructive for a human – loss of memory as antithesis to the Truth; similarly, the Latin equivalent *oblivio* means the deletion or loss of meaning (and the ability to think and to evaluate); the structure of the Old Slavonic *забытъѣ* testifies that this state of being is ‘on the other side’ of conscious existence. Thus, memory remained the reservoir of true (*eo ipso* dignified) recollections, and oblivion contained everything that was false, hence it was not worth remembering (Стародубцева, 2004, pp. 36–39). Finally, the ancient Greek, Αλήθεια literary meant ‘the absence of oblivion’, the opposite of Lethe. However, it should be mentioned that the affix *a* also used to possess an emphatic meaning i.e. ‘a-letheia’ might be understood both as the sublation of oblivion and also as its excessiveness. That is why the truth was really something that ‘would not sink into Lethe’ and, at the same time, something that was potentially hidden in it. True memory keeps only what is worth keeping and simultaneously it is hidden ‘behind’ the line of visible existence. So, comprehension of the truth is possible only with the help of one of the components of oblivion, i. e. remembering.

### Conscious Memory

The bipolar movement of consciousness, which is called a mnemonic paradox, is fully relevant not for all humans, but for those who have sufficiently developed psychological and mentally-cognitive processes that function according to generally accepted adequacy norms (Дроздов та ін, 2005, p. 14). Physical predisposition, in turn, is a ground for conscious orientation in reality, which is divided by a temporal scale of the past, present and future; yet, materially prolonged in space due to the sign system.

According to the contemporary Polish sociologist Barbara Szacka, “the significant role of consciousness of existence in time cannot be ignored on the level of social life”, it becomes ‘a synonym of continuance’, a reason for

the creation of the cultural tradition (which is why this process ‘lasts continually’) and does not alter its high status either in the Modern industrial time or in the Postmodern rhizomatic era. There is no unanimous opinion among humanitarians or experts in natural sciences concerning the problem “why, in communities, antiquity is one of the sacralising factors”; still memory, among others, performs two functions which are significant for a person and for a society: identificational and legitimising. That is why “something that has a past is particularly long”, we can recollect, support and symbolically continue its heritage, “it is perceived as something more valuable than a thing devoid of the past” and even “indirectly justifies its right to exist” (Szacka, 2006, pp. 48–49). Thus we can define memory as a semio-physical phenomenon whose mnemonic paradoxicality is only an introduction to such worldview problems as transformation of the universe’s impersonal actuality into cultural entrenchment, though changeable, personified reality. The passively inherited everyday world should be permanently filled with values “that belong to the human world only” and unlike animal ones, are not restricted by mere satisfaction of needs (Патцінґер, 2006, pp. 54–73). The hierarchy of ethical senses in cultural existence is naturally changeable both for each new generation and for each separate individual. It is influenced by historical context, by the right to subjective self-identification and collective consensus that should serve the common good. Memory is one of the virtues that direct the human mind and consciousness in their constant longing to explore the inexhaustible potential of personal authenticity, the great power of collective identity and other millennial strivings for ‘the truth’ as the ultimate verity of the sense of dignified being.

In one of her culturoosophic articles, the Ukrainian writer Oksana Zabuzhko points out the semantics of a certain Slavonic word (Забужко, 1994, pp. 118–119). Its meaning proves that mnemonic processes, characteristic of human consciousness, engage into shaping reality through a prism not only of rational choice but also of arecognized merits system. Thus, what is at issue is the concept of ‘consciousness’ (*prytomnist*’ (*притомність*) in Ukrainian.).

Borys Hrinchenko in the *Dictionary of the Ukrainian language*, which is a model dictionary of Ukrainian historical lexis,<sup>9</sup> mentioned two interpretations of the ‘conscious’ state: the first one (‘находящийся в сознании’ or ‘that which is in the consciousness’) is identified with consciousness as a form of generalized and adequate reality reflection, peculiar to humans; the second one (‘присутствующий’ or ‘that which is present’) points out the expected and predicted activity of the ‘conscious’ person already by its morphologic structure, because such a person except the ability of self-awareness in time and space (remembering through

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<sup>9</sup> See the on-line version of the dictionary in open access by following the link <http://hrinchenko.com>

identification) is also capable of being ‘present’ (‘при сутності’; *præesse* ‘be before, be at hand’ from *præ-* ‘before’ + *esse* ‘to be’) – near the substantial, essential, what is true (Грінченко, 1958, p. 446). Conscious presence, both through and under the influence of, the mnemonic nature of consciousness has an impact on the constitution of world understanding as the highest (after world perception and worldview) structural level of outlook, which motivates rational and logical reality perception and at the same time to its reflective and heuristic interpretation (Рижак, 2009, pp. 44–45). Zabuzhko described ‘consciousness’ as ‘involvement into a situation with one’s whole individual and specific existence’ which “can implicitly estimate reality and hence is able to reflect upon it, not only to take it for granted (as animals do) but to search for sense in it, for *raison d’être*” (Забужко, 1994, p. 118). In this specific ability for reflection (and self-reflection) human memory turns from the inherited (and thus conservative, ‘fixed’) tradition into the ‘living’ discourse of ethical and axiological virtues and finds new meaningful articulations for them.

Thus, to possess memory does not only mean to have the mechanical or functional brain receptors’ ability but also active involvement in reality transformation. Thereafter, to come to one’s consciousness is synonymous with personal (self-)identification as a social, cultural or political subject, who by their actions represent personally accepted and appropriated virtues, and also without any considerations retransmit value instructions of the community to which they belong, a national one in particular.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the loss of consciousness (insentience) takes the person to the sphere of oblivion: it alienates one from historical continuity (uproots), stops conscious and creative reflection upon the contemporary and as a result destroys the natural striving for the future (Капась, 2001, pp. 122–127). Totalitarian systems deliberately deprive not only target groups of consciousness, through repressive practices and censorship, (for example, intelligentsia), but also alienate the whole national cultural layer from the (re)creation of reality.

The unconsciousness of the national community, especially of its intellectual elite, inevitably leads to a dumbing down (futility and loss of reflection) of the entire culture, which becomes incapable of noticing (understanding and evaluating) the dialogic polyphony of reality; and loses the ability to actually interpret itself, especially through collective memory – provided by words, behaviours and visions. The subject of this unconscious community does not need either to remember or to forget any more, it uses

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<sup>10</sup> It should be briefly mentioned in this aspect the national worldview as a value “directive towards the world and life” reveals itself in “what exactly the nation loves, what it avoids and what it appreciates in people the most and what ignores” (Чижевський, 2005, p. 39). The features of national character ‘are embodied in the philosophical works’ of any nation, in the architectonics of the philosophical system (beginning from the form of expression, conceptual apparatus, research methods and ending up with ‘the place and role of a certain value’ in the national ‘thinking and speech’).

ready clichés taken from outside of its own cultural life-world, it does not think of predestination, does not hear the spiritual call for searching for the truth, it distances itself from responsibility and forgets consciousness and solidarity; as a result, it loses its dignity. Erosion of conscious memory also leads its nation to self-destruction.<sup>11</sup>

‘Reckoning with the past’ is a dilemma which causes mnemonic paradoxes and even democratic societies to not avoid it. The so-called ‘industry of heritage’ (Nora) which began after World War II made public and set free the experiences that earlier were hidden in private, in the family; closed, censored and repressed memories. Local memories that were illegitimate before increased in no time. Especially for emancipated minorities (like regional, religious, sexual, social ones), the recovery of memory laid the foundation for their released identity and became a way of obtaining recognition of their exceptionality on the part of the rest of the community.

The natural need to have memory sooner or later suggests its usage. A few decades of relatively successful practices in the countries of the Old World (Germany, France and Poland) gave nurture to the conclusion that state ‘memory policy’, methods of public-medial therapy, art-provocations and intellectual ‘culture of memory’ projects only partially reach the expected understanding of the collective (and also individual) memories of neighbouring peoples. As a result of the intense disremembering and appropriating of memory, which substitutes its restraint and displacement, memory is either ‘in abundance’ or ‘lacking’ (in both cases, by Paul Ricoeur, it is dangerous for its consciousness). But in some moment the positive directive to release memory began to contradict itself and even turned into “a reticent form, into a motive of exclusion and into a tool of war” (Nora, 2001, p. 43). The negative aspect of memory’s ‘worldwide triumph’ became stronger: one can abuse, block, manipulate, dictate it, keep it silent; make it ‘possessed’.<sup>12</sup>

In an opinion-forming historiosophic essay *Heritage and Collective Responsibility* written in honour of Leszek Kolakowski, a historian of ideas,

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<sup>11</sup> Mnemonic paradox becomes an entropic trap for the collective and individual memory of a colonized nation, it being that the experience of ‘cultural unconsciousness’ transmits from one generation to another, and it is extremely difficult to get rid of its symptoms (in particular from the feeling of inferiority towards oneself and distorted sense of dignity toward the others) because “the elements created as a result of historical process are easier to change than those that were created by a nation’s psychological structure” (Чижевський, 2005, p. 39).

<sup>12</sup> Without taking into consideration the demagogues of political games or the aesthetes of scandalous art-performances one can notice that during the last decade a good deal of educated and honourable people appeared who are not eager to admit the obvious facts of collaboration, antisemitism, pacification, denunciations, debunking the ‘unpatriotic’ heroes in their personal biographies or national past of their Homeland. At the same time the quantity of those who “do not want to pay the national debts” and behave themselves childishly when it comes to any collective values increases.



Jerzy Jedlicki, explains this referring to a socio-psychological striving to juxtapose contemporary memory with the past. This striving is, even today, still deeply entrenched in the ethos of Western civilization, in the liberal age, so “that it is difficult to imagine civilization without it” (Jedlicki, 1993, p. 108). Even though the freedom to choose cultural tradition is to be understood as inherited ‘fate’ no more, certain elements of group or individual heritage are still being forced out – those “that from the point of view of our axiology are awkward, unfavourable or ambiguous”, besides, descendants ‘who have no guilt’, “who have no reason to be ashamed and do not need to hide anything” (Jedlicki, 1993, p. 112). Regaining memory through the establishment of connections between generations, as Jedlicki pointed out, has “moral and psychological consequences that are not easy to cope with because together with this heritage we receive not only glory and grace but also offences and humiliations, sins and undertakings. Is it possible to accept grace and to reject damnation? Can one have heritage and avoid the debt that obligation cast upon it? How is it possible to claim one’s dignity, but avoid shame? Is it possible to boast with the predecessor’s accomplishments in front of the world without taking responsibility for their guilt?” (Jedlicki, 1993, p. 110).

### **Dignified Pre-Sense**

Psychoanalyses manage to deal with the reticence of mnemonic paradoxes the most productively. However, it, being narrowly specialized, gives only “certain food for asking questions” (LaCapra, 2002, p. 127). What can be done about that? A lot of contemporary researchers, among them philosophers and historians of ideas, begin to pay attention to the not (properly) understood status of ethics in memory studies.

From the beginning, each mnemonic effort, not always rational but invariably emotionally significant is followed by ethical reflections. The key terminology itself points out to it directly: moral debt, mercy, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, shame, guilt, punishment, justice, duty of memory, solidarity etc. It is already the first proof that even in the contemporary secularized era “the idea of world moral duty is deeply entrenched in human hearts, human nature and encoded into all known cultures” (Jedlicki, 1993, p. 115).

Conscious memory is possible when the individual/community have awareness of self-identification through putting them on the same footing with the blocked past and make it present in the contemporaneity. The most important thing here is not the disclosure of facts which sooner or later will become known but first of all the *acceptance*, the act of taking responsibility (Jedlicki, 1993, p. 121). This symbolic atonement is capable of changing both the psychological and political background of discussions about the new identity, which will finally ‘settle the scores’ with the constraining past and fill tradition with new value narrations.

What is a person (or community) led by while choosing the ethical action as a way from un-consciousness to pre-sense? So, it is high time another notion was introduced into our discourse – ‘dignity’. What kind of phenomenon is it? In short, it is the highest value, the most representative virtue of any civilization, especially of the Western one. It does not often appear in popular kinds of narration characteristic of the global space distorted by a plethora of information. Still this human feature, beginning from children’s ignorance and ending with the elderly’s forgetfulness ties a person, step by step, to reality as a social and cultural being who makes choices, bears responsibility, has values and defends their sense.<sup>13</sup> I clearly see a parallel between memory and dignity. They become evident due to their active interconnection and as a result a real, authentic, present consciousness of a person/community arises (pic. 2).

dignity → consciousness ← memory  
(pic. 2)

The Mnemonic roaming of consciousness and mind between remembering and forgetting get ethical support within the virtue of dignity, thanks to which human memory will survive the most rigid and perverse moral blackmailing by the past. What does dignified consciousness mean?

This virtue is a quintessence of all the inborn, developed and acquired talents which a human can possess. The philosopher Barbara Skarga, who was imprisoned for more than ten years in a concentration camp by the Soviet regime, at the end of her long and fruitful life wrote a short essay *Dignity in the hour of sadness* in which she gave her definition of dignity (Skarga, 2007). For her, the one who has this virtue “defends what he considers to be the highest value – humanity; that is when a human is

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<sup>13</sup> For the Slovak philosopher Vasil Gluchman, the notion *dignity* contains a set of the most important values which deserve respect and recognition, and it is a human who possesses them in full. The most significant among them is life “in all its forms and manifestations” which equals the value of all human beings. But this fact is only “the source state into which we are born and which is given us metaphysically and ontologically” (Gluchman, 2008, p. 90). One should not make this state absolute because not every human being is capable of developing him/herself as a valuable moral subject. The other important values are equality and recognition. Though, even they are not inborn features of dignity, as they are subscribed to the subject from the outside by other people. Similarly, consciousness of moral responsibility of the carriers of those features does not appear automatically from such features of dignified attitude as rationality and free will, “they can also be used for such purposes that by no means deserve respect or recognition” (Gluchman, 2008, p. 94). Even the sense of self-respect which we expect from conscious human beings (also providing moral subjects with this sense) contains ambiguity, because criminals and deviants usually have high self-appraisal. Thus, this Slovak thinker in his constructive polemics with other professional ethicists suggests understanding *dignity* through the prism of other values, apart from life (equality, rational consciousness, will, responsibility) such as actions and deeds of moral subject.

treated as a human. He defends the independence of human thinking and freedom but also the independence of what is 'human', what understands the others and calls for moral co-existence with the others" (Skarga, 2007). Dignity is never "the expression of egotism or lack of obedience, uncertainty or even arrogance". By no means is it accompanied by 'frivolity towards other people, lack of tolerance or concentration on one's own thoughts only'. Dignified life is the realization of ethical principles that exclude the instrumental interpretation of a person. A dignified person wants to remain him of herself and never will another to become a stepping-stone for this person. And for his or her chosen 'Self' ('sobość' in Polish) a dignified person is fully responsible.

Among the components of the dignified attitude are choice, freedom, responsibility and empathy. For Skarga as well as for thousands of other deported intellectuals, even in *the limit situations* (by Karl Jaspers) when dignity is radically attacked by pain, fear or hunger, dignified attitude does not change into an inaccessible model of behaviour of a few mentally strong chosen ones. Because the source of this virtue for them first of all lay in strong self-consciousness, built on an axiological basis which should not necessarily be religious. Keeping to the chosen values and at the same time faith that the choice is right' gives strength to the psychological state of one's consciousness (which is more important than a physical one). The loss of self-identification with the chosen life values equals 'unworthy death'.

The question arises, how should one understand the values which help to shape conscious memory and keep the dignified attitude of a person/community as a moral agent? Consequentialist methodology, whose guidelines were developed by the philosopher and ethicist Gluchman, helps to give the answer to this question. Especially such guidelines as:

- a) no moral value is unchangeable, absolute or unalterable;
- b) human beings possess a different measure of dignity;<sup>14</sup>
- c) the measure of human dignity directly depends on the behaviour and acts of moral subjects and on the respect from others.<sup>15</sup>

So, dignified attitude is reflected in those values which we are led by in our deeds, and especially in their consequences "for the rest of moral subjects and maybe for the wider social and moral community", to which

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<sup>14</sup> There is an evolutionary scale of dignity of all life forms (not only of the human one). Their indices concerning a mature (self-)conscious moral subject can either increase or decrease. Gluchman defends the idea of "moral unacceptability of the idea that, say, a victim of humiliations, tyranny or persecution has the same human dignity as his or her tyrant, torturer and the moral monster who let himself go into that" (Gluchman, 2008, p. 108).

<sup>15</sup> That is why it "would be morally wrong to equal those who were unaware of their situation or position with those who consciously, purposely and voluntarily committed crimes against mankind, numerous innocent people or caused their death" (Gluchman, 2008, p. 114).

we belong (Gluchman, 2008, p. 122). Gluchman's approach introduces a new perspective to the ideas of the prominent thinkers mentioned in this article, on the influence of collective belonging, past and tradition on the authenticity of moral choices, feelings and acts of a person. Their humanistic positions are united by the common doubt "whether the complete separation of a person from the social background is possible and thus – the complete autonomy of individual consciousness". If it is so, the next question is; to what extent would this autonomy grow" (Jedlicki, 1993, pp. 113–114). Interestingly, those scholars are witnesses to or participants in the worldview cataclysm that attacked European identity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, they do not use, in their interests, the critical topic of definite loss of consensus concerning the basic *axis mundi* and efforts, instead, they are looking for better solutions, they direct the efforts of their historiosophic and ethical reflections in the direction which is opposite to old re-sentiment. It is important to mention that they try to keep their discourse from going beyond the limits of publicity without devaluing religious components in the processes of the moral self-identification of contemporary generations.

### **Conclusion**

Studying memory does not give way to being impartial. Because this discourse is in fashion nowadays, numerous simulations have appeared in the public, educational and media space. However, "the cost of memory is too high to leave it to enthusiasm or to malice" (Todorov, 1998, p. 14). There is still a demand for the research of merits in which the author would "unambiguously identify the features and values, on the bases of which he would dwell upon human dignity" (Gluchman, 2008, p. 93). And yet, like memory, it is the object of academic analysis, philosophical interpretations, religious searching, artistic experimentations let alone political manipulation or the invisible presence of each of us in everyday life.

The plurality of contexts, meanings and topics, which provide food for both of these most significant features of the authentic in the human's being, show the 'living', current actuality of their meaning. A human cannot get to know them profoundly even in the time of the highest technologies, well-developed methodologies, equitable rule of law and moral catharsis of all mankind.

The virtue of dignity makes physical existence through the prism of moral values conscious, and not vice versa. True memory is realized only within the prism of ethical coordinates and moral convictions. Being led by moral values, a person/community directs the mnemonic paradoxes inherent to human nature into the sphere of responsible compromise between oblivion and remembering. In their turn, they make consciousness and the mind search for true identification of their identities in the past and in the present. Both memory and dignity, in order to be realized (to recover their

consciousness), need such behaviours and acts which would bear a value connotation and have a consequentialist direction.

Translated by Taras Demko

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## **Responsibility – Reciprocity or Asymmetry? (Responsibility in Martin Buber's Thought)**

**Michal Bizoň**

### **Abstract**

The submitted contribution is devoted to the controversy in Martin Buber's conception of responsibility and especially to the question whether its nature is reciprocal or asymmetrical. This controversy arises from a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of his concept of mutuality as a constituent of I-Thou relation. Several refuting arguments are offered against the claim that the mutuality of the I-Thou relationship means equality of responsibility which enables ethical calculus.

**Keywords:** responsibility, mutuality, asymmetry, ethical calculus

Many authors criticize Martin Buber's conception of responsibility for the reason that it is reciprocal in nature. The question regarding its nature occurs when it is compared with Levinas' conception of radical responsibility. From those thinkers who criticize Buber, Catherine Chalier has been chosen as a main opponent in the present paper because she has made some strong results in his critique. The aim of this paper is to answer this controversy by denying the claim that the mutuality of Buber's I-Thou relation means equality of responsibility which enables ethical calculus. Chalier's position and its background is outlined in a short introduction. The second part is devoted to analyzing and arguing against her critique in two steps. Firstly, it will be demonstrated that an interpretation of Buber's responsibility as reciprocity between I and Thou is inadequate and wrong. Secondly, it will be pointed out that her position is inconsistent and self-repugnant. I presents that in a situation which contains the mutual saying of Thou by both dialogical partners is not necessary the equality of responsibility between them in the last part.

The main distinction between Buber's and Levinas' understandings of relationship rests in that Buber laid stress on mutuality of relationship and Levinas on its asymmetry. From this distinction, Catherine Chalier deduced that mutuality of relationship also means the equality of responsibility. Man is responsible for the other likewise the other is responsible for him, therefore two people are responsible in the same way for each other. Thus, the man who responds to the call of a fellowman could expect him to act equally tomorrow. He knows that his effort to help a fellowman is not in vain because he could count with his help. According to Chalier, this kind of ethical calculus could not only be a motive for man's action, but even a motive of his inaction because one could expect that him to start to act just as the other (Chalier, 1993, p. 30). Catherine Chalier develops her critique of Buber on the basis of Levinas' own reading and interpretation of the mutuality of Buber's I-Thou relation. Buber's concept of the mutuality in

the I-Thou relationship is replaced in Levinas' interpretation with the concept of reciprocity. According to Levinas, in Buber's I-Thou relationship I stands to Thou as Thou stands to I (Levinas, 1997, p. 44). Thus, within the I-Thou relationship the reciprocity is between I and Thou. Some authors have been inspired by Chalier's reasoning and adopted it for themselves (cf. Bačáková, 2011, pp. 4–5; Tatranský, 2004, p. 52).

To argue against such a claim is possible in many various ways. From the methodological point of view it seems to be the most appropriate to manifest its indefensibility within the scope of Buber's own philosophical anthropology. The First step of this method is to identify significant points and hidden premises of the claim that responsibility is reciprocal. That concept of moral responsibility in Martin Buber's thinking refers to the I-Thou basic word as the first premise of this claim because it is just this relationship expressed by the word-pair of I-Thou that is characterized by mutuality in contrast to the I-It relationship. The I-Thou relationship is very briefly and sketchily characterized by immediacy, mutuality, directness, presentness, ineffability. On the other hand, I-It is always a mediated, one-sided, indirect, comprehensible and orderable relationship (cf. Friedman, 1955, p. 57). So, when it is discussed, the mutuality of the relationship, it is discussed I-Thou relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding the mutuality of the I-Thou relationship as a means of equality is the second premise. As one member of the relationship is to the other member, so the other is to the first one. At this point I would like to mention some of the selected passages from Buber's major work *I and Thou* (Ich und Du) which refer to the I-Thou relationship as a mutuality. "One should not try to dilute the meaning of the relation: relation is reciprocity" (Buber, 1970a, p. 58).<sup>2</sup> Relation is reciprocity. My You acts on me as I act on it (Buber, 1970a, p. 67). In connection with the reciprocal interpretation of responsibility the following sentence about love is also often quoted. "Love is the responsibility of an I for a You: in this consists what cannot consist in any feeling – the equality of all lovers..." (Buber, 1970a, p. 66).

Now it is necessary to turn our attention to Buber's own philosophy and to demonstrate that moral responsibility belongs to the realm of the I-Thou basic word if it is true that there is real connection between moral responsibility and mutuality. The subject of this methodological point coincides with the first premise of the claim that the nature of moral responsibility is reciprocal. Forasmuch as I maintain that Buber's concept of moral responsibility belongs to the realm of the I-Thou word, which is also

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<sup>1</sup> Buber differs between the German term "Verhältnis" which I translate as a relation and "Beziehung" which I translate as a relationship. In my paper I use the term relationship as relation in narrow sense of the I-Thou relation.

<sup>2</sup> However, Kaufman translated the German term *Gegenseitigkeit*, that was used by Buber, as reciprocity I prefer to use the English term mutuality in my paper in order to emphasize its different meaning in contrast to reciprocity.

opinion of my opponents, it is not necessary to give a more detail explanation of it because there exists an agreement between them and me.

After this I would like to continue with an explanation of Buber's understanding of mutuality within I-Thou relationship. If the mutuality is a fundamental part of structure of each I-Thou relationship, what is evident from the quotations above, then is very suitable when considering the question of the mutuality of the I-Thou relationship with respect to the essential principles of Martin Buber's dialogical philosophy. The opening sentence of his *I and Thou* is: "The world is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude" (Buber, 1970a, p. 53). The world is twofold for man in accordance with his attitude to it and not in accordance with attitude of world to him. Buber is not concerned primarily about the attitude of the world to man but about man's attitude to the world. His dialogical philosophy deals with ways how man can relate to his partner and not vice-versa. Thus, when Buber speaks about mutuality as a basic attribute of each I-Thou relationship, he has in mind something that depends on the way how man relates to the world. He means mutuality that refers to the structure of man's relation to his partner. Mutuality as a part of the I-Thou relationship expresses a certain quality on the part of man who speaks this basic word and not a quality on the other part. It is not dependent on the other side of the relationship because it is true that: "The relationship can obtain even if the human being to whom I say You does not hear it in his experience" (Buber, 1970a, p. 60).

From the fact that one addresses the other by the I-Thou word does not follow that the other addresses him by the same way, by the same basic word. Basic words do not tell us anything about how the other relates to someone who addresses him by one of them. Both basic words designate the attitude of the man who speaks these words and not the attitude of those who are addressed by them.

From what was said above is possible to deduce two very similar arguments against the assertion that responsibility in Martin Buber's thought is reciprocal in nature that gives rise to ethical calculus. Firstly, let us assume that responsibility belongs to one of two basic word realms, particularly to the realm of the I-Thou word, then it must be said that the questions whether the other is responsible or not, whether the other is responsible in the same degree or not, are completely out of Buber's concern. Because of this reason it seems inadequate to speculate about everything, including the responsibility that concerns itself with the other side of the relationship. Secondly, if it is true that mutuality concerns primarily the structure of man's attitude to his partner, then it is absolutely inadequate to speak about equality of responsibility in a sense that as I stand to Thou so does Thou stand to me.

In the following section, Buber's understanding of mutuality and its role in the I-Thou relationship is introduced. The usual and wide-spread meaning

of mutuality is that both partners in a relationship participate in it in the same way (not identical) but this is not what Buber means by mutuality of the I-Thou relationship. Mutuality of a relationship does not mean that both partners address each other by the same basic word. Mutuality as a fundamental part of I-Thou relation represents a certain quality of attitude of the man who addresses his partner. Mutuality understood in this manner means mutuality of acting. "Relation is reciprocity. My You acts on me as I act on it" (Buber, 1970a, p. 67). The sameness of acting does not refer to actions of my Thou. It does not mean that my Thou acts on me by the same action than I act on it. For example, when I act on my Thou by smiling, my Thou does not act on me by smiling necessarily. The sameness of acting means that I act on my Thou in the same way as I receive its acting on me, i.e. by my whole being (cf. Buber, 1970a, p. 53). Thus the meaning of mutuality in the I-Thou relationship is the mutual acting between I and Thou, I-acting-You and You-acting-I (cf. Buber, 1970a, p. 73). Every act has to arise out of something which has the being (Buber, 1970a, p. 17), therefore mutuality is a contact of one acting existence with another acting existence (Buber, 1994, p. 35). In the I-Thou relation, "we live inscrutably involved in the currents of universal reciprocity" (Buber, 1970a, p. 67). Mutuality is such a quality of the I-Thou relation that makes it possible to enter into a relationship with the world and participate in it.

Now it is absolutely evident that Chalier's conclusions are based on a very wrong understanding of Buber's concept of mutuality and also that from such an understanding of mutuality as the mutual acting of I on Thou and Thou on me does not follow that reciprocity of moral responsibility.

The third argument against the reciprocal interpretation of responsibility is demonstrated by the fact that this statement is inconsistent and self-repugnant. If it is true that a man can expect reciprocity of responsibility and he modifies his decision-making on the action or inaction based in this calculus then it is also true that such moral action is conditional but any kind of anticipation means that the relation of responsibility is not unmediated and without any purpose which are two fundamental attributes of every I-Thou relationship (Buber, 1970a, pp. 62–63). The fallacy of Chalier's claim that responsibility is reciprocal consists in the contradiction between its results and one of its hidden premises that moral responsibility belongs to the realm of the I-Thou basic word.

P1: Moral responsibility belongs to the realm of the I-Thou relation.

P2: Mutuality of the I-Thou relation means equality.

C: Moral responsibility is calculable.

Ethical calculus removes responsibility from the sphere of the I-Thou word and locates it in the sphere of the I-It word which is characterized by indirectness and mediation. Thus it is clear that mutuality should not be

understood as an equality which enables both partners of the relation to require any reciprocity of moral responsibility.

In the previous sections arguments were submitted against the claim that responsibility in Martin Buber's thought is of reciprocal nature that manifested its indefensibility. The main reason for refuting the reciprocal understanding of responsibility is the fact that the primary concern of Buber is man's relation to the world and not vice-versa. On the one hand, the mutual saying of Thou by both dialogical partners is not a prerequisite for the realization of the I-Thou relation. On the other hand, the possibility of this situation cannot be excluded in the case of interpersonal relations. But is it really the case of equality of responsibility between partners? Is it true that whenever they speak the I-Thou basic word to each other they are also responsible for each other in the same way?

The answer to these questions can be found in the fifth part of Buber's *Afterword* to the second edition of his *I and Thou* which is entirely devoted to the problem of mutuality. According to Buber, there are two obstacles to the complete mutuality or reciprocal mutuality<sup>3</sup>. The first obstacle is human insufficiency to enter relationship with other human beings (Buber, 1970a, p. 177). Since this type of obstacle is not the subject of our question we will now continue with the next obstacle of complete mutuality.

"Inner laws that govern our life with one another" (Buber, 1970a, p. 177) is the second obstacle that Buber called normative limitations of mutuality (cf. Buber, 1970a, pp. 178–179). "There are many I-You relationships that by their very nature may never unfold into complete mutuality if they are to remain faithful to their nature" (Buber, 1970a, p. 18). In other words, decisive is a kind of a particular relationship. A few examples of different kinds of interpersonal relationships are husband-wife, friend-friend, parent-child, teacher-pupil, doctor-patient etc.

"Every I-You relationship in a situation defined by the attempt of one partner to act on the other one so as to accomplish some goal depends on a mutuality that is condemned never to become complete" as Buber wrote (Buber, 1970a, p. 179). Hence the equality of responsibility is not possible in interpersonal relationships in which man acts on the other with the intention of achieving some goal but this intention could not be interpreted as a medium but as something which arises from immediate and direct I-Thou relation. For example, parents act on their children with the intention of educating them well, teachers act on their pupils with the intention of teaching them something, doctors act on their patients with intention of healing them. At this point, it is necessary to point out that asymmetry of responsibility applies to these relationships only when they are kept in their own natures therefore a relationship between a doctor and a patient could exist a relationship in which responsibility is not asymmetric or in which the patient is more responsible than the doctor but these cases of relationships

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<sup>3</sup> This term was used by Paul Kramer (Kramer, 2003, p. 185).

are different from the specific healing relationship in its nature. As far as the complete mutuality of responsibility, it can be said that: "It is a form of grace for which one must always be prepared but on which one can never count" (Buber, 1970a, p. 178).

What Buber means by mutuality and what he emphasises is not reciprocity in the sense "that one member of relationship is to the other member, so the other is to first one" but it is a mutuality of acting, I act on my Thou and I receive its acting on me. On the basis of this understanding of mutuality we can say that the complete mutuality of responsibility is not only one necessary form of the I-Thou relation because it is only one of its possibilities as well as asymmetry (Buber, 1970b, p. 28). Even if we accept the situation in which two people would be equally responsible for each other, the conclusions that Catherine Chaliel deduced cannot be definitely inferred. Genuine responsibility requires of a man to respond directly to meeting with another human being and it excludes any ethical calculus. Needless to say, the asymmetry of responsibility in interpersonal relationships does not mean that one partner would be obliged by it and another would be free of it.

The answer to the question from the title of this paper can be found by saying that responsibility is neither always of an asymmetric relation nor of a reciprocal (complete mutual) relation, however, Buber put great emphasis on mutuality. The relation of responsibility itself is neither one of these two properties in Martin Buber's thought, unlike Levinas, who regarded asymmetry as an immanent attribute of every relation of responsibility. The asymmetry or reciprocity of responsibility arises from a lived presence. What is common to both philosophers is their resolute rejection of any ethical calculus with reciprocity of responsibility. "Reciprocity is *his* affair" said Levinas in one conversation with Phillipe Nemo (Levinas, 1985, p. 98) and Buber refuted it in following way: "Our concern, our care must be not for the other side but for our own, not for grace but for will. Grace concerns us insofar as we proceed toward it and await its presence; it is not our object" (Buber, 1970a, p. 124).

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# Rawlsian Constructivism and the Conception of Human Rights by Ladislav Hejránek

Matej Cívik

## Abstract

In spite of the iron curtain looming large between western academics and their (often politically persecuted and institutionally detached) colleagues in the eastern bloc, some intellectual developments bear striking similarities. This paper analyses one of them: the conception of human rights by Ladislav Hejránek as opposed to Kantian constructivism, which was developed in the “west” by John Rawls and others. Both Rawls and Hejránek, who was one of the philosophical heavyweights of Czech dissent, are moved by very similar concerns: the need to ground objective values without falling into utilitarianism or some (other) form of naïve ethical objectivism. They view political values as constructed and yet objective, not given but still sound. Given the immense difference in their professional position and philosophical style, this indicates a truly interesting case of a unity of concern bridging the east and the west, even under very unfavorable political conditions.

**Keywords:** human rights, Rawls, Hejránek, constructivism, value theory

## I

My aim in this short article is to present what I take to be the most interesting type of value-grounding argument in contemporary ethics and political philosophy. In the first stage, I will sketch its main motivations – why I think the general direction of thinking is worth exploring and is also, in a sense, natural. Secondly, I will introduce two very different instances of this type of reasoning. One will be John Rawls and his constructivism; the other will be a theory of human rights by Ladislav Hejránek.

I do not think it is necessary to introduce John Rawls. His *Theory of Justice* is easily the most influential book of 20<sup>th</sup> century political theory (Rawls, 1999). My sketch will focus on Rawls’ thinking that immediately followed the publication of this book – when in the 80’s he developed his account of constructivist political philosophy. I will mostly ignore his later work, namely *Political Liberalism* (Rawls, 1993).

After Rawls I will analyze Ladislav Hejránek. He is one of the most important dissident Czech philosophers and has been an influential figure in Czechoslovak and Czech intellectual circles for the past 50 years. But he has not only been a theorist – very active in political struggles of the former Czechoslovakia, he became one of the spokesmen of the Charter 77 movement. I will focus on his theory of human rights, which is obviously a question he was very much concerned with, given his involvement in the Charter movement. But it needs to be said that his theory of human rights

does not feature prominently in his thinking, which very broad in scope and depth, focuses mostly on more ‘abstract’ issues.<sup>1</sup>

The important thing to notice right from the start is that there is a world of difference between Rawls and Hejdánek. The traditions of American liberalism are very strong in Rawls, while Hejdánek mostly remained within the bounds of continental philosophy. Rawls in his work reflects deep philosophical issues raised by Locke, Rousseau and Kant together with the most recent (at the time) advances in social sciences and political theory – rational choice theory, American pragmatism, communitarianism and value pluralism. In stark contrast, Hejdánek in his political theory reflects (although very critically) mostly either the figures central to Marxism (Marx, Hegel) or ancient thinkers (Plato, Aristotle). More generally he is interested in building upon the Czech intellectual tradition of Patočka, Rádl and Havlíček.

But the contrast between them is not confined to their different intellectual affinities. Rawls spent most of his life in the role of distinguished Harvard professor having the world’s intellectual resources at his disposal. And Hejdánek was for decades persecuted, often unemployed, and institutionally detached with no access to vast libraries and limited contacts with the academia outside Prague.

The short contrast of the traditions Rawls and Hejdánek, presented in previous paragraphs, was not self-serving. It points to a very important fact: if it were possible to identify a common element in their approach, it would be positive proof that this approach has very strong philosophical appeal across different styles and traditions and merits very close examination. Otherwise scholars with such different backgrounds would not be drawn to it.

## II

Let’s move to the sketch of motivation. But before that, a caveat is in order: in this section I will briefly comment on many major traditions in ethical thought, especially in the Anglo-American tradition. A comprehensive analysis would require a thick book, so my aim will only be to point towards

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<sup>1</sup> The main source of my analysis of his theory will be highly unorthodox. Hejdánek spent most of his life ‘underground’ but he never stopped actively pursuing philosophy, even in spite of being banned from publishing or any public activities. From the late 1970s he led a philosophical seminar in his flat, which was, given the nature of the regime outside, constantly surveyed and harassed by the secret police. (For more information about the whole underground philosophical culture see the recently published (Borovanská, Bendová & Vejvodová, 2013). My sources of Hejdánek’s thoughts are the audio records of the seminar he held on political philosophy in the spring of 1989. These fascinating materials which indeed provide a window to a world that no longer exists are available in the Libri Prohibiti library.

possible problems these theories might face. The remarks are not to be taken for a comprehensive argumentative critique.<sup>2</sup>

With that said, one of the distinguishing features of 20<sup>th</sup> century practical philosophy was a crisis of probably all of the previously popular approaches to ethics and politics. And this discontent leads, as always in time of crisis, to searching for alternatives. And the alternatives are often specified in virtue of the very positions they grow to reject.

If you are a late 20<sup>th</sup> century practical philosopher, there are host of otherwise traditional and venerable positions and theories in the domain of moral philosophy you may be motivated to avoid. First of all, utilitarianism, a giant of practical philosophy, found itself under pressure from multiple sources in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Problems with lacking an adequate definition of human well-being, lack of appreciation for separateness of persons or values such as integrity meant that utilitarians found it increasingly difficult to justify their one basic rule (Smart & Williams, 1973, p. 150). As a result, utilitarianism did not (or does not) provide a very appealing alternative for a moral philosopher to hold.

Secondly, analytical linguistic meta-ethics represented by Moore, Ross or Hare (Hare, 1952), which was extremely popular in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, became increasingly doubtful as well. This approach – even though interesting from the point of view of philosophy of language – proved to be ineffectual in providing a good enough positive ethical theory, as was demonstrated for example by Philippa Foot or Iris Murdoch (Foot, 1978, p. 96). So if a philosopher wanted to develop a theory which would actually have something to say about the moral dilemmas of the day, the kind of linguistic ethical analysis Hare provided was not a plausible candidate.

Connected with that (serving often as a content of analytical meta-ethics), any sort of approach to practical philosophy that John Rawls labeled ‘intuitionism’ – which is a view that the ethical realm is sort of ‘out there’, discoverable by the logic of our language or some unproblematic moral sense – is discredited, because we simply do not have a requisitely specific and unified capacity to discover moral truths. If the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided some crucial insights into moral theory, it was the final demonstration of the fact that our moral intuitions radically differ, are culturally formed and that we live in a deeply pluralistic world. Therefore, any position stipulating some sort of unity of moral sense has to be largely discredited from the start. And, as Rawls proved, without postulating this unity, intuitionism has no way of adjudicating moral and political dilemmas – hence its usefulness is very limited (Rawls, 1999, p. 36).

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<sup>2</sup> The most notable exception I do not comment upon is virtue ethics, which has been the subject of renewed interest since the 60s. But, as I said, the list does not aim to be complete and the items on it are there only to demonstrate the desirable features of the theory presented later on – which is mostly political in nature, so virtue ethics would be difficult to apply.

Largely as a response to the plurality of the modern world it was relativism that became a seemingly great candidate for the moral theory of choice – as a last resort, when everything else failed. However, it does not work all that well. As Bernard Williams rightly pointed out, it is simply too late for it (Williams, 1986, p. 163). Once there is a global mixture of cultures and moral practices interacting with each other, it is not possible to say ‘I have my conception of right and you have yours, let’s ignore each other’. Especially in politics, there is only one set of rules, one list of rights that can be protected and enforced by the state. Relativism can be of no help here.

So, what kind of conclusion can be made from this very short sketch? What type of theory is left when all the options above do not seem to be attractive? I hold that the list above is definitely not as negative as it may seem – it constitutes the first positive step from which it’s possible to construct a list of desired features which could transcend the above presented difficulties, which could then form a sort of *desiderata* for future theory.

The first characteristic stemming from the list is that a desired approach to practical philosophy must be non-relativist, objectivist. It must claim that political or moral values stem from something deeper than only our ever-changing and contingent culture, something that can possibly be shared with all human beings. Otherwise an intelligible conversation on moral values is impossible – especially under the pluralist circumstances of the modern world.

But, and here comes the catch, it must not be naively objectivist. It must not claim that values are sort of ‘out there’, waiting only to be discovered by some kind of straightforward deductive analysis of language or intuited by some reliable moral sense. ‘We all know that pleasure is the only desirable thing’ is a non-starter.

So, a resulting desired theory constitutes a bit of a paradox: How can a theory be objective yet somehow constructed, not given but still sound? Yet I believe this precisely needs to be the ambition of any practical philosopher who wants to avoid the difficulties presented above.

Introduced like this, it is clear that the main question of such an approach pertains to the nature of values. What are the values that should lie in the foundations of our political system? And, more importantly, how can we justify them so they are neither culture-relative, nor given to us as some objective facts? I interpret both Hejdánek and Rawls as responding to these very questions.

### III

In order to keep my exposition concise, I will exemplify the nature of construction of values by both Rawls and Hejdánek on one example, equality. This is by no means an arbitrary decision. As will become very

clear shortly, both Rawls and Hejdánek give very high priority to equality – it stands as the foundational value, upon which much of their political theory hangs, including their theory of human rights.

Political equality for Hejdánek is not some kind of natural fact or even a natural right. There are no natural rights. And people are not ‘in fact’ equal. Equality is not even established by consent or consensus: equality for Hejdánek is a matter of truth and truth cannot be established simply by the will of political actors. Equality consists in equal ‘calling’ (*povolanie*) for participation in the political community. Equality as a calling means that it is not a part of anything that ‘is’ – but a part of what ought to be. As humans we equally possess a moral task to create a just society, and this very equality in calling provides the basis for equality more generally.

The same type of approach is used by Hejdánek when he tries to establish his conception of human rights. Rights are not natural; they are not a subject of political consensus or some prior consent. They are not anyhow simply ‘given’ to human beings. Human beings are born small, helpless and vulnerable. They are born into family and society that must care for them, or else they will die. So there are no ‘natural’ claims that can be stated as simple empirical facts.

Human rights then express our capacity to be free, our moral task of respecting others and taking care of them. More than anything else they express what we can be and become if we behave like human beings should. They are, to use a dichotomy popular in Anglo-American philosophy, normative, not factual claims about human beings. If we examined human beings as they are, we would find no traces of rights.

What we hear in these expressions are the echoes of Hejdánek’s mentor and important Czech philosopher Emanuel Rádl, who postulated the priority of what ‘ought to be’ as opposed to what is. He claimed that it is not us who have the truth; it is the truth that has us. It constitutes our purpose, defines what we ought to do – it makes claims on us so to say ‘from the future’. So, in the end, political values are a sort of normative fact to be worked out and fulfilled by us when we deliberate on our nature and our moral purpose in this world.

When it comes to Rawls, he works, especially in his later texts, with so called political liberalism: he wants to find an overlapping consensus on a conception of justice in contemporary liberal societies (Rawls, 1993, p. xl). This ambition is, on the surface, very different from what Hejdánek had to say: it seems that he is trying to work out an actual consensus between reasonable people on what it takes for a state to be just and legitimate. And this is very much in conflict with everything that Hejdánek believes about the truth in politics not being subject to some sort of voting or consensus. But the most elaborate contemporary interpretations of Rawls suggest this is not the whole story (Quong, 2011, p. 138). He is interested in the consensus

of idealized agents who all accept the picture of society as fair cooperation between the free and the equal.

And when it comes to the basis of freedom and equality, his explanation always turns to his conception of moral personality. In his view moral personality consists of two basic human characteristics: 1) possession of a sense of justice and 2) a capacity to set up and follow a rational plan of life. These two ‘powers’ are binary, not scalar. So one either does possess them, or does not – the concrete level of advancement of these powers is irrelevant for the purposes of political theory.

Why, then, are people equal for Rawls? It is because they possess these two capacities. (Not their actual realization – capacity is the only important thing.) And why are these capacities so important that they for him ground the most important political values? Because they ground a basic possibility to participate in human cooperation based on moral rules. To expand, Rawls can be interpreted as claiming something like ‘can imply ought’. Our being capable of doing justice grounds our duty to do so. Once we are capable of doing justice, then justice becomes our calling, our duty. Once we can understand and accept a conception of justice for society, plus are able to set up a conception of good for our lives, we have a moral obligation as human beings to create a society that is fair: society as cooperation between the free and the equal. So, our powers of moral personality for Rawls constitute, once again, a sort of normative facts, on whose bearing we ought to structure our society, its basic institutions and its conceptions of justice and human rights. The nature of basic political values lies in the fact that as human beings we can be expected to respond to normative calling regarding our co-citizens.

#### IV

Let me state the findings of the previous sections more generally: When searching for political principles it is useless to only take upon our culture or tradition. Culture as a very old artifact is bound to be confused and to contain multiple incommensurable values. To identify one set of cultural values that ought to be relevant for political purposes will always be a speculative enterprise. And with no independent arguments supporting the choice of values, it will always be quite arbitrary. Also, and especially now, it will be challenged quickly by other cultures and ways of life. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we necessarily live in multicultural societies. Therefore, trying to base political values solely on cultural values must always fail – provided we do not give up on trying to establish a legitimate system that could, at least in principle, not be rejected by reasonable people.

On the other hand, trying to stare directly on some given values is a fruitless exercise. Values are not simply given to our moral sense or coded into our language. They require careful philosophical analysis.

Thus, I take it that the most attractive possibility at this point is to look at the conception of a person and find out what normative implications it can have for political theory. Specific political principles can then be constructed using this normative conception of a person as a starting point. Rawls, having thought out the implications of this theory more widely than Hejdánek, is well known for this construction of principles. He takes his conception of a person and embeds it in the so called ‘original position’ which then becomes the driving force behind his derivation of ‘the two principles of justice’. But that is a whole different story and in this presentation I wanted only to focus on what I interpret to be his starting point, not the subsequent argumentation

## V

Despite a rhetoric that was sometimes sweeping and general, the ambition of this paper was relatively modest. I wanted to show that trying to ground political principles on a normative conception of a person is an attractive prospect that has an appeal across different philosophical backgrounds and traditions. I did not, nor did I try to, disprove relativism or intuitionism. That would be far beyond the scope of this paper. I only pointed to some of their generally acknowledged weaknesses, or, to say it in an even more modest fashion, the challenges they face.

Grounding political principles in a normative conception of a person therefore both 1) can solve the weaknesses of other prominent political conceptions, and is 2) attractive across different philosophical backgrounds – even for such figures as Ladislav Hejdánek, for a long time isolated from the broader philosophical community in the West. These conclusions can justify the claim that this strategy may prove out to be the most fruitful way of doing political (and also moral) philosophy in the years to come.

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## Jonas' Contribution to the Notion of Care

Josef Kuře

### Abstract

Hans Jonas is well-known for his work published under the title *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*. The idea of care is incorporated in his concept of responsibility which is a prospective caring responsibility in fact. The study, departing from Jonas' concept of ethics based on one sole principle, investigates the role of notion of care in Jonasien ethics and the place the notion of care takes in his Principle of Responsibility ("Prinzip Verantwortung"). Furthermore the paper searches for the relation between responsibility and care in Jonasien ethics, taking into account the historical background of Jonas' use of care. Finally the potential impact of the notion of care for contemporary ethical theories will be discussed and care as a prospective and conceptual tool for bioethics discourse in the age of bio-information-technology will be proposed.

**Keywords:** bioethics, care, ethics of care, responsibility

### Introduction

Before analyzing Hans Jonas's approach to care and discussing the Principle of Responsibility, his intellectual background should be mentioned - as a condition to understanding the context in which Jonas' concept of ethics grew. First of all one should mention that the Principle of Responsibility and with this principle, the related notion of care is the fruit of a lifelong search, work and reflected experience. With certain hyperbole one could state that Hans Jonas has produced one work only, namely the *Imperative of Responsibility*, ("Prinzip Verantwortung"), adding that all his previous work was intellectual preparatory work for the *Imperative of Responsibility* and all his later work was commentary on the *Imperative of Responsibility*. Jonas, coming from "ancient creed", namely from his early studies on Gnosis, to "technological man" which encompasses his studies on philosophy of science, is world-renowned for his late work *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* which was first published in 1979 when Jonas was already 76 years old.<sup>1</sup> *The*

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Jonas first published his "Principle of Responsibility" in German which was his mother tongue under the title *Das Prinzip Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation* in 1979 (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag). The English translation appeared under the title *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* in 1984 (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press). Forasmuch as the English edition of the "*Prinzip Verantwortung*" – in many places differing from the German original not only lingisitcally but matter-of-factly as well – was translated by Hans Jonas himself, so the *Imperative of Responsibility* can be simultaneously regarded as the primary text. When referring to the German version of the "*Prinzip Verantwortung*", the edition from 1984 published by Suhrkamp (Frankfurt am Main) will

*Imperative of Responsibility*, which can be also called Ethics of Responsibility (“Verantwortungsethik”), represents the peak of his practical philosophy – ethics was to him the challenge for practical philosophy – which is deeply founded in (philosophical) anthropology (Müller, 2008) and ontology (Wille, 2002). Jonas was one of few philosophers who dealt extensively with technique and technology in many different contexts such as medicine, environment, biology, or philosophical anthropology.

His early work on Gnosis<sup>2</sup> generally had a far smaller impact than his main work on ethics, although one could find the Principle of Responsibility in a certain form, namely in the form of responsibility for the knowledge, already in his doctoral thesis “*Die mythologische Gnosis*” (1934) (Müller, 2003; Colpe, 1994, pp. 129–150).<sup>3</sup> Similarly in the shadow of *The Imperative of Responsibility*, other eminent works by Jonas on philosophy of science and *Naturphilosophie* remain such as *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (1963), “*Organismus und Freiheit: Ansätze zu einer philosophischen Biologie*” (1973, Organism and freedom: elements of a philosophical biology), *Philosophical Essays: From Ancient Creed to Technological Man* (1974), or “*Wissenschaft als persönliches Erlebnis*” (1987, Science as a personal experience).

Hans Jonas, born in 1903 in Germany (Mönchengladbach), intellectually grew up in the most influential environment of the 1920s. Having studied at University in Freiburg, Heidelberg, Bonn, Berlin and Marburg, he was a student of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Bultmann. He accomplished his doctoral studies in philosophy under Heidegger and Bultmann in 1928 on Gnosis and the late ancient spirit (published in 1934). Jonas, as a German Jew, left Germany in 1933. He spent the rest of his life in emigration: England (1933–1935), Palestine (1935–1949), Canada (1949–1955), USA (1955–1993). He died in 1993 in New York.

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be used in this paper. When referring to the English version, the first edition of the *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press) from the same year (1984) will be used.

<sup>2</sup> The following belong to Jonas’ main works on Gnosis: *Die mythologische Gnosis: Mit einer Einleitung zur Geschichte und Methodologie der Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 1934, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1964, 456 pages), *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 1954, 223 pages, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1966); *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, edited by K. Rudolph (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1993); *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, 355 pages, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1967). *The Gnostic Religion* is an English summary of the previous two German books *Die mythologische Gnosis* and *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* – both of them often compiled under the common title *Gnosis und der spätantiker Geist*, i.e. as one book of two parts (*Die mythologische Gnosis* as the first part and *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* as the second part.)

<sup>3</sup> Hans Jonas published his doctoral thesis “*Die mythologische Gnosis: Mit einer Einleitung zur Geschichte und Methodologie der Forschung*” in 1934 in Göttingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag).

The range of Jonas's thought is remarkable. The extent of his philosophical thought can be expressed by the subtitle of his book published in 1974: *From Ancient Creed to Technological Man*.<sup>4</sup> However, his early (and extensive) work dealing with Gnosis and continuing his dissertation research is almost forgotten – meanwhile, a significant influence of his work on Gnosis in his later writings on science, technology and ethics can be found (Jonas, 1973, pp. 292–316). Overall, Jonas' topics in the course of his intellectual pathway are the following ones: gnosis, mythos and mythology, philosophical and theological mystics, philosophical anthropology, existentialism (and Gnosis), post-holocaust theology (Jonas, 1996, pp. 115–179), philosophy of science, *Naturphilosophie*, philosophy of medicine and of technology and finally ethics. His work can be periodized as follows: Gnosis (1920s–1960s),<sup>5</sup> philosophy of nature and of man, in his own words “*Ontologie des Organischen*”<sup>6</sup> (1960s–1970s),<sup>7</sup> ethical reflection on science, technology and medicine, in other words “ethics and responsibility”<sup>8</sup> (1970s–1990s).<sup>9</sup> Jonas' treatise on responsibility belongs to the third period, however his studies on responsibility are located in his previous work (Jonas, 1974, pp. 3–20, 168–185; Jonas, 1973, pp. 258–342). Elements of ethics can be found already in his existentialist hermeneutics of Gnosis or in his later philosophy of science when he, influenced by Heidegger (Jakob, 1996), synthesizing the philosophy of matter with the philosophy of mind, emphasizes moral human nature in his *Phenomenon of Life: Towards Philosophical Biology* (Jonas, 1963) and as one of the first

<sup>4</sup> H. Jonas: *Philosophical Essays: From Ancient Creed to Technological Man*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974. These essays appeared in print during the years 1965–1973.

<sup>5</sup> Jonas, rewriting his two German published volumes on Gnosis (see above), later published *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press 1958). The second edition of *The Gnostic Religion* (1967) already reflects on Gnosis, Nihilism and Existentialism in a more systematic way (Jonas, 1967, pp. 320–340) than his early book does (Jonas, 1964, pp. 90 and 100–108). Jonas, having interpreted Gnosis in an existentialist way, later wrote: “Der Erfolg der ‘existentialistischen’ Lesung der Gnosis lud zu einer quasi ‘gnostischen’ Lesung des Existentialismus und mit ihm des modernen Geistes ein” (Jonas, 1987, p. 19).

<sup>6</sup> Jonas’ “*Ontologie des Organischen*” (ontology of the organic) can be also called “*Sein der Natur*” (being of the nature) (Jonas, 1987, pp. 19–25).

<sup>7</sup> Jonas' main works of this period are the following two books: *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) and “*Organismus und Freiheit: Ansätze zu einer philosophischen Biologie*” (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jonas, 1979, pp. 25–31.

<sup>9</sup> The *opus magnum* of this period is Jonas' main work on ethics “*Das Prinzip der Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation*” (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1979) followed by his own three commentaries: “*Macht oder Ohnmacht der Subjektivität? Das Leib-Seele-Problem im Vorfeld des Prinzips Verantwortung*” (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1981), “*Technik, Medizin und Ethik: Praxis des Prinzips Verantwortung*” (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1985) and “*Philosophische Untersuchungen und metaphysische Vermutungen*” (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1992).

philosophers extensively addresses ethical questions arising from contemporary life sciences.

### **Jonas' Approach to Care: Preliminary Semantics**

The idea of care is incorporated in Jonas' concept of responsibility which is caring responsibility in fact. Jonas insists that – and one should be aware that the historical context of his statement is ecological and nuclear crisis of the cold war – our human survival depends basically on our effort to care for the future. As responsibility is, to him, primarily responsibility for the future, so care is, to him, primarily care for the future (Böhler, 1998; Müller, 2008).

Generally, Hans Jonas does not frequently use the German term "*Pflege*" for "care". Hereby, he does not stay in any traditional Feminist or Nonfeminist approach to ethics understood as Ethics of Care. Moreover Ethics of Care is not his own concept, not using the term Ethics of Care which comes from some forms of Virtue Ethics and from several Feminist approaches. Jonas does not follow any particular philosophical school, he goes his own original way. Instead of Ethics of Care in the narrow sense, Jonas's approach would rather belong to Virtue Ethics (German *Tugendethik*). However Jonas does not label himself as a "virtue ethicist". He remains critical about "Tugend" as the core of traditional and foregoing ethics. Virtue Ethics, being traditionally focused on the right action much more than on the teleological aspects of deliberation, did not take into account the future as such and the distant consequences of an action conducted at present (Jonas, 1979, pp. 222–224). In terms of Virtue Ethics, Jonas considers one virtue solely, namely the responsibility which he understands as an alternative to the old ethics which was not able to deal with ethical challenges of (bio)technology and biomedicine. Responsibility becomes the central piece of his ethics (Jonas, 1979, p. 222). There is a significant link between Jonas' "Prinzip Verantwortung" and Discourse Ethics understood as "Verantwortungsethik" (Apel, 1988), though both concepts are different (Werner, 1994, pp. 324–326; Kuhlmann, 1994, pp. 277–302).

Jonas' *Prinzip Verantwortung* (The Imperative of Responsibility)<sup>10</sup> can be called, more accurately, *Pflichtethik* (Ethics of Duty) – in the Kantian sense of self-obligation and moral "necessity" of the Categorical Imperative (Roviello, 1993, pp. 49–68). So Jonas' ethics would be close to traditional Deontological Ethics. The Kantian concept of duty in its imperativeness is closer to Jonas' approach than the Heideggerian concept of *Sorge* (concern, care), even though Jonas' emphasis on the existentialist understanding of care apparently comes from the Heideggerian approach to *Sorge* ("Ruf der

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<sup>10</sup> H. Jonas: *Das Prinzip der Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation* (1979); H. Jonas: *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (1984).

Sorge”). Nevertheless there are significant differences between the Jonasian and Heideggerian understanding of *Sorge*: while for Heidegger, *Sorge* is pre-eminently an intellectual description of Dasein (“bloße formale Seinsstruktur des Seienden”),<sup>11</sup> for Jonas, *Sorge* is a duty (Jonas, 1979, pp. 85–86, 391; Jonas, 1984, p. 39). *Pflicht* (duty, obligation) – beside *Vetantwortung* (responsibility) – is probably the most frequently used term by Jonas.

Jonas’ usage of some synonymous terms for care such as concern,<sup>12</sup> sacrifice (*Verzicht*),<sup>13</sup> *Hütung* (watching, warding),<sup>14</sup> *Voraussicht* (anticipation, preconceiving),<sup>15</sup> or *Vorsicht* (foresight, prevision)<sup>16</sup> is rather

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger: *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. In: Gesamtausgabe, vol. XX. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1979, pp. 406–420, here pp. 406f.; M. Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986, 16<sup>th</sup> edition, pp. 180–230, 301–333 (§§ 39–44, 61–66). In his late work *Wissenschaft als persönliches Erlebnis* (1987), Hans Jonas makes a note on the limits of Heidegger’s approach to *Sorge*: “Bei Heidegger hörte man vom Dasein als *Sorge* – in geistiger Hinsicht, aber nichts vom ersten physischen Grund des Sorgenmüssens: unserer Leiblichkeit, durch die wir, selber ein Stück Natur, bedürftig-verletzlich in die Umwelt Natur verwoben sind [...]” (Jonas, 1987, p. 19).

<sup>12</sup> Jonas uses the term “concern” in the sense of concern regarding the future as a trait of political responsibility (Jonas, 1984, pp. 106–108), which characterizes responsibility of both politician and parents as well. This concern with the future belongs to any ethics of the future; the term “concern” can be substituted by “care for the future”.

<sup>13</sup> Jonas, dealing with Marxism – but his comment can be understood generally –, writes about *Verzicht* (abandonment, renouncement) and *Bescheidenheit* (modesty) (Jonas, 1979, pp. 265 and 338) and austerity (Jonas, 1984, pp. 148f.), asking the question of enthusiasm for modesty and limitedness as a transformation of enthusiasm for utopia; in the English version the term “sacrifice” is used (Jonas, 1984, pp. 150f.). Jonas’s allusion about sacrifice of one generation for the next one (Jonas, 1984, p. 11) can be therefore understood as care one generation being taken for the next one.

<sup>14</sup> The biblical term “*Hütung des Ebenbildes*”, Hans Jonas uses (Jonas, 1979, p. 392), can be perceived as care for *imago Dei* – indeed care for a human being and care for the future (Jonas, 1979, p. 393). “*Hütung*” means to take care of the existence: “mankind’s existence – the first commandment” (Jonas, 1984, p. 99; “Existenz der Menschheit: das ‘erste Gebot’” – Jonas, 1979, p. 186) and the extent of this care (*Hütung*) is a cosmic one (Jonas, 1984, p. 99). The Imperative of Responsibility usually translates the German term “*Hüter*” as “guardian” (Jonas, 1984, p. 99). Notwithstanding the last chapter of the *Prinzip Verantwortung* has been changed distinctly in the English edition and so the imago-metaphor (“*Hütung des Ebenbildes*”) was omitted in *The Imperative of Responsibility*.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Jonas takes the following position: “Our thesis is that the new kinds and dimensions of action require a commensurate ethic of foresight and responsibility which is as novel as the eventualities which it must meet” (Jonas, 1984, p. 18). The German version of his statement is the following one: “Unsere These ist, daß die neuen Arten und Abmaße des Handelns eine ihnen kommensurable Ethik der Voraussicht und Verantwortung erfordern, die so neu ist wie die Eventualitäten, mit denen sie zu tun hat” (Jonas, 1979, p. 47). Among examples for the “*Voraussicht*” approach, Jonas gives the politician: “The foresight of the statesman thus consists in the wisdom and moderation he devotes to the *present*. This present is not here for the sake of a future different from (and superior to) it in type, but rather proves itself-luck permitting-in a future still like itself, and so must be as justified already in itself as its succession is hoped to be” (Jonas, 1984, p. 15).

rare in his essays. However, they indicate the semantic width of the term “care” used by Jonas. Terms such as anxiety, attention, attentive aid, mercy, friendship, charity, philanthropy, solicitude, or benevolence are not used by him. Anyway, Jonas often uses the term “fear” (*Furcht*), “heuristics of fear” (Jonas, 1984, pp. 26f., 202f.) which is used to substitute the terms “wisdom” (Jonas, 1984, p. 23), “getting knowledge” or “getting practical wisdom”. Thus “heuristics of fear” has significant epistemological function. In Jonas’ language, the term “fear” has a strong connotation with the term “care”, motivating one to take care or even urging one to act in a responsible way (Kurreck, 1994, pp. 428–454). There are also other terms - such as *Sympathie*<sup>17</sup> (sympathy), *Mitleid*<sup>18</sup> (compassion) or *Solidarität* (solidarity)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jonas proposal “Fortschritt mit Vorsicht” (progress with foresight) (Jonas, 1979, p. 337) gives a true picture of prudential care for the future. In *The Imperative of Responsibility* the idiom “modesty of goals” (versus “the immodesty of utopia”) is used (Jonas, 1984, p. 191). It should be mentioned that “Vorsicht” not only has its negative and restrictive aspects such as caution, cautiousness, guard, guardedness, reservedness or wariness, but also its positive (and prospective) ones as well (e. g. carefulness, charitability, modesty, prudence, vigilance). *Vorsehen*, literally *vor-sehen*, means a prospective sight, foreseeing, prevision – including prospective action and care.

<sup>17</sup> See Jonas, 1979, p. 89; Jonas, 1984, pp. 41f.

<sup>18</sup> Jonas’ own comment on fundamental duty in this context is the following one: “Hierüber zu wachen ist *unsere* Grundpflicht gegenüber der Zukunft der Menschheit, von der alle Pflichten gegen die künftigen Menschen sich erst ableiten. Diese inhaltlichen Pflichten mögen sich dann unter der Ethik der Solidarität, der Sympathie, der Billigkeit, ja sogar des Mitleidens subsumieren lassen [...]” (Jonas, 1979, p. 89). “To stand guard over this onerous endowment of theirs is *our* cardinal duty toward the future of humanity as such (its existence presupposed), from which all specified duties toward the well-being of future humans are the derivative” (Jonas, 1984, p. 42).

<sup>19</sup> Jonas makes use of the term “solidarity” (Jonas, 1984, p. 42) in the sense of solidarity of interests with the organic world (Jonas, 1979, p. 245; Jonas, 1984, p. 136). Solidarity understood in this way means to take care of nature, including the future of both humans and nature. Solidarity for him means also a sharing of the interests of the world of life and taking care of the future of life (life of human beings, life of the nature as whole). Solidarity, likewise, means for Jonas “the standing by one another in common cause or danger” (Jonas, 1984, p. 94). Jonas also uses the term “Solidarität” in the context of *analogia amoris*: “And ‘love’, finally, in the genuine sense cannot be felt for a nonindividual, collective, largely abstract entity. Nonetheless, to take the last most fundamental point first, there does exist an emotional relation comparable to love on the part of the political individual toward the community whose destiny he wishes to guide to the best, for it is ‘his’ in a much deeper sense than that of a mere community of interests: he is (in the normal case) descendent from it and thought it has become what he is; he is thus, indeed, not the father, but a ‘son’ of his people and country (also class, etc.) and thereby in a kind of sibling relation to all others - present, future, even past – with whom he shares this bond. This fact engenders, as in the family, from which the symbolism is borrowed, something more than merely a recognition of duty, namely, that emotional identification with the whole, the felt ‘solidarity’, which is analogous to the love for the individual” (Jonas, 1984, p. 104). Jonas similarly advocates for “the new planetary distribution of suffering” (Jonas, 1984, p. 180), “new universal compassion”, “new planetary sympathy” and for “cosmic responsibility” (Jonas, 1979, p. 186; Jonas, 1984, p. 99).

– which do not belong to Jonas’ frequent vocabulary, yet have momentous meaning as synonyms or analogies for “care” (Jonas, 1984, p. 42).

Instead of the term “care”, Jonas uses the term “responsibility” as a general term with wide semantics, many particular meanings and with deep anthropological and ontological foundation: a human as a being who gives response (Poliwoda, 2005). The semantics of both the German (*Verantwortung*) and English words for responsibility is based on response (*Antwort*). Beside the mentioned semantics, there was not any significant philosophical tradition in European continental thinking – and in the particular German philosophy that Hans Jonas based his work on – which would consist of care. Moreover there is no an unequivocal equivalent in German for the English term “care” which has to be translated using several terms such as *Pflege* (*pflügen*), *Sorge* (*sorgen*, *sich kümmern*), *Sorgfalt*, *Versorgung*, *Betreuung*, *Fürsorge*, *Zuwendung*, or *Achtsamkeit*. So what in English terminology is included in the term “care” can be appropriately expressed – with regard to Jonas’ thinking – by his concept of *Verantwortung* (responsibility).

### **“Responsibility” as a General Synonym for “Care”**

Hans Jonas, being not interested in the legal aspect of responsibility, does not reduce responsibility to legal accountability (retrospective responsibility as responsibility *post quam*). He understands responsibility primarily not as a causal accountability for the past (“*Verantwortung als kausale Zurechnung vergangener Taten*” – Jonas, 1979, p. 172; “the causal attribution of deeds done” – Jonas, 1984, p. 90). He uses the term “responsibility” in the moral sense as a given response by an action, as re-acting towards the current challenge with respect to the future (responsibility *ante quam*). The expression “to be responsible” and “to take care” means for him practically the same. Semantically, *Verantwortung*, as a general term, is, for Jonas, the basic ethical concept. The notion of care (*Pflege*, *Sorge*, *Fürsorge*) comprises one of several semantic aspects of the term *Verantwortung* (responsibility).

Jonas’ own views on responsibility include the following:

- 1) “The first and most general condition of responsibility is causal power, that is, that acting makes an impact on the world; the second, that such acting is under the agent’s control; and third, that he can foresee its consequences to some extent. Under these necessary conditions, there can be ‘responsibility’, but in two widely differing senses: (a) responsibility as being accountable ‘for’ one’s deeds, whatever they are; and (b) responsibility ‘for’ particular objects that an agent commits to particular deeds concerning them. (Note the different referent of ‘for’!) The one is a formal, the other a substantive concept, and we really speak of two different things when we say that someone is responsible for what happened (which is neither praise nor blame), and that someone is

- a responsible person, that is, honors his responsibilities (which is praise)” (Jonas, 1984, p. 90).
- 2) Responsibility is, according to Jonas, first of all “*Verantwortung für das Zu-Tuende*” (Jonas, 1979, p. 174f.), no primary “*Verantwortung für das Getane*” (Jonas, 1969, p. 174) in a retrospective way, in the sense of moral or legal responsibility. Jonas himself translates the idiom “*Verantwortung für das Zu-Tuende*” in *The Imperative of Responsibility* as “the positive duty of power” (Jonas, 1984, p. 92) which does not express precisely the original German phrase. “There is, however, a vastly different concept of responsibility that concerns not the *ex post facto* account for what has been done, but the forward determination of what is to be done; by its command, therefore, I feel responsible, not in the first place for my conduct and its consequences but for the *matter* that has a claim on my acting. [...] Here, the ‘for’ of being responsible is obviously distinct from that in the purely self-related sense. [...] First comes the ‘ought-to-be’ of the object, second the ought-to-do of the subject who, in virtue of his power, is called to its care” (Jonas, 1984, p. 92f.). Responsibility to him means to be called to care for the one’s ought-to-do.
  - 3) According to Jonas, there are two types of responsibility: *natural responsibility and contractual responsibility* (Jonas, 1984, p. 94) (“*natürliche und vertragliche Verantwortung*”, Jonas, 1979, p. 178). The first type of responsibility is responsibility instituted by nature, which is independent of prior assent or choice (Jonas, 1984, p. 94) (“*die von der Natur instituierte, von Natur aus bestehende Verantwortung*” Jonas, 1979, p. 178). This form of responsibility is “global, nondepending on any previous consent, is irrevocable and invoidable (“*unkündbar*”)” (Jonas, 1984, p. 94; Jonas, 1979, p. 178). In difference to the second one which is “responsibility instituted ‘artificially’ by bestowal and acceptance of a task” (Jonas, 1984, p. 95). This form of responsibility is temporarily limited and conditioned. As an example, Jonas gives parental responsibility for natural responsibility and responsibility of the statesman for contractual (here political) responsibility (Jonas, 1979, pp. 184–198; Jonas, 1984, pp. 98–108). It is obvious that a part of parental responsibility is to take care of the child.
  - 4) *Parental responsibility and responsibility of the statesman* are two paradigms of responsibility. Parental responsibility is “the archetype of all responsibility” (Jonas, 1979, pp. 189, 242; Jonas, 1984, pp. 101, 135): “the child as a whole and in all its possibilities, not only in its immediate needs, is its object” (Jonas, 1984, p. 101). The child is the aboriginal object of responsibility (Jonas, 1979, pp. 234–240; Jonas, 1984, pp. 130–135). Political responsibility, the self-chosen responsibility of the politician (Jonas, 1984, p. 96), is freely and consciously accepted responsibility, self-commitment (*Sebstverpflichtung*



– Jonas, 1979, p. 195) in the Kantian sense, for the future. Jonas calls this type of responsibility *Sorge* (care): “die vorausschauende Sorge des Gesetzgebers und Staatsmanns für das künftige Wohl des Gemeinwesens” (Jonas, 1979, p. 42); in the English version he uses explicitly the term “care”: “the long-range care of the legislator and statesman for the future good of the commonwealth” (Jonas, 1984, p. 14). For Jonas both types of responsibility, i.e. the parental responsibility and the responsibility of the politician, are *Fürsorge*, care (Jonas, 1979, p. 185). For both paradigms of responsibility, he gives three distinctive traits which exemplify the nature of responsibility as such (Jonas, 1979, pp. 184, 189f. and 196–198; Jonas, 1984, pp. 101–102 and 105–108). These three traits are as follows: totality, continuity and future.

### ***Totality***

For Jonas, both political and parental responsibility is total (Jonas, 1984, pp. 101f.): “By this [totality] we mean that these responsibilities [parental and political] encompass the total being of their objects, that is, all the aspects of them, from naked existence to highest interests. [...] The child as a whole and in all its possibilities, not only in its immediate needs, is its [responsibility] object. The bodily aspect comes first, of course, in the beginning perhaps solely; but then more and more is added, all that which falls under ‘education’ in the broadest sense: faculties, conduct, relation, character, knowledge, which have to be stimulated and guided in their development; and together with these also, if possible, happiness. In brief: the pure being as such, and then the best being of the child, is what parental care is about.” (Jonas, 1984, p. 101). So parental care is the content of parental responsibility.

With the exception of dynastic rulers such as “Papa Czar” (Jonas, 1984, p. 102), responsibility of the statesman, although temporality limited, is total. “The ‘statesman’ in the term’s full sense has, for the duration of his office or his power, responsibility for the total life of the community, the ‘public weal’” (Jonas, 1984, p. 102). The possession of power “objectively carries responsibility with it. Its compass makes it an analogy of parental responsibility. It too extends from physical existence to the highest interests, from security to abundance of life, from good conduct to happiness” (Jonas, 1984, p. 102).

### ***Continuity***

Both political and parental responsibility is continual, spreading continuity through time (Jonas, 1984, pp. 106f.). “Continuity follows from the total nature of responsibility, first in the almost tautological sense that its *exercise* dare not stop. Neither parental nor governmental care can allow itself a vacation or pause. More important still is the

continuity of the cared-for *existence*; itself as a *concern*, wherein both responsibilities [parental and political] discussed here must be kept in mind on every single occasion of their exercise. Nontotal, defined, responsibility is limited not only to a single aspect but also to a single time period of such an existence” (Jonas, 1984, p. 105).<sup>20</sup> The continuity of responsibility is not limited for some period of time – indifference to defined and limited responsibility for which Jonas gives two examples: the ship’s captain and the physician.<sup>21</sup> “Total responsibility, however, must continually ask: ‘What comes after that? Where it will lead?’ and at the same time, ‘What preceded it? How does what is happening now fit into the overall becoming of this existence?’ In other words, total responsibility must proceed ‘historically’, embracing its object in its historicity, and this in the true meaning of what we here designates with the element of ‘continuity’” (Jonas, 1984, p. 106).

### ***Future***

Both political and parental responsibility is oriented towards the future (Jonas, 1984, pp. 106f.). “Above all, however, it is the *future* with which responsibility for a life, be it individual or communal, is concerned beyond its immediate present. [...] But this routine inclusion of tomorrow in today’s concern, given with temporality as such, acquires an altogether different dimension and quality in the context of ‘total responsibility’ [...] (Jonas, 1984, p. 106).<sup>22</sup> Responsibility follows ontology, more precisely, responsibility follows not only *Sein* but *Zeit* as well. From this perspective, is Jonas’ powerful statement: “[...]”

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<sup>20</sup> While *The Imperative of Responsibility* uses the term “care” (care for existence itself), the German version expresses the same by verb “betreuen” and as a synonym for “pflegen”: “Wichtiger noch ist die Kontinuität dieser betreuten *Existenz* selbst als ein *Anliegen*, das beide hier betrachteten Verantwortungen bei jedem Einzelanlaß ihrer Aktualisierung im Auge haben müssen. Partikuläre Verantwortung ist nicht nur auf einen einzelnen Aspekt, sondern auch auf einen einzelnen Zeitausschnitt einer solchen Existenz beschränkt” (Jonas, 1979, p. 196).

<sup>21</sup> “The ship’s captain does not ask his passengers what they did previously or what they will do later – whether they undertake the journey with good or evil intentions, to their salvation or damnation, to the advantage or detriment of third parties. None of this is his concern. As his business is transporting them safely from one place to another, his responsibility begins and ends with their presence on the ship. ... Or, to take the most frequent example of an, at once high and strictly limited responsibility: the responsibility of the physician, begun with the therapeutic relationship, encompasses the curing, relief of suffering, and prolonging the life of the patient. All his other weal and woe lies outside its scope, and the ‘worth’ of the existence benefited or saved is none of its business. And this responsibility, too, ends with the termination of treatment.” (Jonas, 1984, pp. 105f).

<sup>22</sup> With his concept of total responsibility, Hans Jonas seems to be close to Emmanuel Levinas (*Totalité et Infini*) (Jonas, 1979, p. 241; Jonas, 1984, p. 134).

responsibility as such is nothing else but the moral complement to the ontological constitution of our *temporality*” (Jonas, 1984, p. 107).<sup>23</sup>

- 5) Responsibility is a *nonreciprocal relationship* (Jonas, 1979, pp. 62–63 and 177–178; Jonas, 1984, pp. 26, 93–94). Jonas also calls this aspect of responsibility a “one-way relationship” (Jonas, 1984, p. 39) which has a “one-sided characteristic” (Jonas, 1984, p. 94). Jonas’ notion of responsibility stresses much more the asymmetric relationship than the symmetric one. Similarly, care is a nonreciprocal attitude. To be responsible or to act responsibly sets, according to Jonas, an un-mutual activity: Subject A takes care of subject B (A is acting responsibly, B is helped/cared for by A), while subject B does not (necessarily) take care of subject A – as a form of equalization, repayment or compensation. The responsibility of subject A (with respect to subject B) is not reciprocal to the responsibility of subject B. Nonreciprocity – which also includes unconditionality – is one of the traits of Jonas’ notion of responsibility (Jonas, 1979, p. 85; Jonas, 1984, p. 39).

- 6) *Long-term responsibility for the future (“Weitsichtigkeit”)*

In the context of long-term responsibility, political responsibility in particular, Jonas uses the term *Weitsichtigkeit* (Jonas, 1979, p. 215). This farsightedness (Jonas, 1984, p. 119) is more required by the magnified causal range of contemporary actions as we experience it in the field of biotechnology. “But the compass of this farsightedness, as the preceding discussion has shown, has two different horizons: the nearer one, within which – with analytical knowledge at our disposal and the extrapolations it permits – the effects of single undertakings [...] can be calculated more or less hypothetically beyond the immediate situation; and the farther horizon, in which the momentum of what is now begun leads onward into the cumulative magnitudes of reciprocal interaction with *all* the factors of the human condition. Here, with the many unknowns in the tangled total, nothing really conclusive can still be extracted – except for these two evident aspects: that certain *possibilities* (eventualities) which we can causally construct will ‘then’, if they should materialize, be beyond control; and that their enormous *order of magnitude* will affect the entire destiny of man” (Jonas, 1984, p. 119). This kind of care also includes responsibility for the expanded time and space scope (“Nah- und Fernwirkungen”),<sup>24</sup> (Jonas, 1979, pp. 214–218; Jonas, 1984, pp. 117–122).<sup>25</sup> So responsibility for long-term consequences

<sup>23</sup> The German version includes a precise connection of time and being: “[...] Verantwortung ist überhaupt nichts anderes als das moralische Komplement zur ontologischen Verfassung unseres *Zeitlichseins*” (Jonas, 1979, p. 198).

<sup>24</sup> H. Jonas: *Auf der Schwelle der Zukunft: Werte von gestern und die Welt von morgen*. In: H. Jonas, D. Mieth: *Was für morgen lebenswichtig ist. Unentdeckte Zukunftswerte*. Freiburg, Basel & Wien: Herder, 1983, pp. 19–21.

<sup>25</sup> “Fernwirkungen sind berechenbarer, aber auch widerspruchsvoller; auf die regenerative Kräfte des von unserm Tun in Mitleidenschaft gezogenen Ganzen ist nicht mehr zu bauen;

(“Fernwirkungen”) requires “Ethik der Fernverantwortung” (Jonas, 1979, p. 63; “ethics of responsibility for distant contingencies” – Jonas, 1984, p. 26).

7) *Responsibility and power*

“Responsibility” means moral responsibility in the sense of the moral imperative (moral duty) of a person dealing with technology in the field of contemporary biomedicine. “Power” refers to technological methodologies as powerful possibilities (as sources of technical, but not solely technical, power). With certain simplification, biotechnology (i.e. technique) is power.<sup>26</sup> Technique is, for Jonas, “enorm gesteigerte Macht” (an extremely increased power – Jonas, 1987, p. 42). Jonas did not link biotechnological power with scientific, industrial and economic power as he probably would do today. Nevertheless, he links power with virtue (Jonas, 1984, p. 93). Jonas supposes there is no morally neutral knowledge; each distinct type of knowledge (biotechnological power is a form of knowledge, traditionally called *scientia*, science) has a moral and ethical impact as well as implications (Lenk, 1994, pp. 213–223).

Traditional ethics, not possessing a proper instrument, was not able to deal with the Baconian paradigm (*scientia est potentia*) in its present form (biotechnology). Jonas’ contribution consists of a redefinition of responsibility: responsibility is an important supplement to power: “responsibility is a correlate of power, so that the scope and kind of power determines the scope and kind of responsibility” (Jonas, 1984, p. 128). Responsibility is also “a function of power and knowledge, with the mutual relation of these two not a simple one” (Jonas, 1984, p. 123).

8) *Primary responsibility is responsibility for other human beings*

Responsibility first of all means responsibility for humans (Jonas, 1984, pp. 98–99).<sup>27</sup> “Responsibility is first and foremost of men for men, and this is the archetype of all responsibility” (Jonas, 1984, p. 98). Therefore the primary object of responsibility is the human subject; the primary responsibility is care for other human beings (Böhler, 1998).

### ***Sorge as a Modus of Care***

Firstly, it should be mentioned that Hans Jonas did not write any separate essays on *Sorge* (care); there are only some notes and remarks, spread in his writings. Here is one of his references to *Sorge*: “It is at least not senseless

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man darf sich nicht mehr vorstellen, daß sich die künftigen Generationen noch in einer ähnlichen Ausgangssituation befinden werden” (Jonas, 1983, p. 20).

<sup>26</sup> “[...] daß Technik ethischen Erwägungen unterliegt, folgt aus der einfachen Tatsache, dass die Technik eine Ausübung menschlicher *Macht* ist [...]” (H. Jonas: *Technik, Medizin und Ethik: Praxis des Prinzips Verantwortung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 42).

<sup>27</sup> “Das Urbild aller Verantwortung ist die von Menschen für Menschen. Dieser Primat der Subjekt-Objekt-Verwandtschaft im Verantwortungsverhältnis liegt unwidersprechlich in der Natur der Sache.” (Jonas, 1979, p. 184).

anymore to ask whether the condition of extrahuman nature, the biosphere as a whole and its parts, now subject to our power, has become a human trust and has something of a moral claim on us not only for our ulterior sake but for its own and in its own right. If this were the case it would require quite some rethinking of the basic principles of ethics. It would mean to seek not only the human good but also the good of things extrahuman, that is, to extend the recognition of ‘ends in themselves’ beyond the sphere of man and make the human good include the care for them” (Jonas, 1984, p. 8).<sup>28</sup>

As introduced above, in the context of paternal responsibility as an archetypical responsibility, Jonas uses terms such as *Vorsorge*<sup>29</sup> (Jonas, 1979, p. 85), *Fürsorge*<sup>30</sup> (Jonas, 1979, p. 85), *Vorsorge für Sosein* (Jonas, 1979, p. 90), *Sorge um den Nachwuchs*<sup>31</sup> (Jonas, 1979, p. 171), *Haften von Eltern für ihre Kinder* (Jonas, 1979, p. 172). On other places, he mentions *Sorge des Heute*<sup>32</sup> (Jonas, 1979, p. 198), *Sorge um die Menschheit* (Jonas, 1983, p. 29), *Sorge um die Zukunft* (Jonas, 1987, p. 31), or *die Aufgabe, für einen Gesamtzustand zu sorgen* (Jonas, 1987, p. 19). In the *Prinzip Verantwortung*, he speaks about *Pflicht der Sorge*<sup>33</sup> (Jonas, 1979, p. 85). “[...] everybody has first experienced, in any case, at least the primal responsibility of parental care himself. In this archetypal paradigm, the reference of responsibility to the animate and to the kindred is most convincingly displayed. Thus, to repeat, only what is alive, in its constitutive indigence and fragility, *can* be an object of responsibility” (Jonas, 1984, p. 98). Another text in the *Prinzip Verantwortung* also

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<sup>28</sup> The German version uses the term *Sorge*: “[...] nicht nur das menschliche Gut, sondern auch das Gut außermenschlicher Dinge zu suchen, das heißt die Anerkennung von ‘Zwecken an sich selbst’ über die Sphäre des Menschen hinaus auszudehnen und die Sorge dafür in den Begriff des menschlichen Guts einzubeziehen” (Jonas, 1979, p. 29).

<sup>29</sup> In *The Principle of Responsibility*, the term “farsighted providence” is used as an equivalent to *Vorsorge* (Jonas, 1984, p. 39).

<sup>30</sup> In *The Principle of Responsibility*, the term “care” is used as an equivalent to *Fürsorge* (Jonas, 1984, p. 39).

<sup>31</sup> In *The Principle of Responsibility*, the term “care for progeny” is used as an equivalent to *Sorge um den Nachwuchs* (Jonas, 1984, p. 90). In the *Prinzip Verantwortung* the following text includes both *Fürsorge* and *Vorsorge*: “Es ist dies [nicht-reziproke Verantwortung und Pflicht gegen die Kinder] die einzige von der *Natur* gelieferte Klasse völlig selbstlosen Verhaltens, und in der Tat ist dieses mit der biologischen Tatsache der Fortpflanzung gegebene Verhältnis zum unselbstständigen *Nachwuchs*, und *nicht* das Verhältnis zwischen selbstständigen Erwachsenen [...], der Ursprung der Idee von Verantwortung überhaupt, und seine ständig fordernde Handlungssphäre ist der ursprünglichste Ort ihrer Betätigung. Ohne diese Tatsache und das mit ihr verbundene Geschlechtsverhältnis wäre weder die Entstehung weitschauender *Vorsorge* noch diejenige selbstloser *Fürsorge* unter Vernunftwesen, seien sie noch so gesellschaftlich, zu verstehen.” (Jonas, 1979, p. 85).

<sup>32</sup> In *The Principle of Responsibility*, the term “today’s concern” is used as an equivalent to *Sorge des Heute* (Jonas, 1984, p. 106).

<sup>33</sup> In *The Principle of Responsibility*, the term “duty to care” is used as an equivalent to *Pflicht der Sorge* (Jonas, 1984, p. 39).

demonstrates the relationship between responsibility and *Sorge*.<sup>34</sup> *Sorge*, similarly to responsibility, requires continuity (Jonas, 1979, p. 196).

Finally, Jonas, using the term *Sorge*, gives the definition of responsibility per care: “Verantwortung ist die als Pflicht anerkannte *Sorge* um ein anderes Sein, die bei Bedrohung seiner Verletzlichkeit zur ‚Besorgnis‘ wird” (responsibility is care which has been acknowledged as a duty; this care becomes concern for the endangered vulnerability of other beings) (Jonas, 1979, p. 391). Interestingly enough, this crucial definition is not encompassed in *The Imperative of Responsibility*.<sup>35</sup> This statement by Jonas is probably his best one and the most accurate one concerning *Sorge*, surpassing all that was said about *Sorge* by Heidegger. In his late essay “Wissenschaft als persönliches Erlebnis” (1987) Hans Jonas, as a summary of his intellectual journey, states that it was the past that became continuously present in his thought and knowledge but finally it was the future in the light of care and concern (“die Zukunft im Licht der Sorge um sie” – Jonas, 1987, p. 31) which has moved him. He adds that the principle of responsibility can be translated into care for the future (“Sorge um die Zukunft” – Jonas, 1987, p. 31). Dealing with the new challenge which technique means for ethics (Jonas, 1994, pp. 341–363), he concludes that ethics is getting, for the first time in the whole of history, a cosmic dimension (Jonas, 1974, pp. 3–20), becoming care for the future.

### Conclusion

In the context of the enormous power of technique which Hans Jonas experienced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and which we experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is a collective power in fact, this Jewish thinker of German origin came up with the idea of responsibility which is primarily responsibility towards the future. Apart from all possible critique on ethics based on one sole principle (principle of responsibility), Jonas’ understanding of responsibility is broad, or one could say *complex*. Responsibility means, to him, at the same time, a concept very similar to what in the Anglo-saxon tradition is called Ethics of Care. For reasons given above, Jonas, writing

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<sup>34</sup> “Da wird die Zukunft der ganzen Existenz, jenseits der direkten Einwirkung des Verantwortlichen und damit jenseits der konkreten Berechenbarkeit, zum Mitgegenstand aller Einzelakte der Verantwortung, die jeweils immer das gerade Nächste besorgen” (Jonas, 1979, p. 198). However the English version of the same place does not encompass “besorgen”: “For it is the future of the whole existence, beyond the direct efficacy of the responsible agent and thus beyond his concrete calculation, which is the invisible co-object of such a responsibility in each of its single, defined occasions” (Jonas, 1984, p. 107).

<sup>35</sup> Vulnerability is for Jonas a *prima facie* trait of the human being: “Let us first take a look at this fundamental relatum, ‘human existence.’ It has a precarious, vulnerable, and revocable character, the peculiar mode of transience, of all *life*, which makes it alone a proper object of ‘caring’; and, moreover, it shares with the agent subject the *humanum*, which has the first, if not the sole claim on him. Every living thing is its own end which needs no further justification” (Jonas, 1984, p. 98).

primarily in German, does not use the term “care” habitually. He makes use of the term “care” only in his English writings firstly because there is no semantically congruous term for “Sorge”, secondly the term “responsibility” is for him broader and therefore more appropriate than “care”. Instead of care meaning “Pflege” he makes usage of other terms such as “Sorge”, “Vorsorge”, “Fürsorge”, “Sorge um die Zukunft”. *Sorge* means for him not a tentative concern but duty (*Pflicht der Sorge*). Responsibility as a principle represents, for him, care (*Sorge*) which has been acknowledged and accepted as a duty. Responsibility is, to him, the continuous and total care for the future.

Jonas’ concept of responsibility has influenced ethical thinking in the area of philosophical ethics and bioethics significantly, in the 1980s and 1990s in particular. His “Prinzip Verantwortung” has been criticized from many sides. What has been overlooked in these debates were the strong links between Jonas’ notion of responsibility and approaches in ethical theories such as Virtue Ethics, Ethics of Care or Feminist Ethics. This paper has shown that Jonas’ notion of responsibility is strongly related to the concept of care, although Jonas did not label himself as an “ethicist of care”. He never defined responsibility per care in any of his English texts. Both his definitions of responsibility per *Sorge* are included in his German writings only. On the other hand approaches such as Ethics of Care, Virtue Ethics or Feminist Ethics usually do not refer to responsibility as to the leading principle or as to the basic concept of ethics.

What seems to be very relevant in the Jonasian notion of responsibility is the relationship with technique and technology as a form of enormously intensified collective power. In this context Jonas’ notion of responsibility which simultaneously contains the notion of care and concern appears as suitable tools for bioethics discourse and for reflection on technology whether it is biotechnology or information technology. Jonas’ concern is not a pragmatic regulation of technology. His concern is related to the future in which technology will be used *for* humans (keeping the *Menschenbild*) who will be part of this future. And the future is governed by responsibility as the moral complement to the ontological constitution of our temporality.

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## Bioethical Principles in Clinical Medicine

Rudolf Novotný & Zuzana Novotná

### Abstract

Bioethical phenomena of current medicine re-evaluate the universal validity of the bioethical principles of autonomy and justice. Individual areas of medicine feature various degrees of inherent paternalism in clinical situations. External paternalism in itself is not ethical. Abstract principles of medical ethics need to be (re)interpreted. From the bioethical point of view, clinical situations require methodological plurality, i.e., a combination of principlism and inductive models (casuistic ethics, ethics of care). At present, the main ethical clinical approach to patients is ethics of responsibility representing a holistic and continuous paradigm.

**Keywords:** bioethical phenomena, paternalism, reinterpretation, medicine, ethics of responsibility

Medical bioethics methodologically pursues the identification of the right procedures by means of a comprehensive, internally structured process of thinking (Kuře, 2010). A methodological procedure is open relative to the specific situation by reflecting the selection of a particular variable ethical framework.

Beauchamp and Childress (2001) take the current liberalism as their point of departure in order to describe four fundamental principles of medical, health-care and nursing ethics, the so-called *prima facie* principles (i.e., the principle of beneficence, the principle of non-maleficence, the principle of respect for autonomy, and the principle of justice). While the first two principles have been the basis of medical thinking since ancient times,<sup>1</sup> the principles of autonomy and justice draw on secular thinking of the Modern Age. Contemporarily, modern medicine underwent another shift when the principle of respect for autonomy started to be emphasized and prioritized in the conduct of health care professionals. Komenská expresses the need of today's healthcare "to move away from a traditional view of health care professions based [...] primarily on the professional skills of their performer" and its paternalistic organization of health care and to shift to patient-centered medical ethics, which would introduce an autonomy model of health care and promote the two-side model of health care

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<sup>1</sup> These two principles had been clearly manifested in the Hippocratic Oath, one of the oldest and the most known professional code of conduct in medical and clinical practice. These principles were later adopted by and expanded into codes of conduct of all other professions connected with health care and nursing. Medicine and healthcare was then understood as a form of art and virtue of the professional which needs to be learned and trained. It was respected as a special skill of a special group of members in society whose opinions and methods should not be doubted. In this way, the Hippocratic (traditional) understanding of health care has historically supported the strong paternalistic organization of health care (Komenská, 2011, pp. 51–60).

relationship (health care professional – patient) (Komenská, 2012, pp. 192–193).

Nevertheless, the authors of the *prima facie* principles assume that these principles do not depend on the application of any ethical theory and are of universal nature. This assumption is relevant to clinical research (as it expresses universal morality) in which bioethical principlism is employed as a deductive model (Ivanová, 2006). Modern bioethical principles in medicine, including autonomy and justice, lose their universal validity in the context of clinical medicine. The principle of respect for autonomy reflects individualism. In the context of bioethics, it is applicable to the patient's right for self-determination in the form of informed consent to any and all circumstances. However, the right to self-determination cannot be viewed outside the context of full legal responsibility of the doctor for the patient. For this reason, medical legislation should be transparent and balanced, including respect for the autonomy of patients and medical employees. Furthermore, it is expected to specify clear rules for addressing ethically problematic situations in a professional way.<sup>2</sup>

Any considerations of the doctor's autonomy go hand in hand with the autonomous ethical discipline of the doctor. This means that the doctor accepts responsibility for what (s)he does. The doctor's autonomy must be balanced out with the patient's autonomy, simultaneously guaranteeing the necessary conditions for human dignity, human rights and fundamental biomedical principles. Optimally, it is a bilateral process in which both sides manifest their respect for responsibility and obligations of autonomy. The relation between the doctor and the patient in clinical research approaches this ideal. A contrasting situation is represented by emergent clinical situations. No standard ethical procedures have been specified for the patient's non-autonomy situation. Consequently, it is the ethos of each individual doctor that plays a key-role in applying abstract principles. This postulate could be changed by a system-level modification of social consciousness, including consistent adherence to the patient's disposition.

Freidson (1971) maintains that there are two components of the doctor's autonomy: the corporative (status-related) and the clinical (professional-medical). Corporative autonomy represents political influence of doctors on their working conditions and remuneration. Clinical autonomy reflects the uniqueness of professional issues, thus excluding from the evaluation process those who do not belong to the relevant group of doctors. Freidson (1988) maintains that the doctor's profession has acquired its autonomy

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<sup>2</sup> This could be supported by ethical codes of conduct of health care professionals, in which respect for a patient's autonomy and other medical employees could be formulated via the values of reverence for human life, dignity and human rights, or through the promotion of vital dialogues with patients (as active and equal participants of the communication processes) and informed consent which would be carried out with truthfulness, fairness and confidentiality from both sides of the health care professional – patient relationship (Komenská, 2012, pp. 196–199).

thanks to the promise of accomplishing socially important objectives in accordance with recognized (ethical) values (Ivanová, 2006).

The education of health care professionals should be an “enhancement and formation of not only professional, technical skills, but of ethical competence” (Smatanová, 2012, p. 182), too. (Bio)ethical education and the training of medical professionals are obligatory values on a par with expertise and skills. WMA lays emphasis on the ethical dimension of education (Williams, 2008). Education requires concentration on autonomous morality of the doctor and its analysis in relation to heteronomous morality. The doctor (medical worker) needs specific rules and knowledge. The knowledge of latent values is a condition for the success of an ethical process. Adequate communication, underlying an ethical process, is a precondition for the applicability of medical ethics.

The principle of justice is related to the distribution of resources for patients. The problem of limited resources in health-care against the background of enormous growth of finances invested in health-care in all advanced countries of the West has become the most serious ethical problem.

Specific professional ‘characteristics’ of the individual fields of medicine project onto the inherent professional uniqueness of bioethical principlism on the basis of various degrees of the patient’s autonomy in relation to paternalism of health-care workers as well as on the basis of the finances allocated to the particular field of medicine.

Individual fields of medicine manifest an unequal internal balance between the patient’s autonomy and the doctor’s paternalism in individual clinical situations. Highly intensive and invasive medical procedures (urgent-care medicine, surgical disciplines) are typical of stronger inherent paternalism. Clinical pathology and clinical biochemistry lay emphasis on laboratory diagnostics. The doctor-patient interaction in these areas is limited (or is mediated by a clinical doctor). What matters here is the diagnostic expertise and clinical experience of the doctor. The cyberspheric nature of these fields of medicine will depend on the level of application of robotic systems and technological-analytical methods. Paternalism in urgent-care medicine, in surgical disciplines and in laboratory-oriented fields of medicine is a specific characteristic that should be considered as advantageous inherent paternalism of the clinical field of medicine.

The nursing nature of medical procedures is characterized by balance between bioethical principlism and partnership. By implication, it is the field of nursing that manifests an adequate balance between bioethical principles. Nursing ethics emphasizes protection of and support for human dignity.

Clinical medicine must distinguish between the inherent paternalism of a particular clinical field and the ‘classical’ (external) paternalism in the doctor-patient relationship. Beauchamp and Childress (2009) define

‘classical’ paternalism as “conscious[ly] ignoring a preference or an action of any person by another person where the latter justifies his/her procedure by reference to the objective of well-doing” (Vácha, Königová & Mauer, 2012). In direct contact with the patient, external paternalism manifests itself as “hard paternalism” which goes against the autonomy of an informed patient with standard will, or as “soft paternalism” (which implies the influence upon patients whose volitional and conscious capacity is limited: psychiatric patients, drug-addicts) (Vácha, Königová & Mauer, 2012).

Thaler and Sunstein (2008) define libertarian paternalism as one which nudges the patient for his own sake, which contributes to good decision-making because many patients do not behave rationally in accordance with their plans and possibilities (Vácha, Königová & Mauer, 2012).

Clinical characteristics of individual fields of medicine present a challenge to the doctor’s expertise. The bioethical-clinical process requires both professional and (bio)ethical authenticity (the principle insisting on the specification of how and to what extent an appropriate procedure should be employed instead of the mere mechanical use of one).

The principle (term) of human dignity occurs neither in the Nuremberg code nor in the Helsinki declaration (they merely refer to an ‘ill person’ and an ‘experimental subject’). The Belmont Report uses the term ‘person’. The reference to the principle of human dignity in the Oviedo protocol (1997) and in UNESCO documents (2005) accentuates abstraction and deontology in medical ethics of the postmodern period. Application of bioethics to the clinical environment presupposes (re)interpretation of the abstract principles of medical ethics. The Hippocratic Oath means, for medical workers, an essential deontological code which, in addition to the classical interpretation, should draw attention to the context of the doctor’s responsibility and cultural integration. A re-definition of human dignity in the context of medicine focuses on ethics of responsibility (Novotný, 2012). Ontological personalism, which does not separate the person from the human being with regard to specific human properties (freedom, will, language, self-consciousness) as an accompanying function, is an option for the phenomenon of human dignity from the doctor’s point of view in terms of the application of medical bioethics.

### **Conclusion**

From the (bio)ethical point of view, clinical situations require methodological pluralism, i.e., a combination of principlism and inductive models (casuistic ethics, ethics of care). The main current clinical approach to the patient is ethics of responsibility as a holistic and continuous paradigm. It is connected with safety (preventive carefulness). The clinical environment lays emphasis on normative aspects of ethics. The practical importance of decision-making with its stress on morality and irreversible

consequences of decision-making affects the development of unambiguous instructive standards.

The basic attributes of the (medical) profession include systematic theory, professional culture, and an ethical code (Ivanová, 2006). The code should contribute to high professional standards so that doctors may perform their profession as well as possible for the sake of the whole community. Sociology labels this phenomenon as 'professional ideology' (Callahan, 1997).

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## **Aspects of the Physician's Relationship to Patient's Autonomy**

**Martin Gluchman**

### **Abstract**

I will deal with the physician – patient relationship with the focus on the patient's autonomy in my article. The core of the whole relationship are basic principles and values of common sense morality, such as respect, reverence, tolerance, justice, responsibility, dignity and the humanity of this relationship. If the physician disposes of these values, he will gain confidence in his/her patients and it's just the positive attitude toward their mutual relationship if they trust each other and have a long-term relationship. In spite of a physician's knowledge of, skill in, responsibility for all the treatment, the physician's abilities to provide diagnosis and prognosis in order to provide treatment possibilities and explain its impacts and influence, are secondary to the patient's right to decide independently based on his/her free will, whether he/she will undergo the treatment recommended by the physician. The physician should not be influenced by any other external effects and factors and should perform his/her job following the values and the principles defined in the Hippocratic Oath.

**Keywords:** physician, patient, responsibility, autonomy

The physician is responsible not just for his/her decisions concerning the treatment and overall health care of the patient, but also for the way of their communication chosen for his/her relationship to the patient. Therefore, the communication of the physician with the patient should depend on actual the health conditions of the patient and the physician should tell the truth within their communication in almost all cases. Regarding the patient's health conditions, the physician handles the information of the patient's state in a human way in order to easily understand the information and care about the patient's mental state. We can supply the patient only with so much information that he/she's able to handle.

There are two results following the physician – patient relationship being characterized by informed consent and benevolence – truthful communication and personal contact. In all physician – patient relationships, if the physician takes care of a dying patient, both are irreplaceable. This matter of fact, basically, modifies the balance between the partnerships making the patient's dependence on the physician greater and thus extending the physician's responsibility towards the patient. The ethical nature of the physician – patient relationship doesn't appear as clear as here (Hill, 2003, pp. 202–203).

Some euthanasia opponents claim that the possibility of euthanasia undermines the physician – patient relationship and disorganizes the physician's role in treatment. The Hippocratic Oath says that "I won't prescribe a deadly drug or advice to cause a death".

Knowledge of a physician's ability to kill a patient undermines the trust that is the foundation of the physician – patient relationship. When asking

for a physician's advice, who could think that "it would be best to offer you a lethal injection and kill you", and is a frightening view of the situation (Finnis, 1998, p. 146). Although physicians will respect the rights of the patient's autonomy, it doesn't mean that the physician has to satisfy all the patient's requirements.

Supporters of the change say, on the other hand, that a more released and equal physician – patient relationship will be made, in which the patient dares to talk about his real feelings (Herring, 2006, p. 452). Hill argues with regard to care of the dying from an ethical perspective that the physician-patient relationship focus moves from curing the illnesses to greater responsibility towards care of the whole person when the patient is dying. What could be considered as optional characteristics in this relationship is becoming essential now. The relationship itself moves from more medical to ethical focus. The reason of such focus is the fact that a dying person suffers the loss of closeness to those around him, such as loved ones and society itself. It's about the loss of dignity within the loss of self-respect and self-esteem. Therefore, the act of care becomes the preserve of a community of people confirming the inner dignity of life of the dying person and therefore, also, the inner dignity of the life of the care providers. It's especially important to keep the focus on personal dignity, and requirements of informed consent emerging from such dignity, rather than the requirements of technological strategies that could prolong the life of the patient, but in inadmissible conditions (Hill, 2003, p. 199).

The question "Whose death is it?" is in fact asking "Who holds the final responsibility for these clinical competences, their ethical use and ethical quality of the results of their use?" The question is relevant because it predicts the state that has not been presumable yet, i.e. the process of dying and death itself, even though necessary, can be a moral business conditioned by informed and voluntary consent. In other words, the process of dying can be ethical because clinical control of the circumstances is possible. If the person is dying, we can apply his/her will to die. The principle of this possibility consists in our ability to refer to, in terms of law, the so-called "right to die".

This reflection is important in this moment: if the patient can die, then he can presumably consider the attributes required in the process of dying, so death can be admired as something good. In other words, death, as well as life, becomes a real ethical question, thus, deserves serious debate within ethics. As a result, good death grew into an objective that we should seek. In this sense, desire for good death or desire to die with dignity can be a moral matter, where the human is the center of interest and is actively and responsibly integrated into dying in the way he used to be during his life. However, relations of "good death" and "dignified dying" are clear expressions of the newly-coined and strengthened moral possibilities of our life experience during all the process of dying. Life has been an easy

hostage of any fate that death itself could undergo in the past. We can revoke life in more considered steps, at least within medical circumstances of acute and chronic illness today. Therefore nothing should belong to our lives than the way we die.

If this presumption is fulfilled, then the main ethical goal regarding care of the dying is, paradoxically, to secure as good a life as possible, until they die. The question we are trying to deal with consists in the way how to supply these states and respect the interests of all involved at the same time (Hill, 2003, p. 201).

Consequently, we expect that the dying person, the patient, will be treated and cured as a perfect human being until his/her death. This obligation consists in general acknowledgement that nobody receives more, for the sake of acquiring good death, than the person who is dying.

Currently, we are doubtful that medicine is really an ethical activity, but we are quite sure that it can help and harm at the same time. In fact, helping and harming is almost the same at present. The same respirator that helped the patient get away from the jaws of death, similarly insensitively prolongs the life of another patient lying in a permanent coma. The Morphine that can solve respiratory problems can cause respiration and completely stop breathing if used in higher doses. If physicians want to or not, they are able to kill – and quickly and effectively. And it's not a secret they will be able to kill legally soon (Kass, 2003, p. 232) even in spite of the Hippocratic imperative of not offering any deadly drug to the patient and swearing not to kill.

At this time it's important to ask the question whether medicine has its own (outer) limits. At least three of them are stated in the Hippocratic Oath, according to which trust cannot be misused, and all sexual relations with patients and the dosing of any deadly drugs are prohibited. These general, self-imposed, restrictions are readily understood as temptations which the physician is sensitive to, is almost helpless towards, those temptations refer to the scope of vulnerability and exposure that are required by the medical practices of their patients. Patients reveal the secret details of their personal lives; patients expose their naked bodies and entrust the care of their lives to a physician's skills, technique and judgment. "Exposing" is one-sided and asymmetric in all the cases when the physician does not expose his intimacies, does not show his nakedness and does not commit himself with all his life to patient. Caring about the importance of such non-mutual exposure, the physician voluntarily sets the limits from his own initiative, obliging not to abuse or violate the patient's intimacy, naked sexuality or life itself (Kass, 2003, p. 241).

The prohibition of killing patients as the first negative promise of self-control sworn in the Hippocratic Oath is perceived as medically the first and the most permanent taboo that says "I won't give a deadly drug to anybody, even if he asks for it and I won't even try to do that... I save life and art in

virtuousness and sanctity” in its version. Human life in human beings demands respect at least for the physician. As respectability doesn’t depend on human agreement or patient’s consent cancelling the consent to live do not relieve living human body of respectability. The most profound ethical principle limiting the influence of the physician is not the autonomy or the freedom of the patient; it’s not even his own compassion or good intention. It is rather dignity and the mysterious influence of human life itself and therefore even what the Oath calls the virtuousness and sanctity of life and art, to which he swore devotion and faithfulness. The human can decide to choose to be a physician, but he cannot simply choose what medicine means (Kass, 2003, p. 241).

Beauchamp and Childress consider the principle of autonomy as a very important principle of biomedical ethics. According to them, the abovementioned principle expresses primarily the possibility of free acting in accordance with their own intent. They see an analogy in the way a independent government rules its country and its policies in all spheres of life in autonomy. The authors hold the view that limiting autonomy happens if the person is controlled by somebody else or has limited abilities of thinking or acting in accordance with his desires or plans, such as in the case of mentally disabled people or prisoners. They consider the freedom and the ability to deliberately act as the basic aspects of autonomy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2009, pp. 99–100).

In their opinion, an autonomous person who signs, for example, a form giving consent to provide medical treatment at a medical facility, without reading the form itself, can act autonomously in terms of the law, but ignores his moral duties ordering him to proceed to the given agreement with respect and particular responsibility (approved by reading the form and understanding it by the patient himself) and consequently fails in his expected acting. Similarly, some people who are generally unable of autonomous, free acting, can sometimes autonomously choose and adopt the closest way for them. For instance, some patients living in institutions for nursing mentally handicapped people who cannot take care of themselves, and incompetence has been legally proved to them, can still autonomously choose, for example, by deciding for a particular meal, refusing treatment and making phone calls to their relatives (Beauchamp & Childress, 2009, p. 100). According to ethics of social consequences, human beings, in this case mentally handicapped individuals, have a primary equivalent human dignity, moral equivalence based on their membership of the *Homo sapiens* group. They can try to acquire the greatest number of positive social consequences that result from accepting and performing human dignity during their development depending on the degree of their disability. However, they never reach the status of moral agents, as there is no potentiality of their moral, mental and psychiatric development worthy of moral agents in their case. If we theoretically determine ethics of social

consequences, a moral agent acts and decides upon moral values in order to be aware of the responsibility for particular consequences of his acting, his moral responsibility, what he should do and how he should act. Human beings with any such abilities are not able to make responsible decisions, acts and are not fully responsible for their acts. We cannot blame, for example, a mentally handicapped man because he is not able to do a particular activity in the way we expect him to do it. We cannot also blame mentally handicapped individuals for negative consequences that result from their unconscious negative actions caused by their insufficient competency and the disability responsible for those particular consequences. In spite of that we approach them with respect as they are human beings fulfilling the primary condition that is life existence itself (disregarding the state and quality of that particular life). If the human cannot do something, it is not a reason for his deprecation and execration. We would always talk about conscious acting in the case of healthy, morally competent individuals, but a mentally handicapped person, even though he may have decided on a particular activity of his own volition, does not act consciously, because it's really difficult to talk about conscious acting in such human beings.

Thanks to their free will, or moral freedom, man has the possibility to act autonomously. As I have written, the more we move on biological, or genetic, lines from ourselves, from the help for ourselves, as the resource in performing humanity, i.e. the treatment, caring and support for our own life to help others, the higher the value of positive social consequences rises, resulting from our behavior and acting. Based on the abovementioned rate of positive social consequences, we can state that it would be worth more if we could help with the prevention and development of the (human) lives of unknown people on the grounds of higher value sharing of positive social consequences in such acting than in preventing my own life and the lives of my relatives (Gluchman, 2008, p. 79). However, within the relation to the closest relatives, there arises a special moral obligation that partially limits such acting and inhibits our autonomous acting based on our free will in a certain way to prefer the acting that is more valuable from the point of view of positive social consequences. Awareness of such moral responsibility, moral obligation towards our relatives puts a human acting thusly on the higher level concerning the overall moral maturity of his/her consciousness.

According to Beauchamp and Childress, analysis of autonomy is focused on moral requirements of "respect for autonomy". We analyze autonomous acting in terms of randomly selecting moral agents who act at first consciously, with understanding and finally without controlling the effects determining their acting. The first of these three conditions of autonomy is not the matter of social state: acts are either conscious or unconscious. However, acts can more or less satisfy both conditions of understanding and absence of influences (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012, p. 155). To view the

acting autonomously, we merely need the understanding to free from restrictions or influences of other and external components. In order to raise average decision making into the form of fully autonomous decision making, we have to purify the acting of any restrictions that limit people and based on it rarely acts autonomously. Therefore, independence and adequate awareness in the context of health care, doesn't have to be, according to Beauchamp and Childress, any greater than trivial independence and autonomy in the decision making of an individual in life situations such as his financial independence, hiring new employees, buying a new house or decision making regarding studying at university. Such consecutive decisions must be basically autonomous, but the vision of absolute autonomy is a myth. Even an absolutely autonomous moral agent is dependent on somebody, something, however, only to a minimal extent. Contrarily, egoism and individualism don't dominate, they are in the background. We cannot reach the absolute autonomy of an individual with such cooperation within society.

Concerning the physician – patient relationship, patients are considered to be equivalent partners in their medical treatment where their care is set only by informed consent of the patients, where patient's satisfaction is an important indicator of special adequacy according to which the patients are seen as customers, as informed adults and they are not infantilized or treated paternalistically and during all this process the influence of physicians is limited (Hope & Fulford, 1993, p. 86). In such a sophisticated attitude to confidence, autonomy is seen as a presumption of natural confidence. "Informed consent is a modern clinical confidence ritual" (Wolpe, 2002, p. 48), a trust ritual that is set into correct institutionalized respect for a patient's autonomy. According to O'Neill, the ideal vision of the physician – patient relationship is a relationship that presents the connection of a patient's autonomy with mutual confidence in a new, recommended way. It is a relationship between equivalent partners where the patient is also a specialist, professional, equivalent partner of a physician; the patient can hear an explanation and the form for subscribing the content is offered to him in order to express his agreement or disagreement in the form of informed consent (O'Neill, 2002, pp. 18–19).

Requirements of informed consent are relevant to specifically autonomous choices just because they are relevant to choices of all types. What is regarded by the patient to be autonomous in medical practice is also applicable by the practice of informed consent (O'Neill, 2002, p. 38).

Concepts of dignity and autonomy hide behind some specific concepts of health care. The idea of trust has been traditionally important within the physician – patient relationship.

Taking care of patients in accordance with their dignity or to respect their autonomous characters demands telling the truth because otherwise there is a hypothesis that the patient is not able to face the truth according to which

the patient has to be protected in the case of being frightened. To take care of an adult in this way means to take care of him as if a child, meaning being paternalistic. For example, patients are sometimes given inconvenient chemotherapy in order to “give them hope” (Randall & Downie, 2006, pp. 56–57).

Respecting the patient’s dignity or autonomy (I’m using these two terms synonymously) requires the specialist not to tell the patient lies. But, since respecting dignity is not the only factor, there are also circumstances when the specialist should be “careful in telling the truth”, as it used to be said in politics. For example, a very ill patient can ask, if he has two more years to live. Specialist can have a good reason to think that four weeks are probable time for survival, but at that moment, it has to be very harsh. The specialist could reasonably respond that survival of two years is rather not very probable than impossible. However, it’s far from the truth, but it’s a truth softened by kindness. We can conclude that respecting the patient’s dignity requires that the specialist always tell the truth, but how much, should depend partially on the patient’s wishes and partially on the judgment concerning potential harm caused by telling the whole truth. On the contrary, lying to the patient or serving wrong information or false hope is a violation of dignity, even though it’s motivated by the desire to support hope. But the truth is also the fact that human beings are entities with feelings, hopes, doubts as well as rationality (Randall & Downie, 2006, pp. 58–59).

The notion of autonomy itself consists in the fact that people should be free in leading their lives according to their visions and wishes and should have a control under their bodies. Decisions of people regarding how to live their lives deserve respect, even though others can think them foolish. Decisions of a man are respected not because they are about good will, but because they are about his choices (Pedain, 2003, p. 203). Denial of human respect towards his opinions is the greatest denial of respect towards this human (Harris, 1995, p. 175). Such respect is especially important in relation to personal and familiar questions such as when to die.

Every person has his/her own view of what death is: the fight for the longest possible life or dying before life starts to be undignified or full of pain (Dworkin, 1993, p. 217; Herring, 2006, pp. 440–441).

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# **The Concept of 3 Rs as a Normative Basis for Professional Codes of Conduct of Scientists Using Animals in their Research**

**Katarína Komenská**

## **Abstract**

Nowadays, the concept of 3 Rs is considered to be the basis of modern research methods and practices using animals in research. The need to implement it into individual research activities is part of legislations in different countries (e.g. countries of the EU, Australia, New Zealand, USA, etc.). Similarly, it is considered as a basis of professional codes of conducts of scientists using animals in their research, as it emphasizes the ethical obligation of scientists to reduce the suffering of sentient animals and to increase their quality of life. Still, the acceptance of the 3 Rs as a normative basis without its critical evaluation should be avoided. The goal of this paper therefore is to analyse the concept of 3 Rs and shows its weaknesses, which I see in the absence of the aspect of moral agency and the moral responsibility in it. This could bind scientists to the living objects of their research and this way creates an ethically relevant relationship.

**Keywords:** reduction, refinement, replacement, responsibility

## **Introduction**

Experimenting on animals is more than an accepted and tolerated method of biomedical research. It is an intentionally created relationship between the scientist (moral agent) and the living objects of research which as such demands constant confirmation of the moral agent's responsibility for providing welfare, health, and the maximum possible level of comfort for these members of the moral community. There are some specific ethical obligations for scientists using animals in research, which are not set for other type of researchers. Therefore, scientific researchers using animal in their research need their own professional code of conduct. The aim of this paper is to introduce a possible normative basis for such a code and its critical evaluation; namely the concept of 3 Rs, which has nowadays been widely accepted as a foundation for the suitable practice of using animals for experimental and research purposes.

## **3 Rs (reduction, replacement, refinement)**

The formulation of 3 Rs (as a normative basis for humane treatment of animals used in research) dates back to the year 1959, when William Russel and Rex Burch published their work *The principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. In the introduction, they formulated the obligation for science and research to replace all sentient beings used in experiments and testing with non-sentient beings, or non-living test subjects (Russell & Burch, 1959). Other aims were summarized by Monamy as follows: a) the need to reduce the number of experiments, so that only those that are absolutely necessary are performed, b) the need to reduce the number of animals used for these activities, and c) the need to prevent and minimize

any form of suffering which can possibly be an outcome of an experiment (Monamy, 2009, pp. 76–77).

The concept of 3 Rs defines three basic rules for the humane use of animals in research and formulates the obligation of *replacement*, *reduction* and *refinement*. *The obligation of replacement* aims to adopt non-animal methods of experimentation in research and to gradually exclude living animals from all research activities (Schaffner, 2011, p. 79). There are many ways to potentially decrease the amount and the level of suffering in research. Andrew Knight names as some of the possibilities; sharing and assessment of already existing data, using computer models,<sup>1</sup> using animals with the lowest possible sensitivity levels, cultivating tissues cultures and *in vitro* assays,<sup>2</sup> genetic engineering, using embryonic stem cells, and/or controversial human testing<sup>3</sup> (Knight, 2012, pp. 100–124). Implementation of this ethical obligation is formulated for example in Slovak legislations, where it is stated that an experiment “cannot be performed if there exists another recognized method of testing or research which would lead to the desired outcome without demanding the use of living animals” (Act No. 377/2012).

*Reduction* of animal suffering is a scientist’s obligation to minimise the number of animals used in research, to use animals less sensitive to pain and, also, to use methods which are less painful and less stressful for the animals (Schaffner, 2011, p. 79; Monamy, 2009, p. 85).<sup>4</sup> These methods can

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<sup>1</sup> These alternative strategies are productive tools especially for education purposes. Many animals are, to this day, used for developing skills of students of medicine, physiology, veterinary medicine. Nowadays, this trend has been supported by developing new, sophisticated computer models to introduce animal anatomy. In the USA, the lower level of education uses programmes such as The Rat Stack, Sniffy – the Virtual Rat or The Digital Frog and, currently, have had some notable success. Various mathematic computer models (capable of fusing and predicating numbers of biochemical, toxicology or physiological processes and their possible reactions) can be understood as these types of strategies. These are important milestones for developing science and technology without unnecessary animal suffering. Even though these strategies will never fully replace testing and research on animals, they have contributed enormously to reducing their amount (Monamy, 2009, pp. 80–82).

<sup>2</sup> Development in this field has ensured that the number of animal testing for research purposes has decreased without influencing the knowledge and information gained in research. Monamy used an example of a company, which was using 16,000 mice a year to observe 1,000 possible anti-viral substances in 1963. In 1975, the same company was able to observe 22,000 substances using less than 2,000 mice (Monamy, 2009, pp. 79–80).

<sup>3</sup> Although this strategy and alternative to animal testing raises many questions and opens more ethical problems, it is important to consider its influence on the way experiments are performed on animals. It is evident that, before the final product is allowed onto the market, human testing is anyway inevitable (Monamy, 2009, pp. 82–83). Critics and opponents of animal testing emphasize that using humans as test subjects is a way of reducing the number of animals being used for experimental purposes (for example P. Singer or T. Regan).

<sup>4</sup> There are many ways to fulfil this demand, such as using effective statistical methods (which would help to statistically determine the outcomes of observations and experiments

be divided into three levels: intra-experimental, supra-experimental, and extra-experimental. They differentiate according to whether they are focused on minimising the number of animals used in a particular research project, reducing the number of used animals in individual research institutions (these changes are related to the scientific research institutions using animals in their research),<sup>5</sup> or the reductions which are influenced by wider scientific development and by developing new technologies.<sup>6</sup>

The last obligation, *the obligation for refinement*, leads to minimising animal suffering in the process of the scientific research project and testing itself. Most often, the demand is related to the use of anaesthesia (or other forms of analgesics) during the experiment itself. A scientist is allowed to refrain from applying analgesics to animals (test subjects) during the research only in the case of it being necessary not to apply analgesics to guarantee the adequacy and relevancy of acquired data (Schaffner, 2011, p. 79; Act No. 377/2012). Another possibility to fulfil the obligation for refinement is to increase the level of care for the animals used in research (Rollin, 2006, pp. 181–182) and to consider the use of alternative research methods (i.e. which corresponds with such previous obligations as, for example, obligation to reduce the amount of suffering) (Monamy, 2009, pp. 89–96).

After introducing individual obligations of the theoretical concept of 3 Rs, a question needs to be stated: does this concept delimitate the ethical rules and obligations of scientific workers who use animals in their research sufficiently enough? Can the concept of 3 Rs really create a normative basis for a professional code of conduct which can help researchers to make decisions in ethical conflicts resulting from their profession?

The aim of the concept of 3 Rs is, firstly, to lower the number of animals used in research, to replace methods of animal testing with alternative

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and therefore unnecessary repeating of testing could be avoided), support communication, spreading information and cooperation of scientists within one research institution (for the purpose of sharing the results of individual tests in more, simultaneous projects), using *post mortem* tissues, proficient experiment design (exact plans of research and experiments, identifying of the exact goal, suitable method and the best type of animal, etc.), using and gaining knowledge from previously published experiments and studies within the same field, etc. (Monamy, 2009, pp. 85–86, Knight, 2012, pp. 125–132).

<sup>5</sup> This can be simply understood as improving the education of research institution employees, so that they prepare and design experimental projects without reducing unnecessary numbers of animals and preventing pain in animals. Also, it is possible to find alternative ways to perform an experiment within research institutions, e.g. including retrospective analysis and supporting the repeated use of animals in several research projects within the institution (Knight, 2012, pp. 127–129).

<sup>6</sup> In Act no. 377/2012, Slovak legislation defines the demand on reducing suffering as follows: “The user shall choose such method which meets the following requirements in the most possible way: a) uses the lowest number of animals, b) uses animals with the lowest sensitivity to pain, suffering, fear, or permanent damage, c) causes the lowest level of pain, suffering, fear or permanent damage, and is the most likely to provide acceptable outcome” (Act No. 377/2012).

methods, and to refine the standards of life for laboratory animals. These are, however, mostly descriptive goals for the profession. The moral good should rather lie in finding the balance between the positive consequences of the scientific outcome and the moral obligation not to cause unnecessary suffering to other sentient beings. This, obviously, has a broader normative scope. Alternative research strategies as formulated in the concept of 3 Rs support ethical performances of researchers using animals for scientific purposes. The implication of these obligations into the professional code of conduct directly decreases the numbers of animals used in laboratories, reduces their suffering and increases their quality of life. Is this, however, everything a professional code of conduct should require from its participants?

This can be illustrated using an example of how the concept of 3 Rs has been implemented into the *Animal Welfare Act*,<sup>7</sup> which defines using animals in research in the United States of America. This Act includes the above-mentioned ethical obligations of reduction, replacement and refinement. Their practical implementation, however, is often absent. One of the main reasons is that the legislative definition of the term “animal” excludes as much as 90% of animals used in scientific experimentations (Schaffner, 2011, pp. 72–73). The US legislation does not guarantee protection and humane treatment for animals such as birds, horses, mice, fish and others.

The second reason lies in the way the concept of 3 Rs is practically guaranteed, implemented and enforced in research activities using animals in United States. American legislation demands that all scientific research institutions (which use animals in research) are officially registered and in this way they agree to follow its regulations and legislative standards of conduct. These are, however, the only professional, legislative and moral requirements to determine the qualification to work with animals in research. The law does not require any special education and training for people who work with animals in these licensed scientific research institutions.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the elementary understanding of a professional as an individual moral agent cannot be absent, because it leads to difficulty in

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<sup>7</sup> This Act defines animals and guarantees their protection, but this legislation covers only those belonging to the endothermic group of animals (e.g. dogs, cats, guinea pigs, primates, rabbits, etc.). Besides these types of animals used in research, AWA focuses on protection of domestic and exhibition animals. Still, this greatly limits the scope of the law (AWA, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> This is opposed to EU legislation, which requires not only license and registration of a research institution, but also licensing individual professionals who handle animals during research (EU 2010/63/EU), this includes everyone who designs animal tests, performs them, takes care of the animals, or deals with their humane euthanasia. These persons have to “complete training in the scientific field related to the performed work and have to have adequate knowledge about the particular type of animal” (Act No. 377/2012) or nationally accepted training. The qualification of individual members of project teams is examined regularly during the approval process for the experiment project.

enforcing the 3 Rs' obligations in performing their research activities not only legally, but mainly morally.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the absence of the moral agent (whether collective moral agent in the form of a scientific and research institution or individual moral agent),<sup>10</sup> the concept of 3 Rs is very difficult to enforce and is therefore becoming just a bureaucratic obstacle in research realisation and in further scientific development, without bringing any change in how the role of animals is understood in science and other human activities. In my opinion, in order to guarantee the implementation of the 3 Rs' demands, it is necessary to root them deeper in the process of moral decision-making and the action of the scientific research worker. This is going to be my intention in the next part of my contribution, using the lens of Ethics of social consequences, adding to the scientific demands of reduction, replacement and refinement also the demand of morally responsible decision making and acting of professionals, who should demonstrate their moral concern, respect and regard for the animals used for research, experiments, or education.

### Conclusion

The paper has focused on defining the norms and values which scientists who use animals in their research should follow. The 3 Rs concept (*reduction, replacement, refinement*) is currently the most complex and the most acceptable ethical commitment for scientists using animals for their research purposes. Therefore, it is often confused with their professional code of conduct. The paper critically evaluates ethical obligations of reduction (of pain or of the number of animals), replacement (the use of models or computer programmes instead of living animals) and refinement (better living conditions for animals) and their potential to be understood as

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<sup>9</sup> According to Baruch A. Brody, there is no law requiring application of the 3 Rs obligations into research activities. In AWA, the implementation of 3 Rs is conditioned by the scientific outcome and its benefits, therefore if implementing the 3 Rs should slow down or negatively influence the success of a scientific experiment, it has no justification and it does not have to be applied in the research process. This interpretation of the act corresponds with Brody's understanding of the moral requirement of using animals for scientific purposes, which could lead to improving the quality of human life (Brody, 2003, pp. 317–325).

<sup>10</sup> Scientists are not machines that just compile knowledge in natural sciences and then apply them in practice. They are first and foremost conscious beings, capable of making free decisions, taking action and accepting responsibility and it is essential to understand them as moral agents. A professional code of conduct of scientists using animals in their research could as well define a moral agent as a collective entity, and could therefore define the norms and rules for research institutions. However, taking into consideration the scope of this paper and the complexity of this issue, the topic should be left to future reflections. Still, the definition of a collective moral agent, its ability to make conscious, independent and free decisions and also its ability to accept its moral responsibility for its actions has been already reflected in some of the ethical theories, e.g. ethics of social consequences (Kalajtžidis, 2011b, pp. 86–122; Kalajtžidis, 2012).

a normative basis for the professional code of conduct of scientists using animals in research. After the evaluation of the concept of 3 Rs, the paper emphasizes the role of scientists as the creator of a morally relevant relationship with the objects of their experiments. From this relationship the ethical obligation to an animal's life and welfare and the responsibility towards them arise. Therefore, I propose that the concept of 3 Rs, which misses a sufficient normative and consequential base, will be broadened by the fourth R: *responsibility*.

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## **Ethical-Economic Dilemmas in Teaching Business Ethics: The Slovak Experience**

**Anna Remišová, Anna Lašáková & Zuzana Búciová**

### **Abstract**

The aim of the article is to analyze the interaction of students' ethical and economic thinking in the process of solving a model ethical-economic dilemma. Dealing with model dilemmas is an integral part of teaching business ethics at the Faculty of Management, Comenius University in Bratislava. Through them, students learn to apply ethics in economic life and managerial decision-making. The main objective of the survey was to determine the differences in ethical thinking between Slovak students and students from Western Europe, in reflecting humanity and responsibility, as well as conceding different stakeholders.

**Keywords:** business ethics, ethical-economic dilemma, ethical decision-making, ethical rationality, economic rationality, teaching business ethics, managerial ethics, corporate social responsibility

### **Introduction**

Over the years, economic faculties have prepared thousands of students of economics and management to be good, i.e. rational economists and to make a profit. What the given education often lacks is acquiring an ethical way of thinking, i.e. how to make a profit in such a way that neither other people nor nature are harmed. Nowadays, when countries from all over the world are struggling with a crisis, which was started by unethical moves of individuals and groups in the economic sphere, it would be hard to find an expert who would openly speak out against the promotion of ethical thinking in the economic world. The conflict between ethical and economic rationality is an everyday reality in the managerial profession, and therefore students of economics and management should be prepared to solve it in favour of ethics. The goal of this article is to analyze the interaction of students' ethical and economic thinking in the process of solving a model ethical-economic dilemma, which is used in teaching business ethics at the Faculty of Management, Comenius University in Bratislava.

### **Business Ethics in Slovakia**

Business Ethics as an applied ethics belongs to the youngest social sciences in Slovakia. It began to develop as a scientific and academic discipline in the early 1990s, after the changes in the political, economic and social systems took place, at a time when Slovakia was still part of Czechoslovakia. Initially, Slovak authors had neither foreign literature on the subject, nor professional contacts in the field. A significant shift occurred after establishing cooperation with the noted business ethics specialist P. Ulrich, who became an active supporter of business ethics in Slovakia (Remišová, 1999, p. 328). Ulrich's integrative approach to

business ethics has become one of the main foundations of understanding business ethics in Slovakia (especially in the works by Remišová) (Remišová, 1999, p. 329). One of the first promoters of business ethics in Slovakia, who influenced its development as an academic discipline, was an American philosopher and theologian of Slovak origin, Arnold Luknič. He authored the first Slovak monograph on business ethics issues (Luknič, 1994). However, at the time of its publication, the book was too “difficult to comprehend” for the majority of academics as well as practitioners, as they did not have sufficient knowledge and experience to apply it to domestic conditions. Business ethics was first presented as a systematic academic discipline in lecture notes by Remišová (1996). A year later, the first textbook on business ethics supplemented with ethical-economic dilemmas of the Slovak economic environment was published in Slovakia (Remišová, 1997).

In 1999, Remišová described the situation in teaching business ethics in Slovakia by writing that in Slovakia “there is an increasing number of universities teaching business ethics or managerial ethics. However, the actual situation is still more the result of the increasing enthusiasm of people who are pioneers in the field and increasing spontaneous interest of students, than a conscious understanding of academic officials of the role business ethics should have in the education of future business professionals” (Remišová, 1999, p. 329). Nowadays, we may conclude that the situation in teaching business ethics is still best described by this quote from fourteen years ago. Though the number of courses in business and managerial ethics, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development has increased, there is still little understanding from the academic officials of its role in business education as well as little effort to make it an integral part of the business curriculum.

At Comenius University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Management, where the survey presented in this article was realised, four elective courses in business ethics are taught at present – *Managerial Ethics*, *Business Ethics* (in general), *Business Ethics for Human Resource Management* and *Codes of Ethics*. For several years, a business ethics course was compulsory for Master’s students specializing in human resource management, but four years ago, once again it became an elective course only. Nevertheless, almost all students specializing in human resource management enrol in the course every year together with dozens of students specializing in marketing, international business, finance, strategic management and managerial information technology. However, students from these study fields present just a fraction of the entire classes, as in these study fields, there is not enough room established for integrating specific business ethics issues in the curriculum.

### **Ethical-Economic Dilemmas in Teaching Business Ethics**

It is often emphasised in literature on managerial decision-making that managers make decisions every day using managerial schema, including alternatives that may have unethical overtones (Awasthi, 2008). According to Young, even decisions involving major moral issues are sometimes presented to managers as technical problems to be solved (Young, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

We assume that a similar effect can be observed in the decision-making of business students. The prevalence of economic subjects at business schools may result in adopting a purely economic approach to decision-making. If students are not trained to face managerial problems from the ethical viewpoint and discuss them using ethical rationality, they are more likely to search for solutions on the basis of economic rationality, unaware of ignoring the ethical aspect.

All books and textbooks by Remišová are based on the idea of teaching the reader to distinguish the ethical from the economic aspect of everyday business situations (Remišová, 1996; 1997; 2000; 2004; 2011; 2012). The main pillars of business ethics according to Remišová's works, on which the majority of business ethics courses in Slovakia are built, are: 1) primacy of ethical rationality over economic rationality (i.e. primacy of universal interests over particular or individual ones); 2) managerial ethics is a professional ethics based on the principles of humanism and responsibility; and 3) corporate social responsibility with the accent on ethical responsibility and stakeholder theory are the key stone of business ethics as a social theory.<sup>2</sup>

Ethical-economic dilemmas represent a key methodological tool to teach students to differentiate in each situation economic aspects (representing particular or individual interests) from ethical ones (representing universal interests). Didactically they represent the realization of an idea that ethical reflection of economic problems can be trained at universities (Remišová, 2004, p. 102). Students are taught to analyze various situations from an ethical viewpoint (as it is assumed that they have already been taught to analyze problems from an economic viewpoint on many other subjects in the curriculum). Discussing ethical-economic dilemmas enhances moral awareness, teaches ethical thinking and improves moral reasoning. The

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<sup>1</sup> Awasthi proposes that "when managers face a moral issue in decision-making, they make a different decision depending upon how the problem is presented to them or how they perceive the problem, whether in an ethical frame or a managerial frame" (Awasthi, 2008, pp. 208–209). In an ethical frame, when the problem is presented and/or perceived as a moral issue, it is easier to recognize the ethical aspects of the problem. On the other hand, in a managerial frame, the problem is typically presented in/or perceived as one of routine managerial problems containing no moral issue. When managers perceive the problem just as a gap between the current and desirable organizational situation, they may often omit being able to grasp the ethical dimension of the problem.

<sup>2</sup> On CSR with the accent on ethical responsibility and stakeholder theory see e.g. (Remišová & Búčiová, 2012).

main goal of such discussion is to point out the conflict between ethical and economic rationality and to teach students to integrate them. At the end of each dilemma students are asked to formulate what the ethical as well as the economic aspect of the problem is, think about all possible solutions, discuss them and then make a decision. The experience resulting from teaching business ethics for 20 years using ethical-economic dilemmas shows that students can be taught to find ethical problems in complex business situations.

### **The Current Study**

As mentioned above, the reason for solving ethical-economic dilemmas in business ethics courses at our faculty is to achieve cognitive skills in considering economic or managerial problems on the basis of ethical and economic interaction. In other words, the goal is to ensure that in their professional lives, our students will apply a socially responsible approach in accordance with stakeholder theory, as well as fundamental managerial principles – humanism and responsibility. In cases when they encounter a situation in which ethics is in conflict with economy, the students should be able to reason using ethical primacy in solving the problem. As there are also foreign students studying at our faculty, enrolling in business ethics courses, the main objective of our survey was to determine the differences in ethical thinking between Slovak students and students from Western Europe in reflecting humanity and responsibility, as well as conceding different stakeholders.

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

The survey took place at the Faculty of Management, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia in 2012. 57 graduate students, who were enrolled in the *Business Ethics* course participated in the survey. The sample consisted of Slovak and foreign students from western European countries studying via the Erasmus exchange program. As mentioned above, the *Business Ethics* course is elective, so we may assume that these students displayed an interest in business ethics issues. The survey took place at the very beginning of the course before any teaching started. No grade was assigned for this task and students were told to express their opinion freely.

#### **Overview and Task**

Participants were given an ethical-economic dilemma by Remišová in written form (Remišová, 2012, pp. 122–123). The dilemma was presented to the participants as a short case study dealing with managerial decision-making. The participants were introduced to a situation in which they represented the owners of a company dealing with special cleaning and liquidation activities in the area of waste disposal. The company cared about

its environmental reputation, and therefore, it invested in a device for intercepting emissions that result from burning waste. The company was in a period of growth but big investments had exhausted it, and so it was essentially looking for lucrative orders. One of the managers came up with a proposal he had received from an unknown foreign food company to dispose of spoiled goods.

Burning such goods produces emissions and the foreign company would have to pay a high fine for disposing of such waste in its home country. The cost of disposing the goods in the food company's home country was stated to be 20 times higher than in the country in which our company operated as the environmental legislation was more lenient.

As the owners of the waste disposal company the participants were informed that their machinery could not deal with those emissions. They also knew there was no monitoring device for emissions in the region where their company operated. The company was to receive € 600 000 for the waste disposal, which would solve its current economic problems as well as strengthen its market position. The manager, who received the offer, was asking what he was supposed to say to the food company. After reading the dilemma the participants were asked to think about it and then fill in a questionnaire that was at the end of the dilemma.

The questionnaire contained six open-ended questions tied to the wording of the dilemma: They comprised issues of how respondents would decide in such a situation, what were the economic and ethical dimensions of this dilemma, what were the consequences of the selected solution, whether respondents would be willing to bear responsibility for their decision, and whether they considered it ethically correct to dispose of waste in economically less developed countries. The demographic question page asked questions about the students' gender, age, nationality, work experience and whether they had taken any courses in business ethics prior to the testing.

After receiving the filled out questionnaires, we decided to carefully read through all the responses and to transcribe them into one document ordering them according to the six consecutive open-ended questions. Next the authors of this paper, each individually, developed a coding scheme in order to catch the most important elements of each answer. Hence, they discussed differences in the coding schemes. This process followed until no uncertainties and differences in individually developed coding systems remained. So, the answers to the six open-ended questions were differentiated into 22 quantitatively coded variables. Moreover, 24 demographic variables were involved in the analysis, too. Next, the data was transcribed into an Excel file, which was subsequently scored using the SPSS program. In assessing the data we used various methods of descriptive statistics, like frequencies and cross-tabulations, as well as the Chi-square test for independence and calculated Cramer's contingency coefficient  $v$ .

Our main survey questions that we decided to present in this paper were:

1. Are there any differences between Slovak and foreign Erasmus students in our sample in: a) the final decision (acceptance) how to solve the moral dilemma, b) moral reasoning, c) assessing the economic viewpoint, d) addressing ethical rationality, e) awareness of consequences, f) willingness to bear responsibility, and g) the approval of disposing of waste at the expense of (economically) weaker countries?
2. Are there any interconnections between the studied elements of ethical decision-making that could be detected in the responses within our sample?
3. Are there any differences in the studied elements of ethical decision-making in regard to having education in ethics?

The next section of this paper will refer to the above stated survey questions.

## Results

### Basic description of demographic background of our two groups of students

Our sample consisted of 57 respondents, 29 being Slovaks and 28 being foreign students who came to Slovakia via the Erasmus exchange program. In the Erasmus group the participants were from Western Europe: the group consisted of French, German, Spanish, Greek, and Portuguese students.

As for the nature of both samples, the Slovak sample consisted of more women. On the other hand, contrasting it with the Slovak sample, the Erasmus sample was populated with younger students (in the age category 20–26) as well as more students with an educational background in ethics. Some of our respondents did not fill in the “personal data” part of the questionnaire, so the cross-tabulation had to be based only on available data (Table 1).

**Table 1** Basic demographic description of the survey sample. Source: Survey.

		Gender		Education in ethics	
		Male	Female	Yes	No
<b>Slovak</b>	Count	8	20	11	17
	% within Slovak/Foreign	28,6%	71,4%	39,3%	60,7%
	% within Gender/Education in ethics	36,4%	66,7%	39,3%	73,9%
	% of Total	15,4%	38,5%	21,6%	33,3%
<b>Foreign</b>	Count	14	10	17	6
	% within Slovak/Foreign	58,3%	41,7%	73,9%	26,1%
	% within Gender/Education in ethics	63,6%	33,3%	60,7%	26,1%
	% of Total	26,9%	19,2%	33,3%	11,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>
	% of Total	42,3%	57,7%	54,9%	45,1%

Furthermore, the Slovak sample included more students with managerial-related work experience and more students with experience in full-time employment than in the Erasmus sample. As for experience with part-time employment, which is wide spread among students in general, no significant differences were found between the two groups, Erasmus students having slightly more experience in this field than their Slovak counterparts.

As for the field in which students got their work-related experiences, we gathered data on various fields, however the mostly populated were administrative, sales, and HR positions. Slovaks outnumbered their foreign colleagues in all three fields. The next three fields of work-related experience, which our respondents indicated in the questionnaire, were accounting/finance, marketing, and production positions. Slovak students were slightly more experienced in marketing-related positions.

**Statistically significant correlations between variables involved in the survey and main differences between the group of Slovak students and the group of foreign Erasmus students**

As noted above in the Methodology part of this paper, from the six open-ended questions concerned in the questionnaire 22 quantitatively coded variables were subject to statistical investigation. Moreover, 24 demographic variables were involved in our analysis, too. We analyzed the data based on the Chi-square test for independence and calculated Cramer's contingency coefficient  $v$  for testing the strength of the correlations between examined variables.

The differentiation in ethical reasoning, argumentation and solutions to the ethical-economic dilemma involved in the questionnaire among the two groups of students was relatively low. Only two statistically significant issues were identified: 1. Argumentation for the chosen decision (Table 2), and 2. Ethical viewpoint involved in the dilemma, namely involving the stakeholder "people from the region" where the respective company operates (Table 3).

**Table 2** Differences regarding argumentation for chosen solution of the ethical-economic dilemma. Source: Survey.

		Arguments for decision			
		Not accepted – Harmful for owner/company	Not accepted – Harmful for others	Accepted – With (ethical) condition	Accepted – Because of economic reasons
<b>Slovak</b>	Count	7	6	7	2
	% within Slovak/Foreign	24,1%	20,7%	24,1%	6,9%
<b>Foreign</b>	Count	8	9	1	9
	% within Slovak/Foreign	28,6%	32,1%	3,6%	32,1%
<b>Total</b>	Count	15	15	8	11
	% within Slovak/Foreign	26,3%	26,3%	14,0%	19,3%

	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value
Pearson Chi-Square	,007	Cramer's V	,498

**Table 3** Differences regarding the involvement of stakeholder “people in the region” into ethical reasoning. Source: Survey.

		Region/People	
		Not involved in reasoning	Involved in reasoning
<b>Slovak</b>	Count	16	13
	% within Slovak/Foreign	55,2%	44,8%
<b>Foreign</b>	Count	25	3
	% within Slovak/Foreign	89,3%	10,7%
<b>Total</b>	Count	41	16
	% within Slovak/Foreign	71,9%	28,1%

	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value
Pearson Chi-Square	,004	Cramer's V	,380

In both cases the strength of the relationship between measured variables was a moderate one. Interestingly, more than 89% of the foreign students did not take the stakeholder “people from the region” in which the respective company operates into consideration when assessing the ethical viewpoint of the dilemma. Moreover, approximately 32% of the foreign respondents would accept the unethical offer from the foreign food company because of the economic benefits resulting from the liquidation of waste even if this action would pollute the environment. 24% of the Slovak



sample would accept the offer, but only under certain conditions. The conditions which were mentioned by the respondents were of an ethical nature, like buying intercepting machinery in order to not to pollute the environment, or making a deal with the foreign food company to liquidate the waste in smaller amounts and over a longer time period, etc.

#### **Other statistically relevant correlations between variables**

Although no other significant correlations were found regarding the Slovak–foreign comparison, other interesting results were detected. Table 4 illustrates results regarding the differentiation in types of arguments given by students when answering the question whether it is ethically correct that economically more developed countries dispose of waste in weaker countries. Some answers were without any argumentation; however others used additional arguments to strengthen their personal view regarding this question.

Five different arguments were mentioned, why is this sort of action not ethically correct: 1) such action causes environmental harms; 2) the principle “abuse of the weaker” cannot be ethically correct; 3) the principle behind such a practice is “orientation merely toward profit”; 4) economically weaker countries usually have dysfunctional legislation that is often abused by other countries; and 5) such action is simply irresponsible and therefore incompatible with ethics.

According to the results, those with prior education in ethics (be it business/managerial ethics or CSR classes) were more attentive to the aspects of “abuse of the weaker” and “legislation imperfections”, whereas those who did not attend any class in ethics tended to mention more the aspects of “just profit” and “irresponsible behaviour” as the main arguments for refusing exploitation of weaker countries.

**Table 4** Differences regarding education in ethics combined with five arguments in favour of refusing to exploit economically weaker countries. Source: Survey.

			Education in ethics		Total
			Yes	No	
<b>Arguments for refused exploitation</b>	Environmental harms	Count	3	2	5
		% within Arguments for refused exploitation	60%	40%	100%
		% within Education in ethics	23,1%	18,2%	20,8%
		% of Total	12,5%	8,3%	20,8%
	Abuse of the weaker	Count	6	2	8
		% within Arguments for refused exploitation	75%	25%	100%
		% within Education in ethics	46,2%	18,2%	33,3%
		% of Total	25,0%	8,3%	33,3%
	Just profit	Count	0	3	3
		% within Arguments for refused exploitation	0%	100%	100%
		% within Education in ethics	0%	27,3%	12,5%
		% of Total	0%	12,5%	12,5%
	Abuse of legislation leaks	Count	4	1	5
		% within Arguments for refused exploitation	80%	20%	100%
		% within Education in ethics	30,8%	9,1%	20,8%
		% of Total	16,7%	4,2%	20,8%
	Irresponsible behaviour	Count	0	3	3
		% within Arguments for refused exploitation	0%	100%	100%
		% within Education in ethics	0%	27,3%	12,5%
		% of Total	0%	12,5%	12,5%

	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value
Pearson Chi-Square	,042	Cramer's V	,642

Another notable survey result dealt with the interconnection between the nature of argumentation for accepting or not accepting the unethical offer and the final decision whether to accept the offer or not (Table 5). Our data revealed that people who used mostly economic types of argumentation during the process of ethical decision-making tended to accept the unethical offer, and vice versa; those who were concerned mostly with ethical types of argumentation chose to not to accept the offer.

**Table 5** Differences regarding ethical/economic arguments used while solving the dilemma combined with acceptance/non acceptance of the offer to burn the waste at the expense of environmental pollution. Source: Survey.

			Ethical or economic argumentation		Total
			Ethical argumentation	Economic argumentation	
<b>Accepted/ Did not accepted the offer</b>	Did not accepted the offer	Count	17	13	30
		% within Accepted/ Did not accepted the offer	56,7%	43,3%	100%
		% within Ethical/Economic Argumentation	94,4%	56,5%	73,2%
		% of Total	41,5%	31,7%	73,2%
	Accepted the offer	Count	1	10	11
		% within Accepted/ Did not accepted the offer	9,1%	90,9%	100%
		% within Ethical/Economic Argumentation	5,6%	43,5%	26,8%
		% of Total	2,4%	24,4%	26,8%
			Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value
Pearson Chi-Square			,007		Cramer's V ,425

Furthermore, we also tested the strength of the relationship between the acceptance of exploitation of economically weaker countries and the nature of the final solution, i.e. whether the respondents accepted or refused the unethical offer (Table 6). Results indicate that people who disagreed with the abuse of economically weaker countries inclined to refuse the offer (68% of those who were against the exploitation decided not to accept the offer). On the other hand, 80% of respondents with an ambiguous attitude toward exploitation tended to accept the offer. From a different angle, it can be assumed that respondents who refused the offer were mostly those who believed that exploitation of weaker countries is not ethically correct (circa 97%).

**Table 6** Differences regarding acceptance of exploitation of economically weaker countries combined with final decision to accept/not accept the offer. Source: Survey.

			Acceptance of exploitation of economically weaker countries		Total
			No, it is not correct	Ambiguous answer	
Accepted/ Did not accepted the offer	Not accepted the offer	Count	34	1	35
		% within Accepted/Did not accepted the offer	97,1%	2,9%	100%
		% within Acceptance of exploitation	68%	20%	63,6%
		% of Total	61,8%	1,8%	63,6%
	Accepted the offer	Count	16	4	20
		% within Accepted/ Did not accepted the offer	80%	20%	100%
		% within Acceptance of exploitation	32%	80%	36,4%
		% of Total	29,1%	7,3%	36,4%

	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value
Pearson Chi-Square	,033	Cramer's V	,287

### Discussion

The results of our survey indicate that there were no significant differences in ethical decision-making between Slovak and Erasmus students in our sample with regard to the final decision (acceptance) of how to solve the moral dilemma, assessing the economic viewpoint, awareness of consequences, willingness to bear responsibility, and the approval of disposing of waste at the expense of (economically) weaker countries. However, we identified two differences in the type of argumentation for the selected solution and also partially in addressing ethical rationality, namely regarding the inclusion of the stakeholder “region/people”. The results indicate that Erasmus students used economic reasons for accepting the unethical offer more often than the Slovak students. Moreover, the Erasmus students did not involve the stakeholder “region/people” in their reasoning as often as the Slovaks did.

As for the interconnectedness between the studied elements of ethical decision-making, the survey’s results indicate that people who adhered to the economic type of argumentation tended to accept the unethical offer more often than those who used the ethical type of argumentation. A preference for ethical rationality shows a significant correlation with the

ability to solve ethical-economic dilemmas ethically. On the other hand, prioritizing economic rationality relates strongly to an inability to solve ethical-economic dilemmas in an ethically correct way. This outcome was also supported by another fact that resulted from our survey. Approval of acceptance of exploitation of weaker countries showed a medium-strong correlation to the acceptance of the offer, too. Namely, those respondents who indicated some sort of ambiguous attitude to this ethical issue tended to accept the unethical offer more often than those students who assumed that exploiting weaker countries is not correct. Again, it has to be stressed that these results confirm our theoretical proposition, which we formulated in the theoretical introduction; that is, in cases when people incline to look at ethical-economic dilemmas primarily from the economic perspective, they do not see a clear distinction between what is ethically right and wrong and they are unaware of the ethical dimension of the issue they are trying to solve.

Finally, we tested the relationship between having prior education in ethics and the character of ethical argumentation used by our respondents. Those who had been subjected to education in ethics were able to identify two distinct ethical dimensions of the exploitation of economically weaker countries, namely “abuse of the weaker” and “abuse of legislative weaknesses”. Students with no ethical education prior solving the dilemma stressed the factor of profit together with the simple statement that it is a kind of irresponsible behaviour. For now, we can state that, based on this survey result, education in ethics shows some kind of influence on the ethical reasoning of students. However, in order to clarify these interesting results, data from a wider sample would be needed.

The results of our study are in accordance with Oddo’s suggestion that if students get into the “habit” of applying ethical decision-making strategies in a school setting, they will be more likely to use them in business situations (Oddo, 1997). The results also correspond with previous empirical evidence demonstrating that the introduction of an ethics component into education can lead to improvement in ethical sensitivity, moral reasoning and even ethical behaviour (Lowry, 2003; Sims, 2002). However, we strongly agree with the authors arguing that in order to be successful, implementation of business ethics in the curriculum must involve the involvement and commitment of the entire business faculty to an overall set of ethical principles to be expressed to students (Sims, 2002). As most courses in business ethics taken by our participants prior to the survey were elective, they were most likely taken by students interested in ethics. Thus, the results can neither prove nor disprove Cragg’s suggestion that the teaching of ethics is only amenable to individuals already primed to consider ethical strategies and related moral values (Cragg, 1997). Comparable to Ritter’s assumption that “while efforts to integrate ethics into the curriculum may increase the possibility that individuals with a prior

ethical schema will activate it in business situations, there may be little or no effect on individuals who have not yet created an ethical schema” (Ritter, 2006, p. 155), we are of the opinion that business ethics should be a mandatory part of business and economic education, regardless of what the students’ level of individual ethical thinking is, prior to university studies. If we work on the assumption that most students will enter the business sphere in the future; in order to prepare them for their professional lives, they should either gain or improve on their cognitive skills in considering economic or managerial problems on the basis of ethical and economic interaction.

We are aware of certain limitations of our approach to survey methodology and presentation of the results. Our sample is rather limited, and due to some missing demographical data the validation of the survey’s results might be somehow problematic. Moreover, because of the qualitative nature of our approach and consequent quantification of the qualitative data in the process of coding the respondents’ answers, there is a risk of incorrect coding. As for the essence of our survey, the content of our survey instrument is rather one-sided, allowing us to gain, first hand, only qualitative data. Next, the population in both the Slovak and Erasmus samples is not balanced according to certain demographic indicators. Furthermore, we did not take into the consideration the cultural background of respondents, which might affect our results, too. Therefore we are aware of the need to widen the scope of respondents in order to confirm or reject some of our results in a large-scale survey.

Despite these circumstances we still believe that our paper puts new insights into the topic of utilization of ethical-economic dilemmas in the educational process. Our article put effort in the description of the current situation in Slovakia regarding business ethics education together with a concise historical excursion into the evolution of business ethics education at Slovak universities. Furthermore, we examined the relevance and contribution of using ethical dilemmas in teaching business ethics at business schools. The results of our survey offer some valuable information on the relationship between certain elements of ethical decision-making as well as on differences in the ethical reasoning of students in regard to a certain demographical background, namely the education in ethics.

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**Stephen R. Palmquist ed. (2010): *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy*. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter.**

The editor presents, in the volume, 64 articles focused on Kantian philosophy as the foundation for the dialogue between Asian and Western philosophers, educating everyone on the wealth of the Chinese philosophical tradition. Furthermore, the articles also examine the concept of personhood and its suggestions for education, ethics and self-identity, religious and political community-building, and mutual cross-cultural understanding. The volume is divided into three parts: part one primarily explores Kant's three *Critiques*. The second part is related to the political, cultural, ethical, and religious aspects of Kant's philosophy. Part III concerns the relationship between Kantian and Asian philosophy.

The volume includes three keynote essays corresponding to three parts of the book. Patricia Kitcher claims in her article *Kant's Spontaneous Thinker and the (More) Spontaneous Agent* (pp. 36–52) that the transcendental freedom introduced in *Critique of Practical Reason* does not necessarily mean practical freedom. Kitcher affirms that the only necessity of freedom is "to characterize the strivings of reason that are the source of metaphysical error" (p. 47). She thinks that Kant changed his idea, from seeing reason as voluntarist to understanding practical reason in terms of duty and the power of choice. According to her, it means the *primacy* of practical reason.

Günter Wohlfart's keynote essay *Metacritique of Practical Reason: Back from Kant's Universalized Egocentrism* (pp. 53–73) focuses on Kant's "Critical metaphysics". He emphasizes Kant's effort to universalize all maxims in order to be moral, in contrast to corruption and evil that are common features of contemporary Western culture. He urges us to go to the East, where "ethos without morality" can be discovered.

Third keynote essay by Chung-ying Cheng entitled *Incorporating Kantian Good Will: On Confucian Ren as Perfect Duty* (pp. 74–98) is focused on an analysis of Kant's moral philosophy, arguing that a distinction of perfect and imperfect duties has to be applied as differently as Kant did. Cheng argues that in accordance with the Confucian principle of *ren* (benevolence), the "life principle" is the definitive basis of all four kinds of duty. Part of his essay focuses on the Confucian doctrine of *ren*, which can serve as the groundwork for a Sino-Kantian understanding of human personhood and it offers a human face to Kantian formalism in ethics.

Despite many interesting papers included in this volume, I will focus only on those essays concerning ideas of humanity and human dignity. For instance, Makoto Suzuki in his article *Respect for Persons as the Unifying Moral Ideal* (pp. 247–255) argues that it is very difficult to reconcile common sense moral judgments with Kantian respect for persons. Suzuki

concludes: “The idea of respect for persons is *not by itself* a unifying moral ideal; some additional factor, or some distinct or more fundamental ideal is required for making sense of the thought that common sense requirements are moral and true duties” (p. 255). According to Vasil Gluchman, Kant’s appeal to “humanity”, as a principle for moral decisions, is antithetical to common sense morality. Kantian ethics efforts to overcome the rudeness of our human nature if Kant calls to accept strangers as equals to one’s friends; Gluchman in his essay entitled *Kant and Virtuous Action: A Case of Humanity* (pp. 256–264), however, affirms that “humanity”, like “animality” for our nearest, can be founded in our common sense preferences. He analyses “humanity” as a pure moral concept, and as an “additional value”. He ends with an appeal to individuals and society to fully accept this principle because in order to maintain the future of mankind.

The next interesting essay concerning Kantian ethics is Adriano de Brito’s article *Freedom and Value in Kant’s Practical Philosophy* (pp. 265–272) emphasizing that our intrinsic value, *not* our freedom makes us human beings responsible for our moral actions. According to the author, personhood especially depends on dignity. Natascha Gruber claims in her essay *When Is a Person a Person – When Does the “Person” Begin?* (pp. 358–369), that if we accept Kant’s phenomenal-noumenal distinction, then there can never be *any* connection between the physical processes of our biological development and the practical rationality which gives human beings dignity.

Bernhard Jakl in *Human Dignity and the Innate Right to Freedom in National and International Law* (pp. 382–390) studies the appeal to human dignity included in the German Constitution as the basic principle of the entire legal system. He pays attention to the foundational application of categorical imperative in Kant’s *Groundwork* and its lawful application in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. According to him, the issue of human dignity results primarily from *Groundwork* in its ethical framework. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant appeals only to the right to be a free agent.

Predrag Cicovacki demonstrates how Kant’s theory of human personhood connects to the moral qualities that make persons worthy of respect. He affirms in essay *Respect for Persons as Respect for the Moral Law* (pp. 485–492) that though our animality does not directly force respect for persons, “humanity” is polemic. Cicovacki’s main question concern whether we have to respect *all* persons equally. He differentiates negative respect (equally earned by all persons) and positive respect (earned only by the virtuous).

I fully agree with Stephen R. Palmquist who confirms that the edited volume reflects “the actual emphasis of many essays on *cultivating* personhood, given that establishing anything like the *unity* of personhood (not only for us as individuals, but all the more so for societies or for

humanity as a whole) is a task to be fulfilled more than a reality to be described. That is, because of the great diversity among peoples and the resulting ‘crookedness’ we find in the ‘wood’ of humanity, we must constantly nurture and work at realizing the ideals of unity in diversity that both Kant and Asian philosophies show us in so many ways” (p. 34).

**Marta Gluchmanová** is a lecturer at the Department of Humanities, Technical University in Košice (Slovakia). Her main research interest is the ethics of teaching. She is the author of the books *Uplatnenie princípov a hodnôt etiky sociálnych dôsledkov v učiteľskej etike* [Application of Principles and Values of the Ethics of Social Consequences in the Ethics of Teaching] (2009), *Vývoj učiteľskej etiky na Slovensku* [Development of the Ethics of Teaching in Slovakia] (2013) as well as chapter *The Teacher as Moral Agent: Humanity and Human Dignity in Teaching Profession* in Vasil Gluchman (ed.): *Morality: Reasoning on Different Approaches* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2013).

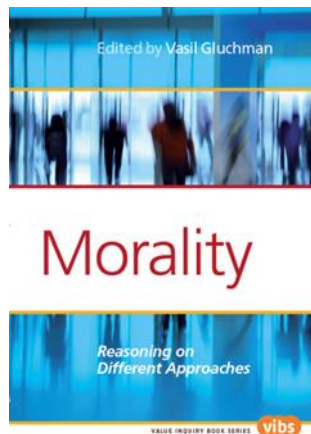
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### *Books Received*

**Vasil Gluchman (ed.): Morality: Reasoning on Different Approaches.**  
Amsterdam & New York, NY: Rodopi 2013. VI, 169 pp. (Value Inquiry Book Series 266)  
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ISBN: 978-94-012-0981-6 E-Book €33,-/US\$45,-  
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This book of essays focuses on the new approaches to moral issues from two perspectives. The first part, 'Different Concepts of Morality', analyses certain central approaches to moral study, and creates the methodological starting point for the more specific enquiries of the second part. 'New Trends in Understanding Morality' contains five articles focusing on these new approaches, especially as they are related to their conceptions of scientific knowledge. This section deals with selected special issues of morality in biology, natural sciences, but also in humanities.

#### Contents

Vasil Gluchman: Introduction: Morality: Reasoning on Different Approaches

#### *Different Concepts of Morality*

Jeremy Bendik-Keymer: The Moral and the Ethical: What Conscience Teaches us about Morality

Howard M. Ducharme: A Critical Evaluation of a Classic Moral Scientist: Are there any Moral Facts to Discover?

Mark Piper: Some Problems with Grounding Moral Respect for Persons in Autonomy

Janusz Marianski: Models of Change in Modernity and in Contemporary Societies

Kumar Neeraj Sachdev: Morality, Good Life, and Selflessness

*New Trends in Understanding Morality*

Francesco Belfiore: Searching for an ‘Objective’ Human Good: An Overview

Frederic Gilbert: Does Neuropathology Dictate Morality? Acquired Pedophilia as a Neuroethics Case

Vasil Gluchman: Humanity: Biological and Moral Issues

Dieter Birnbacher: Are Ethical Experts also Experts in Morality?

Marta Gluchmanová: The Teacher as a Moral Agent: Humanity and Human Dignity in the Teaching Profession

About the Contributors

Index

**Vasil Gluchman: *Idey humanizmu v dejinách etiky na Slovensku* [*Ideas of Humanism in History of Ethics in Slovakia*]. Prešov: FF PU 2013. 218 pp.**

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The central goal of the book is an analysis of the main aspects of Slovak ethical thinking on the Christian understanding of man, his position in the world and society from the Reformation until the first half of the 20th century.

#### Contents

##### Introduction

##### *Humanism in Ethical Thinking in Slovakia (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*

Erasmus of Rotterdam

Leonard Stöckel

Martin Rakovský

Ján Milochovský

Matej Bel

##### *Forms of Slovak Ethical Thinking of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

Ján Kollár

Ludovít Štúr

Jonáš Záborský

Pavel Hečko

##### *Christian Humanism of the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Lutheran Christian and National Humanism

Catholic Forms of Christian Humanism

Ján Bubán

Cyril Dudáš

Štefan Hatala

Nikolaj Onufrievič Losskij

Conclusion

References

About the Author

Index