



UNIVERZITA PAVLA JOZEFA ŠAFÁRIKA V KOŠICIACH

PHILOSOPHY
OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Vladimír Leško

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Strong and Weak Models

Vladimír Leško

Košice
2011

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Katedra filozofie a dejín filozofie FF UPJŠ v Košiciach

Editor: prof. zw. dr hab. Czesław Głombik, Dr. h. c.

Reviewers: prof. PhDr. Stanislav Hubík, CSc.
doc. PhDr. Pavol Tholt, PhD.

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ISBN 978-80-7097-872-6 (tlačená verzia publikácie)

EAN 9788070978726

ISBN 978-80-8152-113-3 (e-publikácia)

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With compliments to
Milan Sobotka

***„The study of the history of **Philosophy**
is an introduction to **Philosophy itself**”***

G. W. F. Hegel

Foreword to the English edition

The country of Slovakia appears to have yielded the most significant results in philosophical investigations regarding the history of philosophy. No doubt, some works of Slovak historians of philosophy, including those by M. Zigo (*Pohľady do novovekej filozofie* [Insights into Modern Philosophy], Bratislava 1987), M. Marcelli (*Michel Foucault alebo stať sa iným* [Michel Foucault, or Becoming Different], Bratislava 1995), F. Novosád (*Pozvanie k Heideggerovi* [An Invitation to Heidegger], Bratislava 1995), are of international significance. Unfortunately, the existing linguistic barrier does not favour the recognition of Slovak philosophical research abroad. It goes without saying that the international philosophical community can only become familiar with the results of Slovak historical-philosophical research if they are presented in a world language.

The Slovak edition of my work *Filozofia dejín filozofie* [The Philosophy of the History of Philosophy] (Prešov 1999, second edition 2004) has received favourable reception not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic and Poland. The positive response (in particular by Professor M. Sobotka – Charles University, Prague, and Professor Cz. Glombik – Silesian University, Katowice) gave me an impulse to introduce my work to the philosophical community outside such Slavonic countries as Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland.

I owe a special debt to Professor P. Štekauer, the translator of this book, whose effort has significantly helped me to accomplish the project. I am also grateful to my daughter Adriana and her husband Keith Miller, the first careful readers of the English manuscript in the USA (Denver, Colorado). My thanks also go to Jonathan Coresty, an English colleague who has been living in Slovakia for several years now, and who helped me to improve the manuscript with his invaluable comments.

I hope I have been successfully in my endeavour. Now the book will try to find its way to readers beyond the borders of the Slavonic world. As its author, I wish it success. Time will show whether this hope will come true.

Prešov, December 10, 2010

Vladimír Leško

Introduction

The origins of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* as an integral part of philosophizing at the system level is closely related to the development of German philosophical thought in the first third of the 19th century. Its foundations were laid by G. W. F. Hegel, whose ingenious *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* demonstrated a fundamental and dramatic inter-connection between the history of philosophy and system philosophy. Ever since, the relationship between philosophy and its own history has been a *significant* and, in a sense, an indispensable *philosophical issue*. Hegel puts a definite end to the non-philosophical – doxographic concept of the history of philosophy, and gives a principled impetus to a new stage in the philosophical approach to historical-philosophical thought as a *philosophical science* – the *philosophizing of the history of philosophy*.

This work has resulted from a long-term thinking about the relation between the history of philosophy and its reflection in more or less systemic and asystemic forms of philosophizing within the most significant philosophical doctrines of the 19th and the 20th centuries. It should be noted that the main theoretical (and other) impulses for the examination of the problems in question primarily came from M. Sobotka's works. His analysis of modern philosophy, the classical German philosophy, and Hegel's historical-philosophical concept in particular, has been the theoretical point of departure.

In addition, this work presents research results achieved within the project *Philosophy of the History of Philosophy – basic models and results*, VEGA 1/4441/97, *Philosophy of the History of Philosophy – Weak models I.*, VEGA 1/9238/02, *Philosophy of the History of Philosophy – Weak models II.*, VEGA 1/2500/05 and *Heidegger and the History of Philosophy*, VEGA 1/0650/08. The theoretical efforts of the research team enabled us to arrive at in-depth and specific understanding of the individual models of the philosophical reception of

the history of philosophy. By implication, I wish to appreciate the theoretical contribution of the other members of the research team, notably, Ľ. Belás, S. Hubík, P. Tholt and M. Ješič. Moreover, this work attempts to continue upon the previous most important historical-philosophical achievements in our country, such as works by M. Zigo, M. Marcelli, and F. Novosád.

The main goal of this work is to *philosophically* introduce the most significant historical-philosophical concepts of the 19th and the 20th centuries that established the necessary conditions for the *strong and weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy in the concepts of G. W. F. Hegel, F. W. J. Schelling, young Marx, F. Nietzsche, E. Husserl, M. Heidegger., E. Fink, J. Patočka and H.-G. Gadamer. Some achievements of the philosophy of the history of philosophy are presented as *metatheoretical motion* within the historical-philosophical thought, the purpose of which is both the empirical description of the historical-philosophical process and understanding and accounting for it as an integral part of the most significant philosophical problems. Let the reader assess the extent to which the objectives have been accomplished.

I. THE STRONG MODELS

1. Hegel's history of philosophy as a *philosophical science*

Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is the first philosophical text dealing with the history of philosophy. In his doctoral dissertation (1841), K. Marx assesses Hegel's concept of the history of philosophy as an admirably great and bold plan, from which alone the history of philosophy can be dated as a philosophical science.¹ Later, Hegel's historical-philosophical concept was similarly characterized by Heidegger, Gadamer, Patočka, Sobotka, Geldsetzer, etc.² Hegel challenged the relativist-doxographic approach to the history of philosophy, the depreciation and degradation of the historical-philosophical heritage. To Hegel, philosophy is an objective science about truth and the necessity for truth. It itself is a comprehending cognition. In his view, truth is a historical process, a journey, a motion, rather than a *pure* or *ultimate* result. Consequently, the borderline between philosophy and the history of philosophy is rather relative. Any separation of the history of philosophy from its systemic core is not only ahistoric, but primarily aphilosophical, or even anti-philosophical. The history of philosophy as the philosophy understood as an *element* of the historical-philosophical cognition in evolution, is, in Hegel's view, an indispensable system-establishing form of philosophy itself. This is the main reason why „the account of

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1975. *Collected Works*. Vol 01. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 29-30.

² Sobotka, M. 1961. „Heglovy dějiny filosofie.” In: G. W. F. Hegel. *Dějiny filosofie I*. Praha: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 5-36. Also cf. Geldsetzer, L. 1968. *Die Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert*. Meissenheim am Glan: Antonio Hain, 47 ff; Bogomolov, A. S. – Ojzerman, T. I. 1983. *Osnovy teorii istoriko-filosofskogo processa*. Moskva: Nauka, 178– 194.

the Absolute Spirit culminates in the philosophy of philosophy.”¹

Methodological foundations of historical-philosophical inquiry

Hegel realizes the importance of outlining an introduction to the history of philosophy which should treat of the methodological foundations of historical-philosophical inquiry. It is precisely these foundations that enable him to define the concept of philosophy in a scientific way and to develop the understanding of the history of philosophy as a *philosophical science*. In his view, the uniqueness of philosophy as a science is in the fact that its notion only seemingly representing its beginnings. Only a comprehensive elaboration of this discipline provides him with relevant evidence and enables him to define this concept. Therefore, Hegel assumes that the concept „is really a result of that treatment.”² Hegel relates the problem of philosophy as a science to the scope of the history of philosophy. The relation between philosophy and the history of philosophy demonstrates an intrinsic relationship resulting from the method of philosophy. „What the history of Philosophy shows us is a succession of noble minds, a gallery of heroes of thought, who, by the power of Reason, have penetrated into the being of things, of nature and of spirit, into the Being of God, and have won for us by their labours the highest treasure, the treasure of reasoned knowledge.”³

Hegel appreciates those philosophical achievements, which, rather than foregrounding the personality of

¹ Major, L. - Sobotka, M. 1979. *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 114.

² Hegel, G. W. F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Greek Philosophy to Plato*. Vol. I. Transl. E. S. Haldane. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, xlv.

³ Ibid., 1.

a philosopher, are devoid of any individual characteristic. This attitude underlies the *principle of historicism* in the history of philosophy. Hegel maintains that, „we are what we are through history: or, more accurately, as in the history of Thought, what has passed away is only one side, so in the present, what we have as a permanent possession is essentially bound up with our place in history. The possession of self-conscious reason, which belongs to us of the present world, did not arise suddenly, nor did it grow only from the soil of the present. This possession must be regarded as previously present, as an inheritance, and as the result of labour – the labour of all past generations of men ... *so, likewise, in science, and specially in Philosophy, do we owe what we are to the tradition which ... runs through all that was transient, and has therefore passed away.* Thus has been preserved and transmitted to us what antiquity produced.”¹

Hegel does not conceive the history of philosophy as a *motionless statue*, a lifeless stationary creation. Rather, the history of philosophy represents a continuous *river-like*, life-giving stream, or torrent. The more distant from the spring the mightier is the river being filled with the traditions that underlie the spiritual world. Hegel emphasizes the fact that the *universal Mind* never sinks into the realm of indifference. The *World-spirit* is characterized by *activity* „for its activity is its life.”² That which each generation produced in intellectual activity is thus understood as *sacrament*. The soul of each successive generation rests upon the ties with this *sacrament*, i.e., upon this inheritance in the sense of accepting and appropriating this philosophical message. Hegel views his own philosophy in close interaction with the philosophical heritage: „... our... Philosophy can only arise in connection with previous Philosophy, from which of necessity it has arisen. The course of history does not show us the Becoming of things foreign to us, but the Becoming of

¹ Ibid., 2.

² Ibid., 3.

ourselves and of our own knowledge.”¹ By implication, „... the study of the history of Philosophy is an introduction to Philosophy itself.”²

In this respect, Hegel points out that any method of processing historical-philosophical sources must take into consideration the above-given relation. Any depiction of the history of the world of thought and the way this world has arisen and produced itself requires specific methodological approaches. Therefore, Hegel’s history of philosophy as a philosophical science is *the history of thought finding itself*: „... and it is the case with Thought that it only finds itself in producing itself; ...that it only exists and is actual in finding itself. These productions are the philosophic systems...”³

Hegel views the relation between the history of philosophy and the philosophical science itself in a very close interaction. The historical-philosophical inquiry does not concentrate on what is outside the content of philosophical doctrines. It does not investigate events. Its main focus is on *content*, which while relatively insignificant, is present historically and still belongs to the science of philosophy. The gist consists in revealing the persisting, the non-passing. „Philosophy is presented here as the most adequate way of recognizing the whole of existence as an infinite, free, and true idea, and simultaneously, of comprehending man’s intrinsic unity with this absolute *object* ... It is in philosophy and through philosophy that the infinite idea fully becomes what it actually is according to its concept, according to its immanent teleological character, that is to say, the absolute spirit. Therefore, philosophy actually is *absolute knowledge*.”⁴

Previous attempts at developing the history of philosophy are subject to sharp criticism by Hegel. He mainly criti-

¹ Ibid., 3-4.

² Ibid., 4.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Major, L. -- Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 114-115.

cizes their approach to the history of philosophy at the level of sheer doxography. This kind of history of philosophy is labelled as a *display of senseless follies*. Since he conceives of philosophy as an objective science of truth and of the necessity for truth as conceiving knowledge, the concept of the history of philosophy based on opinions is by necessity subject to overwhelming criticism. In this connection, one cannot disregard the immense variety of the historical-philosophical thinking. The diversity of various philosophical doctrines is not, in Hegel's view, in contradiction with the concept of philosophy as science. On the contrary, this diversity is indispensable to the existence of the *philosophical science*; it is connected with its essence. „The facts within that history are not adventures and contain no more romance than does the history of the world. They are not a mere collection of chance events, of expeditions of wandering knights, each going about fighting, struggling purposelessly, leaving no results to show for all his efforts.”¹

Both in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and his most significant systematic works, i.e., *The Phenomenology of the Mind* and *Science of Logic*, Hegel vividly explains that the historical-philosophical movement represents various development processes that cannot be abstractly compared to a *straight line*. The history of philosophy does not head for any abstract (vague) infinity. Hegel compares the history of philosophy to a *circle* „returning within itself, which, as periphery, has very many circles, and whose whole is a large number of processes in development turning back within themselves.”²

Hegel views philosophy as a system in perpetual movement, and development. The same applies to the history of philosophy. The only difference pertains to the fact that while the task and the object of philosophy rely on the depiction of a special way of coming into existence and the

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. I, 19.

² *Ibid.*, 27.

derivation of the specific forms of the individual determinations of the idea, the history of philosophy is supposed to offer a different picture. It should reflect the different stages and moments in development in time, in manner of occurrence, and in particular places; it should reflect the empirical form.¹ This is where Hegel's dominant philosophical postulate comes from; according to this postulate, *the sequence in the systems of philosophy in history is the same as the sequence in the logical deduction of the concept – determinations of the Idea.*² Obviously, this postulate can be called into question in terms of, for example, „imperial claims”, „despotic approach to the problems of pluralism in philosophy,”³ etc. Yet, it has significant philosophical consequences. Most importantly, in the opinion of this author, it emphasizes *that the study of the history of philosophy is the innermost way to the comprehension of philosophy itself.*

Hegel aims to justify the idea of development as the dominant idea in the history of philosophy. „... only a history of Philosophy thus regarded as a system of development in Idea, is entitled to the name of Science...”⁴ Hegel asks the question how it happens that philosophy appears to be a development in time and has its history. In his view, the answer to this question relates to the *metaphysics of time*. The essence of Mind is its being and its activity. The activity of Mind is to know itself. The idea, thought of as being at rest, is not in time. From this point of view, the history of philosophy is *the temple of self-conscious reason.*⁵

Hegel maintains that philosophies *belong to the region of mind*. These are no accidental phenomena. The history of philosophy as a whole „is a progression impelled by an

¹ Ibid., 30.

² Ibid., 30.

³ *Études sur l'histoire de la philosophie en hommage à Martial Gueroult*. 1964. Paris, 200. Hyppolite, J. 1955. *Études sur Marx et Hegel*. Paris, 82.

⁴ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. I, 31.

⁵ Ibid., 35.

inherent necessity, and one which is implicitly rational and a priori determined through its Idea... Contingency must vanish on the appearance of Philosophy.”¹ But not only this. In his view, every philosophical system has been, and still is, necessary. By implication, no philosophical system has passed away. All philosophical systems are affirmatively contained in the philosophical science as elements in a whole. In addition, no philosophical system can be, in fact, refuted. „What has been refuted is not the principle of this philosophy, but merely the fact that this principle should be considered final and absolute in character.”² Hegel suggests that any historical-philosophical attitude to a specific philosophy in history must include both *affirmative and negative facets*. He assumes that the history of philosophy is the history in which the past is not dealt with. The reason is simple. „Hegel emphasizes that there is, in fact, only one philosophy, and the history of philosophy represents its consistent, in itself necessary, progress towards the pre-determined goal, the comprehension of the totality of truth.”³ The scope of the history of philosophy covers the *scientific products of reason*. „What is obtained in this field of labour is the True, and, as such, the Eternal; it is not what exists now, and not then...”⁴

What changes and what is lost in the past in the history of philosophy is primarily the fate of philosophers, their life. The works of philosophers and their ideas follow a different fate, because philosophers „neither conceived nor dreamt of the rational import of their works. Philosophy is not somnambulism, but is developed consciousness; and what these heroes have done is to bring that which is implicitly rational out of the depths of Mind, where it is found at first as substance only, or as inwardly existent, into the light of day, and to advance it into consciousness and

¹ Ibid., 36-37.

² Ibid., 37.

³ Major, L. -- Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 116.

⁴ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. I, 38.

knowledge. This forms a continuous awakening.”¹ Hegel’s concept of the history of philosophy is thus the concept of *awakening philosophical knowledge*. It is in this sense that this concept is viewed as something that *does not age, that lives in the present*. The stress on this motif clearly assumes that the history of philosophy is philosophy itself in its historical metamorphoses. As a result, within a historical-philosophical inquiry, we are supposed to *set to work on an historical basis, and to ascribe to each philosophical system only what is immediately given to us, and that alone*.²

Hegel maintains that, within the logical system of thought, each intellectual achievement has its unique place, and it is only at that place that it applies. An ahistorical transfer of intellectual achievements results in errors. „The history of philosophy is an external, world-historical correlate of the time-independent pure thought, of the logical idea captured by the speculative logic. Each logic category corresponds with a specific historical form of philosophy.”³ Each philosophy is „a particular stage in the development of the whole process and has its definite place where it finds its true value and significance.”⁴ Realizing this fact leads to the assumption that since each philosophy in history represents a special stage in the development of philosophy it is bound to its time. No philosopher can neglect this important fact. „... Philosophy is Mind’s thought of itself and therefore its determinate and substantial content. Every philosophy is the *philosophy of its own day*, a link in the whole chain of spiritual development, and thus it can only find satisfaction for the interests belonging to its own particular time.”⁵ What is crucial in this view is that Hegel accentuates the concept of philosophy which, rather than by content, survives its times by its form only.

¹ Ibid., 39.

² Ibid., 43.

³ Major, L. -- Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 116 – 117.

⁴ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...*, Vol. I, 45.

⁵ Ibid., 45.

Thus, any subsequent analysis must deal with the link between philosophy and other areas of spirituality. In his historical-philosophical concept, Hegel studies the historical facet of relation between philosophy and the other areas of spiritual production – science, arts and, mainly, religion. He discusses in detail the external historical conditions of philosophizing, and suggests that what is common to philosophy, arts, and religion is that their content pertains to universal objects. In his *Science of Logic* and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel maintains that philosophy builds upon the same foundation as religion. The object of philosophy and the object of religion are the same.¹ In philosophical terms – it is *the universal reason existing in and for itself*. „Worship is only the operation of reflection; Philosophy attempts to bring about the reconciliation by means of thinking knowledge, because Mind desires to take up its Being into itself. Philosophy is related in the form of thinking consciousness to its object; with Religion it is different.”²

At the same time, in his *Science of Logic* and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel points out a big difference between philosophy and religion. He does not intend to beat about the bush in order to find evasions or shifts. „This is nothing else than to appear to wish to conceal the fact that Philosophy has directed its efforts against Religion.”³ In his view, religion is at the level of *images*; hence, it can only comprehend that which is at the same level. Consequently, religion cannot comprehend philosophy, because it is the *concept, the universal intellectual specification* that is crucial to philosophy. Hegel openly admits that he is not interested in those philosophical thoughts that are implicit in religion. He is only interested in philosophical thought as thought, because only *thought is the absolute form of idea*. By implication,

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *The Shorter Logic*. Transl. W. Walled, § 1.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 1, 63.

³ *Ibid.*, 65.

the *freedom of thought* is an indispensable condition of philosophizing. *Greek philosophy* was the first to meet this condition. No doubt, Hegel calls into question *the freedom of thought* within the framework of religious perception of reality. Consequently, he finds the origins of philosophy in ancient Greece.

The main systemizing task of the history of philosophy as a philosophical science in Hegel's doctrine is to *deal with* various categories of the system of logic. The system of logic should enable Hegel to completely understand and to dialectically explain the whole reality. The emphasis is laid upon the dialectical contradiction and development. Hegel's presentation of historical-philosophical development is methodo-logically conditioned by understanding the dialectic as logic of intellectual activity. The understanding of the history of philosophy as a philosophical science required, however, dialectical identification of the place of this science within the *encyclopedic philosophical system*. This is because the development of thought, illustrated by the history of philosophy, is also expressed by philosophy itself, without any historical *externality*. Philosophy devoid of a system cannot be, in Hegel's opinion, scientific, because „[e]ach of the parts of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle rounded and complete in itself. In each of these parts, however, the philosophical Idea is found in a particular specificity or medium. The single circle, because it is a real totality, bursts through the limits imposed by its special medium, and gives rise to a wider circle. The whole of philosophy in this way resembles a *circle of circles*. The Idea appears in each single circle, but, at the same time, the whole Idea is constituted by the system of these peculiar phases, and each is a necessary member of the organisation.”¹

Hegel's historical-philosophical concept is dominated by a *logical* sequence of philosophies. The author believes that when the fundamental concepts of philosophies, which

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *The Shorter Logic*, §15.

emerged in the process of the development of philosophical knowledge, are cleared of anything related to their external form, their application to the idiosyncratic, etc., one obtains various degrees of specification of the idea itself in its logical concept, and vice versa. If we take logical procedure as such, we find out that it expresses the main point – the succession of historical events. „Similar to logical categories the history of philosophy proceeds from the abstract to the concrete. Each philosophy claims to be absolutely true, suggesting that it has succeeded in arriving at the complete and ultimate explanation of the existence, even though it has, in fact, captured only one side of truth.”¹ Hegel finds it necessary to reveal *pure concepts* in historical form. The history of philosophy deserves the status of *science* if it is conceived as a system capturing the development of *rational thought*.

Hegel, therefore, does not conceive the history of philosophy as an accidental aggregate of philosophical doctrines. The history of philosophy is, in its innermost nature, an independent philosophy in its historical forms. The dominant methodological postulate of the *unity* between philosophy and the history of philosophy also strongly applies to the periodization of the historical-philosophical thinking. Hegel's concept divides the history of philosophy to eight basic stages.

The first stage concerns the most ancient history of Greek thought when, rather than the idea itself, the objective was philosophy's point of departure, and transformed the same into the idea. In Hegel's view, the most significant achievement of this period was the philosophy of Parmenides. The next stage established an *abstract idea* (noûs), which became known to itself as a universal idea rather than a subjective thought. The main representative of this period was Plato. The third stage is characterized by the concept of comprehending thought, permeating and spiri-

¹ Major, L. - Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 117.

tualizing all the forms that the Universe contains. The most distinguished representative of this stage was Aristotle. The fourth stage of Hegel's historical-philosophical concept introduces the concept of subject, that is to say, how something comes to exist for itself. This fact is reflected in the philosophy of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics. The fifth stage is characterized by the thought of totality; the *intelligible world is a concrete idea*. While this principle, developed by the Neo-Platonists, is considered by Hegel to be ideal in all reality, it is not an idea which knows about itself. The principle of subjectivity and individuality has been transformed to it; as a result, God as self-conscious spirit becomes actual to Himself.

This period is followed by modern times, in which this *idea of spirit* is first conceived; the *self-consciousness of the idea* is connected with an infinite opposition: the idea has come to the consciousness of being absolutely separated. In this way, philosophy perfected the *intellectuality of the world*, because the spirit thinks the objective essence. By implication, philosophy produced the spiritual world as an object existing beyond presence and reality, like a version of nature – the first creation of spirit. The work of the spirit was aimed at bringing this world back to reality and self-consciousness. For this purpose, self-consciousness thought itself and recognized *absolute existence as self-consciousness thinking itself*.

In Hegel's view, the first to overcome the above-mentioned separation was Descartes. „Self-conscious-ness, in the first place, thinks of itself as consciousness; therein is contained all objective reality, and the positive, intuitive reference of its reality to the other side. With Spinoza Thought and Being are opposed and yet identical...”¹ This is the perception of substance, but the knowledge of sub-

¹ Hegel, G. W. F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. Vol. 3. Transl. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 549.

stance in Descartes' case is external. „We have here the principle of reconciliation taking its rise from thought as such, in order to abrogate the subjectivity of thought: this is the case in Leibnitz's monad, which possesses the power of representation.”¹ This approach to the central problem of modern philosophy leads to the stage at which „self-consciousness thinks of itself as being self-consciousness; in being self-conscious it is independent, but still in this independence it has a negative relation to what is outside self-consciousness. This is infinite subjectivity, which appears at one time as the critique of thought in the case of Kant, and at another time, in the case of Fichte, as the tendency or impulse towards the concrete. Absolute, pure, infinite form is expressed as self-consciousness, the Ego.”²

The last, eighth stage is figuratively characterized by Hegel as a *light* „that breaks forth on spiritual substance, and shows absolute content and absolute form to be identical; substance is in itself identical with knowledge. Self-consciousness thus ... recognizes its positive relation as its negative, and its negative as its positive, --or, in other words, recognizes these opposite activities as the same, i.e., it recognizes pure Thought or Being as self-identity, and this again as separation. This is intellectual perception; but it is requisite in order that it should be in truth intellectual, that it should not be that merely immediate perception of the eternal and the divine which we hear of, but should be absolute knowledge. This intuitive perception which does not recognize itself is taken as starting-point as if it were absolutely presupposed; it has in itself intuitive perception only as immediate knowledge, and not as self-knowledge: or it knows nothing, and what it perceives it does not really know, - for, taken at its best, it consists of beautiful thoughts, but not knowledge.”³

¹ Ibid., 549.

² Ibid., 549-550.

³ Ibid., 550.

However, in Hegel's view, intellectual intuition is knowledge if all external reality is known as internal. If it is known through its essence it manifests itself as changeable, and its essence consists in the transition to something else. This point resembles the principle of Heraclitus or that of Stoics, according to which *nothing is at rest*. This principle must be demonstrated for everything. Hegel maintains that what matters is knowing this unity in its essence. „[I]ts essence as this identity is, in the same way, to pass over into its opposite, or to realize itself, to become for itself something different; and thus the opposition in it is brought about by itself. Again, it may be said of the opposition... that it is not in the Absolute; this Absolute is existence, the eternal, etc. This is, however, itself an abstraction in which the Absolute is apprehended in a one-sided manner only, and the opposition is apprehended only as ideal ...; but in fact it is form, as the essential moment of the movement of the Absolute. This Absolute is not at rest, and that opposition is not the unresting Notion; for the Idea, unresting though it is, is yet at rest and satisfied in itself. Pure thought has advanced to the opposition of the subjective and objective; the true reconciliation of the opposition is the perception that this opposition, when pushed to its absolute extreme, resolves itself; as Schelling says, the opposites are in themselves identical – and not only in themselves, but eternal life consists in the very process of continually producing the opposition and continually reconciling it. To know opposition in unity, and unity in opposition – this is absolute knowledge; and science is the knowledge of this unity in its whole development by means of itself.”¹

Hegel presents his history of philosophy in three basic volumes. „This structure follows from recognizing the reality as *intellectual objectivity*, from recognizing the world as externalization, self-manifestation of absolute idea whose intrinsic determination includes, as we already know, its

¹ Ibid., 550-51.

effort to know itself, and thus to realize itself.”¹ The three volumes of Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* represent three basic stages in the development of historical-philosophical knowledge. From the point of view of content, the largest space is devoted to the Classical philosophy, covered by the first, the second, and a part of the third volumes of Hegel’s *Lectures*. The medieval and the Renaissance philosophies are paid very little attention. Much more attention is, however, paid to the modern philosophy, from Descartes to Schelling.

Hegel’s interpretation of Greek philosophy.

Hegel distinguishes two great eras in the history of philosophy, including the *Greek* and *Germanic philosophies*. While the Greek world, in his view, developed thought to the level of idea, the Christian-Germanic world understood thought as spirit. The history itself is divided by Hegel into three periods: 1. *Greek philosophy*, 2. *the Middle Ages*, and 3. *the Modern age*. The first question to be asked by the history of philosophy is, in Hegel’s view, „what a deed in Philosophy is; and whether any particular thing is philosophic or not.”² The answer to this question is sought, first of all, in Greek philosophy. In introducing the *Greek world*, he emphasizes the theme of *Heimatlichkeit* [home]. The Greeks „made their world their home.”³ It is this common spirit of home that links us with Greece. In the Greek spirit of free *beautiful historicity*, we can find the latent germs of thinking freedom. Therefore, the origins of philosophy emerge in Greece. Hegel sees the essence of the Greeks in *the substantial unity of nature and spirit*. The Greek spirit sets a limit to the oriental limitless power of substance. „The riches of the Greek world consist only of an infinite quantity of beauti-

¹ Major, L. - Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 118.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. I, 115-116.

³ *Ibid.*, 150.

ful, lovely and pleasing individualities in the serenity which pervades all existence...”¹

Hegel identifies Thales’ doctrine as the first step of philosophy. Thales’ specification of *primordial stuff* is seen as philosophy because the primordial stuff does not refer to water perceivable by senses in its uniqueness with regard to other natural objects. In his theory of the primordial stuff, Thales presents a „Thought in which everything is resolved and comprehended. Thus we approach the divorce of the absolute from the finite; but it is not to be thought that the unity stands above, and that down here we have the finite world.”² Thales’ theory was the first manifestation of natural philosophy, because the primordial stuff is seen as a general essence, i.e., as something real, as a *unity of thought and Being*.

Hegel’s analysis of Presocratic philosophy attempts to account for all influential doctrines and their representatives. Hence, he discusses the philosophies of Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, the Eleatics, Anaxagoras, and the Sophists. In Hegel’s view, the Pythagorean philosophy has not yet achieved the speculative form of expression for the concept. Rather than pure concept, number is merely a concept in the form of ordinary idea or sensuous perception. Furthermore, he maintains that „[t]his expression of absolute essence in what is a pure Notion or something thought, and the movement of the Notion or of Thought, is that which we find must come next...”³ The Eleatic school represents the beginning of the *clear movement of thought in concepts*, i.e., the beginning of a dialectic concept of the reality. This indicates the opposition between thought and sensual being. Hegel considers Parmenides to be the first to reach the empire of the ideal. His work represents the origins of *true philosophy*. The rea-

¹ Ibid., 154.

² Ibid., 179.

³ Ibid., 239.

son is quite obvious: „A man now constitutes himself free from all ideas and opinions, denies their truth, and says necessity alone, Being, is the truth. This beginning is certainly still dim and indefinite, and we cannot say much of what it involves; but to take up this position certainly is to develop Philosophy proper, which has not hitherto existed. The dialectic that the transient has no truth, is implied in it...”¹

Hegel then discusses Heraclitus’ philosophy for which he has much respect. In Heraclitus’ philosophy, he sees the prototype of the concept of the absolute as a *dialectic process*. Indeed, Heraclitus was the first in the history of philosophy to conceive the dialectic as an independent principle of reality and of explaining this reality. Consequently, Hegel considers his philosophy to establish a *solid land*, and admits that „there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my Logic.”² He is mainly intrigued by Heraclitus’ general principle – *the becoming*: „...since everything is and is not, Heraclitus hereby expressed that everything is Becoming. Not merely does origination belong to it, but passing away as well; both are not independent, but identical. It is a great advance in thought to pass from Being to Becoming, even if, as the first unity of opposite determinations, it is still abstract.”³

Hegel emphasizes the fact that *becoming is the truth of Being*. From this point of view, Heraclitus’ philosophy cannot be perceived as past and gone; rather, it is considered to be utterly current. Hegel writes: „The recognition of the fact that Being and non-being are abstractions devoid of truth, that the first truth is to be found in Becoming, forms a great advance.”⁴ He is impressed with Heraclitus’ idea of *negativity* inherent in his philosophy. Hegel believes Heracli-

¹ Ibid., 254.

² Ibid., 279.

³ Ibid., 283.

⁴ Ibid., 283.

tus to have been the first to understand the essence of nature as infinite in itself, and to depict it as a process taking place in nature itself.

Hegel praises Anaxagoras for the fact that reason reveals *the concept* as the essence. An important change in the comprehension of *concept* is introduced by the Sophists. They transfer a simple *concept* as a *thought* to all objects of the world, and all human relations are pervaded with thought. As a result, *concept* becomes not only philosophy but also *general education*. The ultimate goal of the Sophists therefore is education. From this point of view, Hegel ranks the Sophists very high in the history of Greek culture. To him, „the Sophists are the teachers of Greece through whom culture first came into existence in Greece, and thus they took the place of poets and of rhapsodists, who before this were the ordinary instructors.”¹

Hegel views Socrates to be one of the most important figures in the history of philosophy and, at the same time, one of the most interesting philosophers in the ancient philosophy. His reasons are presented in a straightforward way: Socrates embodies the basic internal turning point of the spirit in the form of a philosophical idea. „Socrates herein adopted firstly the doctrine of Anaxagoras that thought, the understanding, is the ruling and self-determining universal, though this principle did not, as with the Sophists, attain the form of formal culture or of abstract philosophizing... with this the infinite subjectivity, the freedom of self-consciousness in Socrates breaks out.”²

Hegel envisages Socrates' doctrine as a manifestation of continuity of his times, emphasizing the principle according to which man should find himself the end of his actions, and hence, the ultimate end of the world. No doubt, the essential line of Socrates' philosophy is ethical. Hegel points out that Socrates understands the good primarily in its spe-

¹ Ibid., 355.

² Ibid., 385-386.

cific meaning of *practical good*. To Hegel, Socrates was the first to dare to penetrate into the depths of consciousness. However, he failed to „reflect upon all the speculations of past Philosophy, in order to be able to come down in practical philosophy to inward thought.”¹

It was primarily Plato and Aristotle who succeeded in this fundamental penetration into the heart of idea and not only in the field of practical philosophy. These two giants of Greek culture are considered by Hegel to be the *teachers of humankind*. Hegel notes that Plato accepted Socrates’ principle saying that *essence consists in consciousness, in its truthfulness*. It is here that *philosophical science* starts to develop as *science*. In his view, „... the progress from the Socratic point of view to the scientific, begins with Plato and is completed by Aristotle.”² Hegel does not conceal his fascination for Plato’s philosophy in which he finds, in many respects, the most decisive points that Hegel himself tries to express in his own philosophy.

The common area of these two philosophers is mainly the idea that „the absolute is in thought, and all reality is Thought.”³ Hegel is impressed with Plato’s philosophy which is focussed on the *intellectual supersensuous world* and which raises consciousness to the spiritual empire. Hegel takes Plato as a pattern from which we can learn the basic ideas of speculative philosophy. The view that the basis of philosophy is one idea and one essence is related to the assumption that *truth is of notional form*. Both Plato and Hegel enthusiastically contemplated about that which holds good in itself and for self.

It is therefore understandable that Hegel’s historical-philosophical interpretation of Plato does not only *demonstrate* his ability to understand and interpret one of the

¹ Ibid., 389.

² Hegel, G. W. F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Plato and the Platonist*. Vol. 2. Transl. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1.

³ Ibid., 1.

greatest figures in philosophy ever; at the same time, it perfectly illustrates a philosophical reflection of the history of philosophy aimed at the self-reflecting comprehension of what Hegel himself pursued in philosophy. This explains Hegel's historical-philosophical postulate according to which the *understanding of Plato's philosophy is hampered by the lack of knowledge of philosophy*. „We must stand above Plato, i.e. we must acquaint ourselves with the needs of thoughtful minds in our own time, or rather we must ourselves experience these needs.”¹ Hegel defends the *right* to return to Plato, mainly for the sake of understanding of what *speculative philosophy* actually is. Thus, Hegel aims to develop Plato's concept of philosophy and cognition.

Hegel is aware of the *exacting nature* of the philosophical terrain represented by Plato's philosophical message *presented* in his dialogues, because, no doubt, this form encompasses heterogeneous elements. Hegel appreciates the *dialogue form* as noble, attractive, and beautiful. While Hegel does not consider it to be the most perfect form of a philosophical work, Plato's dialogues must be esteemed as a work of art. More importantly, Hegel realizes that Plato, in his dialogues, *works* with a number of former philosophical ideas. Plato does not accept them eclectically; rather, he applies a deeper principle in order to offer a new philosophical quality. Hegel maintains that Plato's philosophy can be legitimately described as a „totality of ideas: therefore, as the result, the principles of others are comprehended in itself. Frequently Plato does nothing more than explain the doctrines of earlier philosophers; and the only particular feature in his representation of them is that their scope is extended.”²

Hegel maintains that understanding Plato on the basis of his dialogues means separating the philosophical idea from anything that belongs to the sphere of images. In fact,

¹ Ibid., 10.

² Ibid., 14.

many of Plato's *philosophical figures* express their views in the form of *simple images*, *simple consciousness*. Hegel, however, does not blame Plato himself for this. He precisely diagnoses that „[t]he philosophic culture of Plato, like the general culture of his time, was not yet ripe for really scientific work; the Idea was still too fresh and new; it was only in Aristotle that it attained to a systematic scientific form of representation.”¹

The difficulties concerning the comprehension of Plato's theory also bear on the fact that its author frequently resorts to expressing his philosophical problems in the form of myths. Hegel, however, points out that philosophy should be given primary credit for the *notional form of truth*. In this connection, Plato is criticized by Hegel, because pure notions are not considered by Plato to be the essence; instead, Plato regards them as mere images. In explaining Plato's philosophy Hegel tries to identify everything that belongs to the sphere of images. In this case, the value of philosophy can be manifested in a completely different way. „The lofty nature of the knowledge of Philosophy deeply impressed him, and he shows a real enthusiasm for the thought which deals with the absolute... Plato upholds the self-mediating unity of consciousness and reality, or knowledge... Plato has a full consciousness of how near human reason is to God, and indeed of its unity with Him.”² Here, philosophical thinking approaches the divine thinking, which is pointed out by Hegel again when he examines Aristotle's philosophy.³ Hegel appreciates the fact that Plato considers philosophy to be *man's highest value, the essence of man*. This attitude engenders their *common creed*: philosophy „alone has to be sought of man”.⁴

¹ Ibid., 17.

² Ibid., 22.

³ Ibid., 125.

⁴ Ibid., 22.

Hegel compares Plato's concept of philosophy, aimed at the knowledge of the *supersensuous*, to the religious consciousness of his time, and maintains that Plato's philosophy is *the consciousness of that which is true and just of itself and for itself, the consciousness of general ends and their relevance in a state*. This appears to underlie the specific need to conceive Plato's philosophy as an ability to distinguish between the human idea of the perceived world and the awareness of the supersensuous world. In this way, Hegel makes room for the exposition of Plato's concept of ideas. If philosophy is conceived as a science of *the universal in itself* in permanent confrontation with its opposite, i.e., the individual things, then the centre of gravity of Plato's examination is the *universal, the idea, the good*. His philosophical doctrine of ideas introduces the mankind to *the intellectual world*, which, however, is *pushed* by Hegel too much from the transcendent reality (the *heavens*) to our real world. Therefore, M. Sobotka aptly notes that Hegel rejected Plato's transcendent concept of ideas. „On the one hand, such ideas would be (due to their independence) resemble things and, on the other hand, the divine reason, whose thoughts they are, would be separated from our consciousness.”¹ For Hegel, „the intellectual world is therefore the True, that which is worthy to be known – indeed, the Eternal, the implicitly and explicitly divine.”²

This gives rise to the treatment of Plato's doctrine of ideas as something which, rather than immediately given to consciousness, arrives at knowledge via its own activity. The immediate perception is only the moment of their simplicity. „Therefore we do not possess them, they are developed in the mind through the apprehending knowledge... but knowledge first brings them to light in rational developed form; they are in this form none the less real, for

¹ Sobotka, M.: 1965. „Poznámka.” In: G. W. F. Hegel: *Dějiny filosofie II*. Praha: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 386.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...*, Vol. 2, 30.

they alone are Being.”¹ Man’s spirit contains in itself the essential, that is to say, the ability to know the divine, the eternal. This ability is, however, conditioned by his development and elevation to awareness. It is through this act that Hegel emphasizes that „the proper life of the mind in and for itself is the consciousness of the absolute nature and freedom of the ‘I.’”²

From this, it follows that Hegel concentrates on his own philosophical concept rather than on Plato’s doctrine. In this connection, Hegel’s account of *immortality* in Plato’s philosophy is very important. It is viewed differently from the other religious doctrines of his time. Hegel stresses that immortality is related rather with the *essence of thought, its internal freedom* than with the idea of the existence of souls in the beyond.

The general concepts, such as justice, the beautiful, etc., are the most important real things. Namely, these general... are not subject to change or perishing. It is only through soul that they can be viewed; not via body. People and things are perceptible by the senses while the beautiful and the good are supersensuous. „Hence the soul which is in thought, and which applies itself to this, as to what is related to it, must therefore be held to have itself a simple nature.”³

Hegel assumes that Plato, as one of the first philosophers, correctly views thought as something divine, something which never loses its power, and which only becomes good or bad depending entirely on the way of guiding the soul. Plato’s philosophy is important because, *inter alia*, it fills the content by thought itself. „...for it is the universal which can be grasped by the activity of thought alone. Plato has defined this universal content as Idea.”⁴

¹ Ibid., 31.

² Ibid., 36-37.

³ Ibid., 42.

⁴ Ibid., 46.

This general definition of the basic concept of Plato's philosophy is followed by the historical-philosophical examination of *logical philosophy* – *the dialectic*, *natural philosophy*, and finally, *the philosophy of the mind*. No more conclusive evidence of Hegel's *interpretation* of Plato's philosophy is needed, other than this division which is in compliance with the requirements of this German *systemic* philosopher. The most interesting point concerns the assignment of the most representative dialogues to the individual parts of Plato's philosophical doctrine. Thus, *logical philosophy (dialectic)* is assigned the *Parmenides* dialogue, *natural philosophy* is assigned *Timaeus*, and *the philosophy of the mind* the *Republic*.¹ The structure of Plato's philosophy is *integrated* with its three main parts.

Hegel treats Plato's *dialectic* very carefully, and demonstrates a striking historical-philosophical sense of historical-philosophical facts. He admits that Plato's dialectic is in no way complete, i.e., one which regards concepts as a necessary motion in which the universal is the unity of opposite concepts. In spite of this, Hegel finds dialectic in Plato's philosophy, i.e., Plato finds absolute existence in pure concepts and explains the movement of these concepts.² In contrast to the external reality, Plato emphasizes the significance of the universal, i.e., the thought as something true as opposed to the sensuous being. Therefore, Hegel finds the significance of Platonic dialectic in its confusing and resolving „the finite ideas of men, in order to bring about in their consciousness what science demands, the consideration of that which is.”³ This is one aspect of Hegel's inquiry into Plato's dialectic.

The other, no less important, aspect of this examination pertains to the fact that man should realize the *universal* in himself. „What we have thus to deal with in the dialectic of

¹ Ibid., 49.

² Ibid., 50.

³ Ibid., 51.

Plato is the pure thought of reason, from which he very clearly distinguishes the understanding (διάνοια)...”¹ Hegel identifies Plato’s *speculative greatness*, which makes Plato, in Hegel’s view, the founder of the whole era in the history of philosophy. „Plato first comprehended the Absolute as the Being of Parmenides, but as the Universal which, as species, is also end, i.e. which rules, penetrates, and produces the particular and the manifold. Plato, however, had not yet developed this self-producing activity, and hence often stumbled into an external teleology.”²

The demanding nature of this philosophical motion is expressed by Hegel in a bizarre confrontation. *The beauty and grace* of Plato’s philosophy in the pre-Parmenidean dialogues (*Defence of Socrates, Phaedo, Phaedrus, Symposium*) – which may attract the reader’s attention by its bright dramatic scenes – is briskly replaced in *Parmenides* with dialectic-speculative moments. This is to such an extent that that which follows is a wearisome path where we cannot avoid being *pricked by the thorns and thistles of metaphysics*.³

Plato’s speculative dialogues *Sophistes, Philebus*, and mainly *Parmenides*, express, in Hegel’s opinion, *an abstractly speculative idea in pure concept*. Their shortcoming is that they do not embrace the opposites as one, and lack the expression of this unity.⁴ This criticism also pertains to *Parmenides*, although Hegel considers it to be *the most famous masterpiece* of Platonic dialectic. Although this criticism also pertains to *Parmenides*, Hegel considers it to be a celebrated *masterpiece* of Plato’s dialectic.

Hegel realizes that not each dialectic motion captured by Plato strictly adheres to the principle of having an opposite. Plato’s dialectic primarily focuses on the determination of the *universal for itself*. „Plato’s highest form is the identity of Being and non-being. The true is that which is, but this

¹ Ibid., 53.

² Ibid., 53.

³ Ibid., 55.

⁴ Ibid., 56.

Being is not without negation. Plato's object is thus to show that non-being is an essential determination in Being, and that the simple, self-identical, partakes of other-being."¹ Hegel identifies the main points of Plato's dialectic, its true gist, as the most interesting aspect of this philosophy. Consciousness is elevated into the spiritual via the ideas of the divine, eternal, and beautiful which apply in and for themselves. „[T]he active, living, concrete universal is hence what inwardly distinguishes itself, but yet remains free in so doing. Now this determinateness consists in the one being identical with itself in the other, in the many, in what is distinguished."² This constitutes, Hegel assumes, the only truth of Plato's philosophy.

Hegel's discussion of Plato's *natural philosophy*, aimed at revealing the essence of the world, is brief when compared to the analysis of Plato's logic (dialectic). Also, Hegel mainly seeks *profound ideas*, in which the *Concept* is contained.³

More attention is paid to Plato's *philosophy of Mind*. Hegel is caught by the idea of moral essence of man, and characterizes it – as a real, practical side of consciousness – as Plato's *greatest glory*.⁴ The moral nature, such as the free will of man in his rationality, became reality in the actual community of people. Plato presents the position, according to which the individual has this universal (state) as his end; consequently, each individual person acts to the benefit of the state. This view suggests that state is man's „second nature, his habits and his customs. This moral substance which constitutes the spirit, life and Being of individuality, and which is its foundation, systematizes itself into a living, organic whole, and at the same time it differentiates itself

¹ Ibid., 66.

² Ibid., 67.

³ Ibid., 75.

⁴ Ibid., 90.

into its members, whose activity signifies the production of the whole.”¹

Hegel understands that the relation between concept and reality could not be realized by Plato in the same way as it is common in modern philosophy, in particular, in classical German philosophy. Still, he assumes that „the eternal world, as God holy in Himself, is reality, not a world above us or beyond, but the present world looked at in its truth, and not as it meets the senses of those who hear, see, etc.”² If the content of the Platonic idea is approached in this way, it follows for Hegel that Plato expresses the essence of Greek morality „for it is the Greek state-life which constitutes the true content of the Platonic Republic.”³

In the context of the philosophical reflection of Plato’s social philosophy, Hegel expresses an idea that „[n]o man can overleap his time, the spirit of his time is his spirit also...”³ However, the point is that the spirit should be recognized by its content. Herewith Hegel declares a well-known idea from *A Groundwork of the Philosophy of Rights*, saying that „What is reasonable is actual and What is actual is reasonable”, because „[t]he true ideal is not what ought to be real, but what is real, and the only real...”⁴

Hegel also subjects Plato’s social philosophy (*philosophy of mind*) to criticism because it ignores the place of subjective freedom in the issues examined. Hegel does not agree with those who blame Plato for having been too idealistic. In his view, the real deficiency of Plato’s philosophy of mind is its lack of idealism. The reasons for this view are as follows: „For if reason is the universal force, it is essentially spiritual; thus to the realm of the spiritual belongs subjective freedom... Therefore reason ought to be the basis of law, and so it is, on the whole. But, on the other hand, con-

¹ Ibid., 93.

² Ibid., 96.

³ Ibid., 96.

³ Ibid., 96.

⁴ Ibid., 95.

science, personal conviction, - in short, all the forms of subjective freedom – are essentially therein contained.”¹

Hegel points out that Plato does not realize this fact, or ignores the principle. Hegel suspects that Plato sometimes intentionally disparaged it, because, in Plato’s view, subjective freedom „had wrought the ruin of Greece...”² This main feature of Plato’s *Republic* is, on the whole, presented in a sense that „...all aspects in which particularity as such has established its position, are dissolved in the universal, – all men simply rank as man in general.”³ From this, it follows that the modern principle of free will of the individual, raised to prominence by Rousseau, contradicts Plato’s doctrine. Certainly, Hegel gives his support to the principle of the conscious free will of individuals: „the theory that the arbitrary choice of the individual, the outward expression of the individual, is necessary.”⁴ Thus, individuals in this world can implement the reasonable through their interests, as well as passions, necessities, opportunities, and motives.

Hegel’s analysis of Plato’s philosophy leads to the conclusion that the *universal* becomes the only true reality for philosophy. It is this universal that becomes the basis of all reality, and as such it is present in our thought. In this connection, Hegel appreciates Plato’s treatment of the universal in his *Sophistes* and *Parmenides* because these dialogues present an immanent motion of the universal with which our thought is identified.

Hegel’s analysis of Plato’s philosophy is followed by his account of one of the richest and deepest geniuses of science ever born – Aristotle. Hegel assumes that *no era gave birth to a man who bears comparison with Aristotle*. He mainly admires Aristotle’s philosophical thinking for reflecting *all aspects of the reality and conceptual mastering all wealth of the reality, including its heterogeneity*. In addition, many philosophical

¹ Ibid., 108.

² Ibid., 109.

³ Ibid., 109.

⁴ Ibid., 115.

disciplines owe to Aristotle for their origin and their independent existence. When confronting Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies, Hegel, at first sight surprisingly, emphasizes the *greater speculative depth* of Plato's student, who „was acquainted with the deepest kind of speculation – idealism – and in this upholds the most extreme empirical development.”¹ Hegel aptly notes that Aristotle develops philosophy in Plato's sense. This development is, in his opinion, more profound, and therefore brings philosophy to a higher level in its development.

Hegel is of the view that the first period of Greek philosophy culminates in Aristotle's philosophy because philosophy becomes a *science*. From this perspective, one can understand that philosophy commences no earlier than with Aristotle. Hegel stresses the idea that it was Aristotle's theory „in which knowledge has reached the standing of free thought. Thus in Plato and Aristotle the result was the Idea...”² Hegel maintains that Plato's approach to the idea as a *universal* is somewhat abstract. Therefore, the idea takes the form of the *unmoved Idea*. Aristotle's philosophy introduces a positive change, mainly with regard to thought: „...thought in activity became absolutely concrete as the thought which thinks itself.”³ When comparing Plato's and Aristotle's concepts of idea, Hegel draws attention to the fact that Platonic idea means an „abrogation of opposites, where one of the opposites is itself unity. While, therefore, with Plato the main consideration is the affirmative principle, the Idea as only abstractly identical with itself, in Aristotle there is added and made conspicuous the moment of negativity, not as change, nor yet as nullity, but as difference or determination.”⁴

Hegel's discussion of Aristotle's philosophy is structured into four basic parts. He mainly concentrates on Aris-

¹ Ibid., 119.

² Ibid., 228.

³ Ibid., 228.

⁴ Ibid., 140.

totle's model of *metaphysics*, which is followed by *the philosophy of nature*, *philosophy of spirit* applied to the problems of *psychology*, *practical philosophy*, *ethics*, and *politics*. The concluding part of Hegel's analysis of Aristotle's philosophy deals with his *logic*. All these issues are discussed in detail, and are given the largest space of all philosophers discussed in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. This appears to be compelling evidence of the affinity between Hegel's philosophy and that of the giant of the Greek philosophical thinking. Hegel was the first to „discover, for the history of philosophy, Aristotle's power of a thinker complying with Hegel's position. At the same time, Hegel's interpretation illuminates his philosophy.”¹ From the very beginning of his analysis of Aristotle's philosophy, Hegel aims to clear Aristotle's reputation discredited in the modern age by those who considered his work to be an empirical philosophy, or *poor Lockeanism*. While Plato's philosophy was conceived as idealistic, Aristotle's philosophy was regarded by many as realistic in the most trivial sense of the word. Hegel admits that Aristotle takes *an external point of departure and proceeds empirically*. This, however, does not mean that his work can be belittled and that, at the same time, we can claim that his way of philosophizing is not *speculative*. Hegel points out that if the empirical is comprehended synthetically it becomes a speculative concept. „In this gathering up of determinations into one Notion, Aristotle is great and masterly, as he also is in regard to the simplicity of his method of progression, and in the giving of his decisions in few words.”²

In Hegel's view, philosophy commences with Aristotle because if the first book of the *Metaphysics* treats the dignity of philosophy in the sense that its object is what is most knowable, i.e., the first and the original causes, then its field

¹ Sobotka, M.: 1965. „Poznámka.” In: G. W. F. Hegel: *Dějiny filosofie II*, 380.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 2, 133.

is the *rational*. „Aristotle has ... declared the chief subject of investigation, or the most essential knowledge... to be the knowledge of end; but this is the good in each thing and, generally speaking, the best in the whole of nature. This also holds good with Plato and Socrates; yet the end is the true, the concrete, as against the abstract Platonic Idea.”¹

In analyzing Aristotle’s philosophy, Hegel attempts to persuade the reader of the fallacy of the claim that the Greek philosopher philosophized only of the particular instead of thinking of the absolute and universal, the God. Aristotle may appear to have always gone from the individual to the individual. And while Aristotle did not logically abstract the universal idea, „there appears in Aristotle the one Absolute, the idea of God, as itself a particular, in its place beside the others, although it is all Truth.”²

In discussing Aristotle’s metaphysics, Hegel focuses on the identification of the *speculative idea*. The basic goal of Aristotle’s philosophy is, in his view, *to acquire the knowledge of substance*. This effort culminates in interconnecting Aristotle’s account of the *possibility, activity, and entelechy*. Hegel labels this interconnection as „the absolute substance which Aristotle (Metaph. XII.6,7; IX. 8), defines in general as being the absolute (ἄδιδιον), the unmoved, which yet at the same time moves, and whose essence is pure activity, without having matter. For matter as such is passive and affected by change, consequently it is not simply one with the pure activity of this substance.”³

To Hegel, the theory of absolute Being as an *active principle*, which brings about realization, implies that „it exists in objectivity in visible nature. As the self-identical which is visible, this absolute Being is *the eternal heavens*. The two modes of representing the Absolute are thus thinking reason and the eternal heavens.”⁴

¹ Ibid., 135.

² Ibid., 137.

³ Ibid., 143.

⁴ Ibid., 145.

Hegel is intrigued by Aristotle's doctrine, in particular, the enormous effort to substantiate the importance of the *active principle*, which is best illustrated by the category of *energeia*. This brings us to the heart of Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle, as aptly formulated by M. Sobotka: „...the principle of Aristotle's philosophy is *energeia*, the absolute succession as a principle of change, in which substance remains the same. Aristotle's philosophy is not a philosophy of substrate, possibility; rather it is a philosophy of the activity of the Absolute.”¹

Hegel's philosophical search for the most important principle of speculative idealism – *the unity of subjectivity and objectivity*, which is essentially related to the idea of *reason* which thinks itself and which, through this unity, arrives at self-consciousness – is extensively satisfied in analyzing Aristotle's philosophy. One, however, cannot claim that Aristotle believed that thought alone is true; hence, he does not reduce everything to thought, „but he says it is the first, the strongest, the most honourable.”² The position that thought is related to itself is what actually is and is simultaneously true, is fully Hegelian. This, however, does not preclude Hegel from *identifying* the same basis of thinking in Aristotle's doctrine. The justification is found in the assumption that Aristotle „speaks not of a special kind of reason, but of the universal Reason. The speculative philosophy of Aristotle simply means the direction of thought on all kinds of objects, thus transforming these into thoughts; hence, in being thoughts, they exist in truth... It is only in thought that there is present a true harmony between objective and subjective; that constitutes me.”³ In Hegel's view, this enabled Aristotle to achieve the ultimate philosophical position, and deeper knowledge is hardly possible.

¹ Sobotka, M.: 1965. „Poznámka.” In: G. W. F. Hegel: *Dějiny filosofie II*, 391.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 2, 149.

³ *Ibid.*, 149, 150.

Hegel maintains that the speculative idea, which is the best and most free, is manifested both in thinking reason and nature. This view is also found in *Metaphysics*, where the object of Aristotle's inquiry is *visible God – the heavens*. „God, as living God, is the universe; and thus in the universe God, as living God, shows Himself forth. He comes forth as manifesting Himself or as causing motion, and it is in manifestation alone that the difference between the cause of motion and that which is moved comes to pass.”¹

In this way, Hegel naturally *worked up to* the study of Aristotle's *philosophy of nature* to which he pays much attention. This is due to Aristotle's ability to represent the *concept of nature* „in the highest and truest manner. For in the Idea of nature Aristotle (Phys. II. 8) really relies on two determinations: the conception of end and the conception of necessity.”² Hegel is right in saying that the main point in Aristotle's philosophical inquiry into nature is the definition of the purpose as an internal specification of the natural object itself. Nature is conceived as *life* having ends in itself, is in unity with itself, and is maintained through changes. Life should be understood as self-purpose, as something that in its externalization also remains identical with its concept. This approach is considered by Hegel to be a *true, deep comprehension of life*. It should be noted that the parallel between Aristotle's and Hegel's philosophies is, without doubt, in their similar concepts of life. „It follows from the point of view of ‘more life’ that the unity of thought and motion is the central motive in both Hegel and Aristotle.”³

Hegel's discussion of Aristotle's *philosophy of spirit* begins with an analysis of *psychology*. At the outset, he aptly notes that Aristotle does not pursue the *metaphysics of the soul*, rather he examines the *method of activity* of the soul. This part of Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine concen-

¹ Ibid., 152.

² Ibid., 156.

³ Sobotka, M.: 1965. „Poznámka.” In: G. W. F. Hegel: *Dějiny filosofie II*, 389.

trates on rejecting the view of *poor Lockeanism*. The sense of Aristotle's dictum *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu* is, in his view, misinterpreted. Aristotle considers the soul to be potentiality without matter. Its essence exists in *activity* rather than in mere passive viewing. Reason, as something through which soul becomes conscious of itself, is as it is due to the activity, the thinking. Therefore, the rationale of the above-given Aristotle's idea of reason and sense-perception is that „thought is implicitly the content of the object of what is thought, and in coming into existence it only coincides with itself; but the self-conscious understanding is not merely implicit, but essentially explicit, since it is within itself all things.”¹

Hegel refers to Aristotle's work *De Anima* as another well-known example of misinterpretation. Aristotle's idea, „reason is like a book upon whose pages nothing is actually written”, and the technical term *tabula rasa*, are interpreted as simple *external illustrations*. This is to suggest that thought comes to reason from outside. Hegel does not share the view that the greatness of Aristotle's philosophy can be attributed to this way of interpretation of the above-mentioned example. Since reason is not a thing it cannot be identified with the passivity of *tabula*. Reason itself is activity while *tabula* is just a *passive receiver*. „The analogy is therefore confined to this, that the soul has a content only in so far as actual thought is exercised. The soul is this book unwritten on, and the meaning consequently is that the soul is all things implicitly, but it is not in itself this totality; it is like a book that contains all things potentially, but in reality contains nothing before it is written on. Before real activity nothing truly exists...”² Still more important in the understanding of *active reason*, as interpreted by Hegel, is unveiling the *identity of the subjective and the objective*. This unity is considered to be the highest possible level of *speculation* in phi-

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...*, Vol. 2, 196.

² *Ibid.*, 197.

losophy. „Aristotle reverts to his metaphysical principles..., where he termed self-thinking reason absolute Thought, divine Understanding, or Mind in its absolute character”.¹

In the final part of his analysis, Hegel discusses Aristotle’s *logic*, the science of abstract thought. He characterizes it as „a knowledge and consciousness of the abstract activity of pure understanding, it is not a knowledge of this and that concrete fact, being pure form.”² He gives Aristotle full credit for revealing the forms of our thought. However, when discussing the *philosophical* value of Aristotle’s logic, Hegel points out that its basis is the identity in the sense of understanding, i.e., no contradictions are acceptable. „[I]ts forms only concern the relationship of finite to finite, and in them the truth cannot be grasped.”³

Aristotle’s philosophy as a whole was not limited to these considerations. Hegel regards Aristotle as a thinker who penetrated all spheres of consciousness, and whose doctrine provides *in-depth and correct ideas*. For these reasons, the first period of Greek philosophy reaches its climax with Aristotle’s philosophy. It establishes science, and knowledge is founded on the *firm footing of free thinking*. The greatest personalities of the first period in the development of the Western philosophy - Plato and Aristotle – contributed most of all to the philosophical exploration of the *universal – the idea*. In Hegel’s view, the *universal* in Plato’s philosophy takes on an even more abstract form. The underlying principle here is the *unmoved idea*. In Aristotle’s philosophy, thought becomes fully specific. It is thought which thinks due to its own capacity and which is an effective principle.

Hegel’s next analysis includes the philosophies of the Stoics, Epicurus, the New Academy, the Sceptics, Philo, gnosticism, and the Alexandrian philosophy. Concerning the latter is concerned, the focus is on Plotinus, i.e., the

¹ Ibid., 200.

² Ibid., 211.

³ Ibid., 223.

neo-Platonic philosophy considered by Hegel as the first philosophy of the *present*. „The present does not refer to the time dimension; it is an expression used by Hegel to characterize the epochs in which the absolute as an immanent spiritual principle becomes conscious, in which human thought becomes sure that absolute is not foreign to it; rather, it has the nature of *substance–subject*. The nature of the absolute as substance also includes self-determination which takes place by overcoming oneself, through which the absolute arrives at self-knowledge and self-realisation.”¹ On the basis of the category of the *present*, Hegel identifies three great periods in the history of philosophy. The Neo-Platonic philosophy is the first philosophy of the *present*. The second is represented by the revival of sciences and philosophy at the beginning of the modern age, with Descartes and Spinoza as the main representatives. The third great period is related to Hegel’s own philosophy.

Hegel and the medieval philosophy

The development of philosophical thought from Thales to Proclus, and the decline of the classical philosophy, covers a period of more than one thousand years. This first period in the history of philosophy is followed by a second period ranging, in Hegel’s view, until the 16th century. Hegel attempts to pass this period in the history of philosophy in the *seven-league boots*. The underlying reasons for this attitude stem from an interconnection between philosophy and religion. The new Christian religion „has made the intelligible world of Philosophy the world of common consciousness.”² The efforts of philosophy within the Christian religion gropes its way through the depths of ideal substances and their forms. Hegel views it as a difficult struggle of reason, which cannot traverse from fantasy and

¹ Major, L. -- Sobotka, M.: *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*, 119.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures ...*, Vol. 3, 8.

imagination to notion. Hegel divides the medieval philosophy into two basic periods. First, he analyses the Eastern *Arab philosophy*, and then he concentrates on the Western *scholastic philosophy*.

The latter is considered to be a single whole, which, when compared to the Greek philosophy, features new characteristics. „In this case as in that of the Arabian philosophy, time does not allow – and if it did the nature of things would not allow – us to separate the scholastic philosophy into its individual systems or manifestations, but only to give a general sketch of the main elements present therein which it has actually taken up into thought.”¹ Unlike Plato’s and Aristotle’s philosophies, the scholastic philosophy does not represent any coherent doctrine; rather it is *a very indefinite name that comprehends the philosophic endeavours of Christianity for the greater part of a thousand years*. In Hegel’s view, the content of the scholastic philosophy is so dull as to make it hardly a philosophy at all.

Hegel mainly opposes intrinsic connection between philosophy and theology. Theology „is the science of the system as it must necessarily be present within every Christian, every peasant, etc.”² Only philosophy can be the science of God. Hegel pictures the split between philosophy and theology at the beginning of the modern age very positively. Hegel blames scholastic philosophy mainly for ignoring reality, nature, etc. „Nature is there no longer good, but merely a negative... Nature has no validity, and affords no interest... the heavens, the sun, the whole of nature is a corpse. Nature is given over to the spiritual, and indeed to spiritual subjectivity...”³ Hegel criticizes the *absence of rationality in the actual* – or of rationality that has its actuality in ordinary existence – and considers it to be the *barbarism of thought*. In this barbarism, thought keeps to another world,

¹ Ibid., 37-38.

² Ibid., 39.

³ Ibid., 41.

and „does not have the Notion of reason – the Notion that the certainty of self is all truth.”¹

Based on these and other facts, Hegel assumes a highly critical attitude against the position of the Church in the medieval society, and claims that „[t]he power of the Church appeared as the violence of the Church, not aiming at operating in accordance with reality and in reality, but at being mighty in the spirit”.² A principled way out of this situation is sought in *subjective freedom*, which is mainly bound to the development of crafts: „In his handicraft the individual is taken in reference to his work, and is himself the producer. Thus men came to the point of knowing that they were free, and insisting on the recognition of that freedom, and having the power of exercising their activity for their own objects and interests.”³

The revival of arts and sciences, dealing with the present, is the inception of the Renaissance period in which the spirit gathers itself together and tries to know itself. *The revival of sciences* stimulates the *autonomy of the spirit* which, in turn, brings about the revival of the classical arts and sciences. Hegel stresses the general acceptance of the idea that „the understanding can recognize something to be false which the Church affirms to be true; and it was of importance that the understanding did so apprehend itself...”⁴ The *philosophy of life*, mainly represented by G. Bruno, J. Vanini, M. Montaigne, and N. Macchiavelli, contributes to man’s increased attention to his own affairs, and to his increased confidence in himself: „...this is their main service. Man has looked within his heart again and given to it its proper value; then he has restored to his own heart and understanding, to his faith, the essence of the relationship of the individual to absolute existence”.⁵

¹ Ibid., 43.

² Ibid., 106.

³ Ibid., 106.

⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁵ Ibid., 146.

Hegel considers *Lutheran Reformation* to be an impetus for the most important breakthrough in this period. It is aimed at the mind arriving at the consciousness of reconciliation with itself. „Now it was perceived that it is in the mind of man that religion must have its place, and the whole process of salvation be gone through – that man’s salvation is his own affair, and that by it he enters into relationship with his conscience and into immediate connection with God, requiring no meditation of priests having the so-called means of grace within their hands.”¹ Lutheran reformation establishes the foundations for freedom of the spirit, accompanied by penetration to new areas of *man’s thought and cognition*. As a result, man regains satisfaction at his activity and pleasure from his achievements.

Hegel’s discussion of modern philosophy

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel divides the history of modern philosophy into three basic *periods*. He finds its first signs in the philosophies of F. Bacon and J. Böhm. This foreshadow of modern philosophy is followed by an *analysis of the period of thinking cogitation*. This period is subdivided into two parts. The first part features discussion of the philosophical doctrines of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Locke, Grotius, Hobbes, Cudworth, Clarke, Wollastone, Pufendorf, Newton, Leibniz, Wolff, and the so-called German popular philosophy. The second subperiod of thinking cogitation, labelled as the *transition period*, starts with the analysis of Berkeley’s and Hume’s philosophical doctrines, continues with the Scottish philosophy of Reid, Beattie, Oswald, Stewart, the French philosophy of negative and positive orientations represented by Robinet, Montesquieu, Helvetius, Rousseau, and is completed with the German Enlightenment. The third period encompasses the analyses of the latest German phi-

¹ Ibid., 147.

losophy of that time – Jacobi, Kant, Fichte, Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Novalis, Fries, Bouterweg, Krug, and Schelling.

While this review of personalities of the modern history of philosophical thought indicates the basic theoretical scope of Hegel's approach, it does not explicate its qualitative aspects. It goes without saying that Hegel's historical-philosophical concept concentrates on the analysis of modern rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza), modern empiricism (Bacon, Locke, Hume), French philosophy (Rousseau), and German philosophy (Jacobi, Kant, Fichte, Schelling). This historical-philosophical inquiry establishes an intellectual basis for any serious discussion on the history of modern philosophy.

Hegel maintains that modern philosophy's point of departure is the principle of *actual self-consciousness* – the principle of *self-present spirit*. Unlike medieval philosophy, the spirit has adopted the *seven-leagued boots*. Self-consciousness is reconciled with the present, and man re-confirms his belief in himself and his thought, in sense-nature both outside and inside him. „...he has discovered an interest and pleasure in making discoveries both in nature and the arts. In the affairs of this world the understanding developed; man became conscious of his will and his achievements, took pleasure in the earth and its soil, as also in his occupations, because right and understanding were there present.”¹ Hegel is intrigued by the large number of new discoveries at the beginning of the modern age. Thought becomes more and more independent of the former church authorities to the extent that its unity with theology is violated.

Modern philosophers are no longer monks separated from the *present*. Modern „philosophers are not monks, for we find them generally in connection with the world, participating with others in some common work or calling. They live, not independently, but in the relation of citizens,

¹ Ibid., 158.

or they occupy public offices and take part in the life of the state. Certainly they may be private persons, but if so, their position as such does not in any way isolate them from their other relationships.”¹

In Hegel’s view, modern philosophy is fore-shadowed by the philosophies of F. Bacon and J. Böhm. In discussing the former, he emphasizes Bacon’s observation of the external and spiritual nature of man in his inclinations and desires, his intellectual capacity and legal conditions. Bacon’s philosophy is guided by *sense-perception* as encountered and reflected by an educated person. Hegel considers Bacon to be the founder of the empirical tradition of philosophizing which is closely related to *experimental philosophizing*. Bacon is not an adherent of abstract contemplation; he rather breeds the *trust of reason to self and nature*. In this way, the transition of philosophizing to things of this world and homes of people is achieved. Hegel appreciates Bacon’s rejection of a teleological account of nature, i.e., an account based on teleological causes.

Hegel maintains, however, that modern philosophy starts with Descartes. With him, „we really enter upon a philosophy which is, properly speaking, independent, which knows that it comes forth from reason as independent, and that self-consciousness is an essential moment in the truth.”² Hegel perceives Descartes’ philosophy as the *home* found eventually. It is the feeling similar to that of a mariner who after a long and tedious voyage on a tempestuous sea, eventually hails the sight of land. Through his doctrine, Descartes decisively sets aside the *dead externality of authority*. Thinking becomes *free* at last. „This likewise signifies that such free thought is the universal business of the world and of individuals; it is indeed the duty of every man, since everything is based upon it; thus what claims to rank as established in the world, man must

¹ Ibid., 167.

² Ibid., 217.

scrutinize in his own thoughts. Philosophy is thus become a matter of universal interest, and one respecting which each can judge for himself; for everyone is a thinker from the beginning.”¹

Hegel envisages the philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza as the *metaphysics of the understanding* – an uncritical metaphysics introducing the *unity of Being and Thought*.² Hegel maintains that the *I* as Descartes’ philosophical point of departure, as something absolutely certain, resembles Fichte’s philosophy. „By this Philosophy is at one stroke transplanted to quite another field and to quite another standpoint, namely to the sphere of subjectivity”.³ While the introduction of cogito in modern philosophy is evident, philosophical inquiries do not attempt at providing the analysis of its content. No doubt, Descartes pursues the development of philosophy on the principle of free thought, primarily acknowledging itself. „Thought is the entirely universal, but not merely because I can abstract, but because ‘I’ is thus simple, self-identical. Thought consequently comes first; the next determination arrived at, in direct connection with it, is the determination of Being. The ‘I think’ directly involves my Being; this, says Descartes, is the absolute basis of all Philosophy. The determination of Being is in my ‘I’; this connection is itself the first matter. Thought as Being and Being as thought – that is my certainty, ‘I’...”⁴

Hegel assumes that it is these ideas that put philosophy on firm ground because it is thought stemming from thought and as such it can be certain with itself. Despite this fact, Descartes failed to avoid a number of theoretical problems related to his concept of substances. They mainly pertain to the issues of *God’s truth*, the interpretation of the problems of nature in the *philosophy of extensionality*,

¹ Ibid., 218.

² Ibid., 220.

³ Ibid., 228.

⁴ Ibid., 228.

and ethics. Hegel especially points out the shortcomings of Descartes' philosophy related to *dualism* which is a characteristic feature of this French thinker. In this connection, Hegel appreciates Spinoza who cancels Descartes' dualism. Importantly, however, he aptly notes that Spinoza's philosophy made Descartes' doctrine „objective in the form of absolute truth.”¹ In discussing Spinoza's philosophy, Hegel maintains that the basis of his idealism is a simple thought: „The true is simply and solely the one substance, whose attributes are thought and extension or nature: and only this absolute unity is reality, it alone is God.”² In addition, he admits that he himself has been significantly inspired by Spinoza's concept of substance, and insists on recognizing this thought of Spinoza as true and justified. The reasons can be found in the following words: „...absolute substance is the truth, but it is not the whole truth; in order to be this it must also be thought of as in itself active and living, and by that very means it must determine itself as mind. But substance with Spinoza is only the universal and consequently the abstract determination of mind.”³

Hegel blames Spinoza for the *rigidity* of his substance, for the absence of mind, which implies no place for man in his philosophy. In spite of these reservations, Hegel believes that „to be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all Philosophy.”⁴

Hegel's analysis of English empirical-sensualist philosophy lays emphasis on the work of J. Locke who elaborated Bacon's ideas. As early as his *Logic* Hegel thinks highly of the contribution of English empiricism to the history of philosophical thought. The reasons for his position concern a *significant principle* according to which what is true must exist in reality and must be accessible to perception. In his

¹ Ibid., 256.

² Ibid., 256.

³ Ibid., 257.

⁴ Ibid., 257.

view, this principle contradicts the imperativism presented in medieval philosophy mainly by ignoring reality and the present in the name of *eternity*. Therefore, Hegel notes: „From Empiricism came the cry: ‘Stop roaming in empty abstractions keep your eyes open, lay hold on man and nature as they are here before you, enjoy the present moment.’ Nobody can deny that there is a good deal of truth in these words. The everyday world, what is here and now was a good exchange for the futile other-world – for the mirages and the chimeras of abstract understanding. And thus was acquired an infinite principle – that solid footing so much missed in the old metaphysic.”¹

It goes without saying that these words of Hegel, addressed to English empiricism, bear on the philosophical doctrines of Bacon and Locke. In addition, he is most critical of G. Berkeley for his idealism which ignores both external reality and skepticism of D. Hume. Hegel points out that Locke’s concept is aimed at recognizing the fact that both the universal and thinking consist in sense existence, and that the general and truth are acquired from experience. Hegel labels this position as *metaphysical empiricism*. From this it follows that Locke’s philosophy is far from meeting Hegel’s criteria of *speculativeness*. „The great end of Philosophy, which is to know the truth, is to be attained in an empirical way; it thus indeed serves to draw attention to general determinations. But such a philosophy not only represents the standpoint of ordinary consciousness, to which all the determinations of its thought appear as if given, humble as it is in the oblivion of its activity, but in this method of derivation and psychological origination that which alone concerns Philosophy, the question of whether those thoughts and relationships have truth in and for themselves...”²

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *The Shorter Logic*, § 38.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 309.

In discussing modern philosophy, Hegel pays special attention to Leibniz's and Wolff's philosophies. The former's concept is not viewed as a philosophical system; rather it is considered to be „an hypothesis regarding *the existence of the world, namely how it is to be determined in accordance with the metaphysical determinations* and the data *and assumptions of ordinary concept, which are acceptable as valid...*”¹ Hegel compares Leibniz's philosophy to a project of a *metaphysical novel* – „it is only when we see what we wished thereby to avoid that we learn to appreciate its value.”² Hegel's claim that Leibniz's philosophy is *idealism of the intellectuality of the universe* pursues confrontation with Locke's rationalism. Hegel is impressed with Leibniz conceiving substance as a thing capable of activity: „The monads are therefore distinguished by modifications in themselves, but not by external determinations. These determinations contained in the monads exist in them in ideal fashion; this ideality in the monad is in itself a whole so that these differences are only representations and ideas. This is the absolute difference, what is termed the Notion; what falls asunder in the mere representation is held together. This is what possesses interest in Leibniz's philosophy. Such identity in the same way pertains to the material, which is also a multiplicity of monads.”³

Hegel conjectures that Leibniz's philosophy is developed by Wolff whose work he values for its very careful and systematic nature. It was Wolff's activity which established firm ground for philosophy in Germany. Although Wolff's philosophy is built up on the foundations of Leibniz's concept, Hegel maintains that the crucial speculative questions have been eliminated from it. He appreciates Wolff's effort to turn philosophy into an appropriately structured system.

¹ Ibid., 330.

² Ibid., 330.

³ Ibid., 335.

Hegel's analysis of French philosophy of the 18th century in his work *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is a most representative example of conceiving philosophy as a *quintessence of the time*. In the introduction, Hegel indicates that he does not wish to pretend that he does *not wish to hurt religion*. This leitmotif culminates in his discussion of French philosophy of the 18th century. His historical-philosophical analysis of French philosophy of the 18th century starts as a critical confrontation with modern rationalism and empiricism. His treatment of English sensualism and scepticism is highly interesting. He mainly resents the involvement of this type of philosophizing in *sensuousness* because the latter conceals the unique capacity of philosophy to reflect the world, to be the consciousness of the world. This criticism is presented as follows: „The French philosophy has more life, more movement, more spirit; it would perhaps be more correct to describe it as full of life and spirit. It is the absolute Concept, which revolts against the whole reigning system of prevalent concepts and established ideas, which overthrows all that has settled into fixity, and acquires the consciousness of perfect liberty.”¹ French philosophical revolt, assuming a fairly sharp form, does not leave in peace the *concepts* of good and evil, power and wealth, or the established views of belief in God and his attitude to the world. In Hegel's opinion, all these forms are now cancelled because neither the real being of the actual world nor the being of the supersensuous world are envisaged as truth existing of itself, outside self-consciousness; rather, they are considered to be the truth of reason itself.

Hegel does not detail the historical-philosophical fact of overcoming modern metaphysics by French philosophy of the 18th century. This fact is, however, presented in a fascinating manner. The overcoming of modern metaphysics by French philosophy is accounted for in a dialectic way. This is mainly reflected in parallel comprehension of

¹ Ibid., 380.

the *absolute* in French philosophy in connection with Spinozean substance. In French philosophy, „there perishes in this negative movement all determination which represents spirit as something beyond self-consciousness... all that is traditional or imposed by authority.”¹ But what remains then? As Hegel notes, it is nothing else but *active matter* which moves and is realized in its diversity, namely as nature.

Hegel maintains that the unhampered development of French naturalism, materialism, and atheism is a necessary consequence of the comprehending self-consciousness. Hegel realizes the *horrible situation* in the French society of those times. „The shamelessness, the dishonesty were past belief; and morals were simply in keeping with the corruptness institutions. We see the law defied by individuals in respect to civil and political life; we see it likewise set at nought in respect to conscience and thought.”²

Hegelian hymn to French naturalism, materialism, and atheism is only understandable in terms of the critical historical-philosophical knowledge of the ideological, theoretical, and political measure of the influence of philosophy upon those times. „In French philosophical writings... worthy of admiration is the astonishing energy and force of the Concept as directed against existence, against faith, against all the power of authority that had held sway for thousands of years. On the one hand we cannot help remarking the feeling of utter rebellion against the whole state of affairs at present prevailing, a state which is alien to self-consciousness, which would fain dispense with it, and in which self-consciousness does not find itself; there is a certainty of the truth of reason, which challenges the whole intellectual world as it stands aloof, and is confident of destroying it. French atheism, materialism, or naturalism has overcome all prejudices, and has been victorious over

¹ Ibid., 381.

² Ibid., 389.

the senseless hypotheses and assumptions of the positive element in religion, which is associated with habits, manners, opinions, determinations as to law and morality and civil institutions. With the healthy human understanding and earnestness of spirit, and not with frivolous declamations, it has rebelled against the condition of the world as legally established, against the constitution of the state, the administration of justice, the mode of government, political authority, and likewise against art.”¹

Such an extraordinary scope of reflection of the influence of philosophizing upon its time cannot be found in the period before the French philosophy of the 18th century. This is also admitted by Hegel as an objective explorer. The main message of French philosophy of the 18th century in Hegel’s view is that „freedom becomes the condition of the world, connects itself with the world’s history and forms epochs in the same... fundamental principles as regards the concrete now take the place of the abstract metaphysic of Descartes. Among the Germans we find mere chatter; they would have liked to offer explanation also, but all they have to give is in the form of miserable phenomena and individualism... The French warred against the speculative Concept with the spirit, the Germans did so with the understanding. We find in the French a deep all-embracing philosophic need, different from anything in the English and Scotch and even in the Germans, and full of vitality: it is a universal concrete view of all that exists, with entire independent both off all authority and of all abstract metaphysics. The method employed is that of development from perception, from the heart; it is a comprehensive view of the entire matter, which keeps the whole ever in sight, and seeks to uphold and attain to it.”²

The genius of Hegel as a historical-philosophical researcher consists, no doubt, in his realizing that this histori-

¹ Ibid., 384.

² Ibid., 385, 386.

cal form of naturalism, materialism, and atheism has two basic facets – the negative and the positive. The negative facet is critical, disturbing, storming, and struggling against religious prejudices. The positive facet includes „immediately enlightening truths of the healthy human understanding, which contains nothing except this truth and the claim to find itself...”¹ The revolt of French philosophy of the 18th century against the *positive facet of rigid religion*, analyzed by Hegel, is, in the end, aimed at the then French state, the depraved civic society, the manners of the court and governmental officials, the injustice of power, and the old institutions which did not have and could not have their place „in the sense of self-conscious freedom and humanity...”² The writings of the French philosophers expressed, in Hegel’s view, the idea that „men should no longer be in the position of laymen, either with regard to religion or to law...”³ Hegel points out that *human reason is true and has the right to exercise its inference*. Therefore, „[t]his great claim made by man to subjective freedom, perception and conviction, the philosophers in question contended for heroically and with splendid genius, with warmth and fire, with spirit and courage, maintaining that a man’s own self, the human spirit, is the source from which is derived all that is to be respected by him.”⁴ The *principle of freedom* which, according to Hegel, goes back to J. J. Rousseau, forms a transition from French philosophy to that of Kant.

Hegel’s inquiry into the *most recent German philosophy of those times* – Kant, Fichte, Schelling – is from the very outset focussed on the way of expressing the *revolution* in this historical form of philosophizing. German philosophy comes to be aimed at *making the unity of Thought and Being an object of its inquiry and at comprehending this unity as the basis of German philosophy, i.e., at comprehending the concept as an intrinsic necessity*.

¹ Ibid., 384.

² Ibid., 388.

³ Ibid., 390.

⁴ Ibid., 390.

Hegel compares the contribution of the German and the French nations to historical processes in the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. He rightly assumes that the new movement in Germany „has burst forth as thought, spirit, Notion; in France, in the form of actuality.”¹

Hegel maintains that Kant’s philosophy specifies the task of revealing the abstract absolute of reason in self-consciousness. It is developed by Fichte who treats of the essence of self-consciousness speculatively as a specific personality. This trend is furthered by Schelling’s philosophy which is the first to specify the idea of the absolute, i.e., it specifies what is true of and for itself.

Hegel’s account of the *most recent German philosophy* begins with Jacobi’s concept. The latter is viewed as contemporaneous with that of Kant’s philosophy. More importantly, the conclusions of Kant’s and Jacobi’s philosophies are viewed as identical; what is different is their respective interpretation of the point of departure and the procedure. While the main source of Kant is Hume’s scepticism, Jacobi draws on French philosophy and German metaphysics. „Jacobi, in that negative attitude which he preserved as well as Kant, kept before him the objective aspect of the method of knowledge, and specially considered it, for he declared knowledge to be in its content incapable of recognizing the Absolute: the truth must be concrete, present, but not finite. Kant does not consider the content, but took the view of knowledge being subjective; and for this reason he declared it to be incapable of recognizing absolute existence. To Kant knowledge is thus a knowledge of phenomena only, not because the categories are merely limited and finite, but because they are subjective.”²

Hegel notes that Jacobi did not develop his philosophy systematically. The basic impetus for Jacobi’s philosophiz-

¹ Ibid., 409.

² Ibid., 410.

ing in the *form* of letters is related to his accidental dispute with Mendelshon concerning the problem of Lessing's adherence to Spinozism. As pointed out by Hegel, this dispute clearly illustrates that those who held themselves to be professed philosophers and to know Lessing's views were wrong. „That Jacobi asserted Lessing to be a Spinozist, and gave a high place to the French – this serious statement came to these good men as a thunderbolt from the blue. They – the self-satisfied, self-possessed, superior persons – were quite surprised that he also made pretensions to knowledge, and of such a ‘dead dog’ as Spinoza... Explanations followed upon this, in which Jacobi further developed his philosophical views.”¹

Jacobi's defence of Spinoza's way of philosophizing leads to the proclamation according to which the idea that thought is not a source of substance, but rather substance is that of thought² is going to be reintroduced to Germany. From this it follows that something unthinking is admitted prior to thought. This approach is mostly applied in accordance with Jacobi's idea that „every method of their demonstration leads to fatalism, atheism, and Spinozism, and presents God as derived and founded upon something else; for comprehending Him signifies demonstrating His dependence. Jacobi thus asserts that mediate knowledge consists in giving a cause of something which has in its turn a finite effect, and so on; so that knowledge such as this can all through relate to the finite only.”³

Furthermore, Hegel concentrates on the issues of cognition in Jacobi's conception, and appreciates his distinction between *reason* (Vernunft) and *understanding* (Verstand). On the other hand, he criticizes several questionable circumstances of the *mechanism* of operation of our cognition, notably the cognition of God. The difference between

¹ Ibid., 412.

² Ibid., 413.

³ Ibid., 413.

Jacobi's and Kant's views is that „[t]o Kant knowledge is... a knowledge of phenomena only, not because the categories are merely limited and finite, but because they are subjective. To Jacobi, on the other hand, the chief point is that categories are not merely subjective, but that they themselves are conditioned. This is an essential difference between the two points of view, even if they both arrive at the same result.”¹

Hegel also discusses the interpretation of God in Jacobi's philosophy. „God, the absolute, the unconditioned, cannot, according to Jacobi, be proved. For proof, comprehension, means to discover conditions for something, to derive it from conditions; but a derived absolute, God, etc., would thus not be absolute at all, would not be unconditioned, would not be God...”² As maintained by Jacobi, reason comprehends a thing in so far as it can derive it from its proximate reasons. „We comprehend a thing when we can deduce it from its proximate causes and not from the remoter causes; the most remote and quite universal cause is always God.”³ By implication, knowledge consists in determining the conditions for an object in question and demonstrating that it is conditioned, caused, by something else, and that it resulted from another cause. Knowledge means the identification of certain conditions. What we have in mind in this case is not the actual beginning; rather it is the finite and manifold existence.

But what then with the endeavour to know the unconditioned? The consciousness of man is composed of two original concepts – the concepts of the conditioned and the unconditioned: „the concept of the conditioned presupposes the concept of the unconditioned.”⁴ Jacobi's belief that we are just as certain of an unconditioned existence as we are of our own conditioned existence, or even more so,

¹ Ibid., 410-411.

² Ibid., 417.

³ Ibid., 417.

⁴ Ibid., 417.

meets Hegel's criticism. The unconditioned, the *supernatural*, cannot be comprehended in Jacobi's concept. Then, the difference between Jacobi's and Kant's critical philosophies bears, in Hegel's opinion, on the fact that Jacobi's categories are not merely subjective. Thus, to understand means to identify the relation via categories.¹ It is this that makes Kant's and Jacobi's doctrines fundamentally different.

Hegel interprets the second principle of Jacobi's philosophy as an expression of the problem of the supernatural as mere reality, i.e., that what *is*, i.e. God. „Since he thus passes back into self-consciousness, the unconditioned is only for us in an immediate way; this immediate knowledge Jacobi calls Faith, inward revelation... God, the absolute, the unconditioned, cannot according to Jacobi, be proved. For proof, comprehension, means to discover conditions for something, to derive it from conditions; but a derived absolute, God, etc., would thus not be absolute at all, would not be unconditioned, would not be God... The consciousness of God, which is in our consciousness, is, however, of such a nature that along with the thought of God we have immediately associated the fact that He is.”²

Hegel also discusses Jacobi's view that man, in his representations and thought, oversteps the limits of the natural and finite, and passes to the supernatural and supersensuous. To Jacobi, the supernatural is as certain as he is himself. „This certainty is identical with his self-consciousness; as certainly as I am, so certainly is God... this immediate knowledge Jacobi calls Faith...”³ Hegel rightly distinguishes between Kant's and Jacobi's concepts of belief. While Kant's approach is bound to the postulate of practical reason, Jacobi's belief is the immediate knowledge of self. Hegel points out that Jacobi's belief preserves the same contradictory meaning as that of thought. Based on an

¹ Ibid., 410 -411.

² Ibid., 417, 416.

³ Ibid., 416-417.

analysis of Kant's and Jacobi's philosophical concepts, Hegel draws the following conclusion: "The Kantian philosophy is critical philosophy, but from it the fact has been omitted that we cannot constitute the infinite with finite categories ... Immediate knowledge is thus everywhere mediated, and Philosophy does nothing but bring this to consciousness – demonstrating the mediation which in point of fact is already present there, e.g., in religion..."¹

Hegel considers Jacobi's philosophy to be simpler than that of Kant. This claim is related to the assumption that thought cannot proceed further than to the feeling of God. Knowledge, says Hegel, is, however, something very different from what Jacobi calls it. Hegel does not agree with Jacobi's concept of God, presented as an *Above me*, an indeterminate Beyond. As this approach implies, Hegel finds a kind of emptiness claimed to be the highest philosophy possible. He points out that the human mind knows God immediately mainly thanks to its recognition of *freedom*. It is only and precisely from this freedom that „we have the source of the knowledge of God, and all externality of authority is thus abrogated in this principle. The principle is hereby gained, but only the principle of freedom of spirit; and the greatness of our time rests in the fact that freedom, the peculiar possession of mind whereby it is at home with itself in itself, is recognized, and that mind has this consciousness within itself."² In Hegel's view, the next step is that the principle of freedom is again purified and comes to its true objectivity. He says that „[i]t is only through thought, which casts off the particular and accidental, that the principle receives this objectivity which is independent of mere subjectivity and in and for itself – though in such a way that the freedom of mind still remains respected."³ Hegel assumes that the next development of philosophical

¹ Ibid., 421, 422.

² Ibid., 423.

³ Ibid., 423.

thinking on German territory must declare that one's own spirit must acknowledge the spirit itself, it must show that *God is Spirit*.

The analysis of Jacobi's concept is followed by that of Kant's philosophy which is discussed in greater detail because of its significance. Hegel points out that philosophical thought is - at last - conceived as *everything after everything*, as something that is *absolutely decisive* and „for it nothing external is authoritative, since all authority can receive validity only through thought.”¹

Hegel's interpretation of Kant's philosophy is sure to surprise each reader by a number of highly critical invectives against the founder of German classical philosophizing. We do not find it felicitous to characterize Kant's notions like *transcendent* and *transcendental* as *barbarian expressions*, *barbarian exposition*, and to blame him, for example, for passing from one part of his practical philosophy to sheer *baloney*. The overall method of Hegel's analysis of Kant's philosophy is, however, balanced, and in no case does it depreciate the latter. On the other hand, it is one of the most critical analyses included in Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

Hegel maintains that with Kant philosophy starts to fulfil its goal, i.e., to focus its effort on the comprehension of the unity of Thought and Being, which „is the fundamental idea of philosophy..., that is, in laying hold of the innermost significance of necessity, the Notion...”² The emphasis put on the *freedom of subject* makes it possible to conclude that thought is conceived as *absolutely decisive*, and represents all authority for itself. This position can be labelled as the *philosophy of subjectivity*. This type of philosophy has some serious consequences. One of the most important is the fact that if thought is subjective, then it is not easy to know

¹ Ibid., 424.

² Ibid., 409.

what exists of and for itself; it can be found neither in external nor in internal experiences.

Kant's philosophy pursues truth which rests upon recognition of *freedom*. Hegel aptly points out the link between this philosophy and the concept of J. J. Rousseau. He also refers to another important source, the philosophy of an English philosopher David Hume. From this, he tries to identify the *simple basis* of Kant's philosophy. Hegel writes that while Hume argued against the general nature and the necessity of categories, Kant rejected their objectivity in terms of their presence in things themselves. „The fact that we crave for universality and necessity as that which first constitutes the objective, Kant undoubtedly allows. But if universality and necessity do not exist in external things, the question arises ‘Where are they to be found?’ To this Kant, as against Hume, maintains that they must be *a priori*, i.e., that they must rest on reason itself and on thought as self-conscious reason; their source is the subject, ‘I’ in my self-consciousness.”¹

From this it follows that the method of Kant's philosophizing is, in a principled way, filled with the *critique of the power of knowledge*. This poses the following problem: prior to knowing we must examine this power of knowledge. Hegel subjects this philosophical position to criticism: „...how we are to know without knowing, how we are apprehend the truth before the truth, it is impossible to say.”²

The focus of Hegel's analysis of Kant's theoretical philosophy gradually shifts towards *a priori sensuousness, the form of sensuousness*, i.e., the issues of transcendental aesthetics. It appears that this criticism is aimed at Kant's separation of thinking understanding and sensuousness which are only united in an external, superficial way. Hegel concludes that with Kant the knowing subject does not really arrive at

¹ Ibid., 427-428.

² Ibid., 428.

reason; it remains still at the level of *individual self-consciousness* instead of being raised to the level of *universal self-consciousness*. „As a matter of fact there is described, in what we have seen only empirical finite self-consciousness which requires a material form outside, or which is limited. We do not ask whether these facts of knowledge are in and for themselves true or untrue; the whole of knowledge remains within subjectivity, and on the other side, there is the thing-in-itself as an external.”¹

Hegel concentrates his further discussion of Kant's theoretical philosophy on the relation between concept and Being. In his view, Kant failed to attain to the comprehension of the synthesis of concept and Being, that is to say, he does not comprehend existence and does not attain to the establishment of it as notion. „The fact to which Kant clings most strongly... is this, that Being cannot be extracted from the Notion.”² Hegel does not conjecture that Kant is right in restricting the possibilities of reason for itself to mere „formal unity for the *methodical systematization* of the knowledge of the understanding.”³ Although abstract thinking is adhered to, understanding can only bring order in things. This order, however, is only subjective. „There therefore remains nothing for Reason except the form of its pure identity with itself, and this extends no further than to the arranging of the manifold laws and relations of the understanding, the classes, kinds and species which the understanding discovers. I, as Reason or concept, and the things external to me, are both absolutely different from one another...”⁴ This is, in Hegel's view, the ultimate standpoint of Kant's theoretical philosophy.

Hegel's discussion of Kant's practical philosophy unambiguously centres on the notion of *freedom* and primarily appreciates the idea that „what self-consciousness esteems

¹ Ibid., 443.

² Ibid., 455.

³ Ibid., 455.

⁴ Ibid., 455.

reality, law, and implicit Being, is brought back within itself.”¹ It is in this part of Kant’s concept that Hegel sees a *great advance*. This advance is closely related to the *principle of freedom as the last hinge on which man turns*. In fact, this principle cannot be substituted by anything else. Therefore, Hegel may remark that „man bows to no authority, and acknowledges no obligations, where his freedom is not respected.”² On the other hand, Hegel criticizes Kant for not developing his principle. While the highest pinnacle of *theoretic reason* is abstract identity, practical reason, as *law-giving*, is regarded as *concrete*. No doubt, the Kantian moral law is a law given by reason itself. This, however, poses a question of the nature of Kant’s *concreteness*. Hegel demonstrates that freedom as conceived by Kant „is at first only the negative of everything else; no bond, nothing external, lays me under an obligation. It is to this extent indeterminate; it is the identity of the will with itself, its at-homeness with itself. But what is the content of this law? Here we at once come back to the lack of content.”³ Since the principle of legislation becomes too formal the whole Kantian doctrine appears to Hegel as sheer abstraction.

This implies Kant’s application of the notion of *duty* in the realm of morality. As noted by Hegel, Kant has contributed nothing but the form of identity. „To defend one’s fatherland, to promote the happiness of another, is a duty, not because of the content, but because it is duty... The content as such is indeed not what holds good universally in the moral law, because it contradicts itself.”⁴ *The cold duty* of Kant’s practical philosophy is subject to sharp criticism.

Hegel pays much attention to Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*. The reasons are presented very clearly. This work namely applies the requirement of *concreteness* (playing a crucial role in Hegel’s own philosophy) – the idea of the unity of sub-

¹ Ibid., 459.

² Ibid., 459.

³ Ibid., 460.

⁴ Ibid., 460.

jectivity and objectivity as a *present state*. Kant's concept of *Understanding* and *practical Reason* suggests that these are two different *regulative systems* on one and the same ground of experience, without excluding each other. It is the possibility of the *existence side by side* of the two legislations and of the powers belonging to them which is, in Hegel's view, an object of highly serious philosophical work. He is very precise in discussing Kant's idea according to which *the concept of freedom is conceived as having for its mission the realization in the sensuous world of the end indicated by the laws of freedom; consequently, nature must be so conceived that, while in form it realizes its own laws, there may yet be a possibility of ends being realized in it according to the laws of freedom*. By implication, Kant assumes that there must exist a ground for the *unity* of the supersensuous which lies at the foundation of nature with the notion of freedom. This makes possible the transition from the mode of thought in accordance with the principles of the one, to the mode of thought in accordance with the principles of the other. This is the reason for the important position of the *faculty of judgement* placed between *understanding* and *reason*. In this capacity, Kant sees the *transition from the province of the notions of nature to the province of the notion of freedom*.

In this connection, Kant analyses in great detail the categories of *adaptation to ends* and *the end*. The end is the concept of an object which contains the ground of the reality of this object. The adaptation to ends is conceived by Kant as harmony of a thing with that quality of things which is only possible in conformity with ends. Thus, the principle of the *faculty of judgement* expresses the *adaptability to purpose of nature* in its multiplicity. To Hegel, this method of philosophical treatment of nature resembles Aristotle who „regarded Nature as in itself this adaptation to end, and as having in itself νοῦς, intelligence, the Universal, so that in individed unity one element is moment of another.”¹ By

¹ Ibid., 467.

implication, purpose as concept is not any external form; rather, it is immanent and all-penetrating. Then, anything that is particular must be determined by this universal itself.

Hegel notes that the principle of reflective faculty of judgement is both *formal* and *material*. The faculty of judgement is either *aesthetic* or *teleological*. The former concerns *subjective*, the latter *objective (logical)* adaptation to ends. „There are thus two objects of the faculty of judgement – the beautiful in works of art and the natural products of organic life – which make known to us the unity of the Notion of Nature and the Notion of Freedom.”¹ Hegel appreciates Kant’s approach to the aesthetic faculty of judgement in the concept of the beautiful which is considered to be the *first reasonable thing* said about beauty. The sensuous as one moment of the beautiful is not sufficient. The beautiful must also express the *spiritual* – a *notion*. „Here in the aesthetic faculty of judgement we see the immediate unity of the universal and the particular; for the Beautiful is this very unity, without Notion and immediate. Because Kant, however, places it in the subject, it is limited, and as aesthetic it also ranks lower, inasmuch as it is not the unity as Notion.”² In relation to the material adaptation to ends within a teleological concept of nature, Hegel points out the immediate unity of Notion and reality. The purpose of nature is to be sought for in matter „to the extent that matter is an inwardly organized product of nature, *in which all is end, and all in turn is means*; because all the members of the organism are at the same time means and end, it is an end in itself.”³ To Hegel, all this is fairly similar to Aristotle’s Notion of *entelechy*; the conclusion is fully in Hegelian terms – it is „the infinite that returns into itself, the Idea.”⁴ Certainly, Kant does not arrive at this conclusion. In Hegel’s view, Kant believes that the wealth of thought un-

¹ Ibid., 468.

² Ibid., 470.

³ Ibid., 470-471.

⁴ Ibid., 471.

folds itself in a subjective form of conceiving, thinking, and postulating. „The objective, according to Kant, is only what is in itself; and we know that Things-in-themselves are. But Being-in-itself is only the *caput mortuum*, the dead abstraction of the ‘other’, the empty, undetermined Beyond.”¹

The application of the idea of concreteness in Kant’s philosophy is connected with the concept of *the end as the Good*. This Good as an Idea is related to the absolute demand that it should also be realized also in the world. Hegel states that both *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Judgement* end with the postulate of God. „[U]niversal Good, as the *final object of the world*, can be attained to only through a third. And this power over the world, which has as its final object the Good in the world, is God.”² Hegel maintains that in Kant’s philosophy no proof is possible of God’s existence; God is only presented as a claim. God can only be believed in – in this point, as claimed by Hegel, Kant and Jacobi are of one mind. But the question remains: What is God? Neither Kant’s nor Jacobi’s philosophy provides any satisfactory answer to this question. Hence, Kant’s philosophy as a whole is assessed as the *philosophy of Understanding which renounces Reason*. However, it is a doctrine which *has set forth the rhythm of scientific knowledge*. Hegel mainly argues against Kant’s claim that our knowledge forms an antithesis to Being-in-itself. It lacks the *negative*, that is to say, the abrogation of the ‘ought’. However, the Kantian motif, according to which nothing external can become an authority for philosophical thought is viewed as the basic space for productive theoretical thought.

Moreover, this motif proves to be the most important motif in the concept of another German philosopher – Johan Gottlieb Fichte. Hegel reflects his philosophy as the consummation and more consistent treatment of Kant’s philosophy. Hegel only concentrates on Fichte’s *original*

¹ Ibid., 472.

² Ibid., 474.

philosophy, i.e., the period of the project of the *theory of knowledge* (Wissenschaftslehre). He maintains that Fichte overcomes „the shortcoming in the Kantian philosophy... its unthinking inconsistency, through which speculative unity was lacking to the whole system... It is the absolute form which Fichte laid hold of, or in other words, the absolute form is just the absolute Being-for-self, absolute negativity, not individuality, but the Notion of individuality, and thereby the Notion of actuality...”¹

By identifying *ego* as the absolute principle conceived as the immediate certainty of self Fichte paves the way for the view that all the matter in the universe is the product of *ego*. „...reason is in itself a synthesis of Notion and actuality.”² Hegel, however, points out that Fichte approaches this principle with bias. The problem concerns *objectivity*. All in all, Hegel appreciates the great advantage of Fichte’s philosophy: it is this philosophy which postulates that „Philosophy must be a science derived from one supreme principle, from which all determinations are necessarily derived. The important point is this unity of principle and an attempt to develop from it in a scientifically consistent way the whole content of consciousness, or, as has been said, to construct the whole world.”³

To Fichte, philosophy is a *theory of knowledge*; universal knowledge becomes both the object and the point of departure of philosophy. „Consciousness knows, that is its nature; the end of philosophic learning is the knowledge of this knowledge Hence Fichte called his philosophy the Theory of Knowledge (Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre...), the science of knowledge.”⁴ The centre of gravity of Fichte’s philosophical speculations is the *transcendental unity of self-consciousness*. „Now Fichte proceeds in his system from the fact that Philosophy must begin with an absolutely

¹ Ibid., 481.

² Ibid., 481.

³ Ibid., 483.

⁴ Ibid., 484.

unconditioned, certain principle, with something indubitably certain in ordinary knowledge.”¹

Hegel remarks that Fichte begins like Descartes, with ‘I think, therefore I am’, which comes to be the ultimate principle of Fichte’s philosophizing. „The Being of the ego is not a dead, but a concrete Being; but the highest Being is thought. Ego, as an explicitly self-existent activity of thought, is thus knowledge, even if it is only abstract knowledge, as in the beginning at least it cannot help being. At the same time Fichte begins from this absolute certainty with quite other necessities and demands; for from the ego not only Being but also the larger system of thought has to be derived.”² The Fichtean *ego* differs from the Cartesian *ego*, mainly by being the source of categories and ideas. As a result, Fichte works up to a different philosophy because in his philosophy „nothing empiric was to be admitted from without.”³ At the same time, as admitted by Hegel, this idea introduces a false point of view into philosophy, namely „the old concept of knowledge, of commencing with principles in this form and proceeding from them... The ego is certain, it cannot be doubted; but Philosophy desires to reach the truth. The certainty is subjective, and because it is made to remain the basis, all else remains subjective also without there being any possibility of this form being removed.”⁴

Hegel analyses Fichte’s *ego* on the basis of three main principles from which the whole of knowledge has to be evolved. Since in Fichte’s theoretical concept of the consciousness of *selfhood* (Ichheit) „philosophical knowledge is the consideration of consciousness itself ... I can only know knowledge, the act of the ego. Fichte thus appeals to consciousness, postulates ego and non-ego in their abstrac-

¹ Ibid., 484-485.

² Ibid., 485-486.

³ Ibid., 486.

⁴ Ibid., 486.

tion...”¹ The development of theoretic reason is thus based on the analysis of the manifold relationships between the *ego* and *non-ego*.

The discussion of Fichte’s theory of knowledge is followed by the analysis of practical reason – practical consciousness. In this respect, Hegel claims that Fichte’s philosophy has the same standpoint as that of Kant. Hegel unambiguously identifies the limitations of Fichte’s philosophy. The main deficiency, in his view, is that Fichte’s *ego* „retains the significance of the individual, actual self-consciousness, as opposed to that which is universal or absolute, or to the spirit in which it is itself a moment merely; for the individual self-consciousness simply signifies standing apart as far as another is concerned.”² Hegel’s next argument against Fichte’s philosophy is that Fichte failed to attain to the idea of Reason as the perfected, real unity of subject and object. „Fichtian philosophy recognizes the finite spirit alone, and not the infinite; it does not recognize spirit as universal thought... The knowledge of absolute unity is apprehended as faith in a moral disposition of the world, an absolute hypothesis in accordance with which we have the belief that every moral action that we perform will have a good result.”³

Despite these critical remarks, Hegel values Fichte’s philosophy as a significant epoch in the history of German philosophy. He appreciates Fichte’s philosophy for addressing the problem of *abstract thought*, *deduction*, and *construction*. The profundity of the treatment of these issues entitles Hegel to speak of the *revolution* in philosophy. „The public had penetrated as far as the philosophy of Kant, and until the Kantian philosophy was reached the interest awakened by Philosophy was general; it was accessible, and men were curious to know about it, it pertained to the ordinary

¹ Ibid., 491.

² Ibid., 499.

³ Ibid., 499-500.

knowledge of a man of culture... Formerly men of business, statesmen, occupied themselves with Philosophy; now, however, with the intricate idealism of the philosophy of Kant, their wings droop helpless to the ground. Hence it is with Kant that we first begin to find a line of separation which parts us from the common modes of consciousness; but the result, that the Absolute cannot be known, has become one generally acknowledged. With Fichte the common consciousness has still further separated itself from Philosophy, and it has utterly departed from the speculative element therein present. For Fichte's ego is not merely the ego of the empiric consciousness, since general determinations of thought such as do not fall within the ordinary consciousness have likewise to be known and brought to consciousness; in this way since Fichte's time few men have occupied themselves with speculation."¹

Hegel maintains that Kant's and Jacobi's philosophies strengthened the view that the knowledge of God is immediate, and that we know it from the beginning without requiring to study, and hence that Philosophy is worthless. A principled breakthrough in this view was made by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. The analysis of his work completes Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

* * *

It follows from Hegel's dialectic integration of the history of philosophy in the philosophical system that the stage of the so-called doxographic concepts or the historical-philosophical concepts of Enlightenment has come to an end. Hegel's historical-philosophical concept represents the first consciously designed *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. The history of philosophy as a philosophy comprehended in its own development is, in Hegel's opinion, first of all philosophical comprehension and enrichment of

¹ Ibid., 504-505.

systemic philosophy itself. Hegel tries to understand the significance of and the interaction between the history of philosophy and systemic philosophy with regard to the specific circumstances of the particular time. Thus, he perceives philosophical concepts in history as elements of a unified whole which should pursue the comprehension of absolute truth. Each system, each philosophical doctrine represents, in Hegel's view, a stage in the process of the development of the Absolute Idea. Instead of simple *rejection* its overcoming is connected with the advances in philosophical knowledge. In its structure, Hegel's history of philosophy reflects the logic of the development of knowledge as a whole; in addition, it aspires to provide the history of knowledge, to represent knowledge in its historical development. In this connection, Hegel attempts to provide a specific historical reproduction of the historical process of philosophical thought, the individual stages of knowledge of reality in terms of *self-knowledge of the Absolute Spirit*, and the lawful relationships capturing all of the known historical forms of philosophical thought in the dynamics of time. A central place in Hegel's historical-philosophical concept is assumed by the identification of the qualitative differences between the individual historical stages in the development of philosophy and the unveiling of changes of various forms of philosophizing at the individual stages of human thought development.

The historical-philosophical knowledge results, in Hegel's view, in the thought which is at home with itself, thus embracing the universe and transforming it into an intelligent world. „In apprehension the spiritual and the natural universe are interpenetrated as one harmonious universe, which withdraws into itself, and in its various aspects develops the Absolute into a totality, in order, by the very process of so doing, to become conscious of itself in its unity, in Thought. Philosophy is thus the true theodicy, as contrasted with art and religion and the feelings which these call up – a reconciliation of spirit, namely

of the spirit which has apprehended itself in its freedom and in the riches of its reality.”¹

To Hegel, the history of philosophy bears witness to the fact that the spirit goes on and on forever, because spirit is progress alone. The work consists of cognizing itself, and this activity is its life; it is, in fact, the spirit itself. The work of the spirit is aimed to know itself and this activity is the life of the spirit and the spirit itself. „Its result is the Notion which it takes up of itself... it is therefore the world’s history in its innermost signification. This work of the human spirit in the recesses of thought is parallel with all the stages of reality; and therefore no philosophy oversteps its own time.”¹ German philosophy at the turn of the 18th century, and mainly Hegel’s philosophy, appears to be a philosophy in which the World-spirit succeeded in comprehending itself as an Absolute Spirit. Consequently, Hegel assumes, the history of philosophy has been actually completed. The only thing he wants from us is to understand that the history of philosophy is not a blind collection of ideas or a haphazard aggregation of philosophical concepts. Then, the final result of the history of philosophy can, in his view, be summarized as follows: „... in the first place, ... throughout all time there has been only one Philosophy, the contemporary differences of which constitute the necessary aspects of the one principle; in the second place, ... the succession of philosophic systems is not due to chance, but represents the necessary succession of stages in the development of science; in the third place,... the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit afford to itself. The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof; it is the product and result of those that preceded it.”²

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol 3, 546.

¹ Ibid., 547.

² Ibid., 552.

Hegel's effort to capture the manifestations of the inner *substantial spirit* is implemented via examination of a *series of spiritual forms of philosophy* in their historical development. In H. G. Gadamer's view, this is the first case of presentation of the *historical consciousness of philosophy* in its entirety.¹ Hegel pursued philosophical circumstances constantly leading us to philosophical achievements in both the critical and positive sense of the word. This aspect seems to be topical today and to creatively inspire productive philosophizing.

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1987. *Gesammelte Werke. Neuere Philosophie I*. Bd. 3. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 297-307.

2. Schelling's fragment of the history of modern philosophy (Munich Lectures)

Schelling's *Munich Lectures*, devoted to the history of modern philosophy, represent a highly important stage in his theoretical work. The lectures were given in 1827 and had been prepared for the undergraduates with a clear objective of becoming a foundation for Schelling's account of the system of his own philosophy. Schelling starts his exposition with Descartes followed by Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolff, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Jacobi. The selection of the personalities analyzed clearly indicates that Schelling tried to capture the most important events in *recent philosophy*. His conception of the fragment of *modern philosophy* is similar to that of Hegel, that is to say, it is considered to serve as an introduction to philosophy. A retrospective view of the former philosophical doctrines identifies, says Fichte, the milestones in current philosophy. The methodological essentials of the Schellingean history of philosophy are expressed, as pointed out by M. Sobotka, as early as his *Bruno* in which the idealism-realism opposition is identified as the key opposition in philosophy. „The development of this opposition, resulting in its reconciliation in Schelling's philosophy, must be traced through the whole history of philosophy. This principle made Schelling one of the founders of the philosophical history of philosophy...”¹

Schelling assumes that the history of modern European philosophy starts with overcoming the scholastics, and is connected with the work of French philosopher René Descartes. In Schelling's view, Descartes is a *revolutionary* in the history of philosophy because he broke off all connection with earlier philosophy and started to build his conception from scratch. Schelling compares this philosophical situa-

¹ Sobotka, M. 1984. „Německá klasická filozofie.” In: V. Čechák, M. Sobotka, J. Sus: *Co víte o novověké filozofii*. Praha: Horizont, 247. Also cf. Sobotka, M. 1987. *Schelling a Hegel*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova.

tion to the beginnings of philosophizing in ancient Greece. Like Thales who raised the question of *what the first and the oldest in the whole nature of things was*, Descartes also asks „What is the First *for me*?“ His answer is as follows: „I myself, and even then I myself at the most with respect to *being* (*Seyn*).“¹ In analyzing Descartes' philosophy, Schelling concentrates on the problem of subjective trustworthiness underlying the new philosophy. He appreciates the fact that Descartes' fundamental principle – the *doubting* – should eliminate anything unproductive that appears to have been a burden to the former philosophy. The radical nature of this principle made some of his contemporaries conclude that Descartes was a *temporary* atheist.² Schelling rejects this interpretation of Descartes as misinterpretation of the basic sense of his philosophizing.

In Schelling's view, the basic message of Descartes' philosophy comes down to the claim that nothing can be considered to be true in philosophy unless it has been reflected in all of its relationships. The basic principle of Descartes' philosophy unequivocally leads to the disclosure of the most valuable of what could be disclosed in the beginnings of modern philosophy, that is to say, to the point of departure – *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am).³ Schelling maintains that this principle has predetermined the essential direction of modern philosophy for a long time. In this respect, the principle is viewed as a *keynote* of modern philosophy which has brought philosophy to the sphere of subjective consciousness. Schelling aptly points out that it is this kind of philosophical point of departure that deviates from the former conception of *authorities*, thus establishing the necessary space for the freedom of philosophizing. Then, the assumption that *freedom* of modern philosophy

¹ Schelling, F. W. J. 1994. *On the History of Modern Philosophy*. Transl. A. Bowie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 42.

² Ibid., 43.

³ Ibid., 45.

owes its existence to Descartes' disclosure is, therefore, fully justified.¹

Schelling's assessment of Descartes' disclosure of *cogito* is similar to that of Hegel, i.e., he regards it to be the reflection of *direct identity of thinking and being*. In his opinion, the *sum* (I am) is enclosed in the *cogito* (I think); it is comprised in and given by the latter without any mediation. By implication, the *cogito* means the same as *cogitans sum* (I am thinking). „Besides this, *Sum cogitans* cannot mean that it is as though I were *nothing* but thinking, as if I were only there in thinking or as if thinking were the substance of my being.”²

Schelling realizes that the word *to think* is used by Descartes in several meanings. In addition to the most general meaning of *pure thinking*, there is also sense perception. Notwithstanding, the major part of Schelling's analysis interprets it in the sense of a reflecting subject. As a result, it is assumed that Descartes is very close to the pure idealistic position underlying German philosophy since Kant. Rather than reflecting the objective existence of things outside us this philosophy deals with the problem of how these things exist in our ideas. Schelling realizes that Descartes does not pursue this philosophical position, and is therefore looking for a different solution. Here, we encounter a serious problem of *guaranteeing the truth*, related to Descartes' disclosure of cogito. While our thought can, almost without any problems, permanently verify the truth of Descartes' disclosure of cogito because we move in the subjective sphere all the time, the transition to the objective sphere introduces a highly complex problem. Here, the self-acknowledgement of the act of thought in cogito does not automatically guarantee the truthfulness of the external world. The bridging of the subjective and the objective spheres can be implemented via the conception of *God*.³

¹ Ibid., 45.

² Ibid., 46.

³ Ibid., 49.

Much attention is paid to Descartes' arguments in favour of *God's existence* as a major problem of modern philosophy. The reasons follow from the fact that Descartes' wording of the *ontological proof of God* came to be – in view of the next development of modern philosophy – the most serious philosophical problem that gave rise to a number of various philosophical positions. Schelling assumes that Descartes' proof of God's existence faces several problems which, in some cases, contributed to the development of ontological and noetic conceptions.

Schelling points out that Descartes' arguments can cause a number of problems. The first one concerns the claim that accidental existence contradicts the essence of the most perfect being. A perfect being can only exist by necessity. Descartes' inference of the necessity of God's existence does not automatically guarantee God's existence. Descartes realizes that the *concept of the most perfect being* of all does not guarantee it. Schelling aims to demonstrate that it is not possible to work up to the evidence of God's existence directly from the notion of God. Our idea of a concept is always entrenched in this notion. Therefore, Schelling concludes that God as the most perfect being is not proved in Descartes' arguments. Rather than to a *live* God, this way of inference leads to a *dead* God. Furthermore, Schelling claims that God does not belong only to philosophy. God mainly exists in *general belief*, independently of philosophy. Descartes should be credited for introducing God to philosophy in a way different from that of medieval philosophy. An adequate concept of God in philosophy is a process that starts with Descartes. This process is significantly continued in the subsequent development of the modern philosophy.

Schelling pays much attention to the analysis of Spinoza's philosophy. Spinozism is interpreted as a development of the Cartesian system. As emphasized by Schelling from inception, Spinoza's position in philosophy is more adequate because it does not start from the subjec-

tive, the subject (ego cogito). Schelling is enthusiastic about Spinoza's starting point, i.e., the *substance* – *God*, and considers him as the right starting point, which becomes the core of philosophical reflections of the whole new (modern) philosophy.¹ By conceiving God as *causa sui* Spinoza considers him to be the necessary essence, which does not require any special evidence.

Schelling claims that this point of departure introduces a calming element into philosophy, and makes it possible to concentrate on the most important. The peacefulness and calm of Spinoza's system create the impression of depth, and become a stimulating example for the future development of philosophical thought. The simplicity of Spinoza's point of departure is taken by Schelling as a model for reaching a similar simplicity in his own system of freedom. Schelling classifies Spinozism as a philosophical doctrine which has never become something truly past and which is very difficult to overcome. Therefore, Schelling concludes, the reading of Spinoza's main work – the *Ethics* – is a must for all who wish to develop a productive philosophical doctrine.²

Schelling's analysis of Spinoza's conception of God as substance is derived from the view that God is not a freely creating spirit. Spinoza's substance is subject–object; more importantly, however, the subject is fully absorbed in the object. Schelling views the Spinozean God as fully absorbed in substantiality. By implication, this God becomes static because motion is bound to subject. The motive of a static God in Spinoza's conception is articulated similar to Hegel's historical-philosophical conception.

New impulses to the development of modern philosophy come from Leibniz. Schelling characterizes Leibniz's philosophy as an *impoverished Spinozism*. Schelling's account of Leibniz's philosophy is based, in principle, on confronta-

¹ Ibid., 64.

² Ibid., 66.

tion with Spinoza. In his view, Leibniz spiritualizes everything, the evidence of which being his conception of monad as *spiritual substance*. Each physical thing in itself is conceived as the totality of spiritual forces. Leibniz, in Schelling's view, does not recognize anything but *spirit*. In his system, therefore, there is nothing non-spiritual, nothing that contradicts spirit. Any differences observed in reality are of mere quantitative nature.

Schelling is impressed with Leibniz's conception of God as prime monad, the only substance. God as the dominant substance *creates* all other lower substances. Pure monads are mainly identified with God. The existence of the physical is connected with what is *outside* God. Schelling points out that each of Leibniz's monads becomes the absolute centre, the universe for itself, a closed world, pure *selfhood* (*Ichheit*) into which nothing can penetrate from outside. In this connection, he asks whether „every monad is only its own independent *vis representativa* (power of representation), or a *centrum representativum Universi* (centre of representation of the universe)... [?].”¹

Although Schelling characterizes Leibniz's doctrine as *impoverished Spinozism*, which may imply a kind of depreciation, he gives Leibniz credit for not restricting his examination of things *in abstracto*. In particular, Schelling examines the relation between Leibniz's works *Monadology* and *Theodicy*. He does not share the view that these works should be viewed in opposition, and claims that *Theodicy* deserves special attention. In this work, Leibniz presents a serious problem of the conception of God and God's capacity to create *only the good*, as „God is the *lord jure absolute positivo* (by absolute positive law), as He is because He Is; there is nothing good before and outside Him which He would have to want, there is only good after Him and as a consequence of Him; only what *He* wants is good, and

¹ Ibid., 79.

only *because* He wants it is it good (not in itself); if He did not want it, it would not be good.”¹

Schelling knows that the doctrine *God can only do good* is nothing but tautology because the good is only what God does. As such, God can only do good. Schelling characterizes Leibniz as a thinker endowed with an unusual magic gaze which enables him to unveil each object attracting his attention. The depth and the breadth of Leibniz’s theoretical work and the fruitfulness of his ideas rank him among the greatest thinkers of the German nation. Leibniz’s fundamental effort is perceived as the pacification of the revolutionary element introduced by Descartes into *philosophy*. Leibniz’s philosophy strengthens Spinoza’s *objective rationalism* by spotlighting the resounding *subjective rationality* of the motives. Thus, Leibniz once again returns to the orthodox metaphysics and indirectly becomes an instigator of this type of scholastic metaphysics, in Germany culminating with Ch. Wolff. It was not before Kant that this traditional approach to metaphysics was violated. As a result, Kant’s role in this respect is similar to that of Descartes in regard of medieval metaphysics.

The account of Leibniz’s philosophy is followed by a discussion of the history of the philosophy in *the period of independent thought*.² This period is defined by Schelling as a new stage in the development of German philosophy, starting with I. Kant’s *critical idealism*. In his view, Kant restores serious scientific significance and the lost dignity of philosophy. In addition, he believes that Kant brings a significant change to philosophical thinking. What preceded Kant is not the peer of what appeared after him. Right at the beginning of his discussion of Kant, Schelling points out that while his criticism put a definite end to any knowledge of the supernatural, in reality it only separated the *negative* from the *positive* in order to put the *positive phi-*

¹ Ibid., 83.

² Ibid., 94.

losophy against the negative philosophy. In this respect, he does not perceive Kant's criticism as hostile to the positive philosophy.

Kant's view that *intellectual concepts* are useless in terms of the account of the supernatural (transcendent), which provides both sufficient space for criticism of the traditional metaphysics and reasons for its rejection, is interpreted by Schelling rather unconventionally. He maintains that Kant did *more* than he actually wanted, and refers in this respect to Kant's conception of reason, which is inapplicable to supernatural matters. From this, Schelling infers that the supernatural can be neither known nor thought. This conclusion is, in his view, *inherently contradictory*. The focus of Schelling's attack on Kant's doctrine is obvious; it is Kant's conception of the *thing in itself*. Schelling asks, what the thing in itself actually is. Is it also something supernatural?¹ In this connection, Schelling poses a question concerning the influence of the *thing of itself*, as an intelligible basis, upon our powers of imagination; in addition he asks, in what way is this basis related to the subject? In his view, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* does not answer these questions in an adequate way.

Schelling accepts Kant's critique of metaphysics chiefly in relation to Wolff's philosophy. This criticism is, however, inapplicable to *Spinozism* because Spinoza's God is not anything supersensuous in the sense of Kant. For Spinoza, God is only the immediate substance of the senses along with any other being. Consequently, Kant's effort to reflect the traditional metaphysics in a critical way results in the conclusion that the supersensuous cannot be actually known.

In addition, Schelling points out Kant's inconsistency concerning the conception of God in his theoretical philosophy – as opposed to his practical philosophy which postulates God's existence as a matter of fact. Schelling,

¹ Ibid., 100.

therefore, queries Kant's actual conception of God if God is not viewed as substance. He wonders what is left of the notion of God if God cannot be thought of as a *cause*? Schelling concludes that Kant has in this way got beyond the scope his own philosophy.¹

In spite of these critical reservations, Schelling appreciates Kant's influence upon the development of philosophical knowledge, especially in terms of putting an end to the *former anarchy in the field of philosophy*. By this he does not mean the *external anarchy* (i.e., the problem of a leading philosophical personality); rather, he speaks of the internal anarchy. Kant came up with *the universality and necessity of human knowledge* as an alternative to the destructive skepticism and sensualism.

Another philosopher to contribute to the progress of philosophical thinking was, in Schelling's view, J. G. Fichte. He mainly appreciates Fichte's radicalized approach to philosophizing within the subject – the *I*. He characterizes this point of departure as a productive space for drawing attention to the problems of *transcendental idealism*. Schelling appreciates Fichte's principle of the science of knowledge – „*I am*” as a precondition for *activity*.² Fichte's selfhood (*Ichheit*) can in no way exist independent of activity. In this respect, he characterizes Fichte's idealism as an opposite to *Spinozism*, or as a *reversed Spinozism*. Fichte namely presumes a subject in his absoluteness, in his activity. Therefore, he can claim that, in Fichte's philosophy, everything is just through the *I* and for the *I*.

Schelling accepts the inspirational motives from Fichte's philosophy. They mainly bear on the conception of the *I* as both theoretical and empirical consciousness having its history. This conception of consciousness entails, in Schelling's view, the issues of transcendental history of the *I*,

¹ Ibid., 105.

² Ibid., 109.

which brings forth the problem of *historicity* in philosophy.¹ Schelling's attempt to interpret Fichte's science of knowledge reflects his reconciliation with the reality. Fichte was the first to express an idea of philosophy based on freedom. Fichte rightly considers the independence of the *I* in connection with both practical philosophy and, mainly, theoretical philosophy.

In Fichte's doctrine, Schelling finds the dominant philosophical method (the dialectic method) claimed to be a discovery of his own. Schelling is very proud of this discovery, and indicates, among other things, that it was stolen from him by someone else (i.e., Hegel).²

The account of Fichte's philosophy is followed by Schelling's self-critical reflection of his own place in the development of German classical idealism. Surprisingly, right at the outset he claims that his conception is independent of Fichte's philosophy. Schelling does not stress the ultimate human *I*; instead, he stresses the *infinite subject* conceived as the only immediate certainty, i.e., one that can never cease being a subject. He tries to avoid the error of completely absorbing the subject by the object, the error committed by Spinoza. Unlike Spinoza, he emphasizes the subject as an *infinite self-postulation*. In other words, by becoming an object the subject does not cease to be a subject. Such a subject is infinite in the positive rather than negative sense of word, because it cannot make itself infinite. This reflects the basic tenets of Schelling's philosophy in the period of his *The System of Transcendental Idealism*, in particular, the assumption that „[n]owhere, not in any sphere, is there anything merely subjective or merely objective, but only a unity of the two.”³

Schelling's division of philosophy into two philosophical sciences – the natural and the transcendental philosophies –

¹ Ibid., 109.

² Ibid., 111.

³ Ibid., 119.

represents the germs of the philosophical system up to about 1810. Nature is defined as one facet of the universe or the absolute totality in which the *absolute subject* is realized. The other facet of this absolute reality is the *world of spirit*: „Philosophy had to descend into the depths of nature in order to raise itself from there to the heights of spirit.”¹ Schelling thus indicates the reasons for developing a new philosophical system, tentatively labelled as a system of *absolute identity*.

Schelling knows that the problems of the *philosophy of spirit* are very close to those of arts and religion. Arts, religion, and philosophy are, in his view, three spheres of human activity revealing the higher spirit as such, that is to say, as *the genius of arts*, *the genius of religion*, and *the genius of philosophy*. These and only these three areas are recognized by him as divine. In this connection, Schelling reveals the *point* in which each philosophy is in harmony or in conflict with the general human consciousness. By implication, the dominant problem of philosophy concerns the explanation of the Supreme Being – the God. What is the God’s place in such a philosophy? Schelling claims that God first exists as an *idea*. In this connection, we should, however, recall the corollary of this conception of God in Kant’s *Critique*.

Schelling’s system posits the conception of God as a *subject* that can no lower itself into being an object. This subject is dynamic rather than static. It has gradually gone through the whole of nature and the whole of history. In Schelling’s words, „God must after all be determined at the end as He also was already at the beginning...”² God is the subject, but the kind of subject that implements the entire process of *motion*.

To Schelling, the conception of God is a criterion for the division of philosophy into *positive* and *negative*. All European philosophy, ranging from Plato to Hegel, is, in

¹ Ibid., 120.

² Ibid., 132.

his view, of essential nature. The ontological priority is bound to essence rather than to existence. The dependence of existence upon essence is articulated unambiguously in the sense that essences represent the genuine reality; on the other hand, existence is secondary from the ontological point of view because it is the mere actualization and individualization of essence. The negative philosophy is apparently built upon the ontological and noetic priority of essences. Its incorrect postulate says that the reality is mastered exclusively by the knowledge of general essences. Schelling points out that this type of philosophy necessarily leads to the negative condition of reality, to its abstract possibility; on the other hand, it is unable to capture the actually existing specific reality. The latter can only be accounted for by the *positive philosophy* because it starts with being which precedes any thought; this is due to the *unconditionally existing* as its point of departure. The rational deduction and the notional dialectic cannot be accepted as adequate tools of philosophical knowledge, and even less so the experiential procedures of modern empiricism. Schelling, therefore, draws attention to the new kind of *speculative experience* which combines the viewing and the intellect: the negative philosophy does not speak of „*existence*, of that which *really exists*... but only of the relationships which the objects take on in mere thinking.”¹

The positive philosophy deals with the *existence*, i.e., with that which really exists.² The most important problem this philosophy faces is a correct philosophical *comprehension of God*. Schelling maintains that it was an incorrect comprehension of the relation between essence and existence that resulted in an incorrect comprehension of God in former works (including Hegel). „No matter how much effort you exert in order to arrive at the correct comprehension of God as a concrete individual, as an unconditionally free

¹ Ibid., 133.

² Ibid., 133.

person, eventually you always depict Him as the supreme, infinite, and primordial Idea which, rather than freely, created the Nature and man out of necessity, of intrinsic need to externalize itself. Nature represents the externalized, unique Divine Idea.”¹

After presenting his own philosophy, Schelling goes on to discuss Hegel’s conception, and his historical-philosophical analysis culminates in the analysis of Jacobi’s philosophy. At first sight, it may appear to be an awkward intention of the author. And in fact, this is so. The previous account of the history of modern philosophy immanently conceals several reasons that are unambiguously expressed in the discussion of Jacobi’s conception. Here, Schelling’s strategic goal is brought to the surface, that the effort to justify the idea that the *objective mysticism* is the position conditioning our *objective knowledge*.

Schelling perceives Jacobi as the most instructive personality in the whole history of modern philosophy. He justifies this claim by saying that Jacobi „of all modern philosophers felt the need for a historical philosophy... most vividly.”² In addition, he appreciates Jacobi’s recognition of the true nature of all systems of modern philosophy. He mainly values his early works focussed on *superrationalism*. Jacobi’s later development towards rationalist systems and Enlightenment is assessed in a critical way. This is related to Jacobi’s conception of God who, rather than a *general substance*, is conceived as an actual *personal God*, including the entirety of spiritual and moral properties assigned to him by common belief. Schelling blames Jacobi for the claim that an impersonal reason assumes an immediate relationship to the *personal God*, this being absolutely unthinkable. Hence, the concluding assessment of Jacobi’s philosophy paradoxically purports that Jacobi’s philosophy

¹ Major, L. 1970. „Schelling proti Hegelovi.” *Filosofický časopis* 18/5, 803.

² Schelling, F. W. J.: *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 166.

knows nothing of God and divine matters. Schelling concludes that Jacobi's philosophy is an *unexplained dualism*, the dualism of freedom and evidence.

Through his criticism of Jacobi's conception of God, Schelling wants to demonstrate that the only correct approach to the problems discussed is *mysticism*. He distinguishes two forms of mysticism. The first one, the *purely practical*, or *subjective, mysticism*, has no scientific aspirations. The other one, the *objective mysticism*, pursues objective knowledge. The latter is also labelled by Schelling as *theosophy*, i.e., *the speculative or theoretical mysticism* devoid of any redundant scientific (rational) cognition in order to focus on the speculative content.¹ Schelling points out the incorrect use of words *mystic* and *mysticism*. The former usually refers to something hidden, mysterious. In this connection, he emphasizes that it is nature which is the most mystic a man can encounter. Mysticism is defined by Schelling as a spiritual frame of mind rejecting any scientific reasoning and/or account of the reality. True knowledge is now derived only from the so-called *inner light*. It goes without saying that this light is not seen by all people; it is rather *latent* in each of us. The discovery of this inner light is conditioned by *ecstatic intuition* or *feeling*. Consequently, the only feature of mysticism appears to be the *hatred* of clear comprehension, reason, and science, which, in Schelling's view – under the conditions of the time – came to be dominant under the influence of Hegel.

¹ Ibid., 184.

3. Hegel versus Schelling – a historical-philosophical confrontation

The philosophies of F. W. J. Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel dominate the German philosophy of the first third of the 19th century. The mutual influence and *competition* between these two giants of philosophical thought has its specific history.¹ An indispensable role in it is played by their respective historical-philosophical interpretations captured in their *lectures* on the history of the latest German philosophy. The primacy in this relation belongs to Hegel who was the first to discuss the place of Schelling's philosophy in the development of German thought. Importantly, while Hegel's historical-philosophical interpretation covers Schelling's philosophical achievements up to 1809 (i.e., the year of publishing Schelling's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Essence of Human Freedom*), Schelling could in his lectures encompass Hegel's philosophical system as a whole.

Right at the outset of his discussion of Schelling's philosophy, Hegel points out that, within the context of German philosophy, Schelling's work represents the most significant achievement following Fichte's philosophy. At the same time, he very precisely identifies the basic strategic goal pursued by Schelling's philosophy – the *transition to the knowledge of God*.² Hegel believes this issue was probably most emphatically discussed by Jacobi.³ Schelling makes Jacobi's principle of the *unity of Thought and Being* fundamental. Hegel's philosophy, too, is fundamentally based on philosophical variations of the issue of the finite and the infinite. Concrete unity of the finite and the infinite, pursued as the main goal in Hegel's philosophy, „can only be

¹ Cf. details Sobotka, M. 1982. *Schelling a Hegel*, 9.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 512.

³ Scholz, H. (ed.). 1916. *Die Hauptschriften zum Pantheismusstreit zwischen Jacobi und Mendelssohn*. Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, XIII.

comprehended as a process and as the living movement in a proposition. This inseparability is in God alone.”¹

From the very beginning of his analysis of Schelling Hegel realizes that Schelling’s philosophy before 1809 does not form a *system* divided into individual parts. While Schelling repeatedly proclaims his effort aimed at the establishment of *philosophical sciences*, Hegel is right in saying that any *system* is absent. Therefore, Hegel views Schelling’s philosophy as an accumulation of several layers, as „the activity of its development”, and assumes that „it has not yet ripened into fruit.”² Hegel was right in this observation, but the question is to what extent Schelling’s later philosophy (*positive philosophy*) represents a truly *ripe fruit* of this method of philosophizing.³

Hegel draws attention to Schelling’s emphasis on the problem of God in the broader context of modern philosophical thought, and points out the connection between Schelling’s philosophy and Spinoza’s conception of substance: „... the substance of Spinoza should not be apprehended as the unmoved, but as the intelligent, as a form which possesses activity within itself of necessity, so that it is the forming power of nature, but at the same time knowledge and comprehension. This then is the object of Philosophy; it is not the formal union of Spinoza that is demanded, not the subjective totality of Fichte, but totality with the infinite form. We see this developing in the philosophy of Schelling.”⁴

After indicating the fundamental framework of Schelling’s philosophy, Hegel’s historical-philosophical analysis proceeds with the problem of *transcendental idealism* developed in Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Hegel concentrates on two fundamental procedures employed by Schelling – from nature (object) to intelligence (subject),

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 512.

² *Ibid.*, 515.

³ Also cf. Major, L.: *Schelling proti Hegelovi.*, 802–810.

⁴ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 516.

and vice versa, from intelligence to nature. The basic point of departure of Schelling's philosophy („All knowledge rests on the harmony of an objective with a subjective”)¹ is considered by Hegel as adoption of Fichtean starting point: „...absolute unity, where the Notion and the reality are undistinguished in the perfected Idea, is the Absolute alone, or God.”² All else contains, in Hegel's view, an element of discord between the objective and the subjective. Hegel also examines Schelling's treatment of the relation between nature and intelligence. The fact that Schelling considers them to be *identical*, is accepted positively, however, several pitfalls of this identity are indicated. The thought of nature impelled to intelligence and intelligence impelled to nature is considered to be Schelling's original conception of a perfect theory of nature. However, the perfect theory of nature would be that by which the whole of nature should be resolved into an intelligence. This implies that „*the so-called dead nature is really an immature, torpid, fossilized 'intelligence'...*” The intelligent character of nature is thus spoken of as a postulate of science.”³

Hegel points out that *the organ of transcendental philosophy* is the *subjective*, the production of inward action. „Production and reflection upon this production, the unconscious and conscious in one, is the aesthetic act of the imagination. Thus these two separate processes are as a whole very clearly expressed: the process which leads from nature to the subject, and that leading from the ego to the object. But the true process could only be traced out by means of logic, for it contains pure thoughts; but the logical point of view was what Schelling never arrived at in his presentation of things.”⁴

¹ Schelling, F. W. J. 1971. *Frühschriften. Eine Auswahl in zwei Bänden*. Bd. 2. Berlin, 525.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 516.

³ *Ibid.*, 517.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 518.

In analyzing Schelling's *transcendental philosophy*, Hegel aptly notes that, in many respects, Schelling sets to work in the same way as did Fichte in his conception of *selfhood* (Ichheit). The new is only introduced by Schelling when he comes to deal with the problem of the *Absolute*. He states, for example, that „[i]t was... in this form of knowledge of the absolute as concrete, and, further, in the form of unity of subjective and objective, that Philosophy as represented by Schelling more especially marked itself off from the ordinary conceiving consciousness and its mode of reflection.”¹ Fichte caused a significant drop of interest in philosophy in Germany because the *laymen* were unable to understand it. Hegel believes that this trend was even strengthened by Schelling.

Hegel appreciates Schelling's effort to analyze the concrete content of the Absolute, God, life, which is indeed the object of natural consciousness. Natural consciousness – unlike the speculative philosophical consciousness – is permanently restricted by *division, distinction, and mutual opposition of the finite thought-determinations*. In Hegel's view, these *different thoughts* should be brought together once again. „Thought begins by holding apart infinite and finite, cause and effect, positive and negative; since this is the region of reflecting consciousness, the old metaphysical consciousness was able to take part in so doing: but the speculative point of view is to have this opposition before itself and to reconcile it. With Schelling the speculative form has thus again come to the front, and philosophy has again obtained a special character of its own; the principle of Philosophy, rational thought in itself, has obtained the form of thought. In the philosophy of Schelling the content, the truth, has once more become the matter of chief importance, whereas in the Kantian philosophy the point of interest was more

¹ Ibid., 521.

especially stated to be the necessity for investigating subjective knowledge.”¹

Hegel critically appreciates Schelling’s interpretation of the *selfhood* (Ichheit) to its *other* and claims that what is presented here is a *tangled mass of abstraction*. He also discusses Schelling’s account of the *highest objectivity* which the subject attains. This highest objectivity as the *highest identity of subjective and objective* is termed by Schelling as the *power of imagination*. „Art is thus comprehended as what is inmost and highest, that which produces the intellectual and real in one, and philosophizing is conceived as this genius of art. But art and power of imagination are not supreme. For the Idea, spirit, cannot be truly given expression to in the manner in which art expresses its Idea. This last is always a method pertaining to intuitive perception; and on account of this sensuous form of existence the work of art cannot correspond to the spirit. Thus because the point last arrived at is designated as the faculty of imagination, as art, even in the subject this is a subordinate point of view, and thus in itself this point is not the absolute identity of subjectivity and objectivity.”²

Hegel draws the conclusion that the *Absolute* in Schelling’s philosophy is the absolute identity of subjective and objective, or, the absolute indifference of real and ideal, of form and essence, of universal and particular. However, he notes that „in this identity of the two there is neither the one nor the other. But the unity is not abstract, empty, and dry; that would signify logical identity, classification according to something common to both, in which the difference remains all the while outside. The identity is concrete: it is subjectivity as well as objectivity; the two are present therein as abrogated and ideal.”³ The main shortcoming of Schelling’s philosophy is, in Hegel’s view, that the point of

¹ Ibid., 521.

² Ibid., 524-525.

³ Ibid., 525.

indifference of subjective and objective, i.e., the Notion of reason, is absolutely pre-supposed, without furnishing any evidence of its truth. Hegel points out that Schelling frequently refers in this connection to Spinoza. In addition, Hegel reproaches him for not presenting the *Absolute* as a motion leading to self-abrogation. This is, however, the condition for knowledge to become the actual knowledge, the knowledge of the absolute. „With Schelling this idea has, however, no dialectic present in it whereby those opposites may determine themselves to pass over into their unity, and in so doing to be comprehended.”¹

Hegel appreciates Schelling's effort to develop a new productive *philosophy of nature* based on a dynamic principle. He writes that „Schelling launched out into too many individual details, if he desired to indicate the construction of the whole universe. On the one hand, however, he did not complete this representation, and on the other hand, he has confined himself mainly to implicit existence, and has mixed therewith the formalism of external construction according to a presupposed scheme. In this representation he advanced only as far as the organism, and did not reach the presentation of the other side of knowledge, i.e., the philosophy of spirit.”² Irrespective of this reservation, Hegel maintains that the initial exploration of nature in Kant's philosophy is here followed by another attempt at inaugurating anew this mode of regarding nature, so as to recognize in objective existence the same mechanism, the same rhythm, as is present in the ideal existence.

Hegel is satisfied with Schelling's account mainly because nature is presented „not as something alien to spirit, but as being in its general aspect a projection of spirit into an objective mode.”³ Therefore, Schelling is considered to be an originator of *modern natural philosophy*, because he „was

¹ Ibid., 527.

² Ibid., 534.

³ Ibid., 535.

the first to exhibit Nature as the sensuous perception or the expression of the Notion and its determinations.”¹ Hegel points out that rather than the traditional metaphysics of nature Schelling seeks to grasp its *notion*. „Nature is to him nothing but the external mode of existence as regards the system of thought-forms, just as mind is the existence of the same system in the form of consciousness. That for which we have to thank Schelling, therefore, is not that he brought thought to bear on the comprehension of Nature, but that he altered the categories according to which thought applied itself to Nature; he introduced forms of Reason, and applied them – as he did the form of the syllogism in magnetism, for instance – in place of the ordinary categories of the understanding. He has not only shown these forms in Nature, but has also sought to evolve Nature out of a principle of this kind.”²

Moreover, Hegel highlights Schelling’s effort to establish the *speculative philosophy* manifesting the position that *knowledge is based on the Absolute*. In this way, Schelling has given to transcendental idealism the significance of absolute idealism. Hegel points out that Schelling’s ideas of God, notably those published in a writing polemizing against Jacobi,³ approach the productive comprehension of God’s nature and His relation to nature. „God, therefore, as this ground of Himself, is Nature – Nature as it is in God; this is the view taken of Nature in Natural Philosophy. But the work of the Absolute is to abrogate this ground, and to constitute itself Intelligence.”⁴

Hegel concludes his historical-philosophical analysis of Schelling’s philosophy by stating that this system represents the *latest interesting and true form of philosophy*. By conceiving the true as the concrete, as the unity of subjective and objective Schelling reintroduces into philosophy, in Hegel’s

¹ Ibid., 535.

² Ibid., 535-536.

³ Schelling, F. W. J. 1982. *Schriften 1804-1812*. Berlin, 209-316.

⁴ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 3, 541.

view, *deep, speculative content* pursued by philosophy in the entire course of its history. „The Thought which is free and independent, not abstract, but in itself concrete, comprehends itself in itself as an intellectually actual world; and this is the truth of Nature, Nature in itself.”¹ This entails another merit of Schelling’s philosophy. In particular, he points out in nature the forms of spirit (electricity, magnetism, etc.). The defect of Schelling’s philosophy is that the distinction between the ideal and the natural world, and also the totality of these determinations, „are not shown forth and developed as necessitated in themselves by the Notion.”² This stance indicates the direction of Hegel’s own philosophy primarily aimed at demonstrating the fact that *the idea is the truth, and all that is true is the idea. The systematizing of the idea into the world must be proved to be a necessary unveiling and revelation.*

* * *

Schelling’s historical-philosophical discussion of Hegel’s philosophy is of clearly polemic, and even *hostile* nature. Its basic goal is the unambiguous rejection of Hegel’s philosophizing as an utterly flagrant violation of a productive method of philosophical work. In assessing his own philosophical doctrine, Schelling rejects his former conception of philosophy (till about 1810). That method of philosophizing is characterized by himself as a *negative philosophy*, because it does not examine nothing concerning the *existence, i.e., what actually exists*. Schelling is now convinced that it’s no longer possible to consider the relations between things in pure thinking.³ His new unambiguous strategic position pursues the development of *positive philosophy*, which is connected with the inquiry into the *existence*.

¹ Ibid., 542.

² Ibid., 542.

³ Schelling, F. W. J.: On the History of Modern Philosophy, 133.

The goal of Schelling's *positive philosophy* is to solve the traditional metaphysical-theological problem of God as a concrete and, simultaneously, unconditionally free person. „To Schelling, all European philosophy, from Plato to Hegel, is of *essential nature*. This implies that ontological priority is given to abstract, universal, necessary, and persistent substances, essences of being, and not to existences, i.e., the being of real, concrete, and finite existences. On the other hand, existence (that means that [quod] the arbitrary concrete *this actually is here*) is ontologically secondary, because it is derived from and dependent on being of which it is mere actualization and individualization. Essential Philosophy concentrates only on essences regarded to be the true, constant reality.”¹

Schelling presents sharp criticism of Hegel's primary requirement of philosophy, i.e., the transition to the area of *pure thought* so that philosophy may acquire a single immediate object, the *pure notion*. At the same time, however, Schelling admits certain positive aspects of this proposal. Namely, Hegel correctly viewed *only the logical nature* of philosophy „which he intended to work on and promised to bring to its complete form. If he had stuck to that and if he had carried out this thought by strictly, decisively renouncing everything positive, then he would have brought about the decisive transition to the positive philosophy, for the Negative, the negative pole can never be there in pure form without immediately calling for the positive pole.”²

Schelling believes that Hegel's *withdrawal* to the province of pure concept, pure thought implies that „concept was *everything* and left nothing outside itself”.³ What Schelling mainly resents is that the position and the role of *concept* in Hegel's philosophy are so dominant that hardly any space is left for God. Hegel's conception of concept as a universal

¹ Major, L.: *Schelling proti Hegelovi*, 802.

² Schelling, F. W. J. *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 134.

³ *Ibid.*, 134.

absolute activity narrows down the space for God as a *god-man*. It is chiefly this fact which is unacceptable for Schelling and which, in his view, engenders a number of problems. Therefore, he notes: „The concept does not have the meaning here of just the concept (Hegel protests most vigorously against this), but instead the meaning of the *thing itself* (Sache selbst)... one admittedly cannot reproach Hegel with holding the opinion that God is just a concept, his opinion is rather: the *true* creator is the concept; with the concept one has the creator and needs no other outside this creator.”¹

With his *logical philosophy*, Hegel does his best to present God only as a concept. Schelling is irritated by this conception of God; not so much for the very conception of God as a concept, but rather because *concept becomes God* – „the concept had the meaning that it *was* God.”² Hegel’s conception of God that gradually becomes a self-conscious idea passes to nature, and returns from it to Himself to become the *absolute spirit*, gives Schelling sufficient evidence of this philosophy being a *negative philosophy*. What Kant withheld from reason in terms of the knowledge of God is returned by Hegel. And much more. In Schelling’s view, Hegel trespasses philosophical competence by ascribing his philosophy the knowledge of Christian dogmas. Schelling points out that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is unprecedentedly modified in accordance with Hegel’s philosophical system: God the Father = a pure logical concept expressed in the pure categories of Being; God the Son = alienation of the Absolute Idea and its existence in Nature; God the Holy Ghost = return of the Absolute Idea to itself.

Schelling envisages Hegel’s logic as negativity. „Hegel therefore goes back to the most negative of all that can be thought, to the concept in which the least can be *known*, which, therefore, he says, is as free as possible from any

¹ Ibid., 135.

² Ibid., 135.

subjective determination, and as such is the *most objective*. And this concept for him is that of *pure being* (*Seyn*).¹

At this point, Schelling poses a question concerning the way of Hegel arriving at this determination of the origin. The answer is sought in a change in fundamental perspective of viewing the subject in modern philosophy. From Descartes, through Fichte's conception of subject, the *self* has been comprehended in modern philosophy as the *subject of self-consciousness*. What is presented here, conjectures Schelling, is the *subjective subject*. Hegel turns this approach to subject into an *objective subject*, i.e., the subject outside us, independent of us. Consequently, the development in Hegel's philosophy originates from this objective subject and proceeds to the subjective subject. „... the point of departure was the subjective in its complete objectivity, thus it was in fact always the subjective, and not the *merely* objective, as it is when Hegel determines his first concept as pure being.”² This implies the necessity of the development of absolute spirit in his three essential wholes. Schelling maintains that this necessary movement suffers from double deception: „1) by the thought being substituted for by the *concept*, and by the *latter* being conceived of as something which moves itself, when the concept for its own part would lie completely immobile if it were not the concept of a thinking subject, i.e., if it were not thought (*Gedanke*); 2) by pretending that the thought is only driven forward by a necessity which lies in itself, although it obviously has a goal that it is striving towards, and this goal, however much the person philosophizing seeks to hide consciousness thereof from himself, for this reason unconsciously affects the course of philosophizing all the more decisively.”³

¹ Ibid., 136.

² Ibid., 136-137.

³ Ibid., 138-139.

Schelling supports his critical arguments against the essential position of Hegel's doctrine by stressing that *Being in general* cannot be thought. In his view, there is no Being in general because there is no Being without a subject. Hegel's philosophical acrobatics at the beginning of his *Logic* – determining the *pure Being*, finding its opposite *nothing*, and finally determining the connection through the category of *becoming* – is commented upon by Schelling as follows: „One cannot really contradict these propositions, or declare them to be false... It is as if one wanted to carry water in cupped hands, which also gives one nothing.”¹

Schelling argues that Hegel builds up his abstract logic outside the *empirical*, outside the nature. On the other hand, he sees his own *philosophy of identity* as the one that captures the nature simply because it remains in it. This fact is projected onto the method of elaboration, that is to say, the method of philosophical research. Schelling claims that „concepts as such do in fact exist nowhere but in consciousness, they *are*, therefore, taken objectively, *after* nature, not *before* it; Hegel took them from their natural position by putting them at the beginning of philosophy.”² In addition, he aptly asks where actually the *world lies* if everything is included in the logical idea; outside this idea, nothing ever exists anywhere. „The whole world lies... in the nets of the understanding or of reason, but the question is *how* exactly it got into those nets, since there is obviously something other and something *more* than mere reason in the world, indeed there is something which strives beyond these barriers.”³

Schelling decodes the main objective of Hegel's logic as the substitution of the meaning of the *speculative theology* by his own conception of the absolute as an idea of God. The latter not only preconditions his system but also is its sub-

¹ Ibid., 141.

² Ibid., 145.

³ Ibid., 147.

stantial result. „Hegel admittedly does not want the Absolute, but rather the existing Absolute, and presupposes that the preceding philosophy wanted it as well, and as he sees no attempt to prove the existence of the Absolute in it (in the manner in which he wants to prove it by his Logic), he thinks that the proof is simply supposed to have lain already in intellectual intuition... Hegel, then... wants the Absolute, before he takes it as a principle, as the result of a science, and this science is precisely the Logic.”¹

Schelling rejects Hegel's philosophical model of God mainly because his God is devoid of any future. It is a God who cannot do anything; a God who may be the final cause but in no way the actual origin – the *creative cause*. Hegel's God is merely a *substantial spirit*, „not spirit in the sense in which piety or normal use of language understands the word...”² As noted by Schelling, Hegelian *God* is not free in the world; rather, it carries the *burden of the world*. Obviously, this philosophical position may be, and actually is, labelled by Schelling as *pantheistic*. At the same time, he stresses that this is not that „pure, quiet Pantheism of Spinoza, in which the things are pure, logical emanations of the divine nature...”³

This fact appears to be the main target of Schelling's criticism. He was highly displeased at wide acceptance of Hegel's philosophical views by the German public of the time. Schelling formulated it as follows: „...in order to introduce a system of divine activity and effect, in which divine freedom is all the more ignominiously lost because one had given oneself the appearance of wanting to save it and sustain it. The region of the purely rational science is left, for every externalisation is an act which is freely decided and which absolutely interrupts the merely logical succession; and yet this freedom as well appears as illusory,

¹ Ibid., 151, 153.

² Ibid., 156.

³ Ibid., 159.

because at the end one nevertheless sees oneself unavoidably pushed towards the thought which negates all having-happened, everything historical, because one, on reflection, must return again after all into the purely rational.”¹ These words accurately diagnose Hegel’s philosophical conception of God, in particular, God’s *incompatibility* with the traditional religious views. In addition, they reveal one of the central reasons for Schelling’s project of positive philosophy as a preliminary stage underlying his later conception of *philosophy*.

¹ Ibid., 159.

4. Marx's doctoral dissertation and the history of philosophy

After Hegel's death (1831), Germany witnessed a fierce, long-term philosophical and political controversy concerning the *theistic* versus *atheistic* interpretation of his *absolute philosophy*. The core of the argument pertained to the Hegelian postulate according to which *the absolute – the God* – attains to its self-consciousness in human knowledge.¹ The controversy concerning the *theistic* versus *atheistic* interpretation of Hegel's absolute idealism resulted in a split of the *Hegelian school* into the Old Hegelians and the Young Hegelians. While Göschel, Hinrichs, Gabler, and other Old Hegelians viewed Hegel's philosophy as a disguised Christian doctrine, the Young Hegelians, in the beginnings of this movement, conceived of his philosophy to be a *pantheistic anti-Christian doctrine*. An important role in articulating the Young-Hegelian philosophical conceptions was played by the philosophies of L. Feuerbach and K. Marx. Both of them were seeking their *own way* of approaching the complex problems of philosophy in the late thirties of the 19th century. Interestingly, they both paid much attention in their early works to the historical-philosophical research.² Their early philosophical achievements were identical in many respects; at the same time, there were significant differences which came to be striking in the following periods of their development into theoretical maturity.

Marx's doctoral dissertation, *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* (including the

¹ Sobotka, M. 1964. *Člověk a práce v německé klasické filosofii*. Praha: NPL, 133.

² Feuerbach, L. 1832. *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie von Bacon von Verulam bis Benedikt Spinoza*. Ansbach; Feuerbach, L. 1837. *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie. Darstellung und Kritik der Leibnizschen Philosophie*. Cf. Sobotka, M. and Major, L. 1979. *Kapitoly z dějin německé klasické filosofie*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 90-95.

preparatory *notebooks and fragments*),¹ represents an important *historical-philosophical phenomenon* in terms of the examination of German philosophical thought in the first half of the 19th century. At this stage of his philosophical development, young Marx assumes that *idealism is no figment of the imagination, but a truth*.² The fact that Marx's doctoral dissertation was written in strict critical confrontation with Hegel's philosophy has been the source of many misinterpretations of the development of his philosophy. While it is true that young Marx was eager to master Hegel's philosophical doctrine, philosophers tend to disregard the fact that, prior to mastering this *world philosophy*, Marx had critically studied other philosophers, including Kant, Fichte, Schelling, etc. It was the study of their works that brought young Marx to writing the dialogue *Cleanthes, or the Starting Point and Necessary Continuation of Philosophy* (unfortunately, this dialogue got lost), in which he, to his own big surprise, *independently* worked up to Hegel's philosophy.³

Prior to writing his doctoral dissertation, Marx undertook several *preparatory research projects* in which he attempted to develop a number of Hegel's productive methodological, historical-philosophical ideas. Marx appreciated various impulses of Hegel's whole philosophical work, and his criticism of the historical-philosophical empiricism, in particular. The attitude of a philosophical system to the world is perceived by him as that of reflection. Philosophy should assume a critical attitude both to the world and philosophy itself. What first appears to be a reverse relation and a hostile dispute between philosophy and the world becomes a problem of particular philosophical self-consciousness inside itself, and, eventually, it manifests itself as an external split of philosophy into two opposite philosophical movements.

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1975. *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 25-107.

² Ibid., 28.

³ Ibid., 18.

Great philosophical doctrines are, in Marx's view, engendered by critical eras, and a philosopher is supposed to adequately account for these eras. Marx realizes that, with the world becoming philosophical, philosophy becomes secular; consequently, its implementation simultaneously entails its losses. That philosophy struggles outside itself is its own internal shortcoming.

Like Hegel, Marx conjectures that *philosophical historiography* is not concerned with comprehending the personality, be it even the *spiritual* personality of the philosopher. A philosophical historiographer is expected to both describe the philosophical conception examined and, primarily, comprehend and explain it. Marx assumes that these tasks can mainly be implemented from two points of view, in particular, from the *historical point of view* and from the *logical point of view*. A philosophical conception of historical relevance cannot be viewed outside the concrete historical circumstances. Therefore, when explaining a philosophical system it is important „scientifically to expound a system in connection with its historical existence...”¹ Marx realizes, however, that adequate comprehension of an examined philosophical system presupposes logical-theoretical confrontation, seeking to reveal its *connection* with the former philosophical systems. Therefore, the historical existence of a discussed philosophical system must also be asserted as „philosophical, and hence be developed according to its essence.”² This development, the exposition of the essence, helps to solve two essential tasks: (1) to comprehend it in terms of its content, i.e., in terms of its determination imprinted upon the total and concrete philosophies,³ and (2) to clarify its place within the historical-philosophical process.

¹ Ibid., 506.

² Ibid., 506.

³ Ibid., 492.

The first task pursuing *immanent determination* of an examined philosophical system should not be reduced to simple description, mere reproduction of a philosopher's views, or an account of the exoteric form of the philosopher's system. Marx maintains that the most important is the *interpretation* because a thinker's self-consciousness need not correspond to the objective content and significance of his/her own philosophical conception. The objective content of many philosophical doctrines must be clearly distinguished from its subjective form. Thus, Marx was inspired by the Hegel's *critical research moment*, which must be applied in historical-philosophical research. Consequently, such a research is supposed to distinguish in each system „the determinations themselves, the actual crystallizations pervading the whole system, from the proofs, the justifications in argument, the self-presentation of the philosophers as they know themselves; to distinguish the silent, persevering mode of real philosophical knowledge from the valuable, exoteric, variously behaving phenomenological consciousness of the subject which is the vessel and motive force of those elaborations. It is in the division of this consciousness into aspects mutually giving each other the lie that precisely its unity is proved. This *critical element* in the presentation of a philosophy which has its place in history is absolutely indispensable in order scientifically to expound a system in connection with its historical existence, a connection which must not be [over]looked precisely because the [system's] existence is historical... Anybody who writes the history of philosophy separates essential from unessential, exposition from content otherwise he could only copy... He would be merely a copying clerk.”¹

From this it follows that particular formal idiosyncrasies of various philosophical conceptions should be, in the historical-philosophical research, derived from their content, their principles. Moreover, Marx stresses that any inquiry

¹ Ibid., 506.

into philosophical conceptions must be set in the particular historical context. Without this critical *historical-philosophical* research, the history of philosophy would be reduced to a mere sum of doxographic ideas.

While the problem of the *absolute* dominates Hegel's and Schelling's historical-philosophical inquiry, Marx's doctoral dissertation also has its say in this problem. Critical adoption of the achievements of the classical German philosophy leads to the philosophical-dialectical explanation of God „as it manifests itself as the idea-in-itself, as religion, as nature, and as history”.¹

This entitles us to conclude that the most important sources of Marx's Young-Hegelian philosophical position, presented in his doctoral dissertation, include: (i) philosophical-critical adoption of the achievements of the classical German philosophy in terms of its *criticism of religion*; (ii) philosophical overcoming Hegel's historical-philosophical interpretation of atomistic philosophy and the Young-Hegelian radicalization of its world-view related consequences; (iii) philosophical elaboration of the *Fichtean motive*.²

* * *

The philosophical conception of man and his integration in the universe and the discussion of the relation between man and the *absolute* in modern philosophy provide a number of positive motives for the elaboration of metaphysical and ontological issues. On the other hand, it features several regressive forms of deformed philosophical thought. Modern philosophy, through its most distinguished representatives (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Jacobi, Schelling, Hegel), worked up to an imminent rejection of the Christian theism, which, however, in

¹ Ibid., 18.

² Zelený, J. 1970. *Praxe a rozum*. Praha: Academia, 124.

many of its explicit formulations produced an impression of acknowledgement of the *truth* of this doctrine. The most significant representatives of modern philosophy unambiguously overcame the theological-dogmatic method of thought and the religious-biblical considerations of God. The non-religious, i.e., philosophical *impersonal comprehension of God*, including strong pantheistic motives, the origins of which within the framework of modern rationalist philosophy go back to Descartes and later were explicitly developed in Spinoza's work, is brought to its climax in classical German philosophy.

Although this philosophy elevates thought to a *divine power* by metaphysical absolutization, in its essence it does not pursue the *transmundane world*; instead, it concentrates on the world of reflective activities of man and his history. The essence of this philosophy, focussed on the comprehension of man and world, could no more rely on the explication of the religious notions of God, revelation, religious dogmas, etc. By implication, this philosophy does not put emphasis on the *absolute for the absolute*.

The rationalist cult of reason and the related conception of pure, *speculative-dialectic reasoning*, culminate in the classical German philosophy. In its basic achievements, it demonstrates, as noted by Marx, that to God, it is the country of reason where his existence comes to an end.¹ This result of modern philosophy, in its confrontation with religion, is vigorously and very quickly adopted by young Marx. This explains why Marx never assumes extreme positions of Bauerean, Feuerbachian, or any other interpretation of Hegel classifying him either as an *atheist* or *theologist*. Later, he formulates his position as follows: „If, however, the philosophy of religion, etc., is for me the sole true existence of religion then, too, it is only as a *philosopher of religion* that I am truly religious, and so I deny real religious sentiment and the really *religious* man. But at the same time I assert

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 105.

them, in part within my own existence or within the alien existence which I oppose to them – for this *is* only their *philosophic* expression – and in part I assert them in their distinct original shape, since for me they represent merely the apparent other-being, allegories, forms of their own true existence (i.e., of my *philosophical* existence) hidden under sensuous disguises.”¹

The Young-Hegelian definition of the problems of philosophy as the *philosophy of self-consciousness*, the *philosophy of act*, established, in the late 1830s, a philosophical climate that inspired Marx to explore the Greek philosophy of the period in which the ancient polis collapsed.. In preparing his doctoral dissertation, Marx pays much attention to the history of Greek philosophy from its inception. He is right in saying that the Greeks will always be our teachers in the field of philosophy. Marx admires their grandiose objective naïveté connected with their viewing each object warts and all, in the pure light of its naturalness.² In his view, Greek philosophy originates in the teaching of the seven sages, including, among others, Thales, the founder of the Ionic philosophy of nature. He claims that „Antiquity was rooted in nature, in materiality.”³ Marx assumes that the history of Greek philosophy becomes complete with the attempts to express an *image of the sage* in notions. The beginning and the end of the history of Greek philosophy, i.e., the seven sages and Epicurus, are perceived by Marx in connection with the image of the sage in Socrates’ *philosophical mission*.

Instead of regarding it as an exoteric fact, Marx takes it as confirmation of the decisive role of *great individuals* in philosophy. He shares the view with Hegel that the *soul of the Greek life and spirit is substance presenting itself as a free substance through philosophers*. „The Greek philosopher is

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3, 342.

² Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 500.

³ *Ibid.*, 423.

a demiurge, his world is a different one from that which flowers in the natural sun of the substantial.”¹

Marx considers the first sages to be fortune-tellers through the mouths of whom the substance articulates general assumptions. Their language is the language of substance. It is the language which, from the inception, manifests the elementary forces of the Greek moral life. Therefore, some early Greek philosophers actively participated in political life and law-making. This holds true of both Ionic natural philosophers and the Pythagoreans. In Marx’s view, the Eleatics were the first to discover the ideal forms of substance. The substance itself, or its inner content, was, however, viewed too abstractly as something mysterious. Their conception is deeply interwoven with the pathos of prophetic revelation. It is, however, the *revelation* which starts to separate philosophers from the Greek nation, in particular, from its *ancient gods*. The emerging conflict due to unequal comprehension of reality and the place of gods in the space presents itself in a significant way in Anaxagoras. Here, the Greek nation for the first time stood against their own philosopher and defended their right to their gods. They stood against a sage, and *separated him from themselves* by exiling him.

Marx admires Anaxagoras’ personal courage and the productivity of his philosophical discovery of *nous*, later developed by the Sophists, and culminating in Socrates’ philosophy. Further development of the Greek philosophical thought is connected with the *Socratean practical movement*, which becomes „general and ideal one in Plato, and the *nous* (νοῦς) expands itself into a realm of ideas. In Aristotle this process is apprehended again in individuality, but this is now true conceptual individuality.”²

Marx compares these giants of the Greek thought to *vivid images*, to *vivid works of art*. This positive characterization

¹ Ibid., 432.

² Ibid., 491.

mainly refers to Socrates. In Marx's view, it is this Greek thinker who is a *great sage* through whom substance itself is absorbed by the subject. Rather than the bearer of divine image, he is the bearer of human image. Rather than mysterious, he is clear and bright. Rather than a prophet, he is a kind master. „The reason why Socrates is so important is that the reaction of Greek philosophy to the Greek spirit, and therefore its inner limit, is expressed in him.”¹ The main contribution of Socrates' philosophy is seen in his initiating the transition from substantial imaginations to the determination of substance-in-itself. Marx regards Socrates' philosophy as his own wisdom, his own goodness, because it reflects his own comprehension of the good.

Unlike Socrates, Marx is very critical of Plato. He makes perfect use of the criticism of the *Alexander of Macedonia* of the Greek philosophy, that is to say, Aristotle's criticism of Plato's doctrine, to demonstrate that while Plato's endeavour, aimed at the transfer to an ideal sphere, elaborates Socrates' conception, this elaboration does not rank among the most important theoretical elaborations of Socrates' philosophy.² Marx is intrigued by the attitude of Plato's philosophy to religion. This analysis was instigated by his critical discussion of D. F. C. Bauer's work of Christian Platonism (*Das Christliche des Platonismus oder Socrates und Christus*. Tübingen 1837). A critical comparison of Socrates and Christ denies, in Marx's view, any analogy. Socrates personifies philosophy, Christ is the personification of religion. Marx argues against Bauer's position, in which Christian elements can be found as early as Plato's conception. The opposite is the truth. Plato's elements find their place in Christianity, in the teaching of the most ancient Christian fathers (Origen, Hieronym, etc.). Marx especially points out that the primary condition in, for example, Plato's conception of state, is the determination of *wisdom*,

¹ Ibid., 438-439.

² Ibid., 439.

knowledge. This condition does not dominate the attitude to the Christian conception of state. Marx draws attention to an important fact that Plato, in his *purely metaphysical dialogue* Parmenides, does not make use of any *mythologizing tools* (i.e., mythological-religious elements) to support his ontological doctrine.¹

* * *

The basic difference between Hegel's and Marx's historical-philosophical interpretations of atomism exists in Hegel conceiving of atomism merely „as a system of ordinary conceptions or even of sensuous existence...”,² within which the dominant position was assumed by Democritus' philosophy, and as such, it was rejected by Hegel – in view of his own philosophy – as almost worthless. Marx views atomism in a similar way, but the Epicurean philosophy (along with the Stoic and the Skeptic philosophies) is considered by him to be „the *key* to the true history of Greek philosophy.”³ As is generally known, in his dissertation, Marx greatly appreciates Hegel's historical-philosophical conception and considers it to be the first truly *scientific* conception. This, however, does not imply that this is sufficiently reflected in the historical-philosophical analyses of Marx's philosophical development, mainly regarding the early stage of his philosophical criticism of religion.

It should be noted that the *godlessness dimension* of the atomistic philosophy is seriously presented in Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Hegel interprets it as too *suspicious*, and a highly significant achievement of Greek philosophy. It is this aspect which is adopted and developed in Marx's conception of atomism. Hegel's stance to the atomistic

¹ Ibid., 496.

² Hegel, G. W. F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Plato and the Platonists*. Vol. 2. Transl. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 281.

³ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 30.

godlessness is formulated as follows: „The Atomists are therefore... opposed to the idea of the creation and maintenance of this world by means of a foreign principle. It is in the theory of atoms that science first feels released from the sense of having no foundation for the world.”¹ Hegel therefore maintains that atomism fundamentally *argues against any universal and ultimate purpose of the world*. It should be noted that Hegel himself does not recognize any ultimate purpose of the world, justified by either philosophy or religion, and calls it the dull (bad) infinite („... against every relation of purpose – as, for instance, the inherent conformity to purpose of the organism – and, further, against the teleological representations of the wisdom of a Creator in the world, his government.”)²

These fundamental positions of the ontological nature have their world-view related repercussion mainly in practical philosophy, morality. This is exactly what Hegel considered to be the most interesting and the best aspect of this philosophy. The reason is that Epicurus’ *practical philosophy* is directed directly toward the *uniqueness of self-consciousness*, with its goal being „... the unshaken tranquility of the soul... pure enjoyment of itself”.³

Hegel’s great appreciation of the atomistic morality in no way calls into question its not being a religious morality. In his historical-philosophical research into atomistic philosophy, Hegel highlights the idea that „[t]he gods lead an existence of pure and passive self-enjoyment, and trouble themselves not with the affairs of the world and of men.”⁴ However, from the point of view of his overall approach to atomistic philosophy, Hegel’s assessment appears to be rather *chilly*, bringing about no *Promethean enthusiasm*, as present in the introduction to Marx’s doctoral dissertation. More importantly, however, Hegel is far from connecting

¹ Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 1, 307.

² Hegel, G. W. F.: *Lectures...* Vol. 2, 291.

³ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 305.

the motive of the atomistic *godlessness* with the motive of the struggle against earthly gods. The latter is the most striking feature of Marx's dissertation. In any way, these atomistic motives are also received by Hegel, even if in the much higher stage of the historical-philosophical development – in the French naturalism and materialism of the 18th century.

Marx's doctoral dissertation primarily aims to *confirm the freedom of self-consciousness*. Marx admires Epicurus' courage to defy the opinion of all Greece. Therefore, he argues that „[t]he first necessity for philosophical investigation is a bold, free mind.”¹ The Epicureans are perceived by him as thinkers whose voice drowned the thundering heaven and darkened the lightning. Marx gives strong support to the Young-Hegelian assumption that the struggle against religion is the most important content of revolution.

Obviously, this revolution is perceived by the Young Hegelians mainly as a theoretical phenomenon, which means that they pursue the revolution in their minds. Also Marx considers self-consciousness to be the ultimate manifestation of the spiritual essence of nature. The laws of nature are accounted for as rational relations between things. In reference to Hegel's philosophy, it is assumed that the spiritual does not exist outside the material world and vice versa.

Marx's historical-philosophical analysis of Democritus' and Epicurus' philosophy of nature concentrates on the value of the *declination of atom*. Philosophers from Plutarch, Cicero, Gassendi, Leibniz and up to Hegel left the radical change in the conception of atom almost unnoticed. Marx envisages the declination in the Young-Hegelian framework as a necessary expression of independence and individuality. The *declination* or *repulsion* is the *first form of self-consciousness*, and therefore corresponds to the form of self-consciousness, which is aware of itself as an immediate

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 471.

being, as the abstract particular.¹ The deviation of atom from linear motion means decoding the *actual atom soul*, which means the presentation of the notion of the abstract particular. While Democritus' atom is *abstract being of itself*, Epicurus' atom is *being for itself*. „In it is expressed the atom's negation of all motion and relation by which it is determined as a particular mode of being by another being”.²

The declination of the atom in Epicurus' philosophy is not an accidental element of his doctrine. On the contrary, it represents the ultimate *law* superior to both the natural and the human worlds. In this way, this world acquires its potential meaning. Marx maintains that the atom declination conception culminates in Epicurus' theory of meteors, which is considered to be the *soul of this philosophy of nature*. In Marx's view, Epicurus' theory of celestial bodies and the related processes contradicts the philosophy of both Democritus and the whole previous Greek philosophy. „Worship of the celestial bodies is a cult practised by all Greek philosophers. The system of celestial bodies is the first naive and nature-determined existence of true reason [*Vernunft*]. The same position is taken by Greek self-consciousness in the domain of the mind [*Geist*]. It is the solar system of the mind. The Greek philosophers therefore worshipped their own mind in the celestial bodies.”³

Marx holds that almost all people have some idea of gods, and the divine is assigned the supreme position. Thus, anything divine is frequently connected with sense-perception of what is related to celestial bodies. This was the case as early as the antiquity when people connected gods with heaven and assumed that heaven itself was *immortal*. In his view, the present teaching provides evidence that it is indestructible, that it did not originate, that it cannot be

¹ Ibid., 50.

² Ibid., 51.

³ Ibid., 66.

blamed for any disasters of the mortals. Our concepts, says Marx, thus correspond with the prophecy of God. The *only* thing that is evident is the existence of heaven. Ancient times have delivered us myths that the celestial bodies are gods and the divine embraces all nature. „The rest was added in a mythical form for the belief of the masses, as useful for the laws and for life. Thus the myths make the gods resemble man and some of the other living creatures, and invent similar things connected with and related to this.”¹

Epicurus was one of the few Greek philosophers who dared to claim that the greatest derangement of human soul was caused by a false account of celestial bodies erroneously regarded to be divine. Therefore, the entire Epicurus’ *Letter to Pythocles* deals with the *theory of celestial bodies*.² Marx pays special attention to this theory in regard of his ethical ideas. This enables him to justify the idea that „[s]tupidity and superstition also are Titans.”³ Marx believes that it is this conception of Epicurus which is the *matter of conscience*.

The knowledge of meteors as well as the conception of nature in general cannot but lead to ataraxy and firm trust of man in himself. „Our life does not need speculation and empty hypotheses, but that we should live without confusion. Just as it is the business of the study of nature in general to investigate the foundations of what is most important: so happiness lies also in knowledge of the meteors.”⁴ Marx points out that the method of the theory of meteors differs not only from the method of ethics but also from the treatment of other physical problems. The origin of meteors, for example, cannot be reduced to any single, simple cause. In addition, meteors have more than one essential category corresponding to the phenomena. No theory of nature can rest upon any vacuous axioms and

¹ Ibid., 67.

² Ibid., 68.

³ Ibid., 68.

⁴ Ibid., 68.

laws. A myth is rejected, says Marx, when attention is paid to the phenomena related to our judgements of what is not visible. He apparently presents the requirement of examining the phenomena on the basis of sense-perceptions. Marx points out the following analogy. „In this way we can explain fear away and free our selves from it, by showing the causes of meteors and other things that are always happening and causing the utmost alarm to other people”.¹

Marx is impressed with Epicurus's effort to reveal the *multiplicity of accounts* striving to cancel and overcome the particularity of an object. While Aristotle and some other Greek philosophers consider the celestial bodies to be eternal and immortal mainly because they always behave in the same way, Epicurus is of an opposite view; hence, his theory of meteors fundamentally differs from the previous physical theories. Epicurus' conception emphasizes the idea of diversity and randomness; everything can be explained by diverse and multiple causes. Those who adhere to a single way of the account of meteors, those who surmise that there is something eternal and divine in meteors, misinterpret these astronomic phenomena. They trespass the borders of the theory of nature and get captured by myths. Their explanations should be despised. We should eschew any prejudice that the exploration of those objects is not profound enough if it only deals with our ataraxy and bliss. On the other hand, the absolute standard consists in the fact that nothing which violates ataraxy, which engenders „danger, can belong to an indestructible and eternal nature. Consciousness must understand that is an absolute law”.²

Marx admires Epicurus for the following conclusion: „*Since eternity of the heavenly bodies would disturb the ataraxy of self-consciousness, it is a necessary, a stringent consequence that they are not eternal.*”³ Those who tried to explain Epicurus' phi-

¹ Ibid., 69.

² Ibid., 69-70.

³ Ibid., 70.

losophy prior to Marx apparently encountered the incompatibility of his theory of meteors and the generally accepted physics. The way how Epicurus arrived at the idea of separating the method used in the theory of meteors from that applied to the remaining part of physics remains to be a perplexing mystery to them. Marx tries to unravel this mystery.¹ He points out that an atom is substance in isolated form, it is an imagined gravity. The ultimate reality of gravity is the celestial bodies. „In them all antinomies between form and matter, between concept and existence, which constituted the development of the atom, are resolved; in them all required determinations are realised. The heavenly bodies are eternal and unchangeable; they have their centre of gravity in, not outside, themselves. Their only action is motion, and, separated by empty space, they swerve from the straight line, and form a system of repulsion and attraction while at the same time preserving their own independence and also, finally, generating time out of themselves as the form of their appearance. *The heavenly bodies are therefore the atoms become real.* In them matter has received in itself individuality. Here Epicurus must therefore have glimpsed the highest existence of his principle, that peak and culminating point of his system”.²

No doubt, the postulate of atoms prompts Epicurus to argue that nature is based on atoms as its immortal foundation. By implication, the world *comes into existence* in a natural way. The universe has always been as it is now, because there is nothing for it to change into. Outside the universe, there is nothing that might penetrate into it and cause a change... it is necessary for the moving atoms to be indestructible and to have nothing in their nature which undergoes a change. To Marx, Epicurus' biggest contradiction is that he considers the reality of nature to be an independent,

¹ Cf. Fink, E. 1992. *Oázis štěstí*. Praha: Vyšehrad, 42 ff. Festugière, A. J. 1996. *Epikuros a jeho bohové*. Praha: Oikúmené, 63ff.

² Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected...* Vol 1, 70-71.

undestructable substance in the celestial bodies. Epicurus tries to bring this substance down to mundane transience and struggles against all who worship nature. „Hence Epicurus feels that here his previous categories break down, that the method of his theory becomes different. And the *profoundest knowledge* achieved by his system, its most thorough consistency, is that he is aware of this and expresses it consciously”.¹

The contradiction between essence and existence, between substance and form in Epicurus’ philosophy of nature, indicated by Marx, is overcome by the theory of *celestial bodies* in which substance adopting the form in the celestial system, and thus acquires its independence. In meteors, the abstractly particular self-consciousness is opposed by its objectified denial, i.e., the universal, which thus becomes the existence and nature. „*Thus as long as nature as atom and appearance expresses individual self-consciousness and its contradiction, the subjectivity of self-consciousness appears only in the form of matter itself. Where, on the other hand, it becomes independent, it reflects itself in itself, confronts matter in its own shape as independent form.*”²

Marx’s analysis unambiguously pursues the idea that anything, which destroys the ataraxy of the particular self-consciousness, is not eternal. Meteors cancel this ataraxy because they represent the existing universal; in them, nature becomes independent. By implication, the *principles of Epicurean philosophy* include *the absolute and the freedom of self-consciousness*, even though it is only conceived in the form of the particular. Therefore, when the abstractly particular self-consciousness is determined as an absolute principle, all true science is cancelled and overcome. In that case, the nature of things themselves cannot be dominated by the particular. Even more important, everything is overcome that is transcendent with regard to human consciousness,

¹ Ibid., 71.

² Ibid., 72.

that is to say, that primarily belongs to the imaginative reason. However, „if that self-consciousness which knows itself only in the form of abstract universality is raised to an absolute principle, then the door is opened wide to superstitious and unfree mysticism. Stoic philosophy provides the historic proof of this. Abstract-universal self-consciousness has, indeed, the intrinsic urge to affirm itself in the things themselves in which it can only affirm itself by negating them.”¹

The difference between Democritus’ and Epicurus’ atomisms is, in Marx’s view, mainly as follows: while Democritus’ atom is just a general objective expression of an empirical research into nature, Epicurus’ atom brings atomism to its culmination as a *natural science of self-consciousness*, including all the limitations of its time. Therefore, Marx regards Epicurus to be the *greatest Greek enlightened mind*, deserving the praise from Lucretius Carus. And not only his praise. In our times, he has been praised, *inter alia*, by E. Fink: „It is only thought that liberates; it liberates from unbridled cupidity and enormous fear of death, of gods and of the crushing fate... the Epicureans owe cognition and inference for the bliss, the human, and therefore, ultimate bliss illuminating the world, things, and also people to one another, and philosophy becomes to them a garden happiness of being.”²

* * *

It is characteristic of young Marx, that when pondering over the problems of the classical German philosophy, he finds the legitimacy and fruitfulness of the Fichtean-Hegelian application of the *common sense* in its philosophical form to the struggle against the *heavenly and earthly gods*. Marx employs this result of classical German philosophy when

¹ Ibid., 73.

² Cf. Fink, E.: *Oázis štěstí*, 38.

formulating his *philosophical creed* – the struggle against the heavenly and earthly gods is the struggle against despotism and oppression of man by man. This creed came to be the leitmotif of the philosophical position of young Marx as well as of everything that developed from this type of philosophizing.

While Hegel *tactically* rejects the atomistic godlessness, Marx avows it proudly: „Philosophy, as long as a drop of blood shall pulse in its world-subduing and absolutely free heart, will never grow tired of answering its adversaries with the cry of Epicurus: ‘Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious’. Philosophy makes no secret of it. The confession of Prometheus: ‘In simple words, I hate the pack of gods’ is its own confession, its own aphorism against all heavenly and earthly gods who do not acknowledge human self-consciousness as the highest divinity. It will have none other beside... Prometheus is the most eminent saint and martyr in the philosophical calendar”.¹

These words are not sheer proclamation in any case. Marx’s open challenge, from its inception, focussed on the search for the roots of religion in the conditions in which man lives. The comprehension of religion as an *empirical consciousness* that is opposed to *reason*, i.e., to philosophy, results in an unambiguous theoretical rejection of the speculative-theological arguments for God’s existence. In Marx’s view, these arguments are vacuous tautologies – explicitly expressed in this manner: „*That which a particular country is for particular alien gods, the country of reason is for God in general, a region in which he ceases to exist.*”²

Marx asks whether the arguments for God’s existence prove anything else apart from the *existence of the substantial human self-consciousness, its logical explanation*. The ontological

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 30-31.

² *Ibid.*, 105.

proof, for instance? Which being is immediate when thought? Self-consciousness. The answer is therefore unambiguous. That is why Marx claims that „[t]aken in this sense all proofs for the existence of God are proofs of his non-existence. They are refutations of all concepts of a God. The true proofs should have the opposite character: ‘Since nature has been badly constructed, God exists’, ‘Because the world is without reason, therefore God exists’, ‘Because there is no thought, there is God’. But what does that say, except that, for *whom the world appears without reason, hence who is without reason himself, for him God exists? Or lack of reason is the existence of God.*”¹

The radical world-view of young Marx, presented in his doctoral dissertation, is very closely related to Fichte’s *Pro-methean heresy*. Due to the philosophical radicalism of Fichte’s works in relation to religion before 1798 the author was accused of *atheism*. Fichte’s and Marx’s methods of *philosophizing* share several fundamental points. First of all, they bear on the view that the *theoretical content depends on the personality of philosopher*. Both of these thinkers believe that *fearless free spirit* is an unconditional presupposition of the only possible philosophical research. However, their common points of departure are not sufficiently specified for understanding the phenomenon of criticism of religion. It should be noted that the *Fichtean motive* cannot be viewed as Marx’s philosophical *return* to the pre-Hegelian positions.

Young Marx, like J. G. Fichte, does not admit any *demi-urge* of the world or nature in terms of *pure intelligence* or *absolute idea*, or *infinite self-consciousness*. Rather, nature has its own existence. Then, man too, is primarily the product of nature.² Marx appreciates the *godlessness* of Fichte’s practical philosophy. The influence of this godlessness, characterized not only by the adoption of the conclusions of Kant’s critique of God’s existence, but also by rejection of his *moral*

¹ Ibid., 105.

² Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3, 340.

proof, projected, in a very radical form, on the early works of F. W. J. Schelling. It is this aspect that is highlighted by young Marx.

In his early work, *On the Ego As Principle of Philosophy*, Schelling claims that he who does not know any objective God is not the one who has a weak mind; rather, it is he who wants to know God. If we admitted, in accordance with Schelling, that God, determined as an *object*, is a *real basis* of our knowledge, then God, being himself an object, belongs to the *sphere of our knowledge*. By implication, God cannot be viewed as the ultimate point upon which all this sphere hinges. In 1795, Schelling writes with determination: „*The time has come to proclaim to the better part of humanity the freedom of minds, and not to tolerate any longer that they deplore the loss of their fetters.*”¹ The *outspoken youthful ideas* of Schelling in which he developed the criticism of religion, and which were highly appreciated by young Marx, are compelling evidence of the third source of Marx’s criticism of religion.

Marx’s criticism of religion, presented in his doctoral dissertation, draws on and develops as a consequence of the *Young-Hegelian* philosophizing. It is the consequence resulting from the confrontation between the classical German philosophy and religion as a social-spiritual phenomenon of the late 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century. In its essence, it was the radical corollary of the analysis of Hegel’s historical-philosophical conception and the Fichtean-Schellingean approach to self-consciousness and freedom. It over-comes the rationalist cult of reason, and represents a conception of *pure dialectic thought*. By attributing the character of the absolute and eternity to the forms of thought, the classical German philosophers paved the way for the philosophical conclusions formulated by Marx in his doctoral dissertation.

The specific feature of the philosophical and world-view position of young Marx is that it is expressed as an enthusi-

¹ Marx, K. and Engels, F.: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 103.

astic *personal rebellion*, a unique philosophical *Promethean protest* against the traditional conception of God. It is a revolt that wanted to be filled with humanism and, at the same time, critically open for possible future elaboration. Marx's *godlessness* is expressed in a typical *poetic form*, and rightly recalls several classical anti-theist motives of Greek poetry. It can be characterized as the *Promethean atheism* because it is also a significant result of a critical philosophical analysis of the historical-philosophical problems of atomistic philosophy.

5. Nietzsche's polyphonic history of Greek philosophy

A prominent place in the history of German philosophical thought of the 19th century is reserved for the philosophical reflection of the history of philosophy in the work of F. Nietzsche who radically re-evaluated historical-philosophical thought. As stated by E. Fink, Nietzsche's philosophical message represents a menacing question-mark on the way passed by European man. „Nietzsche is a symbol for the suspicion that this path was a wrong track, that man has lost his way and that a reversal and a rejection of everything which hitherto had been considered *holy, good, and true* is required.”¹ In contrast to Hegel's *systematic history of philosophy*, Nietzsche outlines an unsystematic, *critically polyphonic* history of philosophy. The germinal form of its decisive motifs can be earliest found in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, its mature form mainly in his *Philosophy in the Tragic Period of the Greeks*, and the supreme achievements in this field can be found in all the rest of Nietzsche's works. Nietzsche, like Hegel, Schelling, and Marx, offers an original model of the *philosophical history of philosophy*, including a number of philosophically innovating impulses. In the 20th century, these initiatives were further developed in the works of Heidegger, Fink, Patočka, and Gadamer.

Hegel's historical-philosophical conception foregrounds an impersonal approach to the development of spirit. On the other hand, Nietzsche lays emphasis on *personality* from the inception, because *personality* belongs to what is *irrefutable and unquestionable*, what history has to preserve. In accordance with the basic principle of his history of philosophy – „the past may only be reflected from the

¹ Fink, E. 2003. *Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Transl. G. Richter. London and New York: Continuum, 1.

greatest power of the present”¹ – Nietzsche models his philosophical reception of the history of philosophy. Hegel’s historical-philosophical conception is *monumentalist*. It manifests the progress in human knowledge up to its eventual achievement of the ultimate absolute goal. Nietzsche’s philosophical analysis of the history of philosophy is critical and programmatically *unsystematic*. Also here, Nietzsche closely adheres to the idea that „the will to a system means the fallacy of honesty.”²

Very soon, Nietzsche arrives at the conclusion that philosophical systems are true for their founders only. Other philosophers perceive them as a *great fallacy*. As a result, his conception of the history of philosophy is focussed on the question of what philosophy actually is and what it should be.³ Obviously, the answer to this question is not simple. Importantly, Nietzsche searches for the answer only in connection with the clarification of the phenomenon of *Greek Presocratic philosophy*.

In his early period, Nietzsche pays much attention to the philological and philosophical reflection of Greek culture and education. He is so intrigued by and impressed with them that they represents the most evident basis of his critical philosophical work. His deep interest in Greek culture in general (the phenomenon of tragedy) and Greek philosophy in particular (Presocratic philosophy) is equally reflected in his early period as well as in all the subsequent periods of his work.⁴

Nietzsche’s attempt to explain the history of Greek philosophy is purposefully designed in a simplified way. He picks out only that particular point from each „system which is a little bit of *personality*, and belongs to that which

¹ Nietzsche, F. 1996. „Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks.” In: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. G. Clive (ed.). New York: Meridian, 217 ff.

² Ibid., 638.

³ Ibid., 152 ff.

⁴ Fink, E.: *Nietzsches Philosophy*, 20 ff.

is irrefutable, and indiscussable, which history has to preserve: it is a first attempt to regain and recreate those natures by comparison, and to let the polyphony of Greek nature at least resound once again. The task is, to bring to light that which we must *always love and revere* and of which no later piece knowledge can rob us: the great man.”¹

Nietzsche’s history of Greek philosophy provides an unconventional celebration of the Greek character. He asks briskly, why sound nations need philosophy. The Greeks as a healthy nation have *justified philosophy once and for ever by having philosophized*. The strength and stamina of the Greeks consists, in Nietzsche’s view, in their philosophizing as men of culture and with the aims of culture. By drawing on various cultural achievements of the ancient world, they saved themselves the trouble of reinventing the elements of philosophy and set directly to work. The Greeks fill out, enhance, and purify the former knowledge „that only now in a higher sense and in a purer sphere have they become inventors. For they discovered the *typical philosopher’s genius*, and the inventions of all posterity have added nothing essential.”²

Nietzsche is impressed with the ideal philosophical community ranging from Thales to Socrates, and appreciates the direct connection between their *thought and their character*. Greek sages were the only philosophical community to devote their life exclusively to knowledge. They found their own form and elaborated it in most minute details. One giant engendered another. Moreover, these giants of intellect conducted the discussion of spirits in an unruffled way. Our modern deafness prevents us, however, from *hearing and understanding* their discussion. Nietzsche believes that Greek sages – from Thales to Socrates – discussed everything what was Hellenic. „In their intercourse, as already in their personalities, they express distinctly the

¹ Nietzsche, F.: *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, 141.

² *Ibid.*, 154.

great features of Greek genius of which the whole of Greek history is a shadowy impression, a hazy copy, which consequently speaks less clearly. If we could rightly interpret the total life of the Greek nation, we should ever find reflected only that picture which in her highest geniuses shines with more resplendent colours.”¹

In Nietzsche’s view, the picture of Hellenism is striking, since while other nations have their saints the Greeks have their seven sages. A philosopher is not an accidental phenomenon in the history of Greece. He enters history as a noble warrior in order to fulfil the same mission which brought forth tragedy. Nietzsche assumes that „[t]he opinion of those philosophers on Life and Existence altogether means so much more than a modern opinion because they had before themselves Life in a luxuriant perfection, and because with them, unlike us, the sense of the thinker was not muddled by the disunion engendered by the wish for freedom, beauty, fullness of life and the love for truth that only asks: What is the good of Life at all?”²

Nietzsche maintains that Greek culture may answer the question of the philosopher’s mission. It is only this culture that can justify philosophy because this culture alone knows and can prove that philosopher is not an accidental *wanderer*. Therefore, he suggests, „[t]here is a steely necessity which fetters the philosopher to a true Culture.”³ But what is the position of a philosopher in a *non-genuine culture*? He becomes an incalculable, hence, terror-inspiring comet. In this way, Nietzsche predicts his own self-identification of a philosopher in a non-genuine culture.

Greek philosophy begins with a seemingly *preposterous idea* that water is the origin and mother-womb of all things. Nietzsche maintains that this claim primarily refers to the origin of things, and does so without figure and fable; it

¹ Ibid., 155.

² Ibid., 156.

³ Ibid., 156.

contains an idea – in the chrysalis state – that *everything is one*. „The thought of Thales has rather its value – even after the perception of its indemonstrableness – in the very fact that it was meant unmythically and unallegorically. The Greeks among whom Thales became so suddenly conspicuous were the antitype of all realists by only believing essentially in the reality of men and gods, and by contemplating the whole of nature as if it were only a disguise, masquerade, and metamorphosis of these god-men. Man was to them the truth and essence of things; anything else mere phenomenon and deceiving play. For that very reason they experienced incredible difficulty in conceiving of ideas as ideas.”¹

Nietzsche considers Thales to be a creative master who, without any useless mystic clouding the things, begins to see nature in its depths; he begins to trust nature. „The philosopher tries to make the total-chord of the universe re-echo within himself and then to project it into ideas outside himself...”²

This tradition is followed by Anaximander. In Nietzsche’s view, he was the first philosophical author of ancient times. Anaximander’s sentence – ‘Whence things originated, thither, according to necessity, they must return and perish; for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustices according to the order of time’³ – is regarded to be a *milestone of Greek philosophy*.

Nietzsche finds Anaximander very close to his philosophy mainly because the latter puts emphasis on the *truly human* rather than the *logical* in his speculations about ‘Being’. Here, we encounter an interesting problem of the comprehension of *becoming as injustice* which must be punished with destruction. „Everything that has once come into existence also perishes, whether we think of human life

¹ Ibid., 160-161.

² Ibid., 162.

³ Ibid., 163.

or of water or of heat and cold; everywhere where definite qualities are to be noticed, we are allowed to prophesy the extinction of these qualities – according to the all-embracing proof of experience. Thus a being that possesses definite qualities and consists of them can never be the origin and principle of things...”¹ Consequently, genuine existence cannot possess any definite qualities, otherwise it would have come into existence and perished like all other things. „In order that Becoming may not cease, the Primordial-being must be indefinite. The immortality and eternity of the Primordial-being lies not in an infiniteness and inexhaustibility... but in this, that it lacks the definite qualities which lead to destruction...”² The *Primordial-being* as the indefinite (*apeiron*) is superior to the process of becoming, which guarantees its eternity. The indefinite as the *mother-womb of all things* is aptly expressed negatively, which, to Nietzsche, recalls the *Kantian thing-in-itself* because of the absence of any predicate. Anaximander was the first in the history of philosophy to avoid restricting the question of the origin of the world to purely physical matter. He was the first Greek in general who „with daring grasp caught up the tangle of the most profound ethical problem.”³ This accounts for the special emphasis laid on Anaximander in the two centuries of the tragic age of Presocratic philosophy. Nietzsche labels its first period as the *Anaximanderean* period and the second as the *Parmenidesean* period.

The crucial problem of the tragic age philosophy, i.e., Presocratic philosophy, is the *doctrine of Being*. Anaximander addresses the issues beyond the horizon of *physis* which point to the question of *Being* „How can anything perish that has a right to exist? Whence that restless Becoming and giving-birth, whence that expression of painful distortion on the face of Nature, whence the never-ending dirge

¹ Ibid., 164.

² Ibid., 164.

³ Ibid., 164.

in all realms of existence?”¹ In this remote history of the germs of philosophical thought Nietzsche identifies one of the dominant problems of his own philosophical thought which irritates him throughout his life: „Out of this world of injustice, of audacious apostasy from the primordial unity of things, Anaximander flees into a metaphysical castle, leaning out of which he turns his gaze far and wide in order at last, after a pensive silence, to address to all beings this question: ‘What is your Existence worth? And if it is worth nothing why are you there? By your guilt, I observe, you sojourn in this world. You will have to expiate it by death. Look how your earth fades; the seas decrease and dry up, the marine shell on the mountain shows you how much already they have dried up; fire destroys your world even now, finally it will end in smoke and ashes. But again and again such a world of transitorines will ever build itself up; who shall redeem you from the curse of Becoming?’ ”²

Nietzsche is struck by the phenomenon of permanent variability, the becoming, and perishing, an eternal and never-ending natural circulation, and points out that such a world will be *created* again and again through its variability and transience. All of his philosophical works stress the question of who at all could show interest in the redemption of man from this *curse of becoming*.

Nietzsche’s analysis of the beginnings of Greek philosophical thought comes to a head in the specification of two decisive questions of Ionic natural philosophy: (i) How is it that plurality is possible, if there exists an eternal unity?, and (ii) Why has not everything that has become perished long ago? His answer is as follows: „...the eternal Becoming can have its origin only in the eternal ‘Being’, the conditions for that apostasy from the eternal ‘Being’ to a Becoming in injustice are ever the same, the constellation of things cannot help itself being thus fashioned, that no end is to be

¹ Ibid., 164.

² Ibid., 164-165.

seen of that stepping forth of the individual being out of the lap of the 'Indefinite'.¹ Nietzsche is well aware of the unsafe ground on which Thales and, mainly, Anaximander move. „The more one wanted to approach the problem of solving how out of the Indefinite, the Definite, out of the Eternal the Temporal, out of the Just the Unjust could by secession ever originate, the darker the night became.”²

The problem of becoming in the history of Greek philosophy is, in Nietzsche's view, first illuminated by Heraclitus as a *divine flash of lightning*. His fascination with Heraclitus – related to his conception of the philosophical message of this great personality of Greek philosophical thought – becomes a lifelong matter. If there is any philosopher whom he respects all his life and adheres to as his *teacher* then it is Heraclitus.³ The most significant points of Heraclitus' philosophy are adopted by Nietzsche in a concentrated form: *the eternal wave-surfing and rhythm of things* – that's the whole world like *theatre*. Unlike Anaximander, Heraclitus denies the duality of two quite diverse worlds. „...he no longer distinguished a physical world from a metaphysical, a realm of definite qualities from a realm of indefinable indefiniteness.”⁴ Nietzsche points out that, in this way, Heraclitus denies *Being altogether*. Consequently, this world of ours is nothing but *Becoming*. The essence of reality is nothing but *Becoming*; there is no other way of *Being*. „The eternal and exclusive *Becoming*, the total instability of all reality and actuality, which continually works and becomes and never *is*, ... is an awful and appalling conception, and in its effects most nearly related to that sensation by which during an earthquake one loses confidence in the firmly grounded earth. It required an astonishing strength

¹ Ibid., 165-166.

² Ibid., 166.

³ Ibid., 588.

⁴ Ibid., 166.

to translate this effect into its opposite, into the sublime, into happy astonishment.”¹

The process of becoming and perishing in Heraclitus’ philosophy is closely related to the category of the *opposite* – the *contradiction*.

Nietzsche, like Hegel, points out this fundamental dimension of Heraclitism without which this doctrine would not be what it has come to be. Heraclitus abstracts the category of opposite through his observation of the proper course of becoming and passing. He understands the reality as a permanent polarity of separated forces, of opposite actions striving after reunion. „The common people, of course, think to recognize something rigid, completed, consistent; but the fact of the matter is that at any instant, bright and dark, sour and sweet are side by side and attached to one another like two wrestlers of whom sometimes the one succeeds, sometimes the other.”² All Becoming results from the war of opposite forces. „[T]he definite and to us seemingly persistent qualities express only the momentary predominance of the one fighter, but with that the war is not at an end; the wrestling continues to all eternity. Everything happens according to this struggle, and this very struggle manifests eternal justice.”³

Nietzsche discusses in detail the reasons for his view that such a doctrine could have only been discovered and made the fundament of *cosmody* by a Greek. Historically, the Greeks prepared the ground for this kind of theoretical reflection of the reality, first in their mythological-religious conception (for example, *Hesiod* in the depiction of *Eris* who was declared to be the cosmic principle), and later, by its application to political, artistic, and sporting activities. Heraclitus conceives of *cosmos* as a remarkable order in which *regularity* and *certainty* are permanently present in each

¹ Ibid., 168.

² Ibid., 168.

³ Ibid., 168-169.

Becoming. Therefore, Becoming itself can be neither bad nor unjust. Heraclitus vigorously addresses the Anaximandrian problem of the one and the many. Unlike Anaximander, he does not resort to the mother-womb of the metaphysically uncertain, and proclaims the following: „*The One is the Many...* The world is the *game* of Zeus, or expressed more physically, the game of fire with itself, the *One* is only in this sense at the same time the *Many*.“¹

This aspect of Heraclitus' philosophy appears to have struck Nietzsche most of all. In confrontation with this ancient Greek position, he views the world in the unity of philosophy, arts, and aesthetics. This world should not be viewed from a moral standpoint: „A Becoming and Passing, a building and destroying, without any moral bias, in perpetual innocence is in this world only the play of the artist and of the child. And similarly, just as the child and the artist play, the eternally living fire plays, builds up, and destroys, in innocence...“²

Nietzsche maintains that this method of contemplating reality is that of an *aesthetic man*. Antagonism and harmony are united in the process of creating a work of art. Therefore, any ethical requirement, imposed upon Heraclitus' philosophy, indicates the misunderstanding of the essentials of his theory. The Heraclitean world is the *beautiful, innocent play of Aeon*; even more important, man in this world „does not occupy a specially favoured position in nature...“³ This aspect of Heraclitism becomes a permanent basis for Nietzsche's philosophy because it, among other things, assumes that the world should be viewed as a *play*.⁴ From this point of view, it should not be approached pathetically, and in no way in terms of *morality*. In Nietzsche's opinion, this position makes Heraclitus a philosopher who postu-

¹ Ibid., 171.

² Ibid., 173.

³ Ibid., 174.

⁴ Fink, E. 1960. *Spiel als Weltsymbol*. Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 25 ff.

lates a theory of law in becoming and of play in necessity, which is still valid. He is a Greek philosopher who „raised the curtain of this greatest stage play.”¹ To Nietzsche, each word of Heraclitus manifests, as it were, the *pride and the majesty of truth*. He notes, however, that climbing a *rope ladder of logic* does not provide us with truth. Nietzsche characterizes this truth as one based on intuition, as the truth of maturity in sibylline ecstasy.

Heraclitus is regarded by Nietzsche to be a unique pattern of philosopher. His life fate and the method of aphoristic philosophizing,² with the specific *darkness* of his philosophical style, has, no doubt, become a compelling example of true philosophizing. In a sense, this may be understood as a specific Nietzschean *self-diagnosis*. Then, the emphasis is chiefly laid on the nature of a philosopher in terms of *wandering lonely along his path*. „His talents are the most rare, in a certain sense the most unnatural and at the same time exclusive and hostile even toward kindred talents. The wall of his self-sufficiency must be of diamond, if it is not to be demolished and broken, for everything is in motion against him. His journey to immortality is more cumbersome and impeded than any other and yet nobody can believe more firmly than the philosopher that he will attain his goal by that journey – because he does not know where he is to stand if not on the widely spread wings of all time; for the disregard of everything present and momentary lies in the essence of the great philosophic nature.”³

Nietzsche views Heraclitus in his *royal self-esteem* and conviction that he is the only *wooer of truth*. And as such, he is actually doomed to life in his own *solar system*. By implication, he must be looked for there. An indispensable aspect of this kind of *existence* is *solitude*. The *feeling of solitude* is an inherent feature of this Ephesian thinker. This implies the

¹ Nietzsche, F. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, 176.

² Cf. Löwith, K. 1987. *Nietzsche. Sämtliche Schriften*. Bd. 6. Stuttgart: V. Kolhammer, 111.

³ Nietzsche, F.: *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, 175.

attitude to other people: „No paramount feeling of compassionate agitation, no desire to help, heal, and save emanates from him. He is a star without an atmosphere. His eye, directed blazingly inward, looks outward, for appearance's sake only, extinct and icy.”¹ Nietzsche avows Heraclitean principles which are identified in *seeking and investigating oneself and knowing oneself and no one else*.

Nietzsche assumes that the decisive change in the history of the tragic age of Greek philosophy is connected with Heraclitus' opponent – *Parmenides*, characterized by Nietzsche as a *prophet of truth*. He is a thinker formed, as it were, out of *ice* and shedding around himself *cold, piercing light*. Parmenides continues in seeking the answer to the Anaximandrian problem (the one and the many), and puts emphasis on the possibility of escaping from the *realm of Becoming*. In addition, he copes with the possible Heraclitean conception of becoming and perishing. Parmenides introduced the philosophical concepts of *Existent* and *Nonexistent*, *Being* and *Not-Being*. Nietzsche realizes that Parmenides and Heraclitus „looked repeatedly at that very world which Anaximander had condemned in so melancholy a way and declared to be the place of wanton crime and at the same time the penitentiary cell for the injustice of Becoming.”²

We already know Heraclitus' solution. Parmenides took an opposite approach. Rather than *Becoming* the focal point of his attention is *constancy-eternal presence-eternal Unity*. By comparing the qualities with one another he concludes that they should be arranged in two columns. Based on the essential quality pair – *bright and dark* – the latter quality is considered to be the negation of the former. In this way, he distinguishes between the positive and the negative qualities, and tries to find this essential opposite in the whole of nature and subsequently explain it on the basis of knowledge. Our *empirical world* comes to be unnaturally divided

¹ Ibid., 176.

² Ibid., 178.

into two different spheres – the sphere of positive qualities (with a bright, fiery, warm, light, rare, active-masculine character) and the sphere of negative qualities (with a dark, earthy, cold, heavy, dense, passive-feminine character). Nietzsche maintains that it is here where the specifically Parmenidean can be traced: „Instead of the expressions ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ he used the standing term ‘existent’ and ‘non-existent’ and had arrived with this at the proposition, that, in contradiction to Anaximander, this our world itself contains something ‘existent’, and of course something ‘nonexistent’.”¹

An unsurmountable obstacle to this philosophizing logic is, however, the question: „... what is the Becoming? And here was the moment where he had to leap, in order not to fall...”² Nietzsche very suggestively explains that Parmenides by necessity encounters the problem concerning his originally determined interacting opposites (the existent and the nonexistent) mainly when „[h]e was suddenly caught up, mistrusting, by the idea of negative quality, of the ‘Nonexistent’”. For can something which does not exist be a quality? Or to put the question in a broader sense: can anything indeed which does not exist, exist? The only form of knowledge in which we at once put unconditional trust and the disapproval of which amounts to madness is the tautology $A = A$. But this very tautological knowledge called inexorably to him: what does not exist, exists not! What is, is! Suddenly he feels upon his life the load of an enormous logical sin; for had he not always without hesitation assumed that *there were existing* negative qualities, in short a ‘Nonexistent’, that therefore, to express it by a formula, $A = \text{Not-}A$, which indeed could only be advanced by the most out-and-out perversity of thinking. It is true, as he recollected, the whole great mass of men judge

¹ Ibid., 179.

² Ibid., 179.

with the same perversity; he himself has only participated in the general crime against logic.”¹

It is this special moment in Parmenides’ development which, in Nietzsche’s view, brought him to the disclosure of the famous principle, the key to the secret of the world – *the tautological truth of Being*. „That which is true must exist in eternal presence; about it cannot be said ‘it was’, ‘it will be’.”² The basic logic of philosophical thought seems to be inexorable. The existent cannot come out of the non-existent. The same holds true of the passing and any other change. Everything is conditioned by the unshakable validity of the claim that anything what *has been* or *will be* does not exist. This, however, cannot apply to the existent, because it can never be said that it does not exist. „The ‘Existent’ is indivisible, for where is the second power, which should divide it? It is immovable, for whither should it move itself? It cannot be infinitely great nor infinitely small, for it is perfect and a perfectly given infinitude is a contradiction. Thus, the ‘Existent’ is suspended, delimited, perfect, immovable, everywhere equally balanced and such equilibrium equally perfect at any point, like a globe, but not in a space, for otherwise this space would be a second ‘Existent’. But there cannot exist several ‘Existents’, for in order to separate them, something would have to exist which was not existing, an assumption which neutralizes itself. Thus there exists only the eternal Unity.”³

Based on these considerations, Nietzsche concludes that Parmenides actually conceived the existent as a *static dead globe*. What we see, hear, and feel around us is, at a particular historical moment of philosophical thought, rigorously rejected, and space is provided exclusively to the power of thought. What follows is the process of strained, total separation of sense-cognition from the capacity of

¹ Ibid., 181.

² Ibid., 182.

³ Ibid., 182.

thinking in abstractions. Thus, Parmenides „demolished the intellect itself, and incited people to that wholly erroneous separation of ‘mind’ and ‘body’...”¹ If we accept the position that any sense-perception results in false knowledge, then we find ourselves in a bizarre world which we can understand but in which we actually cannot live. „Truth is now to dwell only in the most faded, most abstract generalities, in the empty husks of the most indefinite words, as in a maze of cobwebs; and by such a ‘truth’ now the philosopher sits, bloodless as an abstraction and surrounded by a web of formulas.”² Nietzsche argues that while a spider wants its victim’s blood, the Parmenidean philosopher hates his victim’s blood from the bottom of his heart because it is actually the blood of Empiricism sacrificed by himself.

A major disagreement with, or even an attack on, Parmenides’ theory concentrates on his dominant ontological notion, the concept of *Being*. Through this notion, the Greek philosopher escapes from the abundant reality to a deadly cool tranquility, to a vacuous notion. Therefore, Nietzsche aptly characterizes Parmenides’ considerations as thought without flavour, colour, or soul. It is thought devoid of blood, religiosity, and ethical warmth. This thought lacks any intoxication and is abstract-schematic through and through. The enormous Parmenidian *certainly*-oriented effort evidently results in serious distortion of views of the reality, which is permanently becoming, luxuriant, varied, blossoming, deceiving, stimulating and living. „Experience offered him nowhere a ‘Being’ as he imagined it to himself, but from the fact that he could conceive of it he concluded that it must exist; a conclusion which rests upon the supposition that we have an organ of knowledge which reaches into the nature of things and is independent of experience. The material of our thinking according to Parmenides does

¹ Ibid., 183.

² Ibid., 126.

not exist in perception at all but is brought in from somewhere else, from an extra-material world to which by thinking we have direct access.”¹

Nietzsche briskly attacks Parmenides’ construction of *Being* and *Not-Being* which, in his view, is logically vacuous since there cannot be any object lying at the bottom of it. To him, words are mere symbols standing for the relations of things to other things, and as such, they never touch absolute truth. Nietzsche points out that „the word ‘Being’ designates only the most general relation, which connects all things, as does the word ‘Not-Being’. If however the Existence of the things themselves be unprovable, then the relation of things among themselves, the so-called ‘Being’ and ‘Not-Being’, will not bring us any nearer to the land of truth. By means of words and ideas we shall never get behind the wall of the relations, let us say into some fabulous primal cause of things, and even in the pure forms of sensitive faculty and of the intellect, in space, time and causality we gain nothing, which might resemble a *veritas aeterna*.”²

When analyzing Parmenides’ concept of *Being* Nietzsche also deals with the etymology of this concept. The concept of Being is revealed through its very poor empirical origin. „The idea of *Being*! As though that idea did not indicate the most miserable empiric origin already in the etymology of the word. For *esse* means at the bottom: *to breathe*, if man uses it of all other things, then he transmits the conviction that he himself breathes and lives by means of a metaphor, *i.e.*, by means of something illogical to the other things and conceives of their Existence as a Breathing according to human analogy.”³ In Nietzsche’s view, the original meaning of the word *to be* soon becomes effaced. Obviously, man accounts for the existence of other things in an anthropo-

¹ Nietzsche, F. 1911. „Early Greek Philosophy and Other Essays”. In: *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Ed. O. Levy. New York: The Macmillan Company, 126.

² Ibid., 127-128.

³ Ibid., 128.

morphous way, which, many times, rests upon an illogical transferral. Through his analysis, Nietzsche wants to point out that the Parmenidean method of viewing reality, completed, for example, with Zeno's idea of the *infinite*, bears witness to the *fallacy of absolute separation of the sense-world from the notional world and of the identity of Being and Thought*.

One of the last great Presocratic thinkers who tried to overcome the separation of the sense-world from the notional world was Anaxagoras. Nietzsche notes that Anaxagoras preserves some of Parmenides' motifs (for example, the idea that the unequal can never come forth from the equal, and that out of the one existent, change can never be explained; otherwise we could hardly work up to the explanation of the *plurality of qualities*). „But if the world in fact is full of the most different qualities then these must, in case they are not appearance, have a *Being, i.e.*, must be eternal, increate, imperishable and ever coexisting.”¹

As a result, the only productive possibility for Anaxagoras is to recognize the existence of infinitely small, innumerable substances, „but never more, never less, and never new ones. Only Motion, playing dice with them throws them into ever new combinations. That Motion however is a truth and not Appearance, Anaxagoras proved in opposition to Parmenides by the indisputable succession of our conceptions in thinking.”² In this way, he removes Parmenides' *dead Being* because there are many *existents*; it goes without saying that all of them are in motion. Certainly, this raises an important question: *Where does motion originate from?* Anaxagoras is aware of the difficulties inherent in this question. He therefore resorts to the unique philosophical construction of *mind – nous*. Reason is viewed as *spirit in itself*. Nietzsche is exalted when finding out that this spirit in itself is assigned *arbitrariness*. He speaks of

¹ Ibid., 135.

² Ibid., 136.

the *beautiful knowledge* of the ancient Greek.¹ Experience makes Anaxagoras confirm the validity of the *proposition of becoming*, from which he proceeds to the theory of *chaos*. He adopts the theory of natural sciences that *everything comes into being from everything*. „According to these hypotheses Anaxagoras conceives of the world’s primal existence: perhaps as similar to a dust-like mass of infinitely small, concrete particles of which every one is specifically simple and possesses one quality only, yet so arranged that every specific quality is represented in an infinite number of individual particles. Such particles Aristotle has called ‘Homoiomere’...”²

Anaxagoras’s conception of the primordial *intermixture of the seeds* admits one exception, which is, understandably, bound to the concept of *nous*. *Nous* is neither part of any thing in the original chaotic universal mixture nor is it later admixed with any other thing. *Nous*, „which alone has motion in Itself, alone possesses ruling power in this world and shows it through moving the grains of matter.”³ Nietzsche appreciates the fact that Anaxagoras envisaged the becoming as a *phenomenon of art* rather than a *moral phenomenon*. Anaxagoras’ assumption that he is here in the world in order to *view the heavens and all the cosmic order* is after Nietzsche’s heart. Nietzsche also agrees with the view that *spirit is free*, and that *nous* is *unconditioned, undetermined, that it can act without being controlled by causes or ends*.

Anaxagoras puts an end to the stage of Presocratic philosophical thought. The origins of the next stage are connected with the theories of Socrates and Plato. Their philosophies and their significance in the history of human thought are subject to very emphatic, and sometimes even *aggressive philosophical interpretation*. Socrates is, in Nietzsche’s view, the most problematic man of ancient times.

¹ Ibid., 143.

² Ibid., 148.

³ Ibid., 149.

Nietzsche characterizes him as an opponent of Dionysus even in his early *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. He is almost in a towering passion when he states the following: „Who is it that may dare single-handed to negate the Greek genius that... as the deepest abyss and the highest height, is sure of our astonished veneration? What demonic power is this that dares to spill this magic potion into dust? What demigod is this to whom the chorus of the noblest spirits of mankind must call out: Alas! /You have shattered / The beautiful world/ With brazen fist;/ It falls, it is scattered!”¹

Nietzsche reveals Socrates’ secret in his miraculous *daimon* – God’s warning voice. To Socrates, instinct is a critic and consciousness is a creator. Socrates, says Nietzsche, is of an excessively logical nature, which makes him the first typical non-mystic. Nietzsche aptly shifts the effects of the phenomenon of logical Socratism to the Postsocratic period of Plato and other philosophers. In his classification, *logical schematism* is nothing but a disguised *Apollonian tendency*. However, as we know, Nietzsche is a staunch adherent of the *Dionysian tendency*, which explains his crushing criticism of Socrates’ and Plato’s philosophies.

Nietzsche is mainly irritated by the following Socratic tenets: *virtue is knowledge, sins result from ignorance, and the virtuous are happy*. These three basic postulates contain a latent danger of a tragic perception of reality. Nietzsche even identifies this danger with the death of tragedy.² While the anti-Dionysian tendency started before Socrates, it was he who instigated its grandiose flight. Then, should art become just an appendix to science, as follows from the logic of Socrates’ philosophy?

Nietzsche’s question – Who actually are the Greeks? – necessarily resulted in confrontation with the phenomenon of *Socratism*. If the Greeks are those to whom our culture

¹ Nietzsche, F. 1968. „The Birth of Tragedy.” In: *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Transl. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollindale. New York: Modern Library, 88.

² Ibid., 91.

was entrusted, what is meant by *Socratism* as a type of human consideration? Nietzsche assumes that Socrates is a sort of theoretical man. This sort of man is infinitely happy about what exists. With his practical ethics he argues against pessimism. Socrates is characterized by „the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it.”¹ This is, in Nietzsche’s view, the grand metaphysical error, or instinct, accompanying science throughout its history.

Nietzsche makes Socrates a *mystic leader of science*, followed by other philosophical schools embodying the *universal thirst for knowledge*. This universality, which has become the domain of science, has been continuously woven into the *unified network of thought*. In this way, Nietzsche ascribes to Socrates the decisive turn and breakthrough in world history. He becomes an archetype of theoretical optimism – the belief that the essence of things can be revealed. Socrates considers knowledge to be a *panacea*; and error or ignorance a cardinal evil. Nietzsche mainly resents Socrates’ effort to capture reality by means of notions, judgements, and conclusions. This is, in his view, a conquering act *par excellence*.

Socrates and Plato are regarded by Nietzsche as symptoms of decline, the tools of Greek breakdown. And as such, they are pseudo-Greek and anti-Greek. In criticizing these two Greek philosophers, Nietzsche becomes highly biased. Socrates is labelled as a *clown* whose only achievement was that he was taken seriously by his contemporaries. He perceives him as a kind of *misunderstanding* that caused considerable evil in the moral sphere. Socrates’

¹ Ibid., 95.

equation: *Reason = Virtue = Happiness* is considered the weirdest equation ever seen.¹

Socrates and Plato introduce, in Nietzsche's view, a new type of philosophizing which concentrates on the play with notions. Life disappears, and is replaced with the idolatry of notions. This idolatry puts any life in jeopardy. Therefore, Nietzsche makes Plato responsible for that erroneous separation of spirit and body, which has been imposed upon philosophy as a curse ever since. Plato's *true world* is nothing but a history of one fallacy: „...the worst, the most tiresome, and most dangerous of errors hitherto has been a dogmatist error – namely, Plato's invention of the Pure Spirit and the Good in Itself.”² Nietzsche sees the reason in the fact that Plato's conception of spirit and the good amounted to the very inversion of truth, mainly in relation to *life*. For this reason, he regards him as a boring philosopher, as a philosopher whom he deeply distrusts. He is an overmoralized and *preexistentially Christian* philosopher. Nietzsche labels Plato's philosophy as a *big swindle*. In the face of reality, Plato is a coward – therefore he resorts to the ideal.

Nietzsche is mainly irritated by Plato's division of the world into the *genuine world and the apparent world*. The model of the *true (the other)* world was devised as an instrument for devaluating the *only world* there is „in order to retain no goal, no reason, no task for our earthly reality!”³ Then, notions like *soul, spirit*, and their *immortality*, pursue the goal of despising the body. Nietzsche's struggle against Plato's philosophical project of the *true world* (The true world – attainable by the sage, the religious, and the virtuous – lives in them, *is them*. The most ancient form of idea, relatively clever, simple, and compelling. A paraphrase of the sentence I, Plato, *am truth*.) and Christianity as a *Platonism for the*

¹ Nietzsche, F.: „The Twilight of the Idols.” In: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, 188.

² Nietzsche, F.: „Beyond Good and Evil.” In: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, 123.

³ Nietzsche, F.: „Ecce homo.” In: *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 790.

people is perceived as a *magnificent tension of soul*¹ related to the re-appraisal of all values in order, primarily, to emphasize the meaning of *actual life*.

Nietzsche's philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy, in particular, the Presocratic period, results in his rejection of the conception of a *grandiose history of philosophy*. Such a conception is not necessary! The knowledge of the history of philosophy as a *scholarly sum of knowledge* about the development of philosophy is worthless. Reading through an abundance of *foreign and deviant opinions* is regarded by Nietzsche to be the most disgusting and the least appropriate activity of a philosopher. A real thinker has never dealt with the scholarly history of the past.

Nietzsche's conception of the history of philosophy directs its decisive *attack* against the traditional approach to metaphysics. Among other things, it makes it possible to complete perfectly the Nietzschean anti-Hegelian motion. It is dominated by the claim that our spiritual traditions – Platonism, metaphysics, morality, Christian-ity – represent the main obstacle to comprehension of the world and man. In his view, this tradition has opposite effects, i.e., the enslavement, humiliation, and self-destruction of man. All that has been dealt with by philosophers over millennia is sheer mummied concepts. Nothing real has ever come out of their hands. Therefore, Nietzsche labels the philosophers from Socrates to Plato as concept idolaters. And as such, they endanger everything living. By deifying notions philosophers, in fact, kill them.

Nietzsche cannot forgive the whole philosophical tradition from Plato to Hegel the fact that they do injustice to the senses. In contrast to this tradition, he himself postulates that senses do not lie. Lie enters into them through our manipulation with their evidence. This view is supported by the categories of traditional metaphysics, such as

¹ Nietzsche, F.: „Beyond Good and Evil.” In: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, 123.

unity, eternity, substance, subject, duration, etc. Consequently, Nietzsche maintains that „[r]eason is the cause of our falsifying the evidence of our the senses. Insofar as the senses show us a state of Becoming, of transiency, and of change, they do not lie. But in declaring that Being was an empty illusion, Heraclitus will remain eternally right. The ‘apparent’ world is the only world: the ‘true world’ is no more than a false adjunct thereto.”¹

Nietzsche fiercely objects to the speculative traditions of reason in the history of metaphysics, because, as well as belittling the importance of senses in our comprehension of the world, they also feature a specific *idiosyncrasy*. It pertains to confusing the last and the first things. ‘These highest and most universal concepts are, in his view, the most vacuous, and therefore should not be regarded as the origin of reality. „All superior values are of the first rank, all the highest concepts – that of Being, of the Absolute, of Goodness, of Truth, and of Perfection; all these things cannot have been evolved, they must therefore be *causa sui*. All these things cannot, however, be unlike one another, they cannot be opposed to one another. Thus they attain to their stupendous concept ‘God’. The last, most attenuated, and emptiest thing is postulated as the first thing, as the absolute cause, as *ens realissimum*. Fancy humanity having to take the brain diseases of morbid cobweb-spinners seriously! – And it has paid dearly for having done so.”²

Nietzsche’s polyphonic history of Greek philosophy encompasses, in a germinal form, all the dominant philosophical themes and problems which he developed in his later works. They concern the re-evaluation of the essential Greek philosophical values, and are intrinsically connected with the emergence of a tragic comprehension of the world, the place and the meaning of arts, and of the aesthetic view of reality, the comprehension of life, culture,

¹ Nietzsche, F.: *The Twilight of the Idols*, 588.

² *Ibid.*, 589.

and our spiritual heritage in general. It goes without saying that Nietzsche's *Philosophy in the Tragic Period of the Greeks* is an excellent example of a philosophical account of the history of pre-Socratic philosophy. Although a number of objections may be raised to it, in its core, it is a *philosophical* interpretation of the history of Greek philosophy, an attempt at a discussion with great thinkers.

6. Husserl and the history of philosophy

The development of Husserl's philosophical views was a complex and multi-layer process. The late Husserl came up with a self-critique concerning the systematic development of his phenomenological theory, because his early theory of phenomenology had been built up as a theory which grew out of an extra-Kantian Enlightenment logicism of Bolzano and Brentano,¹ and was considered by Husserl to be a static phenomenology. An in-depth apprehension of this fact is connected, among other things, with Husserl's straightforward characterization of philosophizing as *radicality* in his *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* (1911). The main goal is to avoid adopting anything pregiven and to eliminate anything traditional from the origin. Husserl assumes an extreme position when claiming that *philosophy does not make us philosophers* and that research must be instigated by things and problems rather than by philosophy. In principle, philosophy is the science of true beginnings, of causes.. The science of the radical must be radical in its procedure in every respect. First of all, it may not give up until it identifies its absolutely clear beginnings, absolutely clear problems. The actual sense of these problems is to determine the method and the essential working field of absolutely clearly pre-given things. However, it never may quit its radical *unbiased* position. In addition, from inception it must, for example, identify the inherent features of things with empirical data, i.e., it may not be blind to those ideas which are abundant in an intermediate opinion.²

Husserl's *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* implements the programmatic declaration published in his earlier work *An Idea of Phenomenology* where he frames his conception as a *theory of knowledge*. Phenomenology is conceived here mainly

¹ Cibulka, J. 1996. *Smysl a fakticita*. Bratislava: Veda, 40 ff.

² Husserl, E. 1981. „Philosophy as Rigorous Science”. In: Husserl: *Shorter Works*. Ed. P. McCormick and F.A.Elliston. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 166 ff.

as a *critique of knowledge* the purpose of which is to explain whether and under what conditions knowledge, in the true sense of the word, is possible.¹ He believes his philosophical conception to allow for an explanation of the essential philosophical problems which have not been solved in the pre-Husserlean history of philosophy.

The early Husserl maintains that philosophy cannot, and the new philosophy may not come into being *from its own mother-womb*. The historical-philosophical knowledge is almost neglected, and is not considered to be the main source of productive philosophical thinking. However, in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*² which he considers to be the *eventually found introduction to the phenomenological philosophy*, the late Husserl can hardly imagine this work and the specification of its central problems without any historical-philosophical context. This big *Husserlean paradox* has not found an adequate response either in our or international literature.³

The origins and the development of phenomenology as Husserl's philosophical conception provides a lot of evidence that rather than a static-doctrinaire and dogmatic-closed theory it represents a substantially active inference of and search for productive philosophical ways in the process of comprehension of man and the world in their unique interaction. From its inception, phenomenology has been envisaged as a philosophy filled with the effort to arrive at

¹ Husserl, E. 1973. *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 34.

² Husserl, E. 1970. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Transl., with an Introd. by D. Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

³ Patočka, J. 1969. *Úvod do Husserlovy fenomenologie*. Praha: SPN; Patočka, J. 1993. *Úvod do fenomenologické filosofie*. Praha: Oikúmené; Ströker, E. 1987. *Husserls transzendente Phänomenologie*. Frankfurt am Main; Gadamer, H.-G. 1987. *Gesammelte Werke*. Bd. 3. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

an in-depth *self-clarifying comprehension of man and the world*. In this respect, a hindsight of the philosophical conceptions of the 20th century entitles us to characterize it as a doctrine with the prevalence of noetic-anthropological elements. This is not to say that such a philosophy loses the problem of science from its field of vision. On the contrary, J. Patočka aptly characterizes Husserl's philosophy as a simultaneous reflection of the meaning of things and human life. This reflection „intends to be a rigorous science, with the science being to him the one, the main, the most important, and the deepest approach to the sense; by implication, it is of vital importance. Science must provide and does provide man with that *spiritual meaning*, content and goals of life we need for being with self, at home, in the world and life. This meaning will not serve as a means for something else; it will be provided by science through its achievements, through its scientific activity.”¹

An adequate understanding of Husserl's phenomenology in its *genetic maturing* obviously requires us to focus on the problem of drawing up an *introduction to philosophy* in his epoch-making work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* in terms of its historical-historical context.

* * *

Although Husserl did not write historical-philosophical texts in the true sense of the word, his conception represents an unconventional *dialogue* with the previous philosophical knowledge, ranging from its apparent *rejection* to its obvious, almost *total, application*. In his selected writings,² there is only one work devoted to the history of philosophy. Paradoxically, Husserl lectured on the history of phi-

¹ Patočka, J.: *Úvod do Husserlovy fenomenologie*, 3.

² *Husserliana*. 1956. Bd. VII. Ed. H. L. Van Breda. The Hague: Nijhoff.

losophy at the universities of Halle, Göttingen, and Freiburg for almost thirty years.

Husserl's historical-philosophical research is typical of being subordinate to his *phenomenological interests*. Conclusive evidence can be found in his works, such as *Cartesian meditations* (1931) and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936). The strategy of global subordination of the history of philosophy to *systematic philosophy* is also present in Hegel's, Windelband's, and Cassirer's works. In Husserl, it is brought to an almost extreme position (like in Hegel and Heidegger). The only task of the historical-philosophical research comes to be the justification of phenomenology.

The fulfilment of this task is reflected in all Husserl's historical-philosophical inquiries which have a teleological actualizing meaning. *The vivifying memory of our philosophical forefathers*, as Husserl calls his historical-philosophical analysis in the *Crisis*, works only in one, *teleological direction*, i.e., it discovers the paths to the birth of phenomenology. In the history of philosophy, Husserl is primarily looking for a *transcendental impulse*,¹ which, in his view, emerges at first in sophistry and Socratean-Platonean thought. In fact, it is a new philosophical motive which he believes to be of universal significance for the philosophical consciousness of mankind and which the naive predestination of the world becomes problematic for the first time.

Husserl assumes that a philosopher who lives in the present-day world of his immediate problems, acts in accordance with his life mission and is motivated by the surrounding world. However, in the *Crisis*, he unambiguously claims that *the most significant motivation comes* from the world of philosophers, i.e., from the world which has belonged to philosophy since its beginnings, and unites the individual philosophical generations up to the present days. For philosopher, this is in fact the only actual live reality. Husserl

¹ Ibid., 60.

notes that „we are what we are as functionaries of modern philosophical humanity; we are heirs and cobearers of the direction of the will which pervades this humanity; we have become this through a primal establishment which is at once a reestablishment [*Nachstiftung*] and a modification of the Greek primal establishment. In the latter lies the *teleological beginning*, the true birth of the European spirit as such.”¹

The Husserlean historical-philosophical initiative, presented in the *Crisis*, unconventionally pulls down historical barriers, which means that Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant are, as a matter of fact, our contemporaries as partners in the current philosophical dialogue aimed at seeking the truth of man and the world.²

Husserl’s philosophical motivation, i.e., the world containing philosophy from its beginnings to the present days and integrating philosophical generations, becomes in the *Crisis* a completely different philosophical area compared to the *Logical Investigations*, *An Idea of Phenomenology*, and *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*. In the *Crisis*, he claims that that being a philosopher mainly implies reaching the sphere of *autonomy*. Being an autonomous philosopher, i.e., avoiding any prejudices, is only possible if the philosopher realizes that all his matter-of-facts are prejudices. This assumption from the *Crisis* carry the imprint of his earlier works. Very soon, however, a principled change takes place. Husserl points out that a historical reflection is „the deepest kind of self-reflection aimed at a self-understanding in terms of what we are truly seeking as the historical beings we are.”³

This position raises the following question: is there any deeper *methodological strategy* in this deepest *radical self-reflection*, or is it just a loose mixture of various historical-

¹ Husserl, E. 1970 *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Transl. D. Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 71.

² Ibid., 71.

³ Ibid., 72.

philosophical reflections? This methodological strategy is expressed explicitly in the *Crisis*: „Our task is to make comprehensible the *teleology* in the historical becoming of philosophy, especially modern philosophy, and at the same time to achieve clarity about ourselves, who are the bearers of this teleology, who take part in carrying it out through our personal intentions. We are attempting to elicit and understand the *unity* running through all the [philosophical] projects of history that oppose one another and work together in their changing forms. In a constant critique, which always regards the total historical complex as a personal one, we are attempting ultimately to discern the historical task which we can acknowledge as the only one which is personally our own.”¹

In his methodological approach to the historical-philosophical knowledge, Husserl does not seek to *discern it from the outside* or merely from facts as a sort of manifestation of an external causal series; instead, he seeks to discern it from the inside. Husserl writes in a Hegelian spirit: „Only in this way can we, who not only have a spiritual heritage but have become what we are thoroughly and exclusively in a historical-spiritual manner, have a task which is truly our own. We obtain it not through the critique of some present or handed-down system, of some scientific or pre-scientific *Weltanschauung*..., but only through a critical understanding of the total unity of history – *our* history. For it has spiritual unity through the unity and driving force of the task which, in the historical process – in the thinking of those who philosophize for one another and with one another across time – seeks to move through the various stages of obscurity toward satisfying clarity until it finally works its way through to perfect insight.”²

In Husserl’s view, no matter how much knowledge we obtain from the historical inquiry into the *self-interpretations*

¹ Ibid., 70.

² Ibid., 71.

of various philosophers we are not to determine the *direction* of the hidden *unity of intentional inwardness*, which alone constitutes the unity of history. „Only in the final establishment is this revealed; only through it can the unified directness of all philosophies and philosophers open up. From here elucidation can be attained which enables us to understand past thinkers in a way that they could never have understood themselves. This makes it clear that the peculiar truth of such a ‘teleological consideration of history’ can never be decisively refuted by citing the documented ‘personal testimony’ of earlier philosophers. This truth is established only in the self-evidence of a critical over-all view which brings to light, behind the ‘historical facts’ of documented philosophical theories and their apparent oppositions and parallels, a meaningful, final harmony.”¹

Husserl’s elaboration of historical-philosophical reflections, presented in *Husserliana* (Vol. VII), and especially in the *Crisis*, represents an unusually valuable project of *philosophical history of philosophy*. The enormous pressure of the historical-philosophical heritage influencing each philosopher, has resulted in a precious and rare philosophical achievement embodied in Husserl’s work. As to his predecessors, a similar project can be mainly found in Hegel. In his brilliant *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel points out that „this history [of philosophy] represents, not merely the external, accidental, events contained within it, but it shows how the content, or that which appears to belong to mere history, really belongs to the science of Philosophy. The history of Philosophy is itself scientific, and thus essentially becomes the science of Philosophy.”²

A closer examination of these unique conceptions of philosophical history of philosophy reveals that they meet an essential requirement according to which the history of

¹ Ibid., 73.

² Hegel, G. W. F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1. Transl. E. S. Haldane. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 6.

philosophy is not a passive intellectual *substrate*; rather, it is the most active *spring* by means of which a philosopher develops his *systematic philosophy*. The philosophical history of philosophy represents, using Hegelian words, *thinking of thought*.¹

Hegel's intention is not restricted to mere interpretation of the previous historical-philosophical doctrines, i.e., to listening to all the *tones in some music*; his intention is to understand the harmony of their tones.² What is, however, more relevant, and even critical, in this philosophical history of philosophy is the principle of *historicism*. It is only on the basis of this principle that Hegel makes use of the teleological principle as well as another indispensable (Hegelian) principle – the principle of *partiality* (the principle of selection and assessment) – in a philosophically meaningful way.³

A closer look at the structure of Husserl's philosophical history of philosophy, in particular with regard to Hegel's conception, reveals a striking difference in their respective applications of the principle of historicism. While Hegel apparently proclaims the conception of *philosophy as the thought of its time*,⁴ thus anchoring it in the widest possible historical dimensions, Husserl adheres to his *transcendentalist orientation* (sense-giving performance of conscious subjectivity)⁵ and consistently keeps to it also in his *Crisis*.

Husserl's conclusion that „[w]hat is clearly necessary... is that we *reflect back*, in a thorough *historical* and *critical* fashion,”⁶ refers to a very attractive project of examining the history of modern philosophy as a struggle for the meaning

¹ Ibid., 94.

² Ibid., xlv.

³ Ibid., xlviii.

⁴ Ibid., 45, 53.

⁵ Fink, E. 1992. „Svět a dějiny.” *Filosofický časopis* 40/2, 253.

⁶ Husserl, E. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 17.

of man.¹ Very soon, however, the essential becomes fairly specified: „If we consider the effect of the development of philosophical ideas on (nonphilosophizing) mankind as a whole, we must conclude the following: Only an understanding from within of the movement of modern philosophy from Descartes to the present, which is coherent despite all its contradictions, makes possible an understanding of the present itself.”²

E. Fink is right when he, while commenting on Husserl's historical-philosophical project, says that, in principle, it presents nothing new: „It is the same *phenomenology of spirit*, employing the analytic instruments of intensional exegesis of consciousness, notably in accounting for the processes which constitute the sense and which determine the style of modern science.”³ Fink aptly reproaches Husserl's conception of the history of philosophy for the *absence of a clearly defined period when a 'humanly' perceived subject, preoccupied with the world, changes to a transcendental self-consciousness of absolute experience*. Fink asks *where this period belongs and whether it is not 'devoid of the world'*. We are of the view that this observation reveals perhaps the most substantial point missing in Husserl's *Crisis* and inevitably leading, in its essence, to critical transcendence of the philosophical foundations of phenomenology, that is to say, the effort to build up philosophy as a *rigorous science*, without any historical-philosophical reflection of the early stages of philosophy.

In the *Crisis*, the late Husserl presents a conception of *transcendental phenomenology*, also based on the modern age historical-philosophical sources. This makes this phenomenological conception historically well-founded, but this very fact results in the destruction of the original phenomenological objective of projecting philosophy as a *rigorous science*.

¹ Ibid., 14.

² Ibid., 14-15.

³ Fink, E.: *Svět a dějiny*, 255.

E. Fink is right in saying that the historicity in the *Crisis* „does not consist in the horizon of the world; rather, world itself comes down to a constituted horizon of constituted objects. The history of a constituting subject is the history of absolute experience. In addition, history is primarily the history of knowledge. Knowledge is a historical phenomenon *par excellence*. The history of knowledge is regarded by Husserl as the fundamental history.”¹

What strikes us first when this point is viewed in terms of the above-given confrontation of Hegel's and Husserl's philosophies of the history of philosophy is the big difference between them. While Hegel's conception is unthinkable without a deeply thought-out and simultaneously applied *philosophy of history*, in Husserl, there are hardly any sharp contours of a true philosophy of history; therefore the latter cannot become the basis of his conception. Obviously, no philosophy of history can be built up on the basis of transcendental phenomenology. This is an indisputable fact in regard of Husserl's *Crisis*. Its consequences clearly affected the specific historical-philosophical analyses of the phenomenon of modern-age philosophy.

* * *

Husserl's aspirations concerning the systematic use of the history of philosophy are more than obvious: „The genuine spiritual struggles of European humanity as such take the form of struggles between the philosophies, that is, between the skeptical philosophies... and the actual and still vital philosophies.”² It should be noted, however, that the idea of philosophy, as defined by Husserl and as handed down from the ancients, very soon *changes* and is aimed at retaining the meaning of the one *all-encompassing science* as

¹ Ibid., 254.

² Husserl, E.: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 15.

a science of the totality of what is. „Sciences in plural,” writes Husserl, „all those sciences ever to be established or already under construction, are but dependent branches of the One Philosophy”.¹

Husserl’s historical-philosophical, i.e., philosophical, aspirations in designing the project of *universal philosophy*, is brought to its climax in his effort to *realize* this philosophy by way of bringing „latent reason to the understanding of its own possibilities and thus to bring to insight *the possibility of metaphysics as a true possibility...*”² (emphasis by V.L.) Husserl’s historical-philosophical research in the *Crisis* reveals the history of the modern philosophical knowledge exclusively on the immanent ground of the history of scientific thinking, which he identifies with the history of philosophy. Consequently, the crisis of philosophy is viewed by him as „the crisis of all modern sciences as members of the philosophical universe.”³

From this point of view it is understandable that, in contrast, for example, to his *Cartesian Meditations* in which there is no trace of Galileo’s theory, his specific analysis of modern knowledge begins in the *Crisis* – after the first methodologically oriented section – with Galileo’s problems of the *mathematization of nature, the nature as a mathematical universe*, and in general, with the issues concerning the *comprehension of nature*. It is within this framework that the problems of *prescientific natural world as a forgotten foundation of the meaning of natural sciences* emerges.⁴

Husserl’s fairly broad introduction to the history of modern science is, no doubt, necessary, if the phenomenon of modern science is to be accurately revealed, including its crisis-related manifestations (some of Husserl’s philosophical proposals are true masterpieces). At the same time, the *Crisis* considerably *moderates* (as opposed to the *Cartesian*

¹ Ibid., 8.

² Ibid., 15.

³ Ibid., 12.

⁴ Ibid., 18 ff.

Meditations) the overvalued link between his phenomenology and Descartes' attempt to build up philosophy as a *universal science* on the axiom of absolute *self-certainty of ego*. In relation to Descartes' philosophy, Husserl's *Crisis* is much more *careful*. It may be that it is not confined only to one part of his philosophy (*egology*) but also captures *the other side of the coin* – Descartes' nature philosophy („physicalist rationalism”).¹

Without pretending to perform any subtler interpretation of Husserl's historical-philosophical reflection of Descartes' philosophy, we will rather briefly discuss Husserl's research into modern empiricism-sensualism. While this research is absent in the *Cartesian Meditations* (with one minor exception – D. Hume and the problem of association), the *Crisis* pays much attention to it. Although in its global contours Husserl's analysis is critical, he must admit that there is a significant *tendency* in empiricism which pursues scientific exploration of the intimately known, but scientifically unknown in our pre-scientific natural world. While he tries to attribute the modern empiricism (sensualism) *a fictionalist gnoseology, solipsism*, he still can see that Berkeley succeeded in shattering the dogmatic objectivism.²

The fundamental motif of *transcendental philosophy* is that „of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower's reflecting upon himself and his knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him occur purposefully, are stored up as acquisitions, and have become and continue to become freely available. Working itself out radically, it is the motif of a universal philosophy which is grounded purely in this source and thus ultimately grounded.”³ Husserl's reception of Kant's philosophy has been widely

¹ Ibid., 73-74.

² Ibid., 91-93.

³ Ibid., 97-98.

discussed, and therefore will not be commented on any further.¹

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In the last paragraph of his *Crisis* titled as *Philosophy as Radical Self-clarification of Mankind and as Self-realization of Reason*, Husserl discusses the role of philosopher and the life-long goals of philosopher as a philosopher. He finds this task and, at the same time, the end in discovering a universal science of the world, the definite universal knowledge, the universe of truths of the world as truths of themselves and truths of the world in itself. Also here, his way of thinking is considerably influenced by the *Cartesian discovery* – the fundamental requirement of apodictics.² All this establishes the basis for, and, at the same time, represents the evidence of the assumption that *Cartesian discovery* is the point of departure for the *philosophy of the deepest and the most universal self-understanding of the philosophizing ego* as a bearer of an *absolute, self-reflecting reason*, the ego whose apodictic being for itself implies its co-subjects and any and all co-philosophers.³

This new sense is articulated by Husserl mainly in relation to *self-understanding* of man who is responsible for his own human existence, in relation to his self-understanding as Being called upon to life in apodictics. He is not only expected to abstractly develop an apodictic science in the traditional sense; rather, he is supposed to realize a science which implements all the specific being of humankind in apodictic freedom in order to become apodictic; this exclusively in all active life of reason which makes mankind the

¹ Cf. Kern, I. 1964. „Husserl und Kant.” *Phenomenologica* 16, Haag: Nijhoff.

² Husserl, E.: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 274.

³ Ibid., 274.

mankind.¹ Then, a distinction between the *theoretical*, the *practical*, and the *aesthetic* (and/or any other) reasons does not seem to be very important. What matters is *humanity*. The latter means the focus on what is *in our heart of hearts and what we are supposed to fulfil for the sake of reaching the goal*. The self-understanding comes to know it as an *apodictic goal*; this innermost self-understanding is nothing but self-understanding according to a priori principles, the self-understanding in the form of philosophy.²

Husserl's struggle for the development of philosophy *as science, as serious, rigorous science* may seem to be complete. Is it really the case? Husserl himself poses this question in summer 1935 and, as it were, he suddenly concludes that „*the dream is over*.“³ Why should it be over? The last supplement to his *Crisis* gives a conclusive answer to it. Husserl admits that reflection of an autonomous man of the world leads by necessity to the transcendent as something incognizable and practically uncontrollable, which makes him assume that „scientific truth about the absolute is not possible...“⁴ For him, this seems to clearly imply that *philosophy is in danger*, that is, its future is endangered.

What is then the present task of philosophy? Husserl does not hesitate to give the following answer: „There is no doubt, then, that we must engross ourselves in historical considerations if we are to be able to understand ourselves as philosophers and understand what philosophy is to become through us.“⁵ In his view, the implication for the philosopher and for the generation of philosophers who act responsibly in the human and cultural space is responsibility and the corresponding actions. Pursuing one's own *philosophical orientation* must be in all respects in accordance

¹ Ibid., 275.

² Ibid., 275.

³ Ibid., 389.

⁴ Ibid., 390.

⁵ Ibid., 391.

with a *radical reflection of oneself*. Consequently, each *philosopher must take something from the history of past philosophers*. The categorical imperative of Husserl's philosophical history of philosophy is thus unambiguously decoded: „The philosopher *takes something from history*. Now history is after all not before us like a warehouse containing its assembled wares, such that everyone can convince himself of the existence of these wares as being not dreamed-up, not illusory, but actually tangible and secure in their being and being-such”.¹

These words unequivocally highlight the active role of the historical-philosophical material. Therefore, the *scientific history of philosophy* is indispensable for a *philosophically autonomous thinker*.² At this point, we face the greatest Husserlean surprise. It concerns his view that *scientific historical interpretation of philosophy* is a kind of *poetic invention* [Dichtung].³ Husserl conjectures that a philosopher knows that „[h]is historical picture, in part made by himself and in part taken over, his *poetic invention of the history of philosophy*, has not and does not remain fixed – that he knows; and yet every *invention* serves him and can serve him in understanding himself and his aim, and his own aim in relation to that of others and their *inventions*, their aims, and finally what it is that is common to all, which makes up philosophy *as such* as a unitary *telos* and makes the systems attempts at its fulfilment for us all, for us [who are] at the same time in company with the philosophers of the past (in the various ways we have been able to invent them for ourselves).”⁴

In our view, herewith the *dream of a rigorous science* in Husserl's philosophical history of philosophy is *complete*. This fact should be born in mind in all seriousness! The more so that the project of philosophy as *poetic invention* is also present in Heidegger's essay *Hölderlin and the Essence of*

¹ Ibid., 392.

² Ibid., 394.

³ Ibid., 394.

⁴ Ibid., 395 .

Poetry (1936). Does it mean resignation of philosophy as a science or rather revelation of its essentially new, still vaguely suspected spaces? The answer to this question is not difficult. Husserl, the classic of the Cartesian rationality, understands that while the project of a *universal philosophy as the only philosophy* is highly attractive, in its essence it is not implementable. Husserl's straightforward questions 'Is the idea of a definitely true-of-itself philosophy just a phantasm?', 'Can only philosophy in plural exist?' require straightforward answers. Yes, it is just a *phantasm* and there exists only philosophy in plural.

7. Heidegger and philosophy of the history of philosophy

In his posthumously published interview for *Spiegel* (September 23, 1966) Martin Heidegger said that all the work presented in his lectures and seminars over the previous thirty years had been mere interpretation of Western European philosophy.¹ This statement might suggest that Heidegger's involvement in philosophy primarily focuses on the history of philosophy. However, such a simplified conclusion is not justified. In his works, Heidegger is not attracted by the idea of interpreting Western European philosophy as a story of philosophy; rather, he approaches it exclusively as the *philosophy* of the history of Western European philosophy. His main effort concerns the field of philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy. This fundamental philosophical position does not seem to have changed after the *turn* (*Kehre*), but represents a productive ground plan for his philosophizing both before and after the *turn*. What has changed is the content of his approach, but not the approach itself.

A compelling piece of evidence can be found in the rediscovered Heidegger's *Introduction to Aristotle* dating from 1922. H. G. Gadamer considers the rediscovery of this manuscript, which reveals the beginnings of Heidegger's philosophizing, to be a *great event* in German philosophy of the 20th century.² From the very beginning, this work clearly demonstrates that the process of philosophical investiga-

¹ Heidegger, M. 1981. „Only a Good Can Save us”: The Spiegel Interview (1966). In: Th. Sheehan (ed.), *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*. Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 59.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 1996. „Znovunalezený Heideggerův ‘Úvod k Aristotelovi’ z roku 1922.” *Filosofický časopis* 44/1, 3. Gadamer, H.-G. 1989. „Die wiederaufgefundene ‘Aristoteles-Einleitung’ Heideggers von 1922. In: F. Rodi (ed.), *Dilthey-Jahrbucher für Philosophie und Geschichte des Geisteswissenschaften*. Bd. 6. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

tion does not pursue any traditional, i.e., historically objectivist mastering of Aristotle's theoretical message. Gadamer is right in saying that Heidegger does not approach Aristotle as an important historical object; he rather develops his own radical questioning based on the philosophical questions of that time, on the pressure of problems.¹

Heidegger's manuscript *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle*² presents several philosophical standpoints towards the history of philosophy. Later on, these were developed at great length and came to constitute his life-long work. More importantly, as early as this work, Heidegger unambiguously defines the basic attitude of philosophy of the history of philosophy: „The idea that this research has of itself and of concreteness of its problematic also already decides its basic bearing toward the history of philosophy.”³ The past can only be viewed, claims Heidegger, from an *angle* which follows from *its own interest*. Heidegger maintains that the inclusion of the *interpretation viewpoint* „is not contrary to the sense of historical knowing, but is simply the basic condition for getting the past to speak to us at all.”³ For the first time in Heidegger's work, this manuscript presents a conception of philosophy of the history of philosophy which has remained unchanged throughout his life. Any changes are only conditioned by the specific circumstances of its implementation. Heidegger is right in saying that any historical account of the history of philosophy as well as any other field „which insist (over against the *constructions* of the history of problems) that nothing is being read into their texts, inevitably open themselves to being caught in the act of just such a reading. They only do so without conscious orientation and with

¹ Heidegger, M. 2007. „Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle”. In: Th. Kiesel – Th. Sheehan: *Becoming Heidegger*. Evanston and Illionis: Northwestern University Press, 155 – 184.

² Ibid., 156.

³ Ibid., 156.

conceptual means from the most disparate and uncontrollable sources.”¹

The early philosophical considerations of Heidegger are implemented in philosophical research whose main object is „human Dasein insofar as it is interrogated in its character of being.”² It is from this point that Heidegger firmly sets off for a new philosophical questioning, different from that presented at that time by Husserl and his project of philosophy as a *rigorous science*. It should, however, be noted that the German philosophy of that period significantly deviates from the philosophy of history, as aptly pointed out by H. G. Gadamer in a number of his works.³

Gadamer’s answer to why Heidegger deviates from Husserl’s rigorous form of phenomenology and his preference for the problem of historicity is as follows. Today, it’s clear that he was mainly driven by his own Christian heritage rather than the problems of historical relativism. „Now that we know more about Heidegger’s first lectures and initial thought experiments of the early 1920s, it is clear that his critique of the official Roman Catholic theology of his time pushed him closer and closer to the question of how an appropriate interpretation of the Christian faith could be possible or, to put it in another way, how could one ward off the infiltration of the foreign Greek philosophy ...”⁴

Without intending to provide a detailed analysis of the relevant philosophical circumstances, it may be concluded that Heidegger’s early search for the object of philosophy clearly represents, among other things, a philosophical reception of the history of philosophy. The possibility to

¹ Ibid., 156.

² Ibid., 156.

³ Gadamer, H.-G. 1994. *Problém dějinného vědomí*. Transl. J. Němec – J. Sokol. Praha: Filosofia, 7ff. (Gadamer, H.-G. 1963. *Le problème de la conscience historique*. Louvain.)

⁴ Gadamer, H.-G. 1994. „The History of Philosophy”. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Heideggerer’s Ways*. Transl. J. W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 155.

capture the object of philosophy is related to philosophy of the history of philosophy in the following way: „Philosophy’s own history is thus objectively there in a relevant sense for philosophical research if and only if it provides, not a diversity of couriosities, but rather radically simple matters *worthy of thought*, i. e. if the history of philosophy does not divert present understanding into merely seeking an expansion of knowledge, but rather forces the present back upon itself in order to magnify its questionability.”¹

No doubt, the central point of this idea is the determination of the comprehending presence which, through the reflection of the history of philosophy, should enrich itself. In a sense, this approach to the history of philosophy appears to be very close to Hegel’s philosophical reception of the history of philosophy. In his later work, *Contributions to Philosophy*, this motive has become the centre of gravity of Heidegger’s considerations.²

Heidegger points out that to comprehend history with the focus on what is worthy of thought and, moreover, to adopt it for the present, in the essential character of which the historical consciousness is constitutive, calls, however, for „a radical understanding of what a particular instance of past philosophical research put forward as its basic anxiety in its situation and for its time. To *understand* means not simply to recognize established knowledge, but rather to repeat in an original way what was once understood in terms of its own situation and for that situation.”³

Heidegger’s philosophical requirement, according to which the *fixation of the basic historical interpretation position grows out of the explication of the sense of philosophical inquiry*, becomes the leitmotiv of all his works. As early as 1922, he

¹ Heidegger, M. *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle*, 157.

² Heidegger, M. 1999. *Contributions to Philosophy. (From Enowning)*. Transl. P. Emad and K. Maly. Bloomington & Indiana: Indiana University Press, 149-155.

³ Heidegger, M.: *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, 157.

expresses another of the ideas without which the esprit of Heideggerism would not be complete. It bears on the comprehension that „for the most part today, philosophy operates inauthentically within the *Greek* conceptuality, which itself has been pervaded by a chain of diverse interpretations.”¹ Heidegger claims that the fundamental philosophical notions, which must have been subjected to a range of different interpretations in the history of philosophy, have lost their original expressive functions, and that it is high time to take some principled steps in this respect.

Heidegger not only promises, but also offers prompt philosophical actions. His overemphasis on the fact that if philosophical inquiry has comprehended its object and if it knows what it wants to study, is, in a radical sense, *historical* knowledge.² The only effective way of working up to this kind of knowledge is provided by the *method of destruction*. Heidegger maintains that „[t]he destruction is rather the authentic path upon which the present must encounter itself in its own basic movements, and it must encounter itself in such a way that what springs forth for the present from its history (of philosophy) is the continual question: to what extent is it (the present) itself truly worried about appropriating radical possibilities from basic experiences and their interpretations.”³

The philosophical method of destruction does not mean any liquidation-negativist comprehension of the history of philosophical thinking. This idea is not restricted to Heidegger’s 1922 views. He repeats it in his *Being and Time*, *Contributions to Philosophy*, and other works. Destruction is conceived of by him as „*purifying* in the direction of freeing basic metaphysical positions.”⁴ In his lecture *What is it – Philosophy?* (1955), Heidegger maintains that „[d]estruction does not mean destroying but dismantling, liquidating, put-

¹ Ibid., 168.

² Ibid., 168.

³ Ibid., 169.

⁴ Heidegger, M. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 154.

ting to one side the merely historical assertions about the history of philosophy. Destruction means – to open our ears, to make ourselves free for what speaks to us in tradition as the Being of being.”¹ From the outset, Heidegger’s philosophical clarification of metaphysical positions concentrates on the examination of the metaphysical traditions, and aims, with determination, to destruct the notions which establish the framework for the Greek and the modern philosophies.

In Heidegger’s view Aristotle is „the first and most distinguished subject in the history of philosophy.”² The gist of this work seems to be an outline of a *positive way* from Aristotle back to Parmenides. Heidegger writes: „It is only by a regress from Aristotle that *Parmenides’ doctrine of being* can be defined and understood as *the crucial step that decided the sense and destiny of Western ontology and logic*.”³ In his later philosophical development, representatively illustrated in *Being and Time* and, following the *turn*, also in other works, Heidegger elaborates an alternative comprehension of the Presocratics and Aristotle. We should keep in mind, however, that Heidegger’s above-mentioned idea of philosophy of the history of philosophy simultaneously expresses a strategic motive for philosophizing in general – *to determine the sense and the fate of Western ontology and logic*. This being a new motive in philosophy it required a profound change in the way of interpreting the historical-philosophical heritage. It is only from this point of view that we can fully understand Heidegger’s requirement that each interpretation should illuminate its thematic subject from its basic position and viewpoint. The formulation of this motive in his essay *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* is

¹ Heidegger, M. 1958. *What is Philosophy?*. Transl. with an Introd. W. Kluback and J. T. Wilde. New Haven, CT: College & University Press, 72-73.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *The History of Philosophy*, 156.

³ Heidegger, M. *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle*, 171.

still very careful. Heidegger indicates that an interpretation in *illumination* should not go too far and should not make claim to objectivity, as if it captured the problems of themselves. „Simply to ask about the *in-itself* at all is to misjudge the character of the *historical* object completely. To arrive at relativism and skeptical historicism because an *in-itself* cannot be found is only the reverse side of *this same* misjudgement. The translation of the interpreted texts, and above all the translation of their crucial basic concepts, have developed from the concrete interpretation and contain it, so to speak, *in a nutshell* (*in nuce*). The coining of terms derives not from a desire for innovation, but rather from the content of the translated texts.”¹ Later on, Heidegger quits the approach to the interpretation of the history of philosophy relying on limited illumination. On the contrary, his claims are almost absolute. Let us, however, return to the beginnings of Heidegger’s philosophical thinking.

The significance of the Heideggerean methodological approach, which lays emphasis on the factual content of texts, is already shown in the *Aristotelian interpretation*. Heidegger’s main question to be answered is as follows: „*In what kind of object and character of being is human being, (who finds) ‘be-ing in living’, experienced and explicatively interpreted?* What is the sense of Dasein in terms of which this interpretation of life initially approaches human being as an object? In brief, within what *pre-possession of being* did this object stand?”² Although Heidegger asks – *What does Being actually mean to Aristotle?* – the searched for and gradually formulated answer clearly indicates that what matters is not the interpretation of the historical Aristotle and his conception of Being; rather, it is Heidegger’s own philosophical problems.

This approach is not confined to Aristotle only. Heidegger also applies it to Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Des-

¹ Ibid., 171 - 172.

² Ibid., 172.

cartes, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. In Aristotle's texts, Heidegger identifies the most important philosophical problem of his own – *What is Being?* The fascination with this question brings him gradually to the verge of philosophizing and, in a sense, to his resignation from providing a satisfactory answer to his crucial philosophical problem.¹

The emphasis laid on the examination of the *sense of Being* in Heidegger's *Being and Time* follows from the postulate that Greek ontology and its history up to the present have been determining the concepts of philosophy. Thus, if the question of Being is to be comprehensible and transparent, „then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved.”² This is preconditioned by decisive introduction of the method of destruction which is expected to reveal the origin of the basic ontological concepts and, in this way, to reveal, *sui generis*, their birth certificate. „On its negative side, this destruction does not relate itself towards the past; its criticism is aimed at ‘today’ and at the prevalent way of treating the history of ontology, whether it is headed towards doxography, towards intellectual history, or towards a history of problems. But to bury the past in nullity [Nichtigkeit] is not the purpose of this destruction; its aim is *positive*...”³ Since the method of destruction concerns the presence it strongly influences the comprehension of the past. This may happen to such an extent that any differences between the past and the present are obliterated.

Heidegger's, as it were, life-long belief that the statements of philosophy are based on identical claims of the same, has a serious impact also on the conception of the history of philosophy. Perhaps the most concentrated expression of this idea is presented in his lecture *Europe and*

¹ See Gadamer, H.-G. 1996. „Evropa a Oikúmené.” Transl. I. Šnebergová. *Filosofický časopis* 44/1, 86.

² Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Transl. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 44.

³ *Ibid.*, 44.

German Philosophy (1936). He assumes that „the actual history of philosophy is the history of just a few simple questions. And the apparently arbitrary multiplicity of standpoints and system changes is, in principle, the simplicity of One and the Same available to a real thinker.” [„die eigentliche Geschichte der Philosophie ist die Geschichte ganz weniger einfacher Fragen. Und die scheinbar willkürliche Vielfältigkeit der Standpunkte und der Wechsel der Systeme ist im Grunde nur die dem wirklichen Denker zugängliche Einfachheit des Einzigsten und Selbigen“]¹ No doubt that the history of philosophy, reduced to a single question – *What is Being?* – becomes the *history of metaphysics*, the history of *ontology*.

Heidegger does not pretend the reverse, and asks: „And what is this One and the Same about which philosophy keeps talking in its reflecting pursuit, which the so-called common sense can never acquiesce in?” [Und was ist nun dieses Eine und Selbe, wovon die Philosophie ständig sagt, in jenem denkenden Suchen, mit dem sich der sogenannte gesunde Menschenverstand niemals unmittelbar verträgt?]² The answer is found in as early as the first great period of Western philosophy. Heidegger *listens to* Anaximander’s thesis – *where does all existence come from*. This is the question of the bottom and the bottomless of Being. „The questioning of philosophy is focused on Being, on what, in principle, the being is rather than is not. Philosophy has always originated in a moment when it becomes clear – in the silence of great astonishment – that being is and Being essentially occurs. Being is that One and the Same through which all being as being is, that Same of which it holds true that it can only be expressed through itself, in its own essential being – it is that which cannot be explained by comparison with anything else, because no comparison is pos-

¹ Heidegger, M.: 1993. „Europa und die deutsche Philosophie“. In: *Europa und die Philosophie*. Hrsg. H.-H. Gander. In: Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft: Schriftenreihe. Bd. 2. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 33.

² Ibid., 33-34.

sible outside it in so far as the Nothing itself, which imposes the limits to Being, belongs to Being itself.” [*Das fragende Sagen der Philosophie geht auf das Seyn, darauf, daß überhaupt Seiendes ist und nicht nicht ist. Die Philosophie entsprang und entspringt immer wieder in dem Augen-blick, wo dieses in der Stille einer großen Bewunderung offenbar wird, daß Seiendes ist und ein Seyn west. Das Seyn ist jenes Eine und Selbe, kraft dessen alles Seiende als Seiendes ist, jeden Selbe, von dem es gilt, eben es selbst, es in seinem eigenen Wesen zu sagen – jenes, was nicht erklärt werden kann durch Vergleich mit anderem, weil außer ihm keine Vergleichsmöglichkeit besteht, so wenig, daß selbst das Nichts, woran das Seyn allein seine Grenze hat, zum Seyn selbst gehört.*“]¹

By implication, Heidegger’s huge philosophical effort is focussed on *uplifting* the Being from its most inherent bottom. How can this kind of operation be implemented? There does not seem to exist any other way but bringing the Being to word and knowledge. As a result, Heidegger formulates the essential mission of philosophy as follows: „*Philosophy is the questioning of the reason for Being as Being of the reason for all things.*” [*„Philosophie ist das fragende Sagen vom Grund des Seyns als dem Seyn des Grundes aller Dinge“*]²

Heidegger’s imperative according to which no philosophy ever can be without the ancient Greek origins of philosophizing is supported by the assumption that „each new beginning of philosophy *is* and *can* only be a repetition of the first origin – a resumed question: what is being – an assertion of the truth of Being.” [*„jeder neue Anfang der Philosophie ist und kann nur sein eine Wiederholung des ersten – ein Wiederfragen der Frage: was das Seiende sei – ein Sagen von Wahrheit des Seyns.“*]³ Almost immediately we encounter the most striking problem in Heidegger’s philosophical conception of the history of philosophy. It pertains to binding the

¹ Ibid., 34.

² Ibid., 34.

³ Ibid., 34.

knowledge of the ways of German philosophy exclusively to the Greek origins of philosophy, so characteristic of the lecture *Europe and German Philosophy* as well as his subsequent works. Heidegger confines his particular philosophical attention to the ancient Greeks (from Anaximander to Aristotle) and, more or less, to German philosophers – Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. The only bright exception to this global view of the historical-philosophical process is Descartes. The rest seems to be insignificant, secondary, and, in a sense, of low value. In his lecture *The End of Philosophy and the Role of Thinking*, he assumes the following: „Not only do we lack any criterion that would permit us to evaluate the perfection of an epoch of metaphysics as compared with any other epoch; the right to this kind of evaluation does not exist. Plato’s thinking is no more perfect than Parmenides’. Hegel’s philosophy is no more perfect than Kant’s. Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a philosophy is the way it is. It is not for us to prefer one to the other, as can be the case with regard to various *Weltanschauungen*.“¹ These ideas appear to be in contradiction with what we referred to as the *other and the accompanying*. While we can believe that Heidegger did not differentiate between Plato and Parmenides, Hegel and Kant in terms of their perfection, it is these great philosophers who embody, in his view, the age of metaphysics. The other philosophers are apparently ignored. But there is still more to be said.

H.-G. Gadamer points out that in examining the problems of metaphysics after the *turn*, Heidegger uses its most significant representatives merely as a background enabling him to highlight his own intellectual intentions: „[M]etaphysics and its eminent representatives were to function only as the backdrop against which he critically set

¹ Heidegger, M. 1993. „The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking.” In: D. F. Krell (ed.), Heidegger, M.: *Basic Writings*. San Francisco: Harper, 432-433.

off his own philosophical intentions. From then on metaphysics no longer appeared as the question concerning Being; rather, it was portrayed as the actual, fateful obscuring of the question of Being, as the very history of the forgetfulness of Being that began with Greek thinking and continues through more recent thought up to the fully developed world-view and belief structures inherent in calculative and technical thinking, that is, up to today. From then on the <various> stages of the advancing forgetfulness of Being and the contributions of the eminent thinkers of the past were forcibly arranged in a fixed historical order, and this obligated Heidegger to delineate his project from Hegel's analogous attempt at a history of philosophy.”¹

What is then the solid historical order of Heidegger's conception of the history of philosophy? The first and the most important historical period is, in his view, the Greek origins of philosophy, ranging from Anaximander to Aristotle. He finds here the key words for Being – *physis*, *idea*, *logos*, and their interconnection with and interrelation to the concept of *alétheia* – *non-concealment*. Heidegger argues against the traditional account of the first Greek philosophers as nature philosophers, on the one hand, and rather primitive philosophers, on the other. The reasons for such an assessment concern insufficient understanding of the words through which these thinkers expressed the Being and the truth. Heidegger explains the essential concepts of the early Greek philosophers in an unconventional way which, while being philosophically charming, many times presents strained interpretations.²

The Greek word *physis* means, in Heidegger's account, the burgeoning (e.g., of a rose) in the sense of becoming clear, showing off, publishing (e.g., a book). „φύσις as the

¹ Gadamer, H.-G., *The History of Philosophy*, 157.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 2007. „Hermeneutics and Ontological Difference”. In: Gadamer, H. – G.: *The Gadamer Reader*. Transl. R. E. Palmer. Evanston, Illionis: Northwestern University Press, 370.

name of Being means for the Greeks: to show off and stand-in-the-world. The being, i.e., *that standing-in-the-world which towers in itself*, the sculpture of the Greeks and their temple bring the *Dasein* of this nation into Being, into an obvious and binding standing-in-the-world; rather than a copy or an expression, they represent an establishing implementation and law of their Being.” [„*φῶς als Name des Seyns besagt für die Griechen: im Sichzeigen dastehen. Das Seiende, d.h. das in sich selbst aufragend Dastehende, das Standbild der Griechen und ihre Tempel, bringen das Dasein dieses Volkes erst zum Sein, zum offenbaren und verbindlichen Dastehen; sie sind weder Nachbild noch Ausdruck, sondern stiftende Setzung und Gesetz ihres Seins.*“]¹

But did the old Greeks really hear the same tones in *physis* as heard by Heidegger? How is it possible that Plato and Aristotle, for example, did not notice this fact, that they did not *hear* it? Heidegger seems to be the only one who can hear these Greek words in this way. Heidegger’s analysis of the concept of *physis* as an intrinsic specification of Being as an illumination of standing-in-the-world implies its interconnection with the entering into concealment. Heraclitus’ claim – *Being likes to be concealed* – plays an important role in this connection. This suggests that the crucial ontological assumption that being, as something what is and persists in its apparent character, is deeply interconnected with the conception of *truth*. The Greek word *a-létheia* is not anything external at the time of the origins of Greek philosophy; rather, it belongs to the intrinsic determination of Being. Unlike the period from the modern age to the present, truth is not and cannot be for the ancient Greeks the property of predication (sentence). Heidegger assumes that truth in old Greece referred to „the essential event of being itself.” [„*das Grundgeschehnis des Seienden selbst.*“]²

¹ Heidegger, M. *Europa und die deutsche Philosophie*, 35.

² Ibid., 36.

The main representatives of the conception of intrinsic interconnection between *Being and truth* are, in his view, Parmenides and Heraclitus. He points out that while the interpretation of these early Greek thinkers as mere irreconcilable opponents presenting opposite philosophical doctrines is possible, it is not correct. Heidegger employs the polarity of their essential philosophical concepts – *Being and Becoming*, *Being and Appearance* – to very skilfully demonstrate that Being and truth are inherently inseparable for these Greeks. „They say that Parmenides accounts for Being in opposition to Becoming; however, he only speaks of Being as One and the Same, because he knows that Being has been constantly endangered by appearance which belongs to it as its shadow.” [*„Man sagt, Parmenides lehre das Sein gegenüber dem Werden; aber er spricht nur vom Seyn als dem Einen und Selbigen, weil er weiß, daß es ständig vom Schein bedroht ist und dieses zu ihm gehört als sein Schatten.“*]¹ It is well known that Heraclitus emphasizes happening in connection with Being. „... but he speaks of becoming in order to integrate it in the One of Being which is, in principle, λόγος. But λόγος does not mean, as thought later, reason and speech; rather, it means the *picking*, the *original collection* of all oppositions in One (λέγειν: to pick, to pick together, vintage).” [*„...aber er spricht nur vom Werden, um es hineinzudenken in das Eine des Seyns, das im Wesen λόγος ist. Aber λόγος heißt da nicht, wie die Späteren meinen, Vernunft und Rede, sondern die Sammlung, die ursprüngliche Gesamtheit aller Widerstreite in das Eine (λέγειν: lesen, zusammenlesen, Weinlese).“*]²

Parmenides and Heraclitus are referred to by Heidegger to exemplify the presentation and the development of the very *origins of Western thinking* because they actually teach the same. How is it possible, then, that the interconnection between Being and truth disappears, that these two great personalities of Presocratic philosophy are misinterpreted

¹ Ibid., 36-37.

² Ibid., 37.

as early as the period of Greek philosophy itself? Heidegger's answer is original, and it is exactly for this originality that it is difficult to accept. He maintains that it is the origin which is most difficult to preserve. The difficulty concerns the fact that it is not possible to stay at the beginning – not for the reason of its imperfection and imperceptibility, but because the beginning was „the greatest in the encloseness of its fullness.” [„das Größte in der Verslossenheit seiner Fülle“]¹

In this respect, Heidegger assumes an explicitly anti-Hegelian position. He believes Hegel's position to be misleading because of its obsession with the principle of development. By implication, the origins of Greek philosophy could not be preserved. Paradoxically, he expresses the view that „the essence of Being and truth experienced a transformation, which, while pre-supposing the beginning, did not manage it anymore.” [„das Wesen des Seyns und der Wahrheit erfuhr eine Umgestaltung, die zwar den Anfang voraussetzte, aber ihn nicht mehr bewältigte.“]² In his lecture *What is it – Philosophy?* (1955), Heidegger rejects calling Parmenides and Heraclitus ‘philosophers’, because they were something more, they were *thinkers*. „Heraclitus and Parmenides were *greater* in the sense that they were still in harmony with the *Logos*, that is, with the *One (is) all*.”³

In the above-mentioned lecture, Heidegger resumes the problem of how and when thinking becomes philosophy. The way to philosophy was paved by Sophism, but it was not before Socrates and Platon that the crucial step was made. „And thus, as was in the past, is now too and will be ever, that towards which (philosophy) is moving and to which it again and again does not find access, is (the question raised) – what is being? (*ti to on*).”⁴

¹ Ibid., 37.

² Ibid., 37.

³ Heidegger, M. *What is Philosophy?*, 53.

⁴ Ibid., 53.

A decisive deviation from the origins of Greek philosophizing can be found in the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle. Backgrounding the Being and foregrounding the *being* is present in the keyword of Plato's philosophy, which is *idea*. The idea, „which is supposed to present being as it is, is itself raised to and re-interpreted as the *actual being*, ὄντως ὄν.“ [„die das Seiende zeigen soll in dem, was es ist selbst zum eigentlichen Seienden, ὄντως ὄν, hinaufgesteigert und umgedeutet wird“]¹ In Aristotle's philosophy, the main turn is bound to the key word *logos* (predication). Since predication provides statement of something, it expresses that Is, the Being. „Thus, if a decision about Being is to be made, a question must be posed about predication. Various types of predication determine various types of Being: substance, quality, quantity, relation.“ [„Soll daher über das Seyn entschieden werden, muß die Aussage befragt werden. An den verschiedenen Weisen der Aussage werden die verschiedenen Weisen des Seyns: Substanz, Qualität, Quantität, Relation, abgelesen.“]² Since predication is expressed by the Greek word *kategorrein*, and since each *logos* predicates, the categories also determine the Being. „What is *actually* said in every predication is the determination of Being which is, therefore, called κατηγορία. That the notions of Being have been called categories from the times of Aristotle up to the present is the clearest evidence of the change in the essential question of philosophy that has taken place since its beginning“ [„Was in jeder Aussage eigentlich gesagt wird, ist eine Seynsbestimmung und heißt daher κατηγορία. Daß seit Aristoteles bis zur Stunde die Seinsbegriffe Kategorien heißen, das ist das untrüglichste Zeichen für den Wandel der Grundfrage der Philosophie, der sich seit ihrem Anfang vollzogen hat“]³

Heidegger maintains that the essential act of thinking – the *predication*, and therefore also the thinking itself – finds itself in an awkward situation. It becomes a kind of *judicial*

¹ Heidegger, M. *Europa und die deutsche Philosophie*, 37-38.

² Ibid., 38.

³ Ibid., 38.

institution over Being. This has considerable effects upon the meaning of logic which now „becomes an obvious or concealed reason of metaphysics” [„wird zum offenkundigen oder versteckten Grund der Metaphysik”].¹ The other consequences pertain to the essential determination of truth as non-concealment of being, as the basic act of Being itself. Following Plato, but mainly thanks to Aristotle, the truth has become a property of logos, the identity between predication and thing. „Everything is upside down. The pressure and the superiority of the obvious used to be the field from which word and speech sprang; at present, the predication is the place and the authority for taking decisions about the truth of being.” [„Alles ist auf den Kopf gestellt. Vordem war der Andrang und die Übermacht des Offenbaren der Bereich, in dem das Wort und das Sagen entsprang, jetzt ist die Aussage der Ort und die Entscheidungsstätte der Wahrheit über das Seiende.”]²

The decisive change to which all Greek philosophy from its inception to Aristotle was subject, determines the basic position of Western European philosophy. Heidegger assumes that the understanding of the essential determination of being as essence (substance), and the essential determination of truth as the agreement between thinking and things has come to be the fate of this philosophy in the centuries to come. „This fundamental belief has even become the *decisive* precondition for the development of *modern* philosophy. Its essential character is the superiority of the mathematical.” [„Diese Grundmeinung wurde sogar entscheidende Voraussetzung für die Ausgestaltung der neuzeitlichen Philosophie. Ein wesentliches Charakter dieser ist die Vorherrschaft des Mathematischen.”]³

In the intrinsic determination of the mathematical, Heidegger aptly sees the emerging trend toward quantification and hierarchization in modern thinking, which provides an

¹ Ibid., 38.

² Ibid., 38.

³ Ibid., 39.

opportunity for the establishment of systems in philosophy. „The trend toward a system and the development of systems in philosophy had not been possible until the mathematical became the ultimate principle of all determination of Being, i.e., until Descartes.” [„Der Zug zum System und der Bau der Systeme in der Philosophie ist erst möglich, seit das Mathematische oberster Grundsatz aller Seins-bestimmungen wird, seit Descartes.”]¹ The Presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle did not create any philosophical system. A systematic form of philosophy is an outcome of modern philosophy, with its peak form reached in German philosophy. Heidegger points out that neither, for example, Kant, who in his *Critique of Pure Reason* determines the limits of reason, can resist the modern effort to build up a system. In his view, the main reason is that, despite criticism, thinking, the *judgement* remains for Kant „the *superior Court* for the determination of Being, i.e., the Being as objective experience...” [„der Gerichtshof der Bestimmung des Seins, d.h. des Seins als Gegenständlichkeit der Erfahrung“].²

Heidegger maintains that the way of Western European philosophy from Plato to Aristotle culminates in Hegel’s logic which is, no doubt, an excellent example of a philosophical system. This way, however, shows no links to the actual origins of Greek philosophy. But the same applies to Nietzsche despite his being one of the first philosophers to revive the Presocratic philosophy. From this philosophy, he adopts notions like Being and Becoming which he, however, explains incorrectly. As a result, Nietzsche’s metaphysics reaches „an impasse in the teaching of eternal return. It is a grandiose attempt to consider Being and Becoming, in principle, as one. But it is an attempt which moves in the bottomless categories of the 19th century, and which cannot find the way back to the original, first question of Being.” [„in die Sackgasse der Lehre von

¹ Ibid., 39.

² Ibid., 39.

der ewigen Wiederkunft. Das ist ein gewaltiger Versuch, Seyn und Werden gleich wesentlich in eins zu denken. Aber ein Versuch, der sich in den bodenlos gewordenen Kategorien des 19. Jahrhunderts bewegt und nicht zurückfindet in das ursprüngliche Wiederfragen der ersten Frage nach dem Seyn."¹

Heidegger's philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy chiefly concentrates on the possibility to *illuminate* the previous course of philosophical thinking through the basis of the original Greek philosophy, i.e., through the concept of Being which is not only an object or idea; it is the Being itself. Although the enormous intellectual effort of his German predecessors (Master Eckhart, Böhme, Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel, Nietzsche) was aimed at the return to the very bottom of Being, this bottom, somehow or other, always turned into the bottomless.² In spite of this fact, it is necessary to pay much philosophical attention to this intention. „Hegel's *Logik* completes the way of Western philosophy from Plato and Aristotle, but not *from its beginning*. The beginning remains unmastered, and has always been interpreted in hindsight from a diverted position, i.e., it was misinterpreted." [*In Hegel Logik vollendet sich der Weg der abendländischen Philosophie seit Plato und Aristoteles, nicht aber seit ihrem Anfang. Dieser bleibt unbewältigt und wurde rückläufig immer nur von der abgefallenen Grundstellung aus gedeutet, d.h. mißgedeutet.*]"³ By its focus on the unique decoding of the *origins* of the Greek philosophy as the most productive way of philosophizing thanks to its essential determination of Being and truth, Heidegger's philosophy of the history of philosophy is in its essence the only actual antipode of Hegel's philosophy in general, and of philosophy of the history of philosophy in particular, not only within the framework of German philosophy. It should be noted that Heidegger in his work *Contributions to*

¹ Ibid., 39-40.

² Ibid., 40.

³ Ibid., 39.

Philosophy appreciates Hegel's effort to build a philosophy of the history of philosophy.

Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy is, in Heidegger's view, built upon the central notions of his philosophy, the notions of *idea* and *absolute knowledge*. Hegel's concept of idea encompasses all its most important content forms in the history – idea as a phenomenon, concept, self-consciousness, perception, the principle of reason, etc. The introduction of a holistic conception of absolute knowledge in the history of human thought established, for the first time, the opportunity to conceive of the history of philosophy as a *philosophical* history. Paradoxically, this turned out to be the last opportunity.¹ If philosophy of the history of philosophy is to be real it must allow for *breaking through Platonism*. „Throughout the entire history of philosophy, Plato's thinking remains decisive in its sundry forms. Metaphysics is Platonism.”²

How should this break-through be implemented? Heidegger's answer is, in a sense, uncompromising. It is necessary to ask the basic question of philosophy concerning the essential determination of Being. This is not any simple questioning. The first question to be asked is „what ground should the essential determination of Being be based on.”³ Being does not predicate of itself directly. It always informs of itself in a particular way through being. „All comportment toward beings thus attests to a knowledge of being, yet at the same time to an inability to stand of its own accord within the law [*Gesetz*] of truth of this knowledge. This truth is a truth about beings. Metaphysics is the history of this truth. It says what beings are in bringing to a concept the beingness of beings.”⁴

¹ Heidegger, M. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 149.

² Heidegger, M. *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, 433.

³ Heidegger, M. *Europa und deutsche Philosophie*, 40.

⁴ Heidegger, M. 1997. „Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’. In: Heidegger, M.: *Pathmarks*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 231-232.

Heidegger believes that European spiritual development has gone through various stages of understanding the being in which Being informs of itself. This holds true of Plato's *idea*, Aristotle's *usia*, Descartes' subject, Leibniz' monad, Hegel's absolute spirit, and Nietzsche's nihilism. „At the individual stages of this way, being comes to be more and more objectified and its forms lose their original relation to Being, also including concealment. Thus, it is also a way of forgetting the Being or leaving the being by Being, an aspect of which is also the non-objectifiable.”¹

Plato's doctrine of being as an idea is the most important event on this way. It follows from the fact that „it thematizes only that being that can be conceptually delimited, thus bringing knowledge to brightness; a view, which only thematizes the bright, only captures the demonstrably present, while all the mysterious, even if being more than things themselves, disappears from the viewing angle of that view.”² A profound change in the conception of Being is introduced no sooner than the modern age, in particular, by determining man as a *subject* of imagination (*Vorstellen*) as a result of Descartes' speculations.³ „Heidegger makes use of etymological puns with a German word *imagination*, the second constituent of which is *stellen*, (*to put, to build, to set,...*), in order to express the modern mediated relation between man and being. This mediated relation means that being must correspond to a particular construction, particular design, or preliminary understanding of what is. It also includes the understanding of natural events as a strictly lawful, calculable, and controllable process. The objectification, reification of the world – one can also speak of ‘undeification’ and ‘unconjuring’ (*Ent-zauberung*) – comes to

¹ Sobotka, M. 1999. „Heideggerova dějinnost bytí v křivém zrcadle”. In: V. Leško (ed.), *Filozofia dejín filozofie II*. Prešov: APHUP, 107.

² Ibid., 107.

³ Also cf. Heidegger, M. 1979. *Nietzsche*. Vol IV. Transl. F. A. Capuzzi. Ed. D.F. Krell. New York: Harper a Row, 96.

a peak at this point. Things are in so far as they comply with our preliminary understanding, including calculus and control. The age of technology has come into existence.”¹

Heidegger’s essentially philosophical thinking, mainly pursuing the answer to the question – *What is Being?* – cannot but deal with the central idea of Hegel’s logic: „Pure Being and pure Nothing are therefore the same.”² He believes this sentence to be fully justified. Being and nothing belong, also in Heidegger’s view, together. But he does not seek the main reason in Hegels’ claim that both „agree in their indeterminateness and immediacy, but rather because Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of Dasein which is held out into the nothing.”³ Heidegger admits that asking about Being as such is a key problem of his conception of metaphysics. In this connection, he views the question related to the conception of the nullity as a question which „pervades the whole of metaphysics since at the same time it forces us to face the problem of the origin of negation, that is, ultimately, to face up to the decision concerning the legitimacy of the rule of *logic* in metaphysics... Only because the nothing is manifest can science make beings themselves objects of investigation.”⁴

In this way, we have worked up to the end of the problem, which, within the Hegel – Heidegger confrontation – was very precisely decoded by H. G. Gadamer. Gadamer considers Hegel’s construction of the history of philosophical thinking to be a teleological construction *from the end*. On the other hand, Heidegger’s conception of the history of philosophy is a construction *from the beginning*.⁵ Gadamer is right in saying that „Heidegger’s thoughtful dealings with

¹ Sobotka, M.: *Heideggerova dějinnost bytí v křivém zrcadle*, 107-108.

² Heidegger, M.: 1993. „What Is Metaphysics?” In: Heidegger, M.: *Basic Writings*. Ed. D. F. Krell. San Francisco: Harper, 108.

³ Ibid., 108.

⁴ Ibid., 108, 109.

⁵ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The History of Philosophy*, 154.

the history of philosophy are burdened with the violence of the thinker who was veritably driven by his own questions and a desire to rediscover himself everywhere.”¹ In our view, this assessment also applies to Hegel. Searching for a more substantial difference between them would be a worthless theoretical effort. This characteristic is sure to apply to Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, and Husserl, too.

¹ Ibid., 165.

8. Heidegger versus Hegel or a struggle for the ancient philosophy

The discussion of the models of philosophy of the history of philosophy from Hegel to Heidegger, presented in the first part of this volume, poses a number of questions. They follow from the highly demanding nature of the theoretical philosophical problems examined. It seems that one of the first questions must primarily concern our *typological-evaluating* position, i.e., the determination of the *main models and the selection* of the individual representatives – Hegel, Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger. Our more broadly oriented research indicates that the philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries offers several attempts at philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy.¹ In addition, it confirms that not all attempts at philosophical analysis of the history of philosophy automatically *passes* to a consciously framed and actually implemented *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. As a result, the difference between the *main models* (Hegel, Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger) and other (*secondary*, or even *filial*) models (Windelband, Dilthey, Russell, Whitehead, Popper, Fink, Gadamer, Patočka, Derrida, etc.) appears to be an important theoretical problem.

The origins of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* are, no doubt, connected with the development of German philosophical thinking in the 19th century. It was founded by G. W. F. Hegel. His model gave rise to the dominant features that enable us to clearly specify the *main models*. Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy is precisely

¹ Also cf. Leško, V. (ed.) 1998. *Filozofia dejín filozofie I*. Prešov: APHUP; Leško, V. (ed.) 1999. *Filozofia dejín filozofie II*. Prešov; Cekič, N. 1990. „Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte von Hegel bis Hartmann.“ *Man and World* 1, 1-22; Cekič, N. „Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte von Rothacker bis Heidegger.“ In: A.-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana XLVIII*, 477-494.

characterized by J. Patočka when he identifies its *main motives* as follows: „1. The development of philosophy is organic. *Various philosophies* represent various development stages of the same organism. 2. The task of an individual is inferior, and does not belong to the *content* of philosophy. 3. Time is only an external *milieu*, a mirror of the internal development of the organism of spirit. Philosophy and other facets of spirit manifest in various periods the same phase of spiritual substance. Each period can be rationally expressed. Thus, time does not have in this case content-related, positive meaning. 4. The sequence of philosophical systems corresponds to the logical development of an idea.”¹

The fact that *philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy* becomes an *integral* part of Hegel’s systematic philosophizing, is the main identifying characteristic of *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. It is first of all represented by the principle of *the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy*. Hegel’s view that the history of philosophy is an indispensable and irreplaceable internal component of any theoretical effort in philosophy has become a solid foundation adopted, though critically and with various modifications, by all models discussed in this volume, i.e., those developed by Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger. The secondary models of philosophy of the history of philosophy are not so consistent in applying the basic principle – *the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy*. In their respective approaches, this unity is much looser, and, as it were, sometimes almost lost. Unlike all the main models it *is not* so rigorous and is never aggressive.

Hegel’s conception of the history of philosophy is aptly characterized by Gadamer who maintains that, in itself, it was a philosophy, it was a special part of the philosophy of history, which wanted to provide evidence of the presence of reason in the history of philosophy. Hegel characterized

¹ Patočka, J. 1996. *Nejstarší řecká filosofie*. Praha: Vyšehrad, 308.

the history of philosophy as that which was the most inherent in the world history.¹ This view is also supported by M. Sobotka who maintains that „the essence and the foundation of history are, in Hegel’s view, the history of philosophy, i.e., the development of philosophy itself, the self-understanding of the idea. The external history of mankind is an objectification of this internal spiritual history.”²

Thus, if the *history of philosophy* is conceived of as the *most inherent* in the world history its significance for philosophical activities of the particular time is indispensable. Hegel’s philosophy of the history of philosophy as *philosophizing of philosophy* is a metatheoretical motion *within* historical-philosophical thinking the meaning of which does not rest on any external-empirical description of the historical-philosophical process; rather, it rests on the comprehension and explanation of this process as an integral part of discussion of the most important philosophical problems. For Hegel, it is the *speculative unity of the abstract and the concrete*. Schelling is primarily interested in the relation between *essence and existence*. The centre of gravity of the historical-philosophical analysis of young Marx is the treatment of *self-consciousness and freedom*. Nietzsche, through the phenomenon of Greek culture (tragedy), searches for *the genuine culture* in order to emphasize that our cultural traditions – *Platonism, metaphysics, morality, and Christianity* – are the main obstacle to truthful comprehension of the world and man. Therefore, he prefers the *Presocratic philosophy* in which he finds the justification of philosophizing in general. Heidegger adopts this *Nietzschean motive of re-consideration* of Presocratic message with the aim of radicalizing the most complex question of philosophy: *What is it – philosophy (metaphysics)?*

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *History of Philosophy*, 162.

² Sobotka, M. 1974. „Poznámka.” In: *Hegel, G. W. F.: Dějiny filosofie III*. Praha: Academia, 525.

In Hegel's approach, the history of philosophy is placed on the pedestal of the most significant spiritual activities which decisively form the spiritual atmosphere in the history. This fact can be observed in all of the examined models, even though the conclusions arrived at by the individual models differ and many time contradict each other. This follows from different applications of the principle of the *unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy* with regard to different philosophical backgrounds, methods, and objectives of their respective philosophical doctrines. What is common to all of these models, is the effort to comprehend the particular philosophical problems and to justify their respective philosophical doctrines through the previous history of philosophy. In this connection, an important role is played by the *teleological principle* with its actualization significance. It is most consistently employed in Hegel's approach, but it also plays an important role in the other main models. Nietzsche, for example, points out that the past may only be explained from the greatest power of the present. Husserl also notes that his goal is to make teleology in the historical development of philosophy, in particular, modern philosophy, comprehensible.

The main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy are characterized by an approach to philosophical problems – in permanent confrontation with the history of philosophy – in which the historical reality is completely lost in many substantial aspects. This is clearly shown by H. G. Gadamer in relation to Heidegger. Gadamer maintains that Hegel's approach to the history of philosophy is subject to the violence of a thinker who is driven by his own questions and who continuously tries to know himself.¹ Hegel's methodological interpretation maxim of philosophy of the history of philosophy, according to which it is necessary to know what should be sought in the old philosophical systems and philosophical schools of different

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. *History of Philosophy*, 165.

time periods,¹ is therefore more or less implemented in all the main models. This facilitates the account of the reasons for the *inherent* participation of the historical-philosophical thinking in the development of philosophical doctrines. Hegel's history of philosophy as philosophy, perceived in the development of the historical-philosophical knowledge, is a necessary *system-establishing* form of the existence of philosophy itself. This is also the main reason for M. Sobotka's conclusion that „the account of the absolute spirit comes to its peak with the philosophy of philosophy.”²

Another unifying platform for the main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy is represented by the philosophical *response* to Hegel's philosophy in general and historical-philosophical reflections in particular. This factor is so important that without it, the examined models are in a sense incomprehensible. It is not accidental that Schelling takes a critical stance to Hegel's philosophy and that he tries his best to provide a comprehensive critical interpretation of Hegel. The philosophical work of K. Marx, notably its early period, in its enormously critical self-clarification of ancient philosophy (with the emphasis on Epicurus), can hardly be imagined without criticism of Hegel's philosophy. Nietzsche's model of philosophy of the history of philosophy is filled through and through with criticism of Hegel's monumentalist conception of history. Nietzsche is the first to reveal the *problem-oriented message* of the classics of ancient philosophy – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – with the aim of expressing the meaning of Presocratic philosophy – as opposed to Hegel who failed to do so in his history of philosophy. The fascination of these two German philosophers with Heraclitus' philosophy is highly interesting. Each of them refers to Heraclitus as a corner-stone of their

¹ Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* I, 48.

² Major, L. and Sobotka, M. 1979. *G. W. F. Hegel. Život a dílo*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 114.

respective theories but for completely different reasons. Through his emphasis on *reason*, rationality, and its place in the history of modern age from the position of transcendental philosophy, Husserl radically recalls to philosophical attention the original Hegelian motive of the significance of the history of philosophy in the development of human culture. However, a crucial philosophical encounter with Hegel on the ground of philosophically reflected history of philosophy did not take place before Heidegger. His work embodies, as it were, a total *philosophical struggle* for truthful comprehension of the *origins* of philosophy, and for the assessment of the decisive role of the *crucial points* in philosophizing, personified in Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, in a very carefully thought-out philosophical strategy.

The main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy also highlight the problem of the degree to which an absolute reference system may be applied to the history of philosophy. Hegel's model is completely built up in accordance with the above-given requirements. Schelling's and Marx's models are less rigorous, but they are not devoid of these pretensions. Nietzsche's, Husserl's, and Heidegger's models do not deviate very much from the original Hegelian aspirations either. An active influence of the history of philosophical thought on the process of developing the individual forms of philosophizing, either systematic (Hegel) or non-systematic (Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger), is mainly concentrated on the main question of philosophy of the history of philosophy – *what is it – philosophy?* An intrinsic determination of *what is it – philosophy?* through a self-critical reflection of the history of philosophy also offers several interesting possibilities of critical confrontation within the framework of discussion of the main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy. The comparison of Heidegger's attitude to Hegel seems to be most attractive of all because it presents the examined problems in the paramount philosophical form.

Heidegger's critical philosophical treatment of Hegel's philosophical doctrine has always been a major unresolved philosophical problem. In examining the problems of the main models of philosophical history of philosophy it must be taken into consideration owing to its specific *strategic plan* preparing the ground for a philosophical dialogue with Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy. One can hardly be surprised at Heidegger appreciating some of Hegel's theoretical results. However, at the same time he critically identifies the *limits* of this way of reflection of the history of philosophy, as well as some other philosophical restrictions.¹

Heidegger is not easy to interpret in this case either, because the problem in question has its special history. Its beginning can be found in his habilitation thesis in which he for the first time outlined „the great task of a foundational confrontation with the system of a historical Weltanschauung that is the most forcible in fullness as well as in depth, experiential richness, and concept-formation, which sublated in itself all prior fundamental philosophic problem motifs, namely, with Hegel.² Much later, almost towards the close of his life, Heidegger, in one of his letters, ponders over the problem of whether his position to Hegel is clearly defined. Interestingly, he is not willing to characterize it as an opposing position. He maintains that the determination of his *position* is connected with the secret of its *origin*. This question is much more difficult because it is simpler than the account offered by Hegel prior to the beginning of *motion* in his *logic*.³ Moreover, Heidegger unambiguously

¹ Cf. Heidegger, M. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 149-155.

² Heidegger, M. 1916. *Die Kategorien – und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*. Tübingen. Cited from Gadamer, H.-G. 2007. *The Gadamer Reader*, Ed. R. E. Palmer. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 455.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: 2007. „The Heritage of Hegel.” In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Gadamer Reader*, 338.

rejects speaking philosophically of the *break-down* of Hegel's doctrine. What broke down was what followed after Hegel, including Nietzsche's philosophy.¹

This view indicates a more complex relation to the philosophical message of the classic of German idealism. Heidegger considers Hegel to be a *great philosopher* with whom it is possible to *think over* philosophical problems. He pays enormous space to Hegel's philosophical doctrine, and carries out philosophical polemics with him from his dissertation thesis up to the end of his philosophical work. H.-G. Gadamer demonstrates in several of his works that Hegel became a permanent *philosophical challenge* to Heidegger, because, among other things, he saw in him the *last* Greek thinker.² In addition, he notes that Heidegger's attitude to Hegel is uncritical and ambiguous on a number of occasions.³

Heidegger's *principled coping* with the system of Hegel's historical views after the *turn* becomes explicit mainly in the *Principles of Thinking* (1958) which discusses the history of Western thinking, including the achievements of philosophers like Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. His standpoint is limpid: „*Thinking became deliberately dialectical* (emphasis by V. L.)... The complete theoretical-speculative development of the dialectic to a self-contained area reached its culmination in the work of Hegel entitled *Wissenschaft der Logik – The Science of Logic*.”⁴ One cannot but agree with this view. But Heidegger would not be *Heidegger*, if this *limpidity* were not developed into a new, unconventional approach which puts the whole former philosophical tradition in

¹ Ibid., 338.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: „Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference“. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Gadamer Reader*, 369.

³ Cf. Gadamer, H.-G. 1987. „Hegel und Heidegger.“ In: H.-G. Gadamer. *Gesammelte Werke*. Bd. 3, 87-101.

⁴ Heidegger, M. 1994. „Principles of Thinking.“ In: Heidegger, M.: *The Path of Thinking*. Transl. J. G. Hart and J. C. Maraldo. Bloomington-London: Indiana University Press, 47.

a new light. He points out that the entry of thought into the dimension of dialectic becomes a *historical matter* and may appear to *have taken place already*. „It seems this way because we are used to picturing history from the viewpoint of the historical disciplines.”¹ Heidegger argues that „as long as we picture history from the viewpoint of historical disciplines, it appears as occurrence – and an occurrence appears in the passage of before and after. We even find ourselves in a present permeated by flowing occurrence. From out of this present, we charge what is past to the account of what is present. For the sake of what is present we plan the future – what is to come.”²

Heidegger resents the fact that picturing history as a sequence of occurrences prevents us from correct understanding of the essential sense in which authentic history is always the attending present. „By present we do not mean what happens to be here now, for the moment. The attending present is that which tends toward us, awaits us, waits on whether and how we expose ourselves to it or seal ourselves off from it. What tends or comes toward us is the future – rightly thought of as what is to come (*Zu-kunft*).”³

Heidegger wants to view the attending present through the *requirement of anticipating the future*. In his opinion, the atmosphere of expectations, anticipation, and therefore, tuning up is beneficial to „the essential questioning which is a part of the growth of every solid work, no matter of what field. A work is a work only by speaking toward the imposition of what is to come, thereby setting free the hidden presencing of what has been, delivering it to us...”⁴

Heidegger understands *authentic history* in its proper sense as the *attending present*. The following words help us to understand this idea: „It is not true that there is never really anything new in history, if this statement means everything

¹ Ibid., 47.

² Ibid., 47-48.

³ Ibid., 48.

⁴ Ibid., 48.

is always 'the same old thing'. But if 'nothing under the sun is new' means that there is only the old within the inexhaustible transforming power of the originating, then the statement hits upon the essence of history."¹ What Heidegger strives for is expressed unambiguously: „History is the advent of what has been. What has been, i.e., what already is, and only it, tends toward us, comes upon us."² Heidegger does not envisage the past as something *beyond man*; rather it is what is *before him* in the sense that each generation must adopt the past achievements of human knowledge. The active role of traditions is evidently adopted by him.

Heidegger also applies this approach to history also to his conception of philosophy of the history of philosophy. This approach represents its leitmotif, which can be illustrated by reference to his excellent lecture *Hegel and the Greeks* (1958).³ Heidegger realizes that Hegel's history of philosophy represents enormous philosophical knowledge. In his view, Hegel is the first philosopher who *reflects* Greek philosophy *as a whole*. Hegel's history of philosophy, like his system philosophy, expressed the self-development of the spirit to the absolute knowledge. In addition, both of these philosophies aim to capture the *truth*. It goes without saying that, from this point of view, Hegel's philosophy is conceived of as the simultaneous embodiment of absolute knowledge and truth. „Truth, for Hegel, is the absolute certainty of the self-knowing absolute subject."⁴

However, as we already know, truth cannot be for Hegel a kind of *completed achievement*, a static act. Truth is understood as a process, a dialectic development. The history of philosophy is not an *automatic* expression of truth; it is a *dialectic search* indispensable components of which are

¹ Ibid., 48-49.

² Ibid., 49.

³ Heidegger, M.1998. „Hegel and the Greeks."In: Heidegger, M. *Pathmarks*. Transl. R. Metcalf. Cambridge University, 323-336.

⁴ Ibid., 332.

contradiction, relation, interconnection, and overcoming. It is absolutely clear from the beginning that the history of philosophy carries out a dialectic motion from *untruth* to *truth*. From this point of view, all previous philosophical doctrines appear not to be true yet, even if not *un-true*. Heidegger primarily wants to violate this Hegelian historical-philosophical certainty without which Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy is unthinkable.

Heidegger argues against Hegel's account of the history of ancient philosophy (mainly Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle) by *accusing* him of false translation of the *essential concepts* of Greek philosophy – *hen, logos, idea, and energieia*. Their false translation stems from their *false interpretation*. This error is not confined to Hegel only. Since Western European metaphysics is completed with Hegel, this error is that of metaphysics as a whole. Hegel, in Heidegger's view, misinterprets the essential concepts of Greek philosophy primarily because he interprets them from his philosophical position. On top of it, since he accounts for them on the basis of his philosophy they necessarily become the pre-stage of his doctrine. This is, in Heidegger's view, a crucial difference between his and Hegel's accounts of Greek philosophy. While Heidegger *reveals* Greek philosophy as a *stage of being*, Hegel reflects it merely as a *pre-stage* of his own philosophy.

As far as truth is concerned, there is also a considerable difference between the two approaches. To Hegel, truth is the *absolute certainty of a self-knowing absolute subject*, expressed as *certainty*. Truth results from a dialectic development, and since this development starts with Greek philosophy, this philosophy cannot be its bearer in the full sense of the word. Heidegger explains truth as *non-concealment*, with this truth dominating as early as the very beginnings of Greek thinking – even before the very origins of philosophy. Heidegger believes that, without *non-concealment*, Western European metaphysics would not have been possible – including Hegel's doctrine – according to which truth is absolute

certainty of the absolute subject. The problem concerning the concept of truth as *non-concealment*, as aptly noted by E. Tugendhat, remains open. What matters is not so much the *non-concealment* itself; rather, it is the scope of *non-concealment*.¹ The answer to this question is missing in Heidegger's work.

Heidegger's critical assessment of Hegel's approach to Greek philosophy shows, however, some common cornerstones of their philosophizing inherently related to metaphysical (ontological) problems. Hegel's philosophy, with the *strategic platform* of its historical anchoring, is based on a processual basis, with its object being *intellectual investigation of things* – the comprehension of reality through the *categorical analysis of Being*. On the other hand, Heidegger emphasizes that the problem of being can only be grasped by reflecting the difference in relation to the existing.² This has serious implications for a philosophical concept of the history of philosophy.

Hegel's effort to philosophically penetrate into the history of philosophical thinking is aimed at the strength and the scope of thinking in terms of its comprehension and inclusion in absolute thinking. Since it is not a static act, it requires gradation. Heidegger, too, tries to penetrate into earlier philosophical thinking and look for its strength, but he does not intrinsically reduce his effort to revealing the actual way of thinking of the individual philosophers. Instead he tries to explain what the particular philosopher *did not think*, what remained *unthought*. He offers thinking its theoretical space. Consequently, while the basic nature of Hegel's investigation into historical-philosophical thinking can be expressed, with a certain degree of simplification, by the concept of *overcoming*, with Heidegger's approach the key phrase is *a step back* – from metaphysics to its essence. Heidegger does not find it important to try to determine

¹ Tugendhat, E. 1967. *Die Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*. Berlin, 261.

² Heidegger, M. *What Is Metaphysics?*, 109.

how Being is intended in the history of philosophy; what matters is how it is *present*.

Heidegger's leitmotif, according to which *Western European metaphysics is the fate of Being*¹ and its history is that of the fate of Being which consists in the oblivion, and in the falling of this oblivion into oblivion, is, in a sense, directed against Plato and Aristotle. This, however, does not hold absolutely. Plato and Aristotle are not guilty and yet neither is Western metaphysics. Oblivion belongs to the nature of Being. Heidegger likes to express it by referring to the Heraclitean postulate – *Being likes to be concealed*. At the same time, he admits that Being is revealed, is illuminated in the existing. Heidegger strongly perceives the Greek focus on revealing the existence which, at the same time, conceals the possibility to understand the ideas of knowledge as *power*. This idea is not explicitly formulated until the modern age. In the 20th century, it is the corollary of the *will to the technological domination*, and results in the belief of the illusory nature of each truth. Heidegger assumes that *nihilism* is the characteristic spiritual space of the present-day West.

The central problem of Heidegger's philosophy of the history of philosophy is the problem of Being. In dealing with this problem he does not find it necessary to be methodologically as perfect as Hegel, because, since he tries to describe metaphysics as unified realization of the growing Being, his outline cannot avoid being subject to a violent logical character, so characteristic of Hegel's construction of the history of thinking. It is not any teleological construction *from the end* as was the case with Hegel. Rather, it is a construction *from the beginning* where the beginning is the fatal Being of metaphysics.²

Hegel would never articulate the extreme postulate that metaphysics may be a *fallacy*. Heidegger considers it to be

¹ Heidegger, M. *Nietzsche*, Vol. IV, 197 ff.

² Gadamer, H.-G. *History of Philosophy*, 157.

the only possible solution because each epoch in world history is an epoch of fallacy.¹ *Each Western metaphysics is a fallacy* – the corollary of this knowledge is immense. If Western metaphysics is a fallacy, then the whole of Western European history is the same. Given the global significance of Western European history, any history is a fallacy. But does this actually hold true? Gadamer assumes that if we conceive of Heidegger's metaphysics as the fate of Being, brought to its absolute extreme by Western European thinking, i.e., to its oblivion connected with the era of technology, all its subsequent steps within an exchange of views with the history of philosophy are actually predetermined.²

Heidegger's philosophy of the history of philosophy finds the decisive meaning of its own activities in revealing what is concealed in the history. Hegel prefers the opposite – all that is realized and formulated openly in the history. Heidegger's approach resembles the fulfilment of one of the possibilities proposed as early as F. Nietzsche in relation to the history of philosophy as *concealed history*. Hegel's philosophical method of investigation into the history of philosophy is consciously aimed at non-concealment, and is therefore devoid of *accidentality*. One cannot be sure about it in Heidegger. Gadamer maintains that Heidegger's approach to the history of philosophical thinking resembles the travelling of a water-diviner who seeks a new spring. All of a sudden, the divining rod bends and the traveller becomes a winner.³ But can these be genuine philosophical victories?

In his *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger aptly characterizes Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy as the *first* appropriate historical questioning. He, however, adds that it is the last *possible* questioning. We may fully agree with the first part of his assessment. The second part

¹ Heidegger, M. 1957. *Holzwege*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 311.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *History of Philosophy*, 158.

³ *Ibid.*, 160.

raises a number of questions. In our discussion, we have tried to show that this tradition has its significant continuation in the philosophical works of Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, and, mainly, Heidegger himself. Heidegger of 1936 to 1938 was right in expecting that the *overcoming of Platonism* as a historical decision of the widest possible importance takes place simultaneously with the justification of the *anti-Hegelean... philosophy of the history of philosophy*.¹ He himself launched this initiative and it is in this connection that we may conclude that his *philosophy of the history of philosophy* is the *last* main model found in the literature of the 20th century. It is the total fulfilment of the *determining* principle of this form of philosophizing – *the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy*. In Hegel, the complete history of philosophy *participates* in constructing its *logic* (*ontology, metaphysics*) as the basis for its philosophical system. In Heidegger's approach, the history of metaphysics (*ontology, logic*) is the *history of Being*. No other theoretical achievements in this respect – Cassirer, Fink, Gadamer, Popper, Ricoeur, Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida, etc.,² – succeeds in applying this determining principle of philosophy of the history of philosophy so consistently, and therefore, in such an *aggressive* and even *unrefined way* as was characteristic of Hegel and Heidegger. An absolutely consistent application of the principle of *the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy* can be exemplified by Heidegger's lecture *What is it – Philosophy?* (1955) dealing with the main question of philosophy of the history of philosophy.

¹ Heidegger, M. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, 154.

² Cf. Leško, V. (ed.) 1999. *Filozofia dejín filozofie II*. Prešov: AF-PhUP; Also cf. Marcelli, M. 1995. *Michel Foucault alebo stat' sa iným*. Bratislava: Archa.

9. The main question of philosophy of the history of philosophy: *What is Philosophy?*

Heidegger's lecture *What is philosophy?* (1955) is a unique philosophical presentation of the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy. It appears beyond a shadow of doubt that answering the question of what philosophy is, is not viable without mastering the *historical context*. It would not be Heidegger if the whole problem were not presented in a demanding philosophical form. As a permanently *seeking* thinker he rejects any simplifying answers which are available as if from themselves. While the search for an answer to a question is completed with a *predication* Heidegger simultaneously indicates its *overcoming* and opens new space for philosophical search.

The answer to the question *What is philosophy?* can be sought in various ways. From the philosophical point of view, it is crucial whether this question is asked from the historical-philosophical position or from the system-based position. In addition, this search can be put into a *theoretical unity*. Heidegger is well aware of the fact that meaningful fulfilment of this possibility is not easy. From the beginning he realizes that answering this question is preconditioned by overcoming the *external* approach to philosophy. In no way does he want to speak *about* philosophy. An in-depth penetration to this question presupposes an *internal* approach to it: „...the aim of our question is to enter *into* philosophy, to tarry in it, to conduct ourselves in its manner, that is, to *philosophize*.”¹

What does Heidegger mean by moving within philosophy and not outside of it? Who or what provides us with evidence of such a motion? The most acceptable and, as it were, facile solution available to us concerns the possible reference to *reason*. This, however, does not solve the problem because the original question must be immediately

¹ Heidegger, M. *What Is Philosophy*, 21.

modified as follows: *What is reason?* And this question may easily take us beyond the *limits* of philosophy. Then, how should we come to grips with this question? Heidegger's proposal is, no doubt, unconventional – *revealing philosophy as a path*. Philosophy is a *path* which lies directly before us, but which we, unfortunately, cannot always see. And even finding it does not imply an easy journey. Instead Heidegger offers a new solution. If „we hear the word *philosophy* coming from its source, then it sounds thus: *philosophia*. Now the word *philosophy* is speaking Greek. The word, like the word *Greek*, is a path.”¹

Following the *pathway* of philosophy is never simple. This can be confirmed by anybody who has made at least an attempt at it. Not always can we find out quite clearly that we are already on the *path*. For some people, *historical knowledge* can help in accessing the *path* and in finding the *path* itself. Heidegger, in accordance with Nietzsche, demonstrates that historical knowledge of philosophy itself does not constitute philosophy. It is necessary to penetrate deeper to the roots of Greek philosophy. If we succeed in it we can reveal their relation to the existence of *Greek nature*. „That is why we can ask the question, ‘What is philosophy?’ only if we enter into a discussion with the thinking of the Greek world. But not only *what* is in question – philosophy – is Greek in origin, but *how* we question, the manner which we question even today, is Greek.”² Heidegger points out that questioning in Greek means asking the question – *what is it...?* It was only the Greeks who managed to ask in this way and to search for the answers to this kind of *philosophical* questioning.

The knowledge that Greek philosophy is an irreplaceable basis for any philosophizing is accepted unconditionally by the representatives of the main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy. The point is, however,

¹ Ibid., 29.

² Ibid., 35.

what is specified as the determining *key* (Marx) to its understanding within the framework of this first historical era. Hegel finds it primarily in Plato and Aristotle, Marx in Epicurus, and Nietzsche in Heraclitus. Following Nietzsche, Heidegger also finds it in Presocratic thinking – Heraclitus and Parmenides. In addition, he also assigns an important role to Anaximander,¹ also taking Plato and Aristotle into consideration.

Heidegger points out that he does not see the question – *What is philosophy?* as the problem of relating knowledge to itself (philosophy of philosophy). Moreover, he does not regard it to be a *question of a historical discipline* either, i.e., the investigation of the origins and the development of philosophy. He conceives of it as a historical question, i.e., the *question of the lot* – „it is *the* historical question of our Western-European actuality.”² However, one can raise justified doubts to what extent the *way* leads from the actuality of the Greeks to us, or even farther through us, if their is a kind of a *free sequel* of the individual periods of philosophy. In this context, Heidegger tries very carefully to distinguish himself mainly from Hegel when writing that „in no way can it be seen that individual philosophies and epochs of philosophy have emerged from one another in the sense of the necessity of a dialectic process.”³

Heidegger tries to answer the question by providing a *philosophizing* answer. And the answer to the sub-question of the main question, i.e., *When do we philosophize?* – carries the typical features of Greek tradition: „Obviously only when we enter into a discussion with philosophers...[t]his mutual talking through of what always anew peculiarly concerns philosophers as being the Same, that is talking, *legein*, in the sense of *dialegethai* [conversing], is talking as dia-

¹ Heidegger, M. 1971. „The Anaximandros Fragment.” In: D.F. Krell and F.A. Capuzzi (eds.), Heidegger, M. *Early Greek Thinking*. Transl. F. A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper & Row, 13-58.

² Heidegger, M. *What Is Philosophy?*, 41.

³ Ibid., 63.

logue.”¹ Heidegger never concentrates on the particular view of another philosopher with the aim of explaining it. He believes this kind of activity to be philosophically worthless. However, a different thing is *talking* to philosophers about what they say. The Nietzschean motive of *dialogue* with great thinkers is here fulfilled almost absolutely. *Almost!* The idea is that the *dialogue* should not be biased, nor leading in only one direction. Unfortunately, Heidegger’s is the case that he only *bears* what he *wants* to hear.

Heidegger’s *dialogue* with the great personalities of Greek thinking (Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle) exclusively covers the field of *metaphysics* (ontology, logic), and is aimed at a single question – *What is Being?* If philosophy is conceived à la Aristotle, that is, as a *kind of mission* which makes it possible to see *what being is as being* then we can imagine and explain both pre-Aristotelean thinking and post-Aristotelean philosophy. „However, it will be pointed out with ease that philosophy itself and the way in which it conceives its own nature have changed frequently in the subsequent two thousand years.”² While we agree with this view, we should like to point out that any reduction of an answer to the question *What is it – philosophy?* to the ontological dimension does not seem to be fully justified. We should ponder over the extent to which this ontological dimension of philosophy is critical to our main question. The motion of philosophy at the end of the 20th centuries indicates that this approach to philosophy implies a biased view of its object in the *historical* context.

Heidegger’s answer to the question *What is philosophy?* raises no doubts. It „consists in our corresponding to [answering to] that towards which philosophy is on the way. And that is – the Being of being. In such a correspondence we listen from the very outset to that which philosophy has

¹ Ibid., 67.

² Ibid., 61.

already said to us, *philosophy*, that is, *philosophia* understood in the Greek sense.”¹ What follows this idea is the *pre-knowledge* of the classical position of philosophy of the history of philosophy. Heidegger believes that we attain an answer to the question *What is philosophy?* „only *when* we remain in conversation with that to which the tradition of philosophy delivers us, that is, liberates us. We find the answer to the question, *What is philosophy?* not through historical assertions about the definitions of philosophy but through conversing with that which has been handed down to us as the Being of being.”²

From this it follows that Heidegger does not consider the indicated path to the answer as a *break with history*, a *repudiation of history*; rather, he speaks of *adopting and transforming the tradition*. What philosophy tries to answer is inherently related to the *Being of being*. Only in this case is this path to answering the question actually carried out and elaborated in its development. The philosophy of ancient times is a kind of mission enabling one to look at the being only in terms of what the *being is as being*.

Heidegger perceives the modern age as a radical change expressed by Descartes when he asks „what that being is that is true being in the sense of the *ens certum*.”³ Heidegger’s emphasis on the changed concept of *certitudo* which is related to ego as the unquestionability of the *cogito sum* results in the following assumption: „Thereby, the ego becomes the distinctive *sub-jectum* and thus the nature of man for the first time enters the realm of subjectivity in the sense of the ego... Henceforth, certainty becomes the determining form of truth. The tuning of confidence to the absolute certainty of knowledge which is attainable at all

¹ Ibid., 71.

² Ibid., 71.

³ Ibid., 85-86.

times is *pathos* and thus the *arché*, the beginning of modern philosophy.”¹

Heidegger’s assessment of Descartes’ historical participation in the search for the answer to the question *What is philosophy?* is in many respects similar to his perception of Greek philosophy, i.e., it is rather strained. Descartes’ ego, as understood by Heidegger, becomes a uniquely significant *sub-ject*. In this way, „the nature of man for the first time enters the realm of subjectivity in the sense of the ego...”² While the characterization of Descartes as a founder of the *metaphysics of subjectivity*³ is possible we do not think it to be proper.

The dominant motif of Descartes’ doctrine, as pointed out by M. Sobotka, is „the motif of Being or God as the basis of all truth we arrive at when searching for the reason for the unity of certainty and truth represented by cogito.”⁴ Finding Descartes’ main philosophical message in *cogito* is in many respects *predetermined* by the positions of the transcendental method of philosophizing. His position implies the construction of the *metaphysics of subjectivity*, but in no way is it the case of a founder of modern philosophy if the historical context is to be taken into account.⁵

Heidegger discusses the *completion* of modern philosophy and asks where it should be sought. Is it in Hegel or late Schelling? What about, then, Marx and Nietzsche? „It looks as though we were only posing historical questions. But, in truth, we are considering the future nature of philosophy. We are trying to listen to the voice of Being. Into what kind of tuning does this put contemporary thinking? The ques-

¹ Ibid., 87.

² Ibid., 87.

³ Heidegger, M. *Nietzsche*. Vol. IV., 96ff.

⁴ Sobotka, M. 1996. „Descartes a metafyzika.” In: V. Leško (ed.), *Descartes a súčasnosť*. Prešov: AFPhUP, 53.

⁵ See Zigo, M. 1997. „Kto číta Descartove Meditácie...” In: Descartes, R.: *Meditácie o prvej filozofii*. Bratislava: Chronos 5 ff.

tion can scarcely be answered unequivocally. Presumably a fundamental tuning prevails. It is, however, still hidden from us. This would indicate that our contemporary thinking has not yet found its unequivocal path.”¹ In our view, neither the *present* nor *future* thinking can find an *unambiguous path*. Heidegger’s thinking itself is a case in point.

Heidegger’s answer to the question of *What is philosophy?* is that we discover it and come to know it under the condition of experiencing how and in what manner philosophy is; he maintains that *philosophy is in the manner of correspondence which is attuned to the voice of the Being of being. This correspondence means speaking; it means that it serves language.*² He himself establishes various *ambiguous paths*. Answering the question of *What is Being* by shifting the focus on *sufficient pondering over language* slowly but surely replaces the position of a *professor-analyst* of Being – by the position of a *prophet-messenger* of the coming of new Being.³ Moreover, if we realize that all this is incredibly interwoven with the thinking of a *patriot-ideologist*,⁴ it is only now that the *phenomenon* of Heidegger can be expressed in a comprehensive way. Such a broad approach, however, does not fall within the scope of our work.

However, what falls within the scope of the present volume is Heidegger’s essay *The Anaximander Fragment* because it, in many respects, very *precisely* expresses the *Heideggerian shift* from a professor-analyst to a prophet-messenger. Moreover, it discusses the present issues of philosophy of the history of philosophy in a way which is different from his former approach. The essay presents the view that *think-*

¹ Heidegger, M. *What Is Philosophy?*, 89-91.

² Ibid., 93. Also cf. Hubík, S. 1994. *K postmodernizmu obratem k jazyku*. Boskovice, 45.

³ Cf. Novosád, F. 1995. *Pozvanie k Heideggerovi*. Bratislava: Archa 1995, 9.

⁴ Ebeling, H. 1997. *Martin Heidegger. Filosofie a ideologie*. Olomouc: Votobia, 10, 131, 134 ff.

ing is the poetizing of the truth of Being in the historical discussion of thinking.¹ The reference to the discussion of thinking is mainly based on recognition or rejection of an authority. All this should contribute to illuminating the companionable consciousness which does not want to reject any contradictory views.² Unfortunately, the reality is different. In the essay *The Anaximander Fragment*, he clearly admits and confirms the position that an arbitrary and strained interpretation is not only admissible but is even regarded to be its basis and structure.³

Moreover, Heidegger profoundly changes the starting position of the philosophical approach to the history of philosophy. H.-G. Gadamer characterizes it as a *from-the-beginning* position when considering the issue whether the end of Western thinking (Nietzsche) can explain its beginning. Anaximander's well-known sentence – „Whence things have their origin, there they must also pass away according to necessity; for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustice, according to the ordinance of time” – becomes his philosophical inspiration in developing the idea of *thinking of Being as poetizing*. „Thinking of Being is the original way of poetizing. Language first comes to language, i.e., into its essence, in thinking. Thinking says what the truth of Being dictates; it is the original *dictare*. Thinking is primordial poetry, prior to all poesy, but also prior to the poetics of art, since art shapes its work within the realm of language. All poetizing, in this broader sense, and also in the narrower sense of the poetic, is in its ground a thinking. The poetizing essence of thinking preserves the sway of the truth of Being. Because it poetizes as it thinks, the translation which wishes to let the oldest fragment of thinking itself speak necessarily appears violent.”⁴

¹ Heidegger, M. *The Anaximandros Fragment*, 19.

² See Heidegger, M. 1954. *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*. Pfullingen, 11.

³ Heidegger, M. *The Anaximandros Fragment*, 13 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

Heidegger shows that the poetic character of thinking has not been sufficiently revealed yet. It is related, among other things, to the fact that where this character of thinking can manifest itself it resembles the *utopia* of a polypoetic comprehension. He comprehends thinking poetry as a *topology of Being*. Heidegger also discusses *singing*. Singing and thinking are considered to be the neighbouring stems of poetry growing up from being and reaching the truth. Heidegger appreciates Anaximander's sentence as a thought whose mightiness is on a par with great poetry as an in-depth view of the world. Anaximander's idea inspires Heidegger to an almost visionary statement of the future: „Do we stand in the very twilight of the most monstrous transformation our planet has ever undergone, the twilight of that epoch in which earth itself hangs suspended? Do we confront the evening of a night which heralds another dawn? Are we to strike off on a journey to this historic region of earth's evening? Is the land of evening only now emerging? Will this land of evening overwhelm Occident and Orient alike, transcending whatever is merely European to become the location of a new but primordially fated history? Are we men of today already 'Western' in a sense that first crystallizes in the course of our passage into the world's night?... *Are* we the latecomers we are? But are we also at the same time precursors of the dawn of an altogether different age, which has already left our contemporary historiological representations of history behind?"¹

In *The Anaximander Fragment*, Heidegger claims that while each thinker speaks of philosophy, his words are, in a sense, about one and the same, about Being. Heideggerean words, about the *Being of being*, about the *present in its presence*. Moreover, *The Anaximander Fragment* indicates the tragic reflection of being in its Being. The motive of the tragic is inherent. However, the most important is bound to the relation of the *governing present*. This relation remains, in his

¹ Ibid., 17.

view, the only one, and bears no comparison with any other relation. It belongs to the *oneness* of Being itself. This implies huge intellectual effort aimed at finding a *word*, a *single word*, which would express the *essence of Being*. Is it possible at all? It appears that Heidegger's effort in this direction could not be successful.

In *The Anaximander Fragment*, Heidegger resumes the question of the specification of the *Greek nature* and *Greek thinking* as a basis for any true philosophizing. „If we so stubbornly insist on thinking Greek thought in Greek fashion it is by no means because we intend to sketch a historical portrait of Greek antiquity, as one of the past great ages of man, which would be in many respects more accurate. We search for what is Greek neither for the sake of the Greeks themselves nor for the advancement of scholarship. Nor do we desire a more meaningful conversation simply for its own sake. Rather, our sole aim is to reach what wants to come to language in such a conversation, provided it come of its own accord. And this is that Same which fatefully concerns the Greeks and ourselves, albeit in different ways. It is that which brings the dawn of thinking into the fate of things Western, into the land of evening. Only as a result of this fatefulness [*Geschick*] do the Greeks become Greeks in the historic [*geschichtlich*] sense.”¹

The Anaximander Fragment will never talk to us if we approach it and explain it on purely historical or philosophical ground. Heidegger maintains that this unique *philosophical statement* cannot talk to us before we leave our own claims of traditional thinking and consider the reasons for the confusion of the present fate of the world. Since science is unable to unveil the mystery of Being, it is *thinking* which should poetize over the mystery of Being. The new philosophical thinking is supposed to search for this *dawn of the re-considered* which aims to approach the mystery of Being.

¹ Ibid., 25.

Heidegger's essay *Anaximander's Statement* has been the only project of *poetizing about the history of philosophy* in the history of philosophy. It may be, however, doubted that it is *the project* which is worth following.

* * *

Heidegger's philosophical conception of the history of philosophy is the culmination of the main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy. In his model, the *unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy* is filled to the top for the second time. Hegel's absolute model of the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy and Heidegger's model cannot, however, be viewed as the end or the completion of any productive philosophical conception of the history of philosophy. Hegel's and Heidegger's models of philosophy of the history of philosophy are the top models of a philosophical conception of the history of philosophy irrespective of all the differences (and maybe thanks to them!) between them. Hegel's model is based on the idea of historical progress in the knowledge of truth. Heidegger's model postulates historical changes in the concept of Being and in the inherent determination of truth. Both models are characteristic of the *ontological involvement* which is assigned high priority in their philosophical investigations. In this connection, R. Wiehl aptly notes that both of them feature a unique way of dealing with Platonic philosophy and its historical influence. Both of them understand their respective conceptions of the history of philosophy as absolute conceptions. Both of them know and recognize only one such history: on the one hand, it is the history of progress in knowing the truth, on the other hand, the history of changes in essential determination of truth. As a result, both of these histories suffer from deficiencies.¹

¹ Wiehl, R. 1996. „Dějiny interpretaci a interpretace dějín v dějinách filosofie.” *Filosofický časopis*, 44/3, 415.

Neither Hegel nor Heidegger were able to *tune up* to the voice of Being of being without the history of philosophy. The position they assumed in their philosophical approach to the history of philosophy is that of an *absolute observer*. This position engenders a number of problems. Hegel's and Heidegger's models of philosophy of the history of philosophy clearly demonstrate, among other things, that *metaphysics is only viable as a historical-philosophical problem*. It has exhausted its possibilities of a live system form of philosophizing. This view is also supported by H. G. Gadamer who points out that Heidegger, toward the end of his life, got to the point at which he ceased using the word *philosophy*, because he found the task of bringing metaphysics as a form of notional thinking, taken up by Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece, to some new horizons of future an insoluble task.¹

In his last interview, Heidegger admits that the *big* that was to be *re-considered*, appears to be too big. He suggests that the effort he devoted to the treatment of philosophical problems be viewed as *beating narrow paths* in order to get a little farther. Heidegger realizes that the contribution of philosophy to more profound changes in the contemporary world is not significant. This results in the above-indicated *practical pessimism* expressed in Heidegger's unique way: „Only a god can save us. The only possibility available to us is that by thinking and poetizing we prepare a readiness for the appearance of a god, or for the absence of a god in (our) decline, insofar as in view of the absent god we are in a state of decline”.²

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1996. „Evropa a Oikúmené.” *Filosofický časopis*, 1996, 44/1, 86. (Gadamer, H.-G.: „Europa und die Oikumene.” In: H.-H. Gander (ed.) 1993. *Europa und die Philosophie*. Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft-Schriftenreihe. Bd. 2. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 67-86.)

² Heidegger, M.: *Only a God Can Save Us*. The Spiegel Interview, 64.

In the end, Heidegger gives up any hope of *overcoming* traditional metaphysics in confrontation with the basic features of the technological age whose development he could follow directly in his life. No doubt, this position also reflects his disappointment at his failure to answer the question of *What is Being* in spite of enormous philosophical efforts. In this connection, Gadamer aptly points out that everybody, who was educated in accordance with Western thinking and Western horizons of religion, finds the meaning of *Being* vague despite all the intensity of experiences.¹

The main models for philosophy of the history of philosophy attempted to consider the history of philosophy as a whole, and approached this whole philosophically. As such, they present extreme approaches to the fulfillment of the principle of the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy. This, however, does not imply that the productive capacity of the philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy has been exhausted. The opposite is true. In many respects, the new initiatives of philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy must be instigated through critical dealing with the main models of philosophy of the history of philosophy. For we can hardly accept Heidegger's view that *thinking did not start before we learned that reason, celebrated for centuries, is the most resistant opponent of thinking*.² If this assumption were true, then the efforts aimed at philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy would turn out to be, as it were, a worthless theoretical activity. We do not, however, share this view. Neither Hegel's nor Heidegger's philosophies mean the *end of philosophy*. They only completed, in a philosophically highly consistent way, just one of the possibilities of the unity between philosophy and the history of philosophy. Other possibilities remain an open *philosophical problem*, and

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference*, 365.

² Heidegger, M. *Holzwege*, 247.

as such, they provoke ever new historical-philosophical investigations.

II. THE WEAK MODELS

Our philosophical examination of *strong models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy has shown that the models by Hegel and Heidegger came to be the dominant doctrines that crucially determine the attitude of philosophers to the history of philosophy. In a way, they represent two opposite philosophical approaches to the historical-philosophical heritage and to a systematic way of philosophizing. Hegel builds up his *philosophical* conception of the history of philosophy on the principle of *development*, or *progress*, from ancient times to the present. His philosophy is viewed as a completion of the previous historical development. Heidegger's position is completely different. The thinking, itself *historical* and determining the history of the world, does not stem from the present. It is older than what is simply the past. It is blown to us in its most ancient ideas, but we are unable to find its trace because we believe that only current issues are relevant to our essence. Consequently, Heidegger insists on returning to the original philosophical *question of Being* of Presocratic philosophy as represented by Parmenides and Heraclitus, because these philosophers stressed the harmony with *logos*.

The development of the philosophical conception of the history of philosophy is connected with most outstanding followers of Husserl and Heidegger – *Eugen Fink*, *Jan Patočka* and *Hans-Georg Gadamer*. None of them confined their efforts to mere imitation of their teachers. Instead, Fink, Patočka and Gadamer took pains to develop the basic principles outlined by their predecessors. A linking element connecting the theories of these most prominent, critical disciples of Husserl and Heidegger was a new variant of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* in the form of *weak models*. A struggle for a new conception of philosophy was unthinkable without an original approach to the historical philosophical heritage. From this perspective, the philosophical message of Fink, Patočka and Gadamer is a unique philosophical resource critically overcoming the period of *strong models* of philosophy of the history of phi-

losophy, and opening a space for the development of *weak models*. Their philosophical message is the most valuable contribution that the second half of the 20th century can offer to us in terms of philosophical examination within the framework in question.

1. Fink's cosmological philosophy and the history of philosophy

An integral part of the western philosophical thought in the middle of the 20th century was the philosophy of *Eugen Fink*, a student of both Husserl and Heidegger, and a critical follower of their philosophical ideas. In his philosophical work, he significantly developed and rectified the fundamental impulses of the phenomenological way of philosophizing in relation to the history of philosophy. In contrast to his teachers, the most outstanding representatives of the *strong model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy, Fink was the first to overcome this method of philosophizing about the history of philosophy and to open the way to the *weak model*. At the same time, he became its first prominent representative. Unlike Husserl he does not search for any *phenomenological-transcendental impulse*. Unlike Heidegger, he does not try to provide a definite answer to the *question of Being*. Fink's philosophy is fully autonomous in its critical development of the ideas of his teachers and in its pursuit of the model of *cosmological philosophy*¹ which developed the pivotal problem of the *world* and the *play*. The origins of this form of philosophy are closely connected to a profound historical-philosophical reflection. Fink's reflection of Presocratic philosophy, with the focus on Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, is a unique example of creativity of Fink's thought.

Critical reception of Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophical conceptions

Early Fink's philosophical development was most strikingly influenced by Husserl's phenomenological teaching. Husserl considered Fink a student who understood his

¹ Petříček, M. 1993. „Eugen Fink a jeho kosmologická filozofie.“ In: Fink, E.: *Hra jako symbol světa*. Praha: Český spisovatel, 7–18.

philosophy better than any other student before. Husserl mainly appreciated substantial help of Fink in shaping the phenomenological doctrine. In the foreword to Fink's early work *Phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl in contemporary critique* (1934), radically defending his phenomenology against the critics, Husserl spoke of Fink with words of praise. Husserl notes that this work does not articulate anything what he can't „approve as his own view.”¹

Fink's attachment to Husserl's philosophy has, however, never been of an epigone-apologetic nature as it might seem at first sight. The reason should be sought in the simultaneous influence of Heidegger on Fink's philosophical development. Fink was not only a student and collaborator of Husserl but also of Heidegger.

He became an outstanding expert in their philosophy to the extent that – as frequently pointed out by Patočka - he would criticize Heidegger from Husserl's position and vice versa. This caused serious personal and theoretical problems to both of the giants of German philosophical thought.² What is more important, however, Fink's philosophical work came to be more and more interwoven with critical *self-distinction* not only from Husserl's phenomenology (as evidenced by, for example, his very harsh criticism of Husserl's phenomenology at Brussels colloquium in 1951) but also from Heidegger's philosophy after

¹ Husserl, E. 1989. Aufsätze und Vorträge. In: *Husserliana*. XXVII. Dordrecht–Boston–London, 183. See also Uzelac, M. 2000. „Fenoméno – živý či mrtvý? O zakládajícím charakteru základních pojmů Eugena Finka.“ In: *Fenoméno jako filosofický problém*. Sborník prací k filosofii Jana Patočky a Eugena Finka. Praha: Oikúmené, 143 ff.

² Zumr, J. 1967. „S Janem Patočkou o filosofii a filosofech.“ In: *Filosofický časopis*, 15/6, 589. See also Bruzina, R. 2000. „Jan Patočka a Eugen Fink v rozhovoru: myšlení jevu jako myšlení toho, co jev přesahuje.“ In: *Fenoméno jako filosofický problém*, 283 ff.; Cibulka, J. 1993. „O Finkově odkazu překonat fenomenologický pozitivizmus.“ In: *Filozofia*, 48/12, 777 ff.

the *turn*.¹ His critical distinction from Husserl and Heidegger was explicitly articulated in his lecture *World and history* at a colloquium in Krefeld in 1956.²

The whole process seems to have started in Fink's dissertation *Vergegenwärtigung und Bild*. Fink tries to articulate his understanding of the *phenomenology of non-reality*, and outlines his own philosophical conception, with the focus on the *problem of the world*. In his view, the question of *the origin of the world* is the *basic question of phenomenology*.³ Later on, this question was completed with the problem of *history*. In this way, Fink established the main area for his substantial critical *self-distinction* from Husserl and Heidegger without having to leave the broad phenomenological field of philosophizing. A strong influence of Husserl and Heidegger upon Fink's work can be, however, traced throughout his philosophical work. In fact, we witness a permanent philosophical dialogue resulting in an effort to find a space for one's own philosophical thought.

Fink realized numerous theoretical difficulties accompanying Husserl's phenomenology as early as his 1940s lectures. A Czech phenomenologist Blecha pointed out that Fink's lectures indirectly outlined „the awareness of the paradox of Husserl's reduction.” The elimination of the world presupposes our belief in the sense of such elimination, in the fact that the world has become a problem if, for some reasons, it must be bracketed off. The main Husserl's error is that the world is to him a mere horizon of our attitude, that he too rapidly and too easily determined our position and our demands for the assessment of the world. Consequently, while the problem of the world is identified

¹ Fink, E. 1985. *Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Würzburg 21ff.

² Fink, E. 1992. „Svět a dějiny.“ In: *Filosofický časopis*, 40/2, 249–260.

³ Fink, E. 1966. *Studien zur Phänomenologie, 1930–1939*. Den Haag: Martinus Nishoff, 101ff.; Also cf. Fink, E. 1976. „Reflexionen zu Husserls Phänomenologischer Reduktion.“ In: Fink, E.: *Nähe und Distanz*. Freiburg–München, 297 ff.

it is pushed aside. He leaves the world too impatiently for the sake of transcendental subjectivity. Fink therefore calls for return to the life in the world, to the beings of the world.”¹

Fink is aware of the relatively narrow limits of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology whose concept of intentionality (as an immanent relation between the constituting noëses and noemata) suggests that *phenomenon* is conceived as a being introduced by *transcendental subjectivity*. „This has serious ontological consequences. The only thing that matters is phenomenon, i.e., the being that appears and that is introduced. Consequently, what cannot be brought to appearance as a phenomenon cannot exist. Husserl does not examine the fact that a being can somehow become an object. The limits of examination are predetermined.”²

Fink was not satisfied with Husserl’s conception of intentionality and its implications. Intentionality, in his view, is not constrained by the limits of immanence. It is also present in things and among things. This brings him closely to the problems ignored by Husserl. Fink searched for a way that enables phenomena to appear „as a way of presenting beings in relation to other beings on the basis of factual proximity and distance, presence and absence. Any reasoning in relation to intentionality necessarily leads to the phenomenology of factual life, and subsequently to the dimension that will enable us – in an existential intentionality – to thematize the phenomenality of phenomena itself. Since, however, this phenomenality does not appear it cannot be grasped by Husserl’s traditional procedures... Fink can see only one way – to overcome Husserl’s phenome-

¹ Blecha, I. 1996. „K pojetí světa u Eugena Finka.“ In: *Filosofický časopis*, 44/2, 214–215. See also Depraz, N. 2000. „Zdaní a zjev u Eugena Finka a Edmunda Husserla. K otázce ztělesňování.“ In: *Fenomén jako filosofický problém*, 196 ff.; Blecha I. 2000. „Fenomén jako dění struktury.“ In: *Ibid.*, 302 ff.

² Blecha, I. *K pojetí světa u Eugena Finka*, 215. Also cf. Cibulka, J. 2000. *Smysl a faktičita*. Bratislava: Veda, 76–80.

nology by reestablishing *speculative thought*. Examination of the phenomenality of phenomena is thus no more the matter of phenomenology. Phenomenology only provides the basic plan. At the same time, it does not contradict phenomenology. This brings us to *real philosophy as metaphysics*. *Speculative thought is its most inherent feature*; it is the pre-comprehension of Being facilitating each encounter of beings.”¹

This way of philosophical thought is in many respects connected to the critical reasoning about the theoretical impulses arising out of Heidegger’s philosophy. If Husserl is blamed for the fact that each appearance of a phenomenon or, every conversion of the existing to a phenomenon, is based on a prior consideration of *what at all is a thing*, the direction toward metaphysics, so alien to Heidegger, is evident. Fink’s position evidently pursues the goal of providing a space for philosophical exploration of the world, something what Husserl was not able to imagine, let alone to implement. His objective was to develop „a *metaphenomenology*, a new type of metaphysics in its speculative effort.”² This was the reason for Fink to critically cope with Heidegger’s philosophy. Fink was well aware of it. One of his major philosophical contributions was his concentration on critical assessment of both the *non-historicity* of Husserl’s transcendentalism and the *abstract nature* of Heidegger’s conception of Being.

In his lecture *World and the history*, Fink contemplates the question of the relation between the world and history. While both Husserl and Heidegger posed and discussed this question their proposals are not acceptable for Fink. Husserl came up with *a conception of the history* in his last work *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology*. Fink maintains that this work can be viewed from various *perspectives*. Beyond dispute, it is „a systematic introduction

¹ Blecha, I.: *K pojetí světa u Eugena Finka*, 215–216.

² Ibid., 217.

to the intellectual area based on illustrative analyses, labeled as the field of philosophy by Husserl. This field is defined as a universal constitution of everything what exists in the meaning-rendering performance of the conscious subjectivity.”¹ Fink is mainly interested in the way the *conception of the history* is treated in this work. This problem is not an easy one because it is connected with the clarification of the notion of *constitutive analysis* and its relations. In the *Crisis*, Fink highly values the idea that „the constituting experience of transcendental subjectivity is in itself historical.”² This, however, engenders another question: *what kind of historicity is it?*

The answer is obvious. It is not the historicity that can be seen in the horizon of the world; it is rather the world conceived as a *constituted horizon of constituted objects*. By implication, „the history of a constituting subject is the history of absolute experience. Furthermore, this history is primarily the *history of knowledge* (emphasis V. L.). Knowledge is a historical phenomenon *par excellence*. The history of knowledge is for Husserl the essential history.”³ Fink aptly points out that Husserl modifies the nature of knowledge by attributing it a *transcendental impressiveness*. Then, the advantage of the *history of knowledge* is justified by saying that „the knowledge conceived as *constitution* is the proper Being, in particular, the living Being of an absolute subject that can never exist without its constituting products, but it precedes them as the basis of their Being.”⁴

Fink emphasizes that Husserl’s interpretation of knowledge *must be* understood as a *background* of his conception of the *history of knowledge*. This has serious theoretical implications projected mainly on the interpretation of the history of modern philosophical thought. While in the *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl vehemently avows Descartes who per-

¹ Fink, E.: *Svět a dějiny*, 253.

² Ibid., 254.

³ Ibid., 254.

⁴ Ibid., 254.

formed a *turn to the philosophizing ego*, i.e., „the ego as subject of his pure cogitationes”¹, introduces a philosophy of a brand new type – *a radical turn from naïve objectivism to transcendental subjectivism* when trying to reestablish Descartes’ radicalism of a philosopher of the beginning. In *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology* Husserl is already able to see modern philosophy in a much better-balanced form. His retreat from Neocartesian positions is evident. Modern history of knowledge is perceived by him as „peripeteia in the world’s historical drama.”²

The most important point in this context is that rather than illustrating the history of knowledge by means of the phenomenon of knowledge of the natural world Husserl exclusively employs the phenomenon of scientific knowledge. The reason is simple. It is only the *science* that – for Husserl – represents an original approach to the genuine Being of things. The limits of this conception become obvious very soon. Husserl’s perception of Descartes in the *Crisis* as a *Janus-faced* philosopher (on the one hand, mathematical objectivism, on the other hand, transcendental subjectivism) suggests that – as a result of phenomenological reduction – the subject recedes from the conception of man as a living being, and becomes just „*a transcendental subject* whose naïve self-perception is represented by man.” A natural bias bearing on man’s self-perception falls apart, humanity itself is conceived as a constituted sense, and thinking is considered to be *identical* to the absolute subjective basis of the natural world. When reduced, the history of man is revealed as a historical bias which has eventually come to its end.”³

Husserl’s understanding of the *historical turn* in relation to the *transcendental ego* is, in Fink’s view, of peculiar nature difficult to express. Fink is right in saying that in the course

¹ Husserl, E. 1999. *Cartesian Meditations*. Transl. D. Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 3.

² Fink, S.: *Svět a dějiny*, 254.

³ Ibid., 255.

of historical changes, man usually remains *a natural subject*; however, Husserl disregards a natural focus on the external – *the natural world* in which man is presented as a *living being* (as being among beings), and is reduced to a *transcendental subject*.

Husserl's model of self-alienation of the absolute subjective spirit rests on the *objectivism* of modern mathematical science, which sees its role in reduction, and is self-confident. According to Fink, Husserl's *teleology of the history of science* consists in the fact that the *constituting experience* is lost in an external objectivist-scientific turn in order to find a way to itself. This historical philosophical scheme does not introduce anything essentially new. Fink aptly notes that it is nothing but a variant of the well-known *phenomenology of mind*, this time making use of different means. It applies *analytical instruments* of intentional exegesis of consciousness in accounting for the processes that constitute the meaning and determine the style of modern science. „Taking a critical position, this conception of history does not clearly determine the time; *when does a humanly conceived subject, concerned with the world, change to a transcendental self-awareness of absolute experience? Where does this period belong? Might it be without the world?* (emphasis V. L.).”¹

Fink's questions are justified. Husserl pursued the way of subjectivization of the world and time in order to confirm the nature of the constituting transcendental subjectivity as *superior to the world*. Fink assumes that Husserl's philosophy thus brings interesting results. As long as the absolute subject does not reach self-confidence he is a *finite, limited being* among the other natural beings. However, as soon as he spots in reduction his own creative performance the situation radically changes. Therefore Fink asks another question: „But is it possible? Is not the finitude meant too superficially?”² Fink's view according to which this is

¹ Ibid., 255.

² Ibid., 256.

merely a form of an *idealistic dream* is precise. Husserl is not able to explain satisfactorily the inner relation of man to the infinite, why the infinite modifies itself into the shape of finiteness – why does it become involved in events, why does the mind get out of itself? Husserl failed to justify phenomenologically the self-constitution of human finiteness. „Time – world – finiteness are the problems which have yet not been solved or coped with in his grandiose vision of the history of knowledge which culminates dramatically in the change of a mathematical objectivist idea of science to a transcendental self-understanding of the constituting experience. However, this culmination brings the history to its absolute end. Husserl assumes – similar to Hegel – that history is controlled by urging the mind to self-awareness.”¹

In a way, both Husserl and Hegel assume that the accomplished self-awareness must be permanently *alert* in order to keep itself alive. Fink indicates that this position engenders serious problems related to the finiteness of individuals and alternation of generations throughout the history. Husserl’s philosophy (especially his account of *intersubjectivity*) does not provide relevant answers to these problems. The reason is obvious: „*The history of science as a simple social phenomenon cannot be grasped without the knowledge of the generation-related life circumstances of the finite mankind* (emphasis V. L.).”² On the other hand, Fink appreciates Husserl’s effort not to confine himself to the transcendently explained history of scientific knowledge; Husserl attempts to radicalize the history of consciousness and knowledge within the *science of time relevance*. No doubt, Husserl is very close to the pivotal idea of Hegel’s conception of history when identifying *self-awareness* as the decisive *power* that controls the history. „The driving motif is the understanding of an intellectual relation to the world which

¹ Ibid., 256.

² Ibid., 256.

determines and carries human *Dasein* through and through.”¹

In Fink’s view, Heidegger raises and explains *historical problems* in a completely different dimension. The reason stems from a completely different conception of *human nature*. Fink points out that Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein* does not give a *concrete* form to Husserl’s abstract concept of consciousness. „Heidegger conceives human nature in an essentially different way. He does not primarily mean an intentional relationship of the knowing subject to the surrounding objects; instead he refers to a temporary openness of man to Being.”² Fink aptly notes that the *problem of history* in Heidegger’s philosophy can only be understood in the *light of Being*. This is true of both stages of Heidegger’s philosophy, i.e., before and after the *turn* (*Kehre*).

Fink maintains that the problem of history is in Heidegger’s philosophy first articulated and subsequently accounted for in a two-fold way: „First, as a question of ontological account of human way of Being, i.e., the fact that he exists in history; second, in an intellectual pursuit of a certain part of history, in particular, the history of metaphysics as a history of Being in oblivion.”³ We witness here an interesting *modification* of what is conceived as *historical*. The historical is not any objective knowledge of a cognizing subject; it is mainly „more or less explicit understanding of the Being of objectivity of all objects and of subjectivity of the comprehending subject himself. The historicity of the understanding of Being is thus elucidated in the interpretation of human Being-in-time. A man who understands Being is as if timing himself in time.”⁴

In Fink’s view, in the first stage of Heidegger’s philosophy, the historical changes to the *human understanding of Being*. The understanding is accomplished by disclosing things

¹ Ibid., 256.

² Ibid., 257.

³ Ibid., 257.

⁴ Ibid., 257.

and by discovering the authenticity of human Being. Heidegger conceives the *history of Being as the history of truth*. „Being-in-the-world and Being-in-truth are equally original existential specifications.”¹ The second stage of Heidegger’s philosophizing is, in Fink’s view, characterized by the fact that the analysis of *existence*, of *truth* as disclosure, *globality* and *time* become known primarily as the determination of Being itself – „Being itself is what is time-related, what happens and what is historical; in principle, a man committed to Being is also historical.”²

Fink considers the relation of man to Being to be the most important problem of Heideggerean philosophy of history. In no way is it a relation between two beings. Heidegger’s emphasis on the disclosure of Being cannot exclude man. This, however, does not imply that man is the crucial factor in the relation between man and Being. Fink aptly notes that if the relation between Being and man is „the actual path of the history, then historical events cannot be conceived as human-bound, as if embedded in man. The history of man manifests the history of Being, the history of truth and the history of the world.”³ Heideggerean conception of the relation between man and history unambiguously favours the existence of a *speculatively conceived basic history* as a basis for any other historical processes. The history becomes more obvious when developed by Heidegger „as the history of Being that emerges in the thought of thinkers (emphasis V. L.).”⁴

Fink carefully examines the limits of the philosophical definition of the relation between man and Being as proposed by Heidegger after the *turn*. One problem is related to the definition of the fundamental concept of *Being*. Also in Heidegger’s approach, Being easily escapes any intellectual determination into the peculiar void of the dissolving

¹ Ibid., 257.

² Ibid., 258.

³ Ibid., 258.

⁴ Ibid., 258.

general. „There is a danger that Being becomes the *matter of an idea* that it evaporates into a concept.”¹ Heidegger was well aware of this danger. This is evidenced by the following words: „Thus we speak often in philosophy of Being and mean beings. On the other hand, we say beings and mean Being. Basically we comprehend neither the one nor the other. And yet we do understand something when we say this, even though everything dissolves into thin air when we attempt to grasp it.”² Although Heidegger was aware of this *metaphysical danger* he failed to avoid it.

Another problem of Heidegger's conception of the relation between man and Being follows from the fact that Heidegger does not identify it by means of basic social formations of communities and nations that can be identified in the past. In other words, the problems of sociality are dominant for essential clarification of the phenomena of history and historicity. Heidegger almost totally ignores them. Its philosophical consequences are reflected in Fink's philosophy.

Since we live amidst history and are, no doubt, historical, Fink's approach rests on the assumption that „man exists historically in relation to the global principle of particularization and difference in both work and struggle. Work and struggle are the fundamental forms of society, the social forms of *Dasein*.”³ The question of *the social forms of Dasein* is absent in Heidegger's philosophy. A major contribution of Fink's philosophy is that social forms of *Dasein* play an important role in his theory in connection with the problem of the *world* and the *play*. Therefore, he writes to say that „the history of mankind, the acts of its freedom, its knowledge, its assessment, its metaphysical proposals, and its political-technological production become, in the proper

¹ Ibid., 259.

² Heidegger, M. 1995: *Aristotle's Metaphysics* Θ 1-3. Transl. W. Brogan, P. Warnek. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 14.

³ Fink, E.: *Svět a dějiny*, 259–260.

sense of the word, *world-historical* when integrated in the play of the world with understanding....”¹ This entails new opportunities for the *philosophical conception of the history of philosophy*.

History of philosophy and the dominance of metaphysics

Fink’s philosophy as presented in his vintage works *Being, Truth, World* (1958) and *Play as a Symbol of the World* (1960) is determined by a *three-fold question* that has been affecting the history of western philosophy from its inception. It is a question asking the same in three basic philosophical concepts: *Being – truth – world*. Philosophy, as conceived by Fink, „is always an ultimate attempt to recollect the lost knowledge of the whole and to ask the question of *Being, truth and world*. These are not three labels for three different topics; these are three views of the same. The problem of Being, the problem of truth, and the problem of world are inseparably connected.”²

Fink knows that this is not a new question. While admitting that it is an *old question* he comes up with an unconventional philosophical ambition to *resume* this question. The purpose is not seeking an original solution but implementing a much more demanding task – *to accomplish real philosophical questioning*. We should not confine our effort to historical acquainting ourselves with this question. *Listing and cataloguing* the related problems is not sufficient.

From the very beginning of his philosophical reflection of the historical-philosophical tradition, Fink turned down any doxographic or biographic *narration* about the history of philosophy. Philosophy will fail if it confines itself to listing and registering the questions and problems as is typical of

¹ Ibid., 260.

² Fink, E. 1958. *Sein, Wahrheit, Welt*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff 1958, 59.

the doxographic approaches to the history of philosophy. It is similar to an ethnologist's description of „the rites of primitive tribes without living among them.”¹ It does not mean that this way of questioning is worthless. But it is not so important. We must *live* with the problems of philosophy. They should not stay outside our active philosophical questioning and experiencing philosophical problems and questions. „Acquaintance with the history of philosophy which assumes a significant and paramount position in our cultural tradition usually conceals and obscures the unusual way philosophy resides in the essential basis of the finite man, the way it concerns us.”²

The same is true of the biographic approach to the history of philosophy. Fink is very critical about the still fairly popular historical-philosophical *habit* to „*narrate the history of philosophy as a biography of philosophers and as a message of the fate of their schools.*”³ As a result, historians of philosophy fostering this habit fail to articulate their standpoint in order to keep a detached and unbiased *view* of a particular philosophical approach. They rather study the motifs *underlying* individual philosophical conceptions. Or, philosophemes are perceived „as *manifestations*, as symptomatic expressions of characteristic mental and intellectual positions, as documents of human existence. In such an approach, philosophy seems to be illuminated and clarified from the overall meaning of human life, unveiled in its *existential motivation*. Where from does such a psychology take the categories of its understanding? Can we speak *of* philosophy before we take it up?”⁴

Fink does not draw any dividing line between philosophy and the history of philosophy. By historical-philosophical interpretation he means „neither adopting a position in a spiritually alien zone nor a change of the per-

¹ Ibid., 60.

² Ibid., 9.

³ Ibid., 27.

⁴ Ibid., 27 – 28.

spective in favour of different experiencing and thinking, nor self-alienation of the comprehending. An interpretation should rather involve explicit presence of one's own situation from which we understand what is alien and what is of a different sort."¹ *Philosophizing about the history of philosophy* becomes to Fink, in the same way as to Heidegger, a crucial space for philosophizing about an important and great philosophical problem – the *problem of Being*. „Philosophy, this most neglected possibility of human existence which belongs to man thanks to the challenge of Being rather than due to man, keeps emerging into a naturally naïve world – like death."² When Fink raises once again Heideggerian question of Being he not only seeks to find new possibilities of questioning but also new answers. One can also observe a substantial difference between Fink's and Heidegger's ways of philosophizing. In Fink's view, philosophy is *always an ultimate attempt to recollect the lost knowledge of the whole* and to ask the question of Being, truth and world.

Contrary to Hegel and Heidegger who pursued the project of *absolute philosophy*, i.e. the philosophy which provides definite and exhausting answers mainly to metaphysical problems with the focus on the question of Being, Fink realizes that „*the dreams of absolute metaphysics are over*."³ This observation has far-reaching implications, which, however, do not mean any philosophical resignation on the question of Being. On the contrary, the objective is to find a place (position) for this question different from that in *absolute metaphysics*. Fink believes that any elaboration on the problem of Being is a special way to a *deadlock* or to an *impassable terrain*. „This way cannot be predicted, there is no providence here. We can never foretell where we arrive, or even

¹ Fink, E. 1977. *Hegel: phänomenologische Interpretationen die „Phänomenologische des Geistes“*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 3.

² Fink, E.: *Sein, Wahrheit, Welt*, 19.

³ *Ibid.*, 52.

whether we arrive somewhere. Because *the most being* cannot be known in advance. We cannot discard our finitude as shabby clothes and enter the grandiosity of the *absolute knowledge*. The man, including his greatest possibilities, is never, a disguised god who might one day realize his similarity to god.”¹

Fink’s anti-Hegelean and anti-Heideggerean motion in the area of metaphysics is anchored in his well justified theoretical position claiming that philosophy is „*a substantial opportunity of a finite man and carries the sign of his finitude.*”² The understanding of his term *finite* is of great importance; otherwise we lose sight of all the new offered to us by the philosophical work of this German philosopher. Fink points out that he uses this term in a remarkable change of meanings. This change is essentially connected with the fact that the term *finite* does not concentrate on the *end* or on meeting the *objective*. It means the opposite – permanently expanding opportunities. *The history of philosophy is of an extraordinary importance for this area, the area of both victories and losses, the area of both emergence and downfall of the ideas from Plato to Heidegger.* It becomes more and more obvious that *absolute metaphysics* is facing a total collapse. Nietzsche was the first to fight a fierce struggle with this intellectual-spiritual heritage of western civilization ranging from Plato to Hegel. In contrast to Heidegger, Fink philosophically reflects this struggle very carefully and consequently in order to learn a lesson from it for the sake of understanding the basic problems of his own philosophical doctrine.

Nietzsche’s philosophy and negative ontology of things

In his philosophy Fink could not avoid a critical reception of the philosophical message of Nietzsche. There are

¹ Ibid., 52.

² Ibid., 53.

several reasons for it. From the point of view of the topic in question the most important reason concerns the effort to critically cope with and to differ from Heidegger's interpretation so dominant mid 20th century. Fink's dialogue, his critical analysis of Heidegger reaches new quality in *Nietzsche's philosophy* (1960).

Similar to Heidegger, Fink also considers Nietzsche a fatal figure of western philosophy, an ominous question mark on the historical wandering of European man from ancient times up to the present. Nietzsche's philosophy should guide us to reexamination of whether the historical wandering of our thought has not been a mere *vagabondage*, whether we should not abandon everything what has been perceived as *sacred, good, and true*.

Fink *searches* for Nietzsche's philosophy concealed in his works, in the intoxicating power of his speech, in his aphoristic style, and in the fascinating power of his personality. However, the problem is much more intricate. Anybody who tries to penetrate into Nietzsche's intellectual message is in a strange situation. This is what Fink very precisely articulates. If a search for Nietzsche's philosophy is not to be a hit or miss or if it is not to rely on the *reassurance* of the philosopher examined, it must stem from an a priori precise answer to the question of what philosophy actually is. The problem with an analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy consists in the fact that the historical tradition of approaching philosophy (metaphysics) cannot serve us as a guide in his case because the examined author declared fierce war on it. It is a peculiar situation: When „searching for Nietzsche's philosophy we may have lost the thread, the thread of Ariadne, which could guide us into the labyrinth of Nietzsche's thought.”¹

The problem gets complicated due to the fact that this way of thinking does not provide us a philosophy in its *pure*

¹ Fink, E. 2003. *Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Transl. G. Richter. London – New York: Continuum, 6.

form, because its main object is *the whole intellectual heritage*. Therefore, Fink is right to raise the following question: „Should we not invent and coin a *new word* (emphasis V. L.) to designate whatever Nietzsche’s philosophy?”¹ In Fink’s view, Nietzsche’s philosophy lives in the seclusion; it is concealed rather than directly available in his work. „It is hidden in the work presenting numerous facades: it is superimposed by his cultural criticism, psychology, poetry, it is modified by Nietzsche’s disguise, various figures and roles played by him – it is overshadowed by a writer who knows all the graces and temptations – it is distorted by an overwhelming subjectivity of its originator, by his overwhelming and torturing self-praise.”²

Fink thus set out on a demanding journey of *searching* for Nietzsche’s philosophy in the *maze of his work*. The decisive *point of view* which, according to Fink, cannot be reduced to a *haughty prejudice*, is essentially related to Nietzsche’s conception of metaphysics. Nietzsche’s radical rejection of Western philosophy (metaphysics) from Parmenides and Plato to Hegel does not pertain to an inadequate articulation of the question of Being as conjectured by Heidegger. Fink assumes that Nietzsche’s rejection of metaphysics rests on a completely different position. Nietzsche does not reflect metaphysics *ontologically*, he reflects it *morally* – „he finds metaphysics in *the view of life*... Nietzsche does not attempt to reevaluate the ontological aspects of the metaphysical message; he only observes their symptoms indicating the tendencies of life... he does not pose the question of Being, at least not in the way characteristic of the thought in the past centuries. *The question of Being is superimposed by the question of value* (emphasis V. L.)”.³ Heraclitus’ concept of *play* is to Nietzsche the most profound philosophical intuition. This is, in Fink’s view, the most important parallel

¹ Ibid., 6.

² Ibid., 9.

³ Ibid., 10. Also cf. Fink, E. 1959. *Alles und Nichts*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 13 ff.

between Heraclitus and Nietzsche. He discusses it in a brilliant philosophical work *Play as world symbol*.¹

Fink believes that Nietzsche's philosophy should not be assessed by his individual works or stages of his intellectual development; instead we should base our assessment on its *fundamental motifs*. In this connection, the motif of *play* is a pivotal motif, along with the conception of the *tragic feeling of life* - *the will to power*, the cosmos as an *eternal return of the same*, *the death of God*, and *the Übermensch* as a *future man*. Fink elaborately analyzes Nietzsche's philosophical development since *The birth of tragedy* in which rather than with his own eyes Nietzsche views the *heart of the world* with the eyes of the ancient Greeks. In addition, he discusses Nietzsche's split from the traditional metaphysical heritage. *The tragic feeling of life* means for Nietzsche not only the confirmation of Being but also the awareness of the fact that the decline of the finite Being implies not only its simple destruction but also return to the foundations of a new life. Life and death are inseparably connected in the cycle of an eternal return of the same, in the *eternal becoming* and *perishing*. However, Being and becoming themselves have no meaning. The meaning stems from the relation to *life* according to the degree of its rise and decline. Fink maintains that the crucial objective of Nietzsche's philosophy is directed at casting doubts on the identity of the concepts of *Being* and *value*.

At the same time, Fink cautions that the cornerstone of *Nietzscheanism* is distrust of any rationalism, or *conceptual thought*. The Heraclitean motif of struggle between *darkness and light* is resumed by philosophy as a dominant motif. Consequently, Fink assumes that the two cornerstones of Nietzsche's way of thought constitute the basis of his *metaphysics of artistism* in which arts become an instrument of philosophy - an instrument and a method of the interpretation of the world. The world can only be understood via

¹ Fink, E. 1960. *Spiel als Weltsymbol*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 24 ff.

arts; its arch-enemy is *reason*. The victory of *Socrateism* (reason) in the history of the ancient world means the loss of true understanding of the world, and Being is devoid of the *sincerity* of the *dark, night side of life*. As a result, arts in their *tragic form* become an *ontological slogan* of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Fink perceives Nietzsche's second period as the period of grouping the main problems of his philosophy around the man. The *view of life* is still a central one, although the perspective is completely different. While the first period of Nietzsche's work is characterized by the *cosmic and the metaphysical* principles, the second period is dominated by the psychological and the biological ones. The reason for this turn is to highlight and even more comprehensively justify the *feeling of the dissonance of life* in order to destroy the *illusion of blindness*. The complexity of life and knowledge, their split and disunity are expressed, in Fink's view, through the picture of *free spirit*. In no way is it an imitation of a simple Enlightenment model. Nietzsche meticulously claims that *the free spirit singing* the song for the joyful science did not forget that this science is problematic. Fink points out that the *free spirit* is free because it has liberated itself from the generally accepted rules of morality (from the transcendence of the good and the evil), religion (God), metaphysics (things of themselves), and unambiguously pursues to reveal its own infinity. By implication, science can become a *joyful science*, because it got rid of the superiority of concepts over life, which gives space to a *courageous researcher – a life experimenter*. This makes *the free spirit* a predecessor of Zarathustra.¹ The conduct of the *free spirit* is constrained by the limits of knowledge. He is *free* in so far as he employs science as an instrument; at the same time, he is not free „because he lives in accordance with the scientific knowledge.“²

¹ Fink, E.: *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, 52–53, 58.

² *Ibid.*, 52.

According to Fink's interpretation Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* develops the basic motif of his early work – *the tragic fate of the mankind that has lost their God*. The postulate of the *death of God* is a clear answer to the loss of *transcendental ideality*. Nietzsche believes that due to the collapse of the *bright canopy of heaven above the country of life* man necessarily loses his fundamental life orientation and is threatened by a major decline. What is therefore needed is an act of restoration – all essential human relations must be *re-evaluated*. Human Being must return back on the earth. In Fink's view, all the subsequent Nietzsche's works fall behind his *Thus spake Zarathustra*. It is the only book that represents a constructive part of his philosophy. All the following works represent its destructive part – *the philosophy of hammer*.

Fink maintains that Nietzsche's work establishes the ground for the re-evaluation of the heritage of Western thought in order to outline a program for a new life orientation. This is not feasible by means of the traditional notions of the traditional metaphysics. Consequently, they must be completely eliminated. Nietzsche's postulate of the *re-evaluation of all values* therefore aims mainly to „the disalienation of Being, the procedure from prejudice to a more complex self-awareness of life, to the awakening from the twilight of the theoretical-axiological dogmatism.”¹ Fink's interpretation of Nietzsche's postulate of the *death of God* directs philosophy to man, to his hitherto undisclosed potential, to his *élan vital*. We witness here a total turn of thought to man (subject) that creates and establishes his own values and his own truth. The new truth does not result from scientific-theoretical exploration; instead, it is the *practice of life*.²

Fink's analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy concentrates on the problems of metaphysics that take the form of the philosophy of values. The *death of God* – the definitive de-

¹ Ibid., 119.

² Ibid., 140 – 142.

cline of the transcendental world of values – may be followed by an *eternal return of the same*, which accounts for the *Übermensch* as a part of the mankind existing in the tragic truth. Fink aptly asks whether Nietzsche's struggle with the Western metaphysical tradition can find a new basis which will enable him to definitely split from this philosophical tradition, or whether he still remains in his struggle dependent of the prevenient metaphysics. In *Ecce homo* where Nietzsche, in Fink's view, abhorrently overestimates himself, and where we can hear a shrilling tone of his enormous pride, one can notice a gleam of Being in a whole. This work ends with the sentence *Dionysus against the Crucified*. Fink is primarily intrigued by the symbolism of this sentence, and tries to decipher it.

Dionysus is the god of suffering – like the Crucified – but his suffering is accompanied with the lust for progeniture. As a result, *suffering, death, and decline* are the reverse side of *passion, resurrection, and return*. *Dionysus* is like the life – bilateral. He is characterized by suffering, passion, both constructive and destructive, life in which we are, in a way, at home, but which we can leave anytime. The *Crucified* is a symbol of suffering denying himself the earthly world for the sake of pointing to the supernatural world. „In Nietzsche's view the Crucified represents a morality which is foreign to life and a utopian religious and metaphysical ideal. The Crucified is for him not only the symbol of Christianity but He also symbolizes Plato and Socrates ...”¹ On the other hand, Christ is the symbol of denial of this world for the sake of the other, a higher world where suffering is rewarded. *Dionysus* is the main representative of Greek suffering which expects Being to be sacred enough to justify the horror of suffering.

Fink asks the question of how to determine then Nietzsche's attitude to metaphysics. How can and should we understand it? Fink refers to metaphysics as a concep-

¹ Ibid., 166.

tion that determines being in its Being. This means that metaphysics, in its basic principles, is related to being – for the multiple, finite, and limited being – in things. „The metaphysical approach is *inner-worldly* and *fourfold*. It investigates being as such, the totality of being, the highest being and the revelation of being.”¹ It is difficult to explain where the four-fold principle stems from. However, it is obvious that its source can be found in the dimensionality of the concept of Being. This is, no doubt, related to the everyday distinction between Being and nothingness, Being and happening, Being and thought. By implication, metaphysics moves within the four-layer horizons of Being, but the dimensionality of the concept of Being is not an elaborated problem.

Fink assumes that the four *horizons of Being* correspond with the transcendentalia so characteristic of the ancient, medieval, and modern metaphysics – *on*, *hen*, *agathon* and *alethes* (*ens*, *unum*, *bonum* and *verum*). He is fascinated by the question of the relation between the four-layered structure of his basic problems and the four layers of metaphysics. Is it not an attempt to *turn* metaphysics within its own field of problems? Fink’s analysis gives support to this postulate because Nietzsche „thinks the beingness of being as the will to power, being in its entirety as the eternal return of the same, the highest being on the one hand negatively as the death of God and then again positively as the Apolonian-Dionysian play which creates all things as products of appearance like an artist and the work of art. Finally he grasps the truth of all this in so far as it is human through the overman.”² In Fink’s view, Nietzsche is completely bound to the traditional metaphysics even though he believes to have abandoned it definitely. But the time is not ripe for celebration.

¹ Ibid., 166.

² Ibid., 169.

Fink finds Nietzsche's link to the prevenient metaphysics in the interpretation of Being as value. All Nietzsche's values are in life, in the world, but neither life nor world have value. Fink maintains that in no way is it a negative evaluation of life or world; rather, this position follows from inability to evaluate them because they represent a whole which admits any evaluation. It is especially the teaching of eternal return that attests the absurdity and worthlessness of the whole in which evaluation is done. This may be due to the fact that the total value of the world is beyond evaluation. The concept of *value* is in Nietzsche's teaching related to Being of the finite *being*, and *worthlessness* with the conception of Being as a whole. This is connected with the idea of return. By implication, Fink assumes, Nietzsche's philosophy not only relies on the fourfold determination of his basic problems, but in his basic philosophical conception of value he depends on the traditional metaphysics. Nietzsche thus draws on the traditions which he wants to surpass, i.e. the field of metaphysics, even though he „already celebrates his victory over it”.¹

An open question is whether Nietzsche's view of the world includes ontological aspects of metaphysics. One of the non-metaphysical sources of his cosmic theory is connected with the idea of *play* as a leitmotif with its important anti-metaphysical consequences. „Nietzsche makes the human playing, the playing of the child and the artist into a key concept for the universe. It becomes a cosmic metaphor.”² It is exactly in this and no other connection that Being and coming-into-existence are understood as a play of the world powers and the creative will of a subject. It frees itself of the snare of the former metaphysics. This is due to the fact that the will of power loses its metaphysical nature of objectifying the *Dasein*. Therefore Nietzsche aims to provide a dynamic Dionysean-Apolonean picture of

¹ Ibid., 169.

² Ibid., 171.

reality in which nothing is static, rigid, or dead any more. Instead, life in its dynamics and ecstasy wins in all its glory.

Heraclitus or a struggle for the history of philosophy and the sense of the philosophy of the world

The necessity of return of the *philosophical thought* back to Heraclitus has been an insurmountable philosophical challenge since the times of Hegel¹ and Nietzsche.² Later on, it was Heidegger who drew attention to this unique personality of Presocratic philosophy.³ Fink meets the challenge – like in many other cases – in an original way. He neither follows Nietzsche's attack on the ancient philosophy (Parmenides, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle), nor resorts (like Heidegger) to philosophical treatment of *logos* and *Being* in order to present Heraclitus as a thinker who posed the same question as Parmenides did.⁴

Fink meticulously characterizes the beginnings of Western philosophical thought as the self-identification with Heraclitus' philosophy, as performed mainly by Hegel and Nietzsche as *Heracliteans*. Hegel's reception is focused on the strength of the *dialectic of concept* (becoming, opposite, contradiction) that came to its peak in his philosophy in the form of an absolute metaphysical system. On the other hand, Nietzsche refused the power of conceptual thought – he struggled against rationalism and the related morality and religion in order to stress the value of *play* and *life*. Hegel conceives Heraclitus as the foundation of the history

¹ Hegel, G.W.F.: *Lectured on the History of Philosophy*. Greek. Vol. I, 279 ff.

² Nietzsche, F. From Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks. 1996. In: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. Ed. G. Clive. New York: Meridian., 172 - 176.

³ Heidegger, M. 1987. *Heraklit*. GA. Bd. 55. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

⁴ Heidegger, M. 1996. „Evropa a německá filosofie.“ In: *Filosofický časopis*, 44/1, 80.

of Western philosophy and integrates him as a whole in his *system of philosophy*. Nietzsche is his complete opposite. He casts doubts upon the whole history of Western thought as manifestation of an essentially *negative intellectual motion*, thus paving the way to his *struggle* against Western metaphysics. Philosophical *thought* turns here against *metaphysics*. Consequently, Fink asks whether Nietzsche is just a *reversed metaphysicist*. Indeed the answer cannot be a *black-and-white answer*, an *either-or* one, because Nietzschean search for *the original experience of Being* is a much more complex philosophical problem.

Nietzsche finds in Heraclitus a crucial idea which becomes the most important one also for his approach to philosophy: „That which he beheld, *the doctrine of the Law in the Becoming, and of the Play in the Necessity*, must henceforth be beheld eternally; he has raised the curtain of this greatest stage play.”¹

In this respect, Fink is surprisingly consequent in following Nietzsche. This can be seen from his attempt to understand the *history of Western philosophy* essentially in relation to *Heraclitus philosophy*.² None of the 20th century philosophers paid such homage to Heraclitus’ philosophy. Fink’s tribute to Heraclitus exceeds by far Hegel’s positive assessment, Nietzsche’s *fascination* with Heraclitus conception of the world *as a beautiful innocent play of Aeon*, or Heidegger’s appreciation of Heraclitus’ conception of *Being*.

What is the nature of the unique philosophical inspiration in Heraclitus’ thought? It is primarily his conception of *play as a symbol of the world* – as an unsurpassable *cosmic metaphor*. „The play of the world is never and nowhere set between things. Thus, does this play referred to by Heraclitus exist anywhere at all? Is it not a mere capricious dream of an idea, a phantasmagoria of speculative thought? Perhaps

¹ Nietzsche, F.: *From Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, 176.

² Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 36.

a beautiful poetic feeling – nothing else?”¹ These questions come to the foreground of Fink’s attention in implementing his philosophical model of *cosmic metaphor*.

In Fink’s view, Heraclitus’s play of the world is never a part of the *givenness*. By implication, „this play is *given*: it is almightiness that accomplishes all *being*. It gives it its place and moment. Then, what is problematic about Heraclitus labeling this giving world-administrating attuning power which cannot be found, described or directly named, and which is rather something unpronounceable, with the name of a specific human conduct known as phenomenon? He used human play as a more or less accidental *cosmic metaphor* – could he therefore turn to a different parable? Or does human play, conceived as a phenomenon, conceal any special reference to the world as a whole? Is play essentially determined through its representative function? Yes, this is what matters, and this is precisely a deeper basis of Heraclitus’ cosmic parable.”²

Fink must also account for play as a special tense attitude of man to the world. „Heraclitus’ gods and people were related to the *perennial live fire*, they were imitators of the creative almightiness adhering to its creation. Their poetic abilities consisted in the play of the world. Therefore, they were essentially players. In so far as gods and people existed from this attitude to the world the difference between them, however big, was not insurmountable – as it follows from Heraclitus’ Fragment 62. However, the less is this shared attitude of gods and people to the world thought from itself the more is visible the distinction between the celestials and the mortals; as a result, human being is interpreted on the basis of his distance from god. This tendency dominates the beginnings of Western metaphysics. Interestingly, Plato also understands the relation

¹ Ibid., 29.

² Ibid., 29.

between gods and people as play. Man is called *a toy of god...*"¹

Play is in Fink's view a special permeation of *Being* and *appearance*. It is, as it were, an appearing Being and being appearance. Therefore, he wants to view the ontological illumination of play as *harmony* between Being and appearance. In no way is it philosophically easy. Fink realizes that „the concept of the *position* of being means not only a spatial relation but also, and maybe even more, an axiological relation... an axiological distinction of things is first performed *pre-philosophically* in terms of the division of power, beauty, etc., and then it is philosophically interpreted in terms of temporal stability, the power of Being, and reason: the most being is the most stable and the most reasonable."²

If philosophy concentrates on an *axiological arrangement of things* in terms of the relation between a thing and the ultimate *being* this axiological arrangement, however problematic, has always the nature of something inside the world. The essential value of things is determined in relation to being that is *in the world* in the same way as things themselves. *An ontological axiological arrangement becomes an inner-world relation between things in the same way as the spatial location of things determined by the distance from a fixed or an arbitrary reference point of a specific coordinate system* (emphasis V. L.). If, however, we can identify the position of a particular being in the overall system inside the world, can we actually see its *position relative to the world*? Things are *in space*, they are *extensional* in a single all-encompassing space; however, this Being of things in space, their spatial integration, is not recognized if we look for distances, lines, and points.³

Fink maintains that the day-to-day determination of the position of things existing in the natural world of our life

¹ Ibid., 29 – 30.

² Ibid., 34.

³ Ibid., 34 – 35.

can be „overcome by scientific *delimitation of positions*, instead of our home we can take the solar system as a point of reference – but in this way we only obtain a larger area inside the world, not the world itself ... Can axiological orders, oriented relative to a variously thought pattern of the ultimate being, become a model enabling us to at least formulate a question of the axiological position of things relative to the world as a whole? This seems to be vague at the beginning. It is, however, crucial for us to hold on and to recognize the peculiarity of the questioning instead of fobbing it off by a precipitous *answer*.”¹

This is the main reason for Fink’s *intellectual return to Heraclitus*. Fink is inspired by essentially considered position of man relative to the world and in connection with *play* as presented in Heraclitus’ philosophical considerations. Guided by this Heraclitean idea Fink tries to give support to his own *blundering speculation*. „That what gods and people are they are not in relation to the *eternally live fire of the world* that illuminates everything particular and imprints a definite contour on its appearance, thus delimiting its shape, place, and moment, bringing it to the present and recalling it from the present. Gods and people are therefore participating witnesses to an illuminating, time-bound and creative play of the world fire: they are capable of poiesis, of revealing and understanding the time. All gloomy statements of Heraclitus mean the same but each time in a different way. Fire is also presented as a lightning and Helios – and the life of fire as *aion*. The idea that what is characterized by so heterogeneous nuclei is not only the same but it is the same in its own and unique way, and its *identity* cannot be thought from the identical Being of things, is clearly articulated in the statement in which Heraclitus puts *blush*, fire against all being, against *panta*, in the parable of *gold and goods*. The relation of multiple things to the golden glare of the flam-

¹ Ibid., 35.

ing all-cumulating world light is the same as that of numerous goods to gold.”¹

The unity of the created allness encompasses, both for Fink and Heraclitus, *the multiplicity of being inside the world* in a cumulative as well as dispersive way. Therefore „Heraclitus also calls this unity from the world *the only sage*... The flaming fire of the world cannot be thought to be a guide of any elementary primordial stuff; rather, it is a guide of illuminating comprehension. Fire, light, time, play, reason, these are the names of the same rule of the world. And to the extent gods and people are in a special relation to this rule they participate in the reason of the universe. In Fragment 32 Heraclitus suggests that *the only sage* both wants and does not want to be called Deus. What matters here is that this formulation prefers the denial to the acceptance. The flaming, illuminating, intellectual time play of the world *does not wish* to be an axis designated by the name of the ultimate god. However, if the ultimate god is closest to it and if the god in his finite determination is better pronounceable and thinkable than the world itself then it is, in a way, the will of the created allness to both appear and disappear, precisely on behalf of this name.”²

As a result, Fink maintains that *the history of Western philosophy* could and should be written as a *commentary* on Heraclitus’ teaching, „because the original openness of human thought to the world has been increasingly changing to the theological focus of metaphysics, its objective comes to be the absolute, *summum ens*, and in its final culmination, notably Hegel’s philosophy, it conceives itself as self-awareness of god.”³ In this crucial point of the history of Western philosophical thought we witness the *loss – the falling into oblivion* of the open nature of human thought with regard to the world, and the growing importance of the *theological focus of metaphysics*.

¹ Ibid., 36.

² Ibid., 37.

³ Ibid., 37.

This development has had far-reaching repercussions for the history of philosophy. Fink puts it clearly: „This tendency is closely related to the fact that the *position* and the *dignity* of man depend on the inner-world relations and that human relation to the world has sunk to the shadow of the centuries-long oblivion. Heraclitus' men and gods are not determined by what they actually are, by what they are of themselves; instead they are conceived on the basis of an awkward, difficult-to-articulate openness to the cosmic reason and the flaming play of the universe. This is almost inconceivable – not only due to the *dark* character of Heraclitus' style of thought, but mainly due to the tradition of our intellectual habits. The long tradition has turned into our habit of talking about being. Being is everywhere before us and we experience it, and observe relevant facts which are subsequently expressed by means of our language. Thing is *what* our statements are about, it is what is the basis for our talking about being... Things are what they are precisely in their non-essential and essential properties. The fundamental structure of being is its substantiality.”¹

Fink agrees with Heidegger in claiming that man understands Being. However, he differs from Heidegger in the question of our capacity to fully understand Being. It is true that our understanding of Being „has been constantly employed and used, and in many respects things are called as being – nevertheless, the understanding of Being can never be complete. The understanding of Being includes, among other things, the former a priori plan of the objectivity of things, their structure as substrate and properties. Consequently, in our unreflected and self-evident understanding we turn to things by *postulating* them as a structure of substrate and property.”²

Fink knows that man does not exist somehow simply, only immediately. Man permanently relates to his own Be-

¹ Ibid., 37

² Ibid., 37.

ing as well as to the Being of things, and therefore exists *in* the understanding of Being. Since we deal with our Being we *care* for ourselves. In this point Fink is not interested in the primarily reflective relation to ourselves. In contrast to Heidegger, he concentrates on the openness to the *world as a whole*. Fink therefore asks: „*Do we exist in the light of Being when creating and articulating the notions of Being* (emphasis V. L.)?”¹

Fink assumes that Heraclitus „refers to such a relation between gods and people on the basis of which they are what they are – based on which they can make use of the creative power - *poiesis*, illumination, timing, the play of ruling, and the world reason. Then, man cannot be thought any more as a thing that is also in a specific *relation*. Instead, man – if he is a thing – would have to be conceived as a thing that is primarily a relation from the very beginning – a thing that does not exist of its own but rather as an ecstatic openness. The position of man could not thus be delimited in an objective system of locations relative to the location and the essential value of the ultimate being. The relation of man to something what is not being but, at the same time, is not nothing, what encompasses all things, what rules all things and penetrates its own play, what never appears in its final form, but provides location and time to everything appearing – this relation characterizes and determines the position of human being in relation to the world. As a result, the relation between man and the world can never be delimited from outside by an objective statement. *As living in this relation to the world man must delimit this relation by his thought. In Heraclitus’ view, the same is true of gods; they too enjoy their undisturbed and happier Being thanks to their comprehending closeness to the ruling world.*”²

¹ Ibid.,38. Also cf. Kerckhoven, G. 2000. „Na naši straně noumena. Svět jako epifanický fenomén u E. Finka a J. Patočky.“ In: *Fenomén jako filosofický problém*, 227 ff.

² Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 41.

A completely different theoretical position is offered by Plato and Aristotle. They stress that gods know everything, that *they are bearers of the unlimited and perfect*, i.e., *the absolute truth*; the cosmos appears to them in splendid brightness, devoid of any darkness. Therefore, „while god is attributed the absolute knowledge – *sophia*, man is attributed powerless effort aimed at *sophia*: *philosophy*, love for wisdom. Heraclitus conceives the knowledge of gods as participation in the supradivine fire of the world’s reason, the *only sage*, the *sophon*. The fate of gods and men is the same, in a distinct way though. The knowledge of both of them is at best philosophy as love, as *philia* for *sophon*.“¹

This is the main reason for Fink’s claim that the position of man in Platonic-Aristotelean metaphysics has radically changed throughout the history. The result of this development of Western metaphysics can be aptly labeled as *Centaurean metaphysics*. Man is conceived as an *animal with divine spark* – a citizen of the *natural* and *intelligible* world who wants to find his bearings in this world, but intellectually he is more attracted by the super-natural – *meta-physis*.

Man appears more and more „as a spirit tarnished by sensuality and as an animal impaired by spirituality – he is, as it were, a twofold being consisting of two contradictory parts: he is like a centaur. Like the mythical *centaur* with an animal-like lower body part and human-like upper part, Western metaphysics conceives man as half-divine and half-animal being.”² *The fundamentally* Centaurean nature of the traditional picture of man is, in Fink’s view, a fatal heritage. The reason is obvious. It is due to this heritage that „the essential relatedness of human existence to the world (nature) has been veiled and obscured by the inner-world distance of man to animal and god. As a result, the relation within the world which is, no doubt, of great importance

¹ Ibid., 41. Also cf. Fink, E. 1985. *Grundfragen der antiken Philosophie*. Würzburg: Königshausen +Neumann, 165 ff.

² Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 44.

has fettered and weakened the ecstatic power of human existence. In defence of the metaphysical picture of man one may claim that the position of man is not only localized through his neighbourhood to another being; if man is conceived as a being somewhere between the animal and the god, it does not imply any delimitation of the distance to other beings, but rather a twofold and tense relation to the world of senses and the pure world of the spirit. It is here that the *position of man relative to the world* has been recognized and grasped, i.e., his position between *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intelligibilis*. Thus, is man grasped as if his home were in *both* of these worlds, conceived as a contradictory Being because of the twofold relation to the world?"¹

Fink is right in raising this question. Even more important is, however, his answer confirming this philosophical explication. It entails huge philosophical tasks that must first of all pursue the elimination of an incorrect focus of the basic philosophical view of the world. Being aware of it Fink articulates his crucial argument as follows: „*World* is used in plural – and this plural is misleading. The concept of the world used in plural is a metaphor, an analogical way of expression, which denotes an overall interconnection, the totality, the *totum*. However, the world is not any accidental whole, field, area of things, it is not any arbitrary *totum*; it is the only *totum*, the all-encompassing, complete *totum*. The allness of the world is not a case of allness in general. It is not at the same level as the allness of genus or species, or the allness of an infinite set – the allness of the world is incomparable to all the (relative) *allnesses* in the world. The term *world* is metaphorically used to denote an aggregate, closed and relative totality. Strictly speaking, the perceived world and the spiritual world are not any worlds;

¹ Ibid., 46.

they are areas *in* the world, the dimensions of particular being.”¹

This entails a unique historical-philosophical paradox which has been obscuring and distorting things. Fink interprets it in an excellent way: „...it was the thinker who opened... the abyss between the perceived and the spiritual – between what we can see, touch, feel, and taste, and what we can only notice via an idea – the very thinker did not speak at all of two worlds. *Plato* calls the sensual area either *the visible place, horatos topos* or, sometimes, *the genus of the visible, horaton genos*. What can be grasped by thought is called *noetos topos* or *noeton genos*. The fact that *Plato*’s contradictory areas of sensual things and ideas were later labeled as two *worlds* means not only the demotion of a Platonic problem to vulgar Platonism – unfortunately fairly widespread in the cultural history – which does not have more in common with *Plato* than the so-called *Platonic love*, but it also means the locking up of *the problem of the world*.”²

While *Plato* does not speak of *two worlds* his philosophy is closely connected with the *locking up of the problem of the world*. How can we account for this situation? In Fink’s view, the main reason is „that in spite of this fact he, in a condensed way, also thought ecstasy of human being. Man was accounted for in terms of self-enhancement, as the motion of transcendence, of growth: he does not stay in himself, he is not wrapped in his humanity; instead he is thought as a living being who is more than he is of himself, a living being burnt with the desire whose ultimate possibility is enthusiastic ecstasy. No more, no less. Nevertheless what this self-increase is aimed at was understood as the ultimate being – said mythologically: it was conceived as god. The ecstasy to the being that is closest to the world has absorbed the ecstasy to the world.”³

¹ Ibid., 46.

² Ibid., 47.

³ Ibid., 47 .

Inspired by Nietzsche's conception of god Fink draws the following philosophical conclusion: „*The God of metaphysics has blocked the world and has blocked it to the degree he recedes from every image, every sensually present phenomenon, from everything what can be captured by a concept, and to the degree he becomes deus absconditus* (emphasis V. L.).”¹

Fink's philosophical stringency is, however, mitigated by his claim that the above mentioned conclusion only applies to the god of philosophers and metaphysicists, and not to the *god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, or *Deus* and *Apollo*, *Odin* or to *Isis* and *Osiris*. Nonetheless, the most important idea is expressed clearly. The concept of the *god of metaphysicists* suggests „that god, protecting himself from an easy-going human approach to him, through the denial of himself deprives man of his everyday comfort, provokes him, makes him turn to the higher and gets him out of his emplacement among things.”²

This is enough for Fink to critically cope with Heidegger's conception of Being as *the only* serious problem of philosophy – metaphysics. Fink assumes that since we understand *Being*, although not in the form of a definite and complete *science*, the understanding of Being should not be viewed as a ready-made *property* we can do anything with. Quite the contrary. An appropriate understanding of Being is conditioned by a radical change in our view of the relation between Being and the world. While Heidegger tries to understand the world through Being, Fink offers a more responsible and more correct variant: „*Our understanding of Being is completely delimited by the world*. Not only does each understanding of Being of a particular being contain the knowledge of the fact that things belong to the world, but also each understanding of being in the world comes to us from an open width of the world. It is not true that first we find things without the world, and only later we arrive at an

¹ Ibid., 47.

² Ibid., 47.

idea of an embracing whole by assigning to us more and more particular things, with this assignment being thought of as a process, indeterminately proceeding ad infinitum; the first thing we spot is already *in* the world and this search also is *a part of* the world. Our understanding takes always place in the width of the all-space and all-time..."¹

Fink focuses our understanding of the reality on the *openness* of the world rule which is the only to *provide* space and time. Only then can we move to things. Man is a strange creature, says Fink, because he is a being that is essentially formed through the relation to the world. As a result, man is an *inner-world thing*, „to which the whole of all Being turns in order to shine up and glare in it. It can be summed up in two sentences: 1. all things are in the world, or Being of all existing things should be conceived as *Being-in-the-world*; 2. man is an inner-world thing that exists in an ecstatic relation to the world-all which is touched by the created allness of the world and which turns to the universe with comprehension – therefore it must be conceived as *Being-in-the-world* in a very specific sense."²

Fink's criticism of Heidegger is not biased. Fink positively accepts various motifs from *Being and Time*, but at the same time, he refuses Heidegger's conception of Being after the *Kehre*. Heidegger's concept of Being-in-the-world as presented in his *Being and Time* shows the basic structure of that being that we are ourselves, i.e., the structure of human Dasein. In Fink's view, Heidegger aptly refuses a cumulative conception of the world. In addition, the idea explaining the world as a huge reservoir of the multifarious being should be rejected too. „The existential understanding of early Heidegger is delimited *transcendentally-philosophically*, and so what makes the world a world is conceived from *alétheia*, from the openness of being to man. The world is where being is understood, where being is

¹ Ibid., 49.

² Ibid., 50.

recognized, and where being is used. Non-being of itself is not necessary in the world.”¹

Heidegger’s thought substantially changes after the *turn* as shown by Fink in reference to Heidegger’s work *On the Essence of Ground*. Heidegger maintains that being as nature could have never been apparent if it had not had an opportunity to enter the world. Fink does not accept this view: „Only if some being, which is *more being* by the way of the timing of Dasein, stands amidst being-all, the day and the hour come when being enters the world. And only when this pre-history, this transcendence is becoming, i.e. if being that has the nature of Being-in-the-world, breaks into being, there is an opportunity for being to appear.”²

The main reason for Fink’s criticism of Heidegger’s conception of being, Dasein and the world is that this way of philosophical thought disregards the *cosmological problem of the world*. Fink articulates his critical reservations as follows: „1. ...Heidegger does not explain the essential structure of Dasein from the openness to the ruling world; to the contrary, he explains the world from the structure of the Dasein-based formation of the world... 2. ... Heidegger does not explain how mankind with its existential structure of *Being-in-the-world* is *in* the world as the created allness of the world, and how mankind is here ambiguously visible and hidden. 3. ... Heidegger’s concept of Dasein is in these works *transcendentally-philosophically* abstract... in all of these ways, we are *socially* open and see the depth of the world in all things. The less a man wants to be the world the more he approaches it. A man who understands Being is not authorized to determine what Being and being are; instead, he must obey what speaks to him from the wide open world. The world is not *only* something human, it is not only an existential structure, a composition of human Being – the inside of the world is rather inclined, in a special way,

¹ Ibid., 50.

² Ibid., 50.

towards the man, and in this inclination it is mysteriously *human*; it is *human* because man is already a being of the world... it is Heidegger's self-criticism expressed in the well-known *Kehre* ... after this turn, Heidegger does not explain the understanding of Being from man as a fixed centre, but rather from the perspective of openness of human being to Being itself."¹ The *humanity of man* appears to have definitely *evaporated* from Heidegger's philosophical reflections after the *Kehre*. This means an irreplaceable loss for philosophy.

Fink aptly surmises that Being-in-the-world is not an *essential structure* exclusively belonging to man and being his exclusive privilege. The world concerns man as a being inside the world; we are permeated with the idea of its immensity. Fink conceives the world as a whole „encompassing all understanding. The world is the primordial knowledge that penetrates and illuminates human existence."² Consequently, human Dasein must be an understanding Being-in-the-world, because the world *strikes* on man. „Self-knowledge of man is always the asking about the whole of being. The idea of the universe inhabits the world and the thing that is finite. *The idea of the world is the idea of all ideas, and it is the only idea that sanctions human thought as asking about the inner-world being and its intellectual determination* (emphasis V. L.).“³

The *idea of the world* can be meaningfully grasped only by means of the concept of *play*. Fink points out that „the *play of the world* is a speculative formula that does not say anything about what can be found in phenomena, but it indicates the way of thought.”⁴ If, however, *play* is conceived as *derived appearance*, as *mirroring*, and if *mirroring* is conceived as reflection of paradigmatic things in reproducing schemes,

¹ Ibid., 51 - 52. Also cf. Fink, E. 1985. *Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 36 ff..

² Fink, E. 1990. *Welt und Endlichkeit*. Würzburg: V. Kolhammer, 11.

³ Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 59.

⁴ Ibid., 68 - 69.

we are still held captive in the magic of Platonean account. Fink insists on setting us free from the magic. „Philosophy comes to cope with the mystery of the reality of play, which unveils the existing appearance, the dimension of *non-reality*, as early as Platonic thought, i.e., at the very beginning of Western metaphysics. Although Heraclitus, through a monumental simplicity, likened the course of the world to a playing boy, and thus outlined an incredibly courageous cosmic metaphor, he had never before analyzed the essential structure of play nor had developed the categories for an account of his grandiose symbol. Plato, the founder of metaphysics, explicitly employs the difference between the reality of the archetype and the reproducing representation by means of which he characterizes the basic ontological distinctions – and also, to a certain degree, thematizes and examines the operational intellectual models themselves.”¹

Platonic conception of the world *ousted* the play from the *heart of the world* and shifted it to the sphere of sensual phenomena.

The struggle between metaphysical philosophy and the essential power of play determined, in Fink’s view, the direction that preconditioned all the serious and major questions of both human and cosmic significance of play. By having been explained as, in principle, a derived and secondary phenomenon play was demoted to its incomplete functionality. Metaphysics eventually triumphed when it succeeded in dispersing and assimilating this *hostile element*. The Platonic-Aristotelean metaphysics aimed to reach this condition by, for example, assigning a subordinate position to the art of poetry in the hierarchized empire of truth, and supported this decision by the delimitation of poetics.

Fink classifies this historical-philosophical fact as ontological undervaluation of play in the beginnings of metaphysics. Metaphysics „*could push through its conception of the world as a universally scaled rational building of being in so far as it*

¹ Ibid., 83.

managed to suppress the conception of the ruling whole of the world as play. The rational order or the play – that was the question. The work of the planning and technical nous – or the tragicomedy of the coming-into-being and perishing of all finite things from a nameless night womb and grave of every individualization?”¹

Fink’s appeal to the *world whole* as the *first and the last whole* that is before all particular things and that extends in each of them, because it can never be found immediately between or next to things, is a unique philosophical idea in spite of the fact that it has constantly eluded us. The more so it should be pursued. The reasons are more than serious. „We live by day, we live by the world without asking in what and relative to what we live. We are confined by the continuous pressure of things surrounding us from all sides, without considering the field, the space and the time of this pressure... In the deepening of things towards the world the thing becomes a symbol; what happens is the *ymballein* of being and of the universe. Behold, the most original: the unnameable power of the world-all appears amidst fragile things... The shining of the light of the world in the things of the world comes uninvited – it is like an assault.”²

The understanding of Being as one of the essential questions of Western metaphysics cannot be abandoned by an arbitrary decision. Fink points out that we cannot simply *part with* it. The history-long understanding of Being is set „in the darkness of the world night as if scantily illuminated dwelling of man that hides him, protects him and facilitates his *Dasein* – but this dwelling must be continuously built up because it is endangered by devastation and destruction. The slightest reconstruction of this understanding of Being can therefore take the form of mere discussion with the

¹ Ibid., 114.

² Ibid., 120. Also cf. Fink, E.: *Grundfragen der antiken Philosophie*, 158 ff.

tradition. The more original is this reconstruction the more radical is the separation from the historical tradition.”¹

We usually cannot see the *only one, unifying* Being of the whole that surpasses all the boundaries of things, we *do not bear the music of the world*. This is because we are mainly concerned with being due to our being distracted by the diversity of things. Hence, we turn to the finite without understanding it in its essential finiteness. „We do not perceive the power that takes and gives, links and separates, cumulates and dissociates finite things.”²

In our everyday understanding of Being we *work* with fragments of Being without experiencing them *as* fragments. „Philosophy as wisdom and knowledge of the world awakens no sooner than a finite thing appears in its *inner-worldness* and thus points to the world whole, if the fragmental nature of being dawns in the light of the world... And this Being of the world is not any sphere of the more powerful and stronger things next to common things, and beyond them and above them – it is not a sphere of the eternal above the lost; Being of the world rules and works *in* finite things; Being of the world rules its coming-to-end, the particularization which is simultaneously cumulation and dispersion; wherever we experience the power of the cumulating and dispersing rule of the whole like *piece* and *war* of the world, the glare of all things in new light, they become *symbols*. This insight into the world or the lightning of the world usually happens as a raid – and it can happen anywhere in the human world: in love, at work, in a rule, in one’s recollection of the dead and – in a play.”³

Fink points out that there is no distance between things and the world. Each thing is in the world, but all things together cannot fill the world. The world „is much farther than any thinkable thing, and at the same time, it is much

¹ Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 126.

² Ibid., 128.

³ Ibid., 129.

closer to each being than the closest thing, because the world rules in it and through it. The world is simultaneously the closest and the farthest, it is the power of the universal motion of Being in each being, the process of coming-into-being and coming-to-end of all finite things – it is a throw by which they are thrown into their being and, at the same time, into the consumption of the inexhaustible time. Whenever we understand individual things of this course of Being they have the *depth of the world* and shine with infinite significance.”¹

The philosophy of the world is born, in Fink’s view, when the everyday certainty of an involved treatment of being inside the world is lost. We need to keep a distance when *astonishment* disturbs us from a captivated comprehension of things and when we try to ponder over the way in which being is in the world whole. Fink’s formulation is a brilliant example of a new conception of the relation between the history of philosophy and the problem of the world: „*The historical development of philosophy as an intellectual relation of man to the world was first and foremost determined by obscuring the original openness to the ruling whole, and by the prevalence of a theoretical view of the inner-world being, of the thing, of the substance; this view grasped the allness of things as a factual allness, as a system and as an architecture of things, both minute and powerful in terms of Being, as an axiological order on the top of which there is the ultimate being, from which we descend downwards step by step. This is connected with the understanding of the finiteness as separation from the ultimate being which is the only to feature the infiniteness. The ultimate being of metaphysical philosophy was given the name of god. Infiniteness became a theological attribute, thus losing its original cosmic sense. The history of transformation of the philosophy of the world to a theologically flavoured ontology does not, however, come to its end with Platonic-Aristotelean foundation of metaphysics; as a hidden tension and as a controversy between exclusiveness and openness to the world it*

¹ Ibid., 134.

has been determining the development of philosophy. (emphasis V. L.).“¹

In Fink's opinion, philosophy is only entitled to this truth of comprehension of Being and of *openness* to the world. This explains why Plato does not consider common things perceivable by senses to be the measure of valid Being. To him, the measure is the Being of idea available exclusively to thought. The consequences of this approach for philosophy are significant because they pertain to the conception of the *god of metaphysics*. Fink claims the following: „... the god of metaphysics is not any dark power driving and persecuting people, throwing them from happiness to misfortune ... the metaphysical god is essentially good, for man he is the reason of the good rather than the reason of evil and wickedness... The metaphysical god neither disguises himself nor hides in multifarious forms, does not change like Proteus; instead, he persists in himself in an unchanged way; he is pure Being in itself, unchanged invariability, continuously identical with himself... he is always apparent and always announcing himself in *logos* which rules all being. However, he is not accessible to sensual sight of man, and is graspable only through pure thought. This metaphysical god of idea, this metaphysical god from Plato and Aristotle up to Hegel's *World Spirit* is inaccessible to any appeals, requests, flavours from a victim; He is not touched by human suffering, he cannot be moved by promises and positive resolutions; he is the demiurge and the ruler of the cosmos, but he is not a loving father who forgives and takes care.”²

Plato's world never became *something* real, it was not the *ultimate* reality with regard to the mightiness of its existence. Heraclitus conceived the world and its *play* as an all-encompassing *reality*, a *web* of everything real. Heraclitus „does not speak of the play of gods; instead he speaks of

¹ Ibid., 140.

² Ibid., 156.

the play of the *aion*, the play of the world-course. By his parable of a playing child he means a play that differs from the human play more profoundly than the human play differs from the play of gods – he means the *play* in which all things, all relations and all persons are emplaced, including both humans and gods. In addition, he means the play without players. In no way is it a nonsensical and unfeasible idea: a play without a player, a play without a person that sets it in motion, a play in which there is no who?”¹

Fink agrees with Heraclitus when saying that *life does not stop, life is motion*, and asks the following questions: „Who can tell what happens in our times? ... What happens today and what actually comes next cannot be relevantly expressed by an individual, because individuals are apparently not authorized to the superhuman, they cannot be prophets or god’s mouth; they are just small waves of a mighty swell of mankind. With extreme skepticism we call into question every growing office of the herald no matter whether he tries to speak on behalf of god or on behalf of Being. All in all, the rest of *theology* resides in all philosophemes that pass themselves for a *mission*.”² Therefore Fink is right when he does not perceive Heidegger’s speaking *on behalf of Being* as the world *mission*, but rather as one of the possible philosophical assumptions.

Each thing is in the world, and is therefore worldly. Fink wonders whether it is wisdom or triviality. It is primarily a statement of being. As suggested by Aristotle, being is dealt with by the first philosophy – metaphysics. When we examine the worldliness of things is it metaphysical questioning? Fink prefers the view that it is the questioning that metaphysics disregards and shifts it to the unproblematic *evident*. The ideas of the multiplicity of *worlds* can be found as early as Presocratic philosophy. Plato instigates speculation of *two worlds* in his theory of the area of the

¹ Ibid., 192.

² Ibid., 204.

visible and the area of the thinkable – later, *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intelligibilis*. The topic of the *world* became a special topic within the general question of Being, a special questioning of metaphysics, for example in the philosophies of Kant, Hegel, etc. Fink therefore asks: „Does not, after all, the whole ontology rest in the dark and unexplained blurred knowledge of the world?“¹

Fink points out that in characterizing worldliness we mainly mean *Being in* that penetrates and creates each being. The understanding of the Being of things includes a reference to the encompassing *in what*. Fink discusses a striking ambiguity of the concept of Being (i. essential arrangement of individual things, and ii. the only, all-unifying Being) that prevents us from talking meaningfully about Being itself. What is the situation in terms of the *worldliness* of the world? Fink's position is as follows: „Worldly in its own sense... is the world itself... To be worldly when talking about things means *Being in* as Being in the universe; in principle, it means *Being inside the world*.“²

However, in Fink's view, the world is not an *inner-worldly* one. Inner-worldliness is attributed to *being as such*. „Consequently, no one thing, no being, including minute being and most powerful being, is worldly in the sense of the rule of the world itself... The world is not an external framework of things, it is not a case containing things ... The world embraces and comprises all things – at the same time, the world is not separated or isolated from things. Things belong to it, Being inside the world as such is an essential aspect of the world.“³

The world in Fink's cosmological reflection does not present itself *in the world*. The world neither comes into existence nor vanishes; it is always identical to itself. The ancient philosophy after Heraclitus starts to speculate about

¹ Ibid., 213.

² Ibid., 216.

³ Ibid., 217.

the world mainly in relation to the acquisition of divine features. This development had its far-reaching consequences, and determined, in principled way, the onto-theological character of metaphysics. Fink maintains that the most evident form of connection between religion and philosophy as wisdom open to the world is *pantheism* „that deforms both faith and thought. The value of the world cannot be comprehended if it is labeled as *divine* and if it is attributed ultimate being. This approach imposes on us an idea as if a personally thought rule (similar to that of gods) were the right way for the world to rule, the right way for its *play*. This rule is falsely accounted for as a play of a player.”¹

These historical-philosophical circumstances suggest, says Fink, that the *cosmological difference* (the difference between the *world* and *being*)² cannot be captured by the traditional intellectual instruments of the ontology of things. Therefore, Heidegger could not implement the *ontological difference* (the difference between *Being* and *being*). A specific feature of Fink’s idea of the *cosmological difference* is that it significantly confines the hitherto unrivalled position of Heidegger’s ontological difference. Fink identifies it by saying: „Speculations of Being and nothingness are mostly affected by a view fixed on the finite limited Being of inner-worldly fragmentary things – this also applies to the theories (such as Hegel) conceiving nothing as *annihilation*, as negativity. How can we speak in this sense of Being of the world? *Does the concept of Being include the concept of the world – or, should the world be conceived as something more primordial, including both Being and nothingness of things? Is cosmology a part of ontology or does philosophy as the true wisdom of the world surpass all the questions of the traditional metaphysics?* These are open, but very important questions that are articulated step by step

¹ Ibid., 218.

² Fink, E.: *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 108–109.

and determine the direction of modern discussion with the history of philosophy.”¹

No wonder, Heidegger does not accept the decisive change of the new direction in the discussion with the history of philosophy – *the cosmological difference* (of the cosmic and the cosmological); instead, he tries to subordinate it to his version of *ontological difference* (of the ontic and the ontological) as evidenced at their joint seminar on Heraclitus.²

Heidegger *did not listen to* what Fink articulated in his work *Play as a symbol of the world* (1960) and at the seminar on Heraclitus (1966). The crucial *Finkean* change in the field of metaphysics was expressed unambiguously: „The world exists *without any legitimate foundation* – but in a completely unique sense. Its bottomlessness unifies an uninterrupted justification of all inner-worldly processes and events ... However, the immense cosmological importance of modern *nihilism* stems from the fact that it rejects the overall purpose of the world on the ground that it is both incognizable and nonsensical; as a result, the world appears in an awkward and mysterious purposelessness... The world of itself is purposeless, it does not have any value of itself, because it is beyond any moral assessment, *beyond the good and the evil*. Without any reason and purpose, without any sense and aim, without any value and plan – and still, it encompasses all the reasons for permanently justified being inside it; through its universal purposelessness, it embraces the ways leading to purposes and aims; though worthless, it embraces being diversely scaled according to the power of its Being, it opens the space and time to the justified, purposeful, meaningful and axiological Being of things. The groundlessness of the world is not anything less, it is not

¹ Fink, E. *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 235. Also cf. Kouba, P. 2000. „Fenoméni jako konflikt v bytí.“ In: *Fenoméni jako filosofický problém*, 205 ff.

² Heidegger, M. – Fink, E. 1970. *Heraklit*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 175 ff.

less than the justification of being; it is something much more primordial. The world rule of omnipotence happens without any reason or aim, without any purpose or sense, without any value or plan. These are the basic features of the world reflected in human play.”¹

Fink assumes that no inner-world thing can ever *really* reach the level of cosmos and its spectacularity. And even if something like this actually happens it can be at best a symbol in the field of appearance. In reference to Heraclitus and Nietzsche, Fink conceives the world as *play*. However, it is not a play of the world of any personally thought power. Omnipotence cannot be, in his view, a person, and a person cannot be omnipotent. Fink insists on his claim that *the world cannot be a god and no god can be the whole world*. „The universe plays: it does not play as a person and its play does not engender *appearance, non-reality*, an imaginary stage... The world rules by offering light to each particular, by introducing things into their appearance and enabling them to glare in the celestial shine, and returning them subsequently to the earth as soil; it rules by determining the appearance and contour, place and moment, success and failure for everything individuated. The world rules as a power of universal individuation.”²

Fink considers the phenomenon of *play* to be the basic feature of *symbolic representation*. It is the most serious phenomenon by means of which we are in a position to understand ourselves and the world. Fink therefore emphasizes that play is not any *innocent* or even *peripheral*, the less so *childish* issue. As finite people we are engaged in the play through the *creative ability and spectacularity* of our magic production. The implications are as follows: „When the essence of the world is thought to be play, the implication for the man is that he is the only being in the open space that can *correspond* to the ruling whole. Man can only reach its

¹ Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 237 – 238.

² *Ibid.*, 240.

home substance through the comparison with the super-human. *In the play, human life is open to the playing foundation of Being of all existing...* (emphasis V. L.)¹

Fink rejects the metaphysics based on an ontological-axiological hierarchy in which Being is thought as motion from the highest – the true (invariable and only thinkable) being towards the lowest – the apparent (visible, variable and temporary). In that case, the philosopher cannot be the *highest* kind of man, but only a being that is an inseparable part of *the play of the world* without any *player*. Fink's anti-Platonic and anti-Aristotelean standpoint aims to reveal the motion of the finite being in the antagonistic and polarized space of the world in which everything is a continuous *play*. This is a *non-metaphysical conception of the world*, including the conception of *man*. From this point of view, this form of philosophy can be understood as *self-interpretation of human Dasein in the world* – because *play is the symbol of the world*.

Fink's philosophy captures an important interconnection between philosophy and a *dramatic act*. While Heidegger is mainly intrigued by the magnitude of Parmenides' philosophy as the *thought of the substance of Truth*,² and Heraclitus is merely reflected as a philosopher subsuming the becoming into One, into the unity of Being, with the emphasis laid on an analysis of *logos*,³ Fink turns to Heraclitus in order to re-consider the problem of *becoming* in the play of the world, in its dramatic form of an act. Essentially, play to him means the only phenomenon for the understanding of and accounting for *what* and *how* philosophy is. Fink suspects that „instead of philosophical ideas about what play is, the play of the ancient tragedy states what is philosophy.”⁴ Fink's philosophical *metaphor* of the perennial *Hera-*

¹ Fink, E. 1992. *Oáza štěstí*. Transl. J. Němec. Praha: Vyšehrad, 33.

² Heidegger, M. 1982. *Parmenides*. GA. Bd. 54. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 25 ff.

³ Heidegger, M.: *Heraklit*, 78 ff.

⁴ Fink, E.: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, 22.

clitean-Nietzschean play of the world as *ecstasy of the man* in which we view the *world whole* in itself and enable the *finite* to flash with the feature of *in-finitude*, comes to its peak in the assumption that *human play* has the significance of the world, that it has its *cosmic transparency*.

Fink is aware of the fact that choosing the play of the world as a topic of speculative thought is a demanding philosophical task. He is right in saying that this task cannot be grasped before the metaphysical tradition is exhausted, the tradition that is hostile to the play and which *conceals* the play. This seems to have happened in the past and to be happening also today. Fink's *cosmological philosophy* – *the philosophy of the world* was not duly appreciated by his contemporaries and is not so today either. This seems to be *ungrounded*.¹ The more so that most original ideas of Fink should be sought in his philosophical reflections of the world in relation to Presocratic philosophy, in particular, Heraclitus. They establish the necessary conditions for overcoming the *crisis of metaphysics*, the crisis in which metaphysics found itself also due to Heidegger's philosophy. This is where we can find a huge theoretical power of Fink's *weak model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy.

¹ Petříček, M.: *Eugen Fink a jeho kosmologická filozofie*, 18.

2. Patočka and the history of philosophy as preoccupation with the care for the soul

The philosophical work of *Jan Patočka* offers a unique intellectual synthesis of historical-philosophical reflections on the basis of *asubjective phenomenology*. His philosophical message has become one of the most important ones within the phenomenological movement. Patočka was the first philosopher of the 20th century to delve into the philosophical decoding of the problem of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* in straightforward critical encounter with Hegel's *strong model*. Like Fink, he reflected, in a critical way, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger's philosophy, and reconsidered them from his own original philosophical position.

Patočka's overall philosophical message is evidently dominated by the *unity of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history*, which is unprecedented within the broad theoretical space of the phenomenological movement – perhaps with the exception of Fink. Patočka accepted many of Fink's productive philosophical views. It should be, however, emphasized that he did not remain in the *shadow* of this remarkable German philosopher who introduced him into the mysteries of Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophy.¹ The philosophical interaction between Fink and Patočka extended throughout their lives. Both of them – from the inception of their theoretical work – sought their own topics and dealt with the issues of an *up-to-date* method of philosophizing. Patočka approached the problems of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history in such an original way which even surpassed Fink and other representatives of the phenomenological philosophy in the 20th century.

¹ Cf. Blecha, I. 2003. *Edmund Husserl a česká filosofie*. Olomouc: Votobia, 36 – 69. Blecha, I. 1997. *Jan Patočka*. Olomouc: Votobia, 26 – 30.

Hegel – history of philosophy and philosophy of history

Patočka's philosophical thought was very closely connected to Husserl's philosophy from the very beginning. A case in point is the question of *natural world* as it clearly follows from Patočka's early work *Přirozený svět jako filosofický problém* [Natural world as a philosophical problem] (1936)¹. This important fact seems, however, to conceal other, equally important, philosophical inspirations which appear to be backgrounded to negligible impulses by current *research into Patočka's work*.

Apart from the question of *natural world*, the beginnings of Patočka's philosophical search are intrinsically connected with another great philosophical topic, in particular, the *philosophy of history* and the *history of philosophy* (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cusanus, Descartes, Comenius, Herder, Hegel, Marx, Comte, Rádl, Masaryk ...) which cannot be ignored. Of crucial importance is primarily Patočka's early reflection of Hegel's philosophy, laying emphasis on the problem of *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. Importantly, this reflection came to be an integral part of his subsequent philosophical development in order to reach its peak in his later works. Its most elaborated form can be found in Patočka's late works, including— *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin* (1975) [Heretic essays on the philosophy of history]², *Evropa a doba poevropská* [Europe and the post-European period]³, and

¹ Patočka, J. 1992. *Přirozený svět jako filosofický problém*. Praha: Československý spisovatel. Cf. also Petříček, M.: Patočkův filosofický projekt. In: *ibid.*, 269-280.

² Patočka, J. 2002. „Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin.“ In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III*. Praha: Oikúmené, 13 - 144.

³ Patočka, J. 1999. „Evropa a doba poevropská.“ In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši II*. Praha: Oikúmené, 80 - 148.

mainly in his private lectures dating from 1973, *Platón a Evropa* [Plato and Europe]¹.

In contrast to Husserl, Patočka never reduced history to the mere history of knowledge. By implication, the philosophical answer to the question of where to seek the way out of the *crisis of European mankind* is intellectually deeper and more significant than that provided by Husserl. Patočka, like Fink, was not satisfied with Husserl's way of philosophizing as *transcendental phenomenology*. Patočka's variant of *asubjective phenomenology* – *the phenomenology of existential motion*² – is intrinsically connected with a different comprehension of the history of philosophical thought, of the philosophy of history in its critical synthetic-theoretical reflection of the most relevant problems of phenomenology after Husserl's death.

A substantial theoretical difference between Patočka's and Husserl's phenomenological conceptions concerns their respective reception of *philosophy of the history of philosophy*, in the way of philosophizing and the identification of the dominant problems through the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history. While philosophy of the history of philosophy is present in Husserl's later works (mainly his work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*) it does not constitute any *foundations* for his phenomenological conception. It is rather an example of an historical paradox showing that thinking in terms of philosophical reception of the history of philosophy necessarily leads to the failure of the phenomenological ideal of *philosophy as a rigorous – apodictically rigorous science*.³

¹ Patočka, J. 1999. „Platón a Evropa.“ In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši II*. Praha: Oikúmené, 149 - 355.

² Blecha, I.: Jan Patočka, 9, 131 – 150. Also cf. Šrubař, I. 1991. „Asubjektivní fenomenologie, přirozený svět a humanismus.“ In: *Filosofický časopis*, 39/3, 406-417.

³ Husserl, E. 1972. *Kříže evropských věd a transcendentální fenomenologie*. Praha: Academia, 549.

From the inception of his philosophical writing, Patočka paid much attention to the problems of *the philosophy of the history of philosophy*. *The history of philosophy* and *the philosophy of history* were viewed in parallel unity to phenomenological activities. This enabled Patočka to make progress on his way of seeking his own model of *phenomenological philosophy*. As early as 1936, that is, at the time of publishing his first great work inspired by Husserl's philosophy, *Přirozený svět jako filosofický problém* [Natural world as a philosophical problem] Patočka notes in his essay *Kapitoly ze současné filosofie* [Chapters from contemporary philosophy] the following: „A great German thinker was the first to announce one hundred years ago a seemingly paradoxical fact - that true philosophy must, in a way, encompass all historical philosophemes, and that philosophy cannot be separated from philosophies ...”¹

Inseparability of philosophy from philosophies – this is the central motif of Hegel's *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. It accurately expresses the unity of the history of philosophy without which Hegel's philosophy is unthinkable. Patočka's early essays *O filosofii dějin* [On the philosophy of history] (1940)² and *Dějepis filosofie a její jednota* [History of philosophy and its unity] (1942)³ clearly manifest *philosophical foundations* that are much broader compared to those offered by Husserl or Heidegger in their philosophical doctrines.

In accordance with Hegel, Patočka outlines his own methodological-theoretical principles of research into the history of philosophy. While the first to come up with the idea of *the unity of philosophy in history* was, in Patočka's view, Leibniz, it was not before Hegel that this idea was imple-

¹ Patočka, J. 1996. „Kapitoly ze současné filosofie.“ In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši I*. Praha: Oikúmené, 91.

² Patočka, J. 1996. „O filosofii dějin.“ *Péče o duši I*. Praha: Oikúmené, 107-115

³ Patočka, J. 1942. „Dějepis filosofie a její jednota.“ In: *Česká mysl* 36/ 2, 58-72, 36/3, 97-114.

mented in a philosophically unique form – *the history of philosophy became to Hegel a true philosophical science*. Only in this sense can it be viewed as an *introduction to philosophy*. Patočka believes that „contemporary philosophy encompasses all intellectual work of the past millennia, and observation of the evolution of the spirit from historical perspective is the history of philosophy.”¹

Patočka accepted Hegel's view that the *history of philosophy is a true philosophical science*: „The history of philosophy can be perceived as an introduction to philosophy (that is, directly as an introductory part of philosophy rather than its mere part), because it accounts for the origins of philosophy... The history of philosophy deals with the acts of thought. These acts pertain to pure thought, i.e., the history of philosophy demonstrates the self-creation of thought. In principle, the history of philosophy represents only *one* idea, but the forms of its elaboration represent various developments of the same”².

Hegel's conception of the history of philosophical thought is based on an indisputable postulate that *there is only one philosophy*. The forms of its historical development are multifarious. Then, *intellectual evolution* resembles an inevitable organic course. The history of philosophy forms *a single system* with various historical stages and individual manifestations. Most importantly, the concept of *evolution* has become a central concept of philosophy and, consequently, the basis of the history of philosophy. „Philosophy as the evolution of ideas constitutes a whole, a system... The history of philosophy consists simply in observation of the evolution of idea in time, and is therefore identical to the system of philosophy. This can be proved by two arguments: a speculative argument and an empirical one. The

¹ Patočka, J. 1996. „Problém dějin filosofie.“ In: Patočka, J.: *Nejstarší řecká filosofie*. Praha: Vyšehrad, 307.

² Ibid., 306.

speculative argument follows from the nature of reason, the empirical argument is offered by history”¹.

Patočka understands Hegel’s position that the evolution of spirit is absolute. It is an eternal motion and peace at the same time. Therefore, *time* comes to be a mere *external moment* in the history of philosophy. Time establishes the *environment* (externality, activity) rather than an internal dimension of possible modifications in the evolution of the spirit in its essential principles. „The forms of the evolution of idea seem to be accidental in this externality. We should, however, realize the necessity of mutual evolution of one from the other. The situation is that the system of philosophy, especially its logical part, and history reflect each other and develop from each other. By implication, historical progress is as necessary as systematic evolution. No philosophy can emerge before its right time, and resurrection of old philosophies means resurrection of mummies”².

Hegel’s *history of philosophy* has its indispensable place within his overall philosophy, which shows its *philosophical significance*. It came to be an organ of self-cognition of the spirit in time as an integral part of the philosophy of the objective spirit. Patočka identifies four main motifs of Hegel’s *philosophy of the history of philosophy*:

„1. The development of philosophy is organic. *Various philosophies* represent various evolutionary stages of the same organism.

2. An individual has a subordinate role rather than being a *content* of philosophy.

3. Time is only an external milieu, a mirror of inner evolution of the organism of spirit. Philosophy and other aspects of spirit are, in various periods of time, manifestations of the same stage of spiritual substance. Each period can be expressed in a rational way. Therefore, time has no content-related, positive meaning.

¹ Ibid., 307.

² Ibid., 307

4. The succession of philosophical systems corresponds with the logical evolution of an idea”¹.

In Patočka’s view, the core of Hegel’s *philosophy of the history of philosophy* can hardly be expressed in a more accurate way. The most important point is, however, that Patočka does not take a purely *external* perspective of Hegel’s philosophy, i.e., his intent is not restricted to its objective description. He accepts it first of all *internally* because it expresses the basic relation between the history of philosophy and systematic philosophy. Patočka writes the following: „When I came to understand Plato or Hegel and I accounted for a particular chapter in the history of the evolution of philosophical spirit I performed some historical work but this had to be preceded by my independent philosophizing. Unlike a historian of mathematics, I could not seek the key to these phenomena in any compendium. A poor mathematician may be a good historian of mathematics, which, however, is not true of philosophy. *Hegel is right in assuming that history of philosophy lives only the life of systematic philosophy and reflects our systematic ability, our system* (emphasis V.L.).”²

Patočka was inspired by critical evaluation of Hegel’s conception of the history of philosophy throughout his life. What could not be obvious to Patočka himself or his readers in 1942 when his first essay on these philosophical problems was presented to the public may be safely stated now: this philosophical position *determines* all of his works. He not only explores the history of philosophy „because of his interest in history, or primarily in it, but mainly because of his interest in his own most essential spiritual striving (emphasis V.L.)”³.

Both Patočka and Hegel conceive the history of philosophy and philosophy itself as a *unity – an organic totality*.

¹ Ibid., 308.

² Patočka, J.: *Dějepis filosofie a její jednoty*, 100.

³ Ibid., 100.

He is aware of the fact that the history of philosophy may be viewed from two fundamental positions – from *purely historical* and from *purely philological*. While a number of reasons may be put forward for this assumption the most important one bears on fulfilling the most substantial sense of the science of philosophy – the ability to penetrate to the ideational position of the spirit¹.

Although Hegel's philosophical conception of the history of philosophy is *speculative* Patočka appreciates his unusual view of the problems, which is close to *sociology*. The history of philosophy is intrinsically an inevitable *objective process*. Therefore, human willfulness cannot play any significant role in it. The history of philosophy is a natural, irreversible and supra-individual process. As aptly noted by Patočka, an individual is to Hegel „a mere instrument used by this process. Consequently, neither Hegel nor the history of philosophy influenced by Hegel refer to individuals. Instead, they speak about ideas, epochs and processes. All the other principled things being different, this is where Hegel's approach coincides with that of the founder of French positivism, Auguste Comte”².

What is common to Hegel and Comte is, according to Patočka, the view that *intellectual development is natural and it represents, at the same time, social development*. From this it follows that no science can be understood without reflection of its own history which is „inseparable from the history of mankind”³. Under its influence, historians of philosophy overcome a *non-historical empiricism* in their effort to comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems without neglecting the empirical view itself. However, Patočka maintains that Hegel's and Comte's objective sociological approaches are not radical enough, because „the law of social develop-

¹ Ibid., 100.

² Patočka, J.: *Problém dějin filosofie*, 308.

³ Ibid., 309

ment or the law of historical progress is identified by both of them in the inner area, that is, in the idea”¹.

In this connection, Patočka refers to Marx who finds the laws of history in the *economic structure of society* from which the whole superstructure of legal and social institutions as well as religious, philosophical and other spiritual products of each historical epoch should be derived. A characteristic feature of Patočka’s work is a permanent critical dialogue with this position. This critical dialogue is more extensive and much more significant than *admitted* in the most important contemporary analyses of Patočka’s work.

Patočka does not accept Hegel, Marx, positivism and the sociological approach to spiritual reality uncritically. He neither wants nor can arrive at a strictly *objective view* of the history of philosophy as an integral part of the cultural history in general. He realizes that the history of philosophy is a spiritual space for inwardly engaged individuals. Therefore, the history of philosophy cannot function as an absolute reference system as assumed by Hegel. Patočka believes the history of philosophy to be for each of us a unique spiritual struggle for *one’s own meditation and contemplation*, through which the history of philosophy can be *elucidated*. We cannot get rid of our own spiritual genealogy: „For a philosophizing, for an actively contemplating and problem-raising person the history of idea makes sense; it is characterized by a sort of unity. There is no unambiguous formulation of this unity; the unity cannot be simply identified as a logical sum of all positive determinations or as a dialectic evolution that develops and reconciles oppositions”².

No doubt, the problem is much more intricate. In contrast to Hegel, Patočka conceives philosophy as an *adventure of knights errant*. Consequently, the history of philosophy,

¹ Ibid., 309

² Ibid., 311.

too, is a philosophical doctrine that consists of an *intellectual struggle for the contact with the thought of others* where *the unique – the individual* is no more negligible. The other way round, in some respects, it even becomes the decisive factor. The history of philosophy is and will be a *philosophical discipline* no matter whether it is or not based on sociological-historical and/or objective-philological principles. These namely form a mere *substrate*. What is crucial is original philosophical work. The substrate „*must be formed by a philosophical idea in order to penetrate where it is necessary to, because an idea can not be pictured, depicted, or transposed – it can only be re-produced, re-created, that is, restored*” (emphasis V.L.)¹.

The effort aimed at the understanding of *the unity* of philosophy and the history of philosophy independently of Husserl and Heidegger is obvious as early as the first stage of Patočka's philosophical development. It is articulated under the dominant influence of his effort to come to grips with Hegel's *philosophy of the history of philosophy*. This characterizes all his work as a *crucial*, i.e., theoretically unique dimension of his philosophical doctrine. *The unity* of philosophy and the history of philosophy is aptly articulated as follows: „*Philosophy is not the ultimate abstraction; rather it is the work of living beings, living minds on their hard and lonely way of search. The philosophizing minds are not indifferent to meeting other minds, sometimes across centuries or even millennia; many a time, it is the ultimate, or even the only thing. And the particular environment in which it happens is the history of philosophy*”².

Philosophy as a *work of living beings – living minds* is an intellectual as well as human space of Patočkean way of phenomenological philosophizing. It is here that we should seek Patočka's independent and extraordinary contribution to the history of philosophical thought of the 20th century, no matter how strong was the influence of Husserl and

¹ Ibid., 311.

² Ibid., 311. Also cf. Tholt, P.1999. „J. Patočka ako historik filozofie.” In: *Filozofia dejín filozofie*. (Ed. V. Leško) AFPhUP Prešov, 195-218.

Heidegger. Patočka's emphasis on *the unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy* is developed into the conception of a *weak model of philosophy of the history of philosophy*, uniquely combining the position of a creative *philosopher* and an excellent *historian of philosophy* who conceives the history of philosophy as the *preoccupation with the care for the soul*.

All this is closely related to his approach to the *philosophy of history*. Patočka's invincibly *believes in* and is even *obsessed* with the idea that the philosophy of history is an *inevitable task of human mind*, that *historical construction is the central task of philosophy with all the other tasks being reduced to accompanying prolegomena*¹. In this way, he clearly avows the great German philosophical tradition the beginnings of which can be traced back to the first half of the 19th century and which is unambiguously connected first and foremost with Hegel's conception. In Patočka's view, Hegel's philosophy in general and his account of history, in particular, represents „an immense power not only in the life of philosophers but also in the life of all of us”².

In contrast to *objective historiography*, the task of which is to *identify facts and provide their causal account*, the essential task of the *philosophy of history* is to interpret the *meaning of events*³. Patočka maintains that while the philosophy of history is unthinkable without the knowledge of the facts to be accounted, it concentrates on reasons that can never be completely reduced to facts. By implication, while the philosophy of history pays attention to facts, the facts themselves cannot provide us interpretation of events. This raises the question of what is actually meant by philosophical interpretation of history⁴. *Historical-philosophical interpretation* means, as assumed by Patočka, „the identification of the essence and meaning of the specific human life from his-

¹ Patočka, J.: „Filosofie dějin.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši I.*, 339.

² Patočka, J.: „Filosofie výchovy.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši I.*, 369.

³ Ibid., 340.

⁴ Ibid., 340.

torical perspective. *It is a sort of evaluation of work performed by man* (emphasis. V. L.)”¹.

What *criterion* can be used to evaluate one’s achievements? Patočka arrives at the *paradox* of the philosophy of history: „*The philosophy of history aims to evaluate man on the basis of what man in fact is* (emphasis V.L.). However, to understand what man is, is neither the only thing nor is it uniform in itself – in contrast to other areas of *a priori* comprehension (for example, mathematics). It depends on time and on individual. It is a process – a history; this process cannot be properly understood without explaining it with maximum possible sincerity and courage”². Patočka believes that the philosophy of history must be *subjective* to a certain extent, because this dimension is an inherent part of *philosophy*.

More importantly, Patočka assumes that the philosophy of history must also be *metaphysical*, and vice versa, each metaphysics has its historical-philosophical implications. Metaphysics exerts influence on the philosophy of history which is not viewed as a mere philosophical science. Rather, it is mainly conceived as „*an integral part of human life, as a part of our existence, which is unavoidable when we ourselves become a part of history* (emphasis V.L.)”³. Historical-philosophical thinking comes to be a kind of *fatal thinking* applied to social events. Consequently, *fatal thinking* is related to a special, personal, subjective way of thinking „which engages our way of judgment, our hopes, and our place in life, a way fairly different from a strictly objective thinking to which *ira et studio* may have disturbing rather than beneficial effects”⁴.

Patočka notes that while historical-philosophical thinking has a long tradition (Hesiodos, Homer, Old Testament – three historical perspectives – three deep perceptions of

¹ Ibid., 340-341.

² Ibid., 342.

³ Ibid., 342.

⁴ Ibid., 342-343.

history), philosophy of history as a philosophical discipline came to its existence in the modern age. Germany of the first half of the 19th century witnessed extraordinary blossom of historical-philosophical thinking – *true orgy of the philosophy of history* - Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, and especially Hegel represent the peak of German philosophy of history, with disciples and adherents throughout Europe, mainly Eastern Europe¹. This kind of philosophical thinking gradually weakens in the first third of the 20th century, primarily under the influence of *positivist thinking*. Nevertheless, Patočka is thoroughly confident about the necessity to continuously deal with the philosophy of history, mainly with its central issue – *the construction of history*.

Thus, an attempt at philosophical construction of history is considered by Patočka to be a courageous theoretical act the implementation of which is far from being simple. Patočka encountered this problem all through his life. Rather than political events or the overall external complexity of historical scene he purposefully chooses the *period of history* that appears to be rather neglected in historical constructions.

Patočka perceives history as a play in which its actors are not its authors. The ‘performance’ itself is of minor importance. What matters is the content of the play „The content of the play grounds in intellectual tendencies, in their multifarious interaction, in their tension and problems which stimulate motion; frequently, these are remote dreams of abstract thinkers which hit the bottom of everydayness”². Dreams of each era are of great importance. Specific performances are to Patočka only peculiar psalms used to *phrase our interpretation*. From this it follows that, from the very beginning, Patočka’s philosophy of history was in its substance a philosophy of intellectual history.

¹ Ibid., 111.

² Ibid., 349.

Patočka aptly notes that „intellectual tendencies and streams have never in history been isolated threads; instead, they constitute wholes viewed generally as unified in their nature”¹. His fundamental philosophical belief in the field of the philosophy of history has never changed: *autonomy and the primacy of the intellectual impulse in history*.

„Isn’t it the case that history is an appeal to reason to get to know itself and to recognize its own limits? Does not this appeal simply mean waking up from the *dogmatic sleep of reason* (emphasis V.L.) that is not aware of its own history?”² Why are we interested in history and why do we study history? Patočka is most irritated by our indifference to history. He firmly believes that *indifference and history contradict each other*³. After all, man is all that matters in history. Therefore, there is no place for indifference under these circumstances. „If we are indifferent to something in history it is dead to history. By implication, rather than a *clear picture* history is an object of passionate contact; however, it is not a contact with anything what is alive, what can be affected or changed. It is not anything like active help either; it is comprehended by *us* within the range of our current struggles and tendencies”⁴.

The interaction between *history* and *us* is perceived by Patočka with utmost consistency: „History thus determines us; it is an objective power which defies us. On the other hand, it is us who keep it alive; reality, i.e., an act, a true work of history consists in our life. If we are determined by history it may be claimed that we determine history, and that by growing out of a stem that no more exists we supply with our blood only those shadows of our underworld from which we expect a reply”⁵.

¹ Ibid., 349.

² Patočka, J.: „Několik poznámek k pojmům dějin a dějepisu.” In: Patočka, J.: *Pěče o duši I.*, 36.

³ Ibid., 39.

⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁵ Ibid., 39-40.

Patočka's question of the *nature of history* is unambiguously directed towards the question of the *nature of man*. He does not, however, reduce the self-understanding of man to the problem of reflection: „The question is, however, whether the capturing of self-understanding referred to by philosophers... can be reached other than by reflection... how do we know that we are human beings; without knowing that we are human beings there is no humanity. Knowledge of one's humanity is a part of human nature...”¹. Consequently, „our being in the world is being in the world of men...” (*ibid.*, 42). Therefore, *philosophizing* itself means to Patočka an opportunity awarded to man by the act of man's freedom. „Thrown freedom means: all the opportunities of freedom stem from what has human past brought to us, they are co-determined by the past. The past is therefore an urgent appeal to our freedom to revive to its own question”².

This is where Patočka finds the meaning of history. History is the mode in which our freedom, by understanding its decisions, separates itself from the dangers that threaten it and identifies its own models and objects of respect. „History aims to know the past in order to evaluate it, i.e., to clarify our own attitude to the wave that bears us in the light of truth which is us and which is implemented by us. The truth of a historian's history depends on whether or not he has understood human freedom. Freedom can be understood by capturing it in a particular historical situation, by being true to ourselves, firm, stronger than the world. Through his decisions man progresses in the world without leaving it”³.

A historian explains history from the position of his *determination*, which provides him a measure for a vivid view of history. Patočka argues that „by understanding history

¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

² *Ibid.*, 43.

³ *Ibid.*, 44.

we identify its meaning when we repeat the substantial; the original possibilities revealed in the past thrown-free determinations. *The meaning of history is nothing ready-made or general, an idea possibly implemented in the history of a particular nation. Rather, its is a repeatable happening and struggling opportunity for free being which somehow or other concerns us in a substantial way*" (emphasis V.L.)¹.

This concept of the *meaning of history* entails the *necessity of historiography*. In Patočka's system it is related to the fact of *human freedom* so that our life may find itself. To become free means to accept „the thrownness in criticizing the dead traditions and the life-strangling lies as residues from outdated decisions, and in courageous repetition of once outlined possibilities. That is why, history cannot be separated from respect, love, hatred, and aversion; that is why, historiography can be one of the most powerful factors of historical life itself ... historiography itself, through the peculiarities of its structure, substantiates human freedom; to put it in Heidegger's words, a historian must want, must argue, and must respect”². However, Patočka goes on to say: „In principle, there is only one history: the history of a specific life in the fullness of its determination”³.

On the other hand, Patočka is aware of the fact that philosophy cannot be *prescriptive* in relation to the world. Its position is exclusively confined to *appeal*. What actually should it appeal for? The answer can be found in his essay *Niekoľko poznámok o mimosvetskej a svetskej pozícii filozofie* (1934) [A few notes on the other-worldly and worldly positions of philosophy]. The appeal of philosophy bears on „the *heroic man*. This is a human word of philosophy.”⁴. By implication, heroism is not a blind passion, love, revenge, ambition, or will to power. It is, first of all, *peaceful clarity of*

¹ Ibid. 44.

² Ibid., 45.

³ Ibid., 53.

⁴ Patočka, J.: „Několik poznámek o mimosvětské a světské pozici filosofie.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši I.*, 67.

the life as whole, it is „the awareness of the fact that this way of conduct is inevitable *for me*, the only possible way of my existence in the world. The hero's being here, at the very moment, does not expect any acknowledgment or continuation in some other world. Heroism accepts its own transience. There is nothing but an irreversible manifestation of one's substance, irreducible to mere circumstances and intersections of the world”¹.

As a result, the task of philosophy is very specific. „It consists of *redeeming* the self-understanding of the heroic man and of an opportunity to *understand* his belief as „a free human act” rather than revelation of the transcendent (emphasis V.L.). What is revealed in this belief is not a transcendent divine command but the *principle of man* (emphasis V.L.) in a particular historical situation. The understanding of Being, which is achieved by philosophy by progressing in the world intellectually, is thus related to true human being, which represents a free act; by implication, the ideal of sovereign philosophy may be expressed as *the philosophy of heroism and the heroism of philosophy*”².

Patočka avows Hegel's heritage especially in his conception of *historicism*. In his essay *O filosofii dějin* [On the philosophy of history] (1940) Patočka maintains that historicism, including its impact on humanities, is a thorny and not yet resolved problem that cannot be ignored³. The philosophy of history, as conceived by Patočka, presents itself in its constructive part as a *theoretical doctrine* striving to interpret human history „in terms of the unified law of its determination; it determines the meaning of the individual stages of development and thus teaches us to understand the intrinsic necessity inherent in the fate of individuals and social wholes”⁴. Such a conception of the function of the philosophy of history may imply an idea of an objective

¹ Ibid., 67.

² Ibid., 67.

³ Patočka, J. *O filosofii dějin*, 109.

⁴ Ibid., 113.

theory primarily pursuing definite facts. However, its crucial point pertains to *the program of life and to the orientation in making decisions on life's directions*. „It is in the nature of life that it has its history, its significant and insignificant periods, its ups and downs; it copes with them, it struggles with them, explores itself in the course of the struggle, and takes pains to reach the clarity”¹.

Patočka conjectures that each significant life has its own inherent history, its inherent meaning. Most importantly, this meaning cannot be conceived as something external, objectively recognizable, or even ordered. The meaning of life can only be achieved through *one's struggle*. The meaning of life „does not exist as *factum a fatum* but is implemented: life itself, that realizing oneself, is continuous self-experiencing, experiencing the meaning we put in us ourselves”². This position has evident consequences for the comprehension of humanities, including philosophy: „A man can find the truth in its *object* if he finds it ... in his subjective world. Only through his subjective truth can a man avoid obsession due to the problem of conditioning by Heraclitean stream of history”³. *Truth* can never be an objective rule. Truth is a requirement *unconditionally* binding us to the *imperative of one's own inner life*. Patočka's life corresponds to these ideas which, in a sense, represent the culmination of his early theoretical work.

It should be, however, noted that reception of Hegel's philosophy has its indispensable place also in the subsequent periods of Patočka's work. In the academic year of 1948-1949 Patočka gives two lectures: on *Aristotle* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

In his in-depth analysis, Sobotka points out that Patočka characterizes his own approach as an *anthropological approach* inspired by Hegelean examination of Kojève and Hyppolit.:

¹ Ibid., 113.

² Ibid., 113.

³ Ibid., 115.

„Patočka realizes that this approach is biased to Hegel; nevertheless, he believes that anthropology (including philosophy of history) can be singled out from Hegel's work, *although Hegel might protest on the grounds of the wholeness of philosophy...* Through singling out the anthropological core of Hegel's philosophy Hegel becomes a philosopher denying the absolute meaning of world and relegating... it to history which was not originally assigned this meaning in the sense of *premundane being and existence* from time immemorial until its implementation, but rather as the meaning *created in the course of history, created in the most eminent sense of the word*”¹.

The philosophical value of Hegel's work can perhaps be best seen from Patočka's brilliant translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, including his extensive and profound notes.² This translation significantly contributed to the *philosophical understanding* of this masterpiece of German philosophy of the 19th century in Czecho-Slovakia. Patočka's essays - *Descartes a Hegel* [Descartes and Hegel]³, *Hegelův filosofický a estetický vývoj* [Hegel's philosophical and aesthetic development]⁴, *Estetika hudby doby Hegelovy* [Aesthetics of music in Hegel's time]⁵ - witness to his permanent interest in the philosophy of this outstanding representative of German classical philosophy and show his ability to unconventionally approach and comprehend the up-to-date relevance of his unique theoretical message. Therefore, it is understandable that Patočka paid considerable attention to Hegel's philosophy, in particular, to his philosophy of history, also in his late works: *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin* [Here-

¹ Sobotka, M. 1997. „Patočkova přednáška z r. 1949 o Hegelově „Fenomenologii ducha““. In: *Filosofický časopis*, 45/5, 849-850.

² Patočka, J. 1960. „Poznámky.“ In: Hegel, G.W.F.: *Fenomenologie ducha*. Praha: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 489-517.

³ Patočka, J. 1963. *Aristoteles, jeho předchůdci a dědicové*. Praha: Akademie, 311-325.

⁴ Hegel, G.W.F. 1966. *Estetika I*. Praha: Odeon, 9-56.

⁵ Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Philosophica et historica. Praha 1971, 29-42.

tic essays on the philosophy of history], *Evropa a doba poevropská* [Europe and the post-European period], and mainly *Platón a Evropa* [Plato and Europe].

Patočka's later works pay much attention to the idea of Hegelian provenance of philosophy and its relation to the particular period („... *Philosophy, as thought and as conception of the Mind of a particular time...*”)¹. This idea is most explicitly articulated as follows: „*Plato's philosophy reflects the life in Greece of his time and the life in Greece in general; the quintessence of Greek life is to him – rightly – Athens* (emphasis. V.L.)”² In his private lectures *Plato and Europe* (1973) he puts it as follows: „*Metaphysics itself grows out of a particular historical situation, the decline of polis, the decline of Athens, and it itself creates heritage that can survive the declining polis and the declining Helenism, and will contribute to the fact that the downfall of the Roman Empire will be followed by another formation, the so-called Europe in its own sense* (emphasis V.L.)”³.

The second lecture of the 1974 series of lectures, preceding his *Heretic essays on the philosophy of history*, Patočka's attitude to Hegel's philosophy of history is articulated in a compelling way. In his view, Hegel ranks among those thinkers who related the task of history to the *evolution of reason*.

While he accepts Hegel's assumption that *historical progress is the progress in the awareness of freedom*, he notes the following: „Hegel conceives the word freedom in a slightly different way. Hegel's free man is not a man as such, a man with his finality; it is rather the spirit, and the spirit is, in its substance, the reason. Therefore, Hegel's conception is – even if our views may later seem to be close or even coincident – profoundly different from what we have in

¹ Hegel, G.W.F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Greek Philosophy to Plato*. Vol. I. Transl. E. S. Haldane. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 51.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 220.

³ Ibid., 263-264.

mind”¹. Patočka rejects Hegel’s great historical-philosophical *speculation* due to his completely different approach to history. „History should not be speculated of, history should be accounted for from *human historicity* (emphasis V.L.) and from how – under certain circumstances and on the basis and by making use of human historicity – a particular task emerges, a task which may be objectively traced in history, including its possibilities and modifications”².

The comprehension and account of history from *human historicity* is vital to Patočka’s philosophical reflection. The rejection of Hegel’s great philosophical *speculations* means that history is not perceived as something closed, and that the meaning of history is not sought in any rule of history. „History is not any law of human evolution; history stems from human freedom as a task related to human freedom in so far as history formulates the task of protecting the most inherent human chance, raising it as a problem and as an opportunity for its future repetition – under the ever-changing circumstances”³. This is where Patočka identifies the most appropriate concept and problem of history.

Unlike Hegel, Patočka does not construct historical development by means of the *dialectic method*. He maintains that this method was used mainly by Marxists who concentrated on the contradictory relation between production conditions and labour. Patočka raises the question of why this is not possible. The answer is unambiguous: „Because dialectic is an individual law – it is a law, but it is an individual law. While there are dialectic structures which are recurrent they recur at different levels and, by implication, they are not identical. Thus, for example, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* includes structures which almost plagiarize each other: master and slave, unhappy consciousness, mean

¹ Patočka, J. 2002. „Problém počátku a místa dějin.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 289.

² Ibid., 289.

³ Ibid., 297.

consciousness and noble consciousness – these are identical structures at various levels, and what matters are the various levels. One might claim that the form of dialectic is thesis – antithesis – synthesis, but this means nothing because the form and the content are separable in it. Dialectic means law in which the form is inseparable from the content, and vice versa.... While dialectic means certain comprehension of Being. It is not – different from what it pretends to be – the very essential law of Being. Dialectic pretends to be an absolute universal system, but in fact it is a necessary way of approaching certain phenomena. Its pretension to totality and absoluteness is something what would destroy the historicity of Being, its actual inherent infinity and inexhaustibility”¹.

The foregoing reasons lead Patočka to a conviction that there is no universal thread in the philosophy of history (such as dialectic structure and dialectic method) enabling us to understand history. He relies on *phenomenology*, i.e., he attempts to identify key phenomena „enabling him to find in the particular case the key to those crucial decisions on an intersection where it is decided on the future direction of development”². It goes without saying that Patočka’s search for answers to relevant issues of the philosophy of history was inspired, or instigated, by his critical reflection of Hegel’s philosophy of history. Therefore, it is not accidental that the original Hegelean philosophy of the history of philosophy (unity of philosophy and history of philosophy) is turned by Patočka into a new, philosophically unique, *unity* of the philosophy of history and *the history of philosophy*, with its focus on the central philosophical problem– *the care for the soul*.

¹ Ibid., 407.

² Ibid., 407.

Socrates, care for the soul, and history

A special position in Patočka's philosophical development is taken by his lectures on Socrates, published in 1947¹. By all accounts, Patočka's project of philosophy as a *work of living people – living minds* would not have been complete if it had not incorporated in its foundations the *philosophical personality* of Socrates. Therefore, his reception of Socrates (*Patočka's Socrates as living consciousness of his time*) is not only an *external* historical-philosophical problem of Patočka's work, but rather a *most inherent* problem, without which we could, in a sense, hardly identify the vital *Patočkean esprit* of philosophizing – *the struggle for man, his life and the sense of human motion in historical-individual dimensions – human historicity*. This is what makes Patočka so different from Husserl and Heidegger not only in his early works but also in his later philosophical development. While in the *Heretic essays on the philosophy of history* this feature is not so striking, a very clear standpoint cannot be overlooked – „*Socrates is the most genuine philosopher, even though perhaps not the greatest one...*” (emphasis V.L.)².

Patočka's *Socratean study* pursues to provide a most objective *picture of Socrates' situation*³. Patočka also concentrates on Socrates as *awakener* „as one who urges people to look in their own eyes in order to be both brave enough to live and to see who lives in them; a zealous explorer, not for fun, but out of care for not missing the substantial in life - that what is called *psyche* by Socrates. Therefore, we will pay special attention to those Platonean works which are generally recognized as Socratean. In addition, we will make use of the resources which further illuminate and deepen the

¹ Patočka, J. 1990. *Sókratés. Přednášky z antické filosofie*. Praha: Vyšehrad.

² Patočka, J.: *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin.*, 80.

³ Patočka, J.: *Sókratés*, 28-108.

results obtained in this way”¹. All this eventually culminates in the conception of the *care for the soul*.

Patočka maintains that the history of philosophy is a discipline that must comply with the fundamental procedures of historical exploration, i.e., it must analyze and account for facts, in particular, *philosophical documents* – publications, texts, assertions. He aptly notes that „all our concepts are products of historical development, all of them are products of tradition, and therefore it is easy to project the current sediment of this development onto its past stages. A special variant of the historical method in the history of philosophy is the *methodological skepticism* about this identification. The following operation must be performed for each concept: none of them can be simply *specified* on the basis of our arbitrary idea of it; instead, each concept must be *found*, i.e., the origin of each concept must be discovered in a documentary way”².

In all of his works Patočka expresses his belief that philosophy is inspired by life and that this inspiration should be returned to life. A case in point is Socrates. In a sense, Patočka himself determines his own *philosophical-human fate* by his understanding of *Socrates’ lot*: „If a philosophical author is himself a strong personality he may succeed in accomplishing the biggest task of a philosopher – to be not only pure self-consciousness, but also a living conscience of his time (emphasis V.L.): he can shape and criticize this life form through his own life, he can shape its ideals, give them a new turn and new form; he can place question-marks before deadlocks in order to highlight what such a person can introduce to us as something uniquely noble and dignified”³.

In Patočka’s view Socrates is *immensely valuable* to philosophy. His value does not only stem from his *conflict* with

¹ Ibid., 27.

² Patočka, J.: „Nemetafyzická filosofie a věda.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 608.

³ Patočka, J.: *Kapitoly ze současné filosofie*, 98.

those for who he lives in a deeper sense. Socrates means to him an *endurance test of philosophy*, because it must stand the test of life and must bear its weight without betraying its *divine* or *human-social mission*. „Socrates proved through both his life and death the possibility of philosophizing, and therefore future ages will think over this personality – *philosophizing without Socrates is impossible* (emphasis V.L.)”¹. The most typically *Socratean* in Patočka’s view is the ability and the capacity to *criticize life* in terms of all of its components, manifestations, in its depth and, at the same time, to ask insistently about its ultimate and exclusive end – i.e., to ask about the *good*. This *act* is in the history of philosophy unambiguously connected with Socrates, because this Greek philosopher demonstrated that philosophy is „a genuine, a real life opportunity”².

What is, in Patočka’s view, the core of Socrates’ *doctrine*? It is the problem of the *care for the soul*. Patočka agrees with prominent historians of the ancient philosophy, including Burnet, Kuhn and Taylor, that in Socrates the word *soul* sounds different from the previous Greek tradition mainly because it is conceived by him as a *bearer of fate*. What matters is not any external but „*an internal fate, internal determination of man* (emphasis V.L.). The soul decides on itself while achieving this goal by means of its unique power – the knowledge of truth, the capacity to discern between good and bad. Thus, what ultimately determines itself in us through the knowledge of the good is Socrates’ soul”⁴.

„A life close to the good, a unified life is possible for us through knowing the not-knowing; since the life close to the good is a perfect life, the life with its *arête*, and since it is knowledge that makes it this way, *arete* is this knowledge, this understanding: *arete* is *fronesis*”⁵.

¹ Ibid., 98.

² Ibid., 98.

³ Ibid., 109 – 147.

⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁵ Ibid., 116.

Patočka discloses the *main points* of Socrates' doctrine which have not been properly interpreted since Aristotelean times. Socrates did not pursue sheer *intellectual knowing*; he pursued something more important. The first *Socratean maxim* is related to the *understanding* that should become the *essential motion or turn* of our whole conscious human being. The second *maxim* assumes that „nobody commits a mistake on purpose; in principle, it assumes that our life, unless it is genuine knowing of the human good, (i.e., the knowing of what is unknown, the knowing of the question), can only be fake knowing of the good, which means a mistake”¹.

Patočka maintains that Socrates' appeal for the care for the soul is specified in the life scheme of the negative-positive attitude to the human good. This explains „the fulfilment of the appeal of a Delphi god *gnothi seauton*, ‘know thyself’, i.e. know yourself in your humanity, your constraints, your limits. The care for the soul starts with identifying the borderline... between what a man, what Socrates, what his partner... knows, and what he does not know. The knowing of the good, so characteristic of man, is in its true form, in the form of knowing ... *knowing the not-knowing* (emphasis V.L.)”².

Socrates' *care for the soul* is conceived by Patočka as the first great attempt at overcoming *false individualism*, with special emphasis on authentic solution of the problem *to have* or *to be*. „Socratean wisdom shows that speaking *I* does not provide evidence of my existence, and so it primarily teaches to be, to exist. *To be* is a precondition for each *to have*, but the project of *to be* is in Socrates so extensive and self-embedded that there is no place left for the external, the addition, for to have. To be implies the concentration of life on one substantial task which provides life with its end or meaning in every single moment and in all changes of situations and inner states; this concentration is

¹ Ibid., 116..

² Patočka, J.: *Sókratés*, 116-117.

that capacity, that power, which is called *fronesis* ‘the understanding’ by Socrates, and this understanding, in fact, the permanent grasping of one basic task, manifested by continued rejection of any and all non-reflection and ill-reflection, is *arete* – Being in perfection, the existence in the proper sense of the word”¹.

In interpreting Socrates’ conception Patočka points out that „the power of the understanding concentration on the substantial is *arete*; the vulgar notions of virtues-capabilities are reconstructed in this unified concept; any one-sidedness and contradictions are removed, and in this concept, the whole substance dissolves to an unconsidered life. And life in this concentration, observed not as a power which is kept close to the idea of its objectives, but rather as a state, is happiness, *eudaimonia*”².

Socrates’ philosophical conception appears to Patočka as consisting of a *single piece*, because Socrates always pursued one and the same modifiable idea. „This is where Socrates’ conception draws heavily on the ancient speculation – rather than by the process of abstract combination and construction each idea, each theme, is considered in terms of its organic maturation or gradual metamorphosis in Goethean sense of the word where each individual man includes the whole and where the whole develops the basic motif included in every part”³.

The crucial aspect of Socrates’ conception is expressed in Patočka’s idea suggesting that Socrates pursues to *reveal a new, genuine man* in unity with *the reconstruction of human life* in all of its forms. By implication, Patočka conceives Socrates as a *founder of the „historical conception of man”* (emphasis V.L.) no matter how paradoxical it may appear in terms of his non-historical times and in terms of the line – as usually claimed – a principally non-historical line of Greek phi-

¹ Ibid., 126.

² Ibid., 143.

³ Ibid., 143.

losophy, and on the eve of that radical eternism represented by Plato and Aristotle”¹. Patočka notes that we should always keep in mind the fact that both the *beginning* and the *end* of an examined process are the *not-knowing*. None of us can namely achieve absolutely precise and exhausting knowledge of *the ultimate end of life*; we cannot arrive at any contentual knowledge. „It only exists as an attendant point conducting us in our historical situations, in our specific life events. *The eternally unknown is pursued by man* (emphasis V.L.); he might be claimed to be in search for unity. However, a vacuous unity is not what he aims at; this abstraction cannot capture more fully and less mysteriously what determines man most specifically, which means most deeply”².

Patočka’s *paradoxical* assumption that Socrates discovered a *historical conception of man* is given a new enormous intellectual dimension in his later works, included in a series of his lectures *Platón a Evropa* [Plato and Europe] (1973). With new philosophical vigour, he concentrates on *the fate of Socrates* as a *victim* punished for an *insight*, which he appeals to people for. This is inherently connected to a *great philosophical project* – „a state of justice in which Socrates may live instead of mere dying...” (emphasis V.L.)³ Patočka believes it „to establish the foundations of human thinking about state and justice. And these considerations about state and justice do become *reality*. They co-establish later communities, they co-create Roman effort to turn a state into the state of law. Even if this effort fails it engenders further effort in order to put this state under the light of which does not come from this world. And this is no less than the history of a historical formation called Europe. It has grown up from it”⁴.

¹ Ibid., 144.

² Ibid., 144.

³ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 193.

⁴ Ibid., 193.

It should be noted that Patočka's conception of *Socrates' mission* in the history of philosophy as well as in the history of the formation of *Europe* is close to Hegel's reception. Socrates – as pointed out by Hegel – *has not appeared out of the blue*. He grew out of *the continuity of his era*, and by his philosophical teaching he expressed the *fundamental inner turn of the spirit*. What does this turn consist in? In introducing and implementing the principle of the *autonomy of Reason*, in the fact that, for the first time in the history of philosophy, *human reason* touched the very substance of *Rationality*¹.

Hegel's assumption that „the teaching of Socrates is properly subjectively moral, because in it the subjective side, my perception and meaning, is the prevailing moment, although this determination of selfpositing is likewise sublated, and the *good* (emphasis V.L.) and eternal is what is in and for itself”², is very close to Patočka's view of Socrates' philosophical message. Socrates' is the first true *anthropological philosophy*, the *true humanism* and, consequently, *history*. Patočka maintains that Socrates is at the beginning of philosophical disclosure of man's *historicity*. While it can never be definitely completed it is the way of permanent effort aimed at the achievement of the *good* as manifestation of the care for the soul (*tes psyches epimelesthai*). This *care* „is the knowing that man *is* in time, that he *is* historical and historically. This *knowing* starts with challenging all natural certainties (*elenchos*). This challenge does not put us to shame. It purges and prepares (*catharxis*). The *knowing* proceeds by distancing itself from substituting the eternal for the passing, and by drawing attention to such a substitution (*irony*). Man *is* in accordance with the procedure of thought: *negatively*, and therefore *timingly*. He remains persistent in his pursuit of what is the First and the Ultimate (i.e., he is *ne-*

¹ Also cf. Pauza, M. 1997. „Patočkův Sókratés“. In: *Filosofický časopis*, 45/5, 900.

² Hegel, G.W.F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol I., 388.

scient), but at the same time he is sure that this is exactly and exclusively *his* way (i.e., he is in-the-know). This is an outcome and a unique benefit. Whatever can man do is only possible because he is *able to can*, because this ability is possible”¹.

The meaning of the personality of Socrates, *the meaning of the fate of philosophy* is expressed by Patočka unambiguously. Socrates is a *man* representing both the old and the new and, at the same time, he establishes a specific unity between the old and the new. First of all, he resolutely attacks the assumptions of those who attempt to live in the *security* of the current and evident *rule of life* – one’s own welfare is worth taking care of, cost what it may. „A huge paradox of Socratean conduct is that in its struggle it employs means against another present, means of one given against another given, that it aims to prove paradoxical theses which have never before been formulated, and which resulted from the traditional way of life without having been formulated there. Socrates keeps examining why he is not aware of him being a man of any special wisdom, but in fact it was him who risked his life for the sake of certain principles or, better, for the sake of observation that some principles are not true”².

Consequently, as noted by Blecha, it is understandable that *Socratean tradition* is *non-Christian*. The European man „has not arisen from his attitude to the absolute truth and good, or from the belief in them, but from his own *knowing nescience*, his permanent struggle for a place in the specific reality. Patočka came up with this idea as early as his first works... Europe was engendered by the shattering of the self-evident: the genuine Europe, as emphasized by Patočka, *is vague and uncertain in itself*. Keeping this uncertainty

¹ Pauza, M.: *Patočkaův Sókratés*, 907.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 224.

and shattering every self-evidence is not relativism; instead, it is a *permanent* mission, the basic value of existence”¹.

The care for the soul is conceived by Socrates as something completely internal, something that does not target the soul to external welfare or any uncertain internal delight or natural sorrow. It is a permanent inexhaustible activity of the internal formation of the soul itself into something „uniformly firm, and therefore existing exactly because it is engaged in thinking”². A soul taking care of itself thus assumes a *solid form* and clear perspective. This is not any *faint intellectualism*, but „an effort to embody the eternal in time and one’s own being and, at the same time, to firmly stand up to the tempest of time, to firmly stand up to all accompanying dangers, to firmly stand up when the man is endangered by the care for the soul. Because, no doubt, the care for the soul in the community in which it is not a law, endangers the man, endangers the being who advocates it in the same way as that being endangers the community, and logically, it is treated accordingly”³.

Although Socrates did not try to be *provocative* in his preoccupation with the care for the soul, the clash between a philosopher and a community could not but result in a hard conflict. Although he did not *provoke*, all of his *existence* was provocative to the community. What was the reason? Patočka maintains that Socrates was „the first who – face to face the disguised tyranny and the adulating residues of the original morality - suggested that a man focused on the truth in the proper sense of the word and examining what is good without himself knowing what is positively good, and arguing against false opinions, must appear – contrary to reality - as the worst and the most disagreeable, and that the one who holds the standpoint of the many necessarily appears to be the best, even if in his deepest essence he

¹ Blecha, I. 1997. „Patočka a Rádl.” In: *Filosofický časopis*, 45/5, 876-877.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 225.

³ Ibid., 225.

represents the opposite, which results in a conflict between the two that cannot but end in the destruction of the good. Socrates is aware of it”¹.

Socratean paradox – he does not help himself (he accepts death!), but he helps others – becomes the more impressive the better we realize in our everyday experience that the implementation of the philosophical idea of the *care for the soul* as the life and thought out of *insight* is definitely the most difficult and, at the same time, the most human destiny of the life of man in a community². Patočka experienced this inevitable life position of *philosopher* all through his life, and especially in the last years of his life when he evidently faced the *Socratean* position³. *The whole of Patočka's existence came to be an intellectual provocation of our former totalitarian regime.*

Democritus, Plato, Aristotle – the care for the soul and Europe

Patočka's philosophical achievement is perhaps best expressed in his audacious philosophical hypothesis - „*let the whole course of European history orbit around one single principle, or better, around one - big and decisive though – consequence that follows from the principle ...* (emphasis V.L.)”⁴, i.e. *care for the soul*. The way towards *the principle of European spirituality* was indicated to him by Husserl in *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology*. With his original philosophical erudition, Patočka elaborates on Husserl's idea that „Europe is identical to *insight* (emphasis V.L.) as a cultural principle...”⁵. It is this idea which, in his view, is a *descendent* of Platonean idea. The late Husserl was the first in the intellec-

¹ Ibid., 226.

² Ibid., 246.

³ Ibid., 225.

⁴ Patočka, J.: „Evropa a doba poevropská.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši II.*, 80.

⁵ Ibid., 121- 122.

tual history to show that *episteme* and *doxa* are firmly interrelated. „The ideal of total reflection which would unambiguously discern what we *see* from what we conjecture, mean and suppose is not viable, but it is valid as a direction towards the maximum of clarity, and foreshadows the possibilities, *the way of life towards truth and in truth* (emphasis V.L.) pursued by philosophy and science”¹.

Plato was to Patočka a huge philosophical challenge. This can be illustrated with his early lectures on ancient philosophy dating from 1947-1949², with the unpublished texts written in the 1950s – *Věčnost a dějinnost* [Eternity and historicity]³ and with his essay *Negativní platonismus* [Negative Platonism] (1953)⁴. In his later works Patočka conceives Plato, in accordance with Fink’s standpoint⁵, as a thinker with great dominance of *light over darkness*. His fundamental philosophical way is guided by the observation „that metaphysics is essentially *practical*, i.e. essentially bound to the possibility of *living in a society*, and that the care for the soul is eventually the care for human life in a *particular community*, which rather than any order means a yet (currently) non-existing order, in a *just* order in which political activity suddenly assumes a special place. This indicates the purpose of *polis* and establishes a framework for an order far from being so specific as the ancient community. It is based on metaphysics, on *an invisible world* (emphasis V.L.); and the course of this metaphysics which, on the one hand, draws on Plato’s ideas, and, on the other hand, on the order

¹ Ibid., 81.

² Patočka, J. 1991. *Platón. Přednášky z antické filosofie*. Praha: Vyšehrad.

³ Patočka, J.: „Věčnost a dějinnost.” In: Patočka, J.: *Pěče o duši I.*, 139-242.

⁴ Ibid. 303-336.

⁵ Also cf. Fink, E.1970. *Metaphysik der Erziehung im Weltverständnis von Platon und Aristoteles*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

stemming from metaphysics (theological), is the history of Europe”¹.

Patočka believes that the transcendence of Christian theology and the idea that the world is subject to judgment, is a mere *repetition* of Plato’s ideas. What is more important Patočka *examines the relation between two European metaphysics – those of Democritus and Plato – which while in permanent contact never mix up.*² He finds Democritus and Plato *two most important names of Greek Philosophy* – they are *querulous brothers*³ connected by the principle of the *care for the soul* as the foundation of Europe and European heritage. Patočka appreciates that Democritus came up with the concept of *philosophy as science*. „To Democritus, the sense of philosophizing is the structure of beings in the world. And, naturally, he is interested in the *eternal* in them”⁴. This implies the concept of *arche*, which while not explicitly used here, is clearly traceable. Democritus conceives *archai* as two – *apeiron* (empty geometrical space – homogeneous and isotropic) and *ta atoma* (which move in it and are themselves eternal and invariant).

Democritus’ system is assessed by Patočka as the *first amazing attempt* of man in the intellectual history of mankind to provide a systematic and multilevel account of the structure of all things. It is not a myth any more; it is a *science*. Patočka is primarily attracted by the *anthropological facet*. Democritus’ *thirst* is the *thirst* for the divine, because only the divine is eternal, constant, and invariant. Democritus assumes that he who cares for the soul cares for the *divine*. On the contrary, he who is engaged in practical-physical matters cares only for the human. Patočka therefore raises the question of *the reason for this situation*. The answer is evident. It is Democritus’ conception of morality as a theory of self-

¹ Patočka, J.: „Vznik a zkáza Evropy.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 783.

² Ibid., 784.

³ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 206, 215.

⁴ Ibid., 207.

discovery, as a way of pursuing oneself. „His own soul also appears to him in this process. His own soul – this is what pursues the eternal and passes the universe permanently under the viewpoint and guidance of the eternal ... An impulse to the eternal leads to the discovery of one's own soul, to the care for one's own soul. The care for one's own soul means an admission ticket to the triumphant march of an account across the universe as a whole and its structures”¹.

Democritus' approach to the care for the soul – different from that of Plato – is, as pointed out by Patočka, predominantly *private and individual*. Democritus recommends to those who wish to follow his way to disregard the issues of community. What is common to both geni of Greek philosophical thought is their conception of soul in contact with the *eternal*. „The soul concentrates on unveiled things, on their overall disclosure, on the truth of the exposed things. Therefore, it must ... permanently care exclusively for truth in the indicated sense, that means, for living from what appears to be present. And the soul which abandons this principle will be ruined, destroyed, unable to fulfil the task in question. By implication, a man who aims to make a breakthrough towards the present as such is first of all bound to the morality of truth.... Taking care for the soul means, says Democritus, caring for it so that it may live with what is eternal, so that it may live in the great present, and certainly, to live the life of its mind, of that part that states what is, what is present”².

Patočka's ambition to identify the similarities in Democritus' and Plato's ways of thinking does not mean that he is not aware of *substantial* philosophical difference between them. Democritus thinks *structurally*, and places emphasis on spatial-temporal operations. Consequently, he never abandons the field of things, space, or time. He aims

¹ Ibid., 209.

² Ibid., 216-217.

to work with *real elements*. Plato works in a different space. He creates *the other world* through thematizing the identities as intellectual elements to which one can always return. „To Democritus, the difference between *doxis* and *aletheia* is the difference between two ways of cognition of one and the same world; to Plato, *doxa* and *episteme* relate to different things”¹.

The idea of *the other world* – *the right one*, and the idea of the *divinity* as the *divinity of the pure good* first emerges in the history of Western philosophy with Plato. Democritus cares for the soul in order to penetrate to the ultimate reasons and to get an insight into them. Plato wants to cognize in order to care for the soul. It is this *care* that discloses us the *nature of the soul* itself. „The soul, its nature can be understood, can be comprehended and seen only if this care is implemented, if we are dedicated to it”². As a result, says Patočka, *soul is the core of philosophy*, because *philosophy is the care for the soul* in its very essence. *Platonean conception* means to him something what permanently circles round the concept of soul and of the care for the soul. „The care for the soul actually reveals us the concept for soul and this concept, aptly explained, gives access to all the other dimensions of philosophical thought and inquiry. The care for the soul is implemented via the inquiring thought”³.

In Patočka’s view, Plato introduces a special philosophical ideal – *the ideal of philosophy as the life in truth*. He means the truth, which wants to be *insightful*, and, at the same time, *obligatory*. Through its *absolute obligation* we are being taught of this *absolute obligation* – this is what is most important and new, something what has, in a sense, underlain human life, although we do not always realize it. Patočka aptly notes that „today we live out of the care for and the preoccupation with soul in the decadent sense... The objective facet

¹ Patočka, J.: „Démokritos a Platón jako zakladatelé metafyziky.” In: Patočka, J.: *Pěče o duši II*, 365.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 229.

³ Ibid., 229.

of the care for the soul in our times has become so enormously essential, and has got so much engaged in its practical application that the other facet, the most substantial facet, the *formation of oneself* has been ignored”¹.

The philosophical ideal of the *life in truth* was developed in Plato’s philosophy into a *metaphysical ideal*. What is, however, significant in Patočka’s view, is the fact that Plato did not confine himself to a particular formulation by simply offering it for consideration, but that he discussed it with his closest co-mates. „Soul can only be understood if there is something like Being that is not physical, not corporeal, that is not thing, that is not the world of things or material events around us. This field of Being is discovered by the soul itself through its own motion, i.e., through its thinking self-determination and reflection of this determination: this is exactly the care for the soul, the care for oneself. In this way, soul reaches for the empire of the ultimate, primordial reasons and origins. And the empire of reasons and origins is simultaneously the empire of causes and order. True Being teaches us to learn what things come into existence from, instead of taking care of and dealing with the permanently recursive facts of common material environment which infinitely surround us”².

Patočka considers Plato’s philosophy to be a *great metaphysics of the Western world* both in terms of what was in the past and what will be in future. The future of *European life* will namely show the impressiveness of three basic motifs of the idea of the care for the soul – *the ontological plan, the community as a projection of soul, and the care for the soul as gaining control over oneself*.³ As pointed out by Patočka, Plato attempted to produce a *summary of Greek life*. But he was not the only one. He was joined by Aristotle who assumed a prominent place in this respect even though he did not

¹ Ibid., 235.

² Ibid., 259.

³ Patočka, J.: *Evropa a doba poevropská*, 129 – 147.

directly philosophize about the care for the soul. Patočka conceives Aristotle's philosophy as a *special* transformation of Plato's philosophy. By implication, his significance for the spiritual origin of Europe and European life is indispensable.

A most typical aspect of Plato's philosophy as the care for the soul is mainly expressed by the intention to be in unity with oneself. This is, says Patočka, magnificent work of our whole life. The direction of the impulse to such a unity is illustrated with Platonean cave: „it is the care for the soul directed to unity, to identity, using measures that guide it in being. The use of measures that are different from the measured brings it from one level of Being to another”¹.

Aristotle performs, in Patočka's view, a paradoxical philosophical motion. He realizes the difference between the measuring and the measured, between being and what forms its Being. Aristotle wants, first of all, to relate Being and being in order to avoid the *doubling of being*. „This profound, paradoxical, and arduous idea is actually the core of Aristotle's philosophy. However, perceived from Plato's perspective it impoverishes its ontological concept. It is a substantial impoverishment, because the invisible appears to have broken down. There are no independent ideas any more – as later termed: separate ideas. Ideas do occur, but they are here, the idea of man is in the particular man. There is a measure that tells us whether something is or is not. This measure is, on the one hand, different from an individual thing, on the other hand, it is not”².

The basic change in Aristotle's philosophical reception of what *is* and of *what* it is, is assessed by Patočka as an *ingenious insight*. What was not seen by Plato is very clearly perceived by Aristotle – *the appearance of Being is the appearance of things*. „A thing appears to be what it is. Appearance is

¹ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 322.

² Ibid., 322.

motion – therefore, things should be perceived in their motion. And their perception in motion is possible”¹. In addition, man himself is a *being of motion*. Thanks to this motion we are in a position to discover other things as well as ourselves. This is why Patočka considers Aristotle a successor to Plato’s idea of the care for the soul, even if no direct reference to the idea of the care for the soul can be found in Aristotle’s work. The reason for Patočka’s relating the two thinkers is the problem of *good life and search for a good, genuine and authentic way of life*. This is the proper philosophical ground for the ideas of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. In fact, what is claimed in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* is that we philosophize in order to become *good people*.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Patočka considers Aristotle the first philosopher in this tradition to thematize the *conduct of man*. „*And this moment, Aristotle’s analysis of human conduct perceived not as something external but rather as a decision made in one’s soul, made in view of a good life and exerting influence upon human life as a whole – this really specific conduct – this is experience that makes Aristotle transform the vertical motion performed by the Platonean philosopher to the horizontal motion. It is this life experience, it is once again the care for life that directs him to what has been commonly regarded as purely theoretical difference between Plato and Aristotle*”².

Aristotle’s change of the overall model of philosophy (*philosophical metamorphosis*) stems, as pointed out by Patočka, from *the changed experience – from life motion* that is to become its innermost matter. It is nothing but „*existential experience* (emphasis V.L.) that philosophy rests on”³. Aristotle’s emphasis on human conduct as something that does not yet exist and is not so unequivocally determined as the fall of a stone, the motion of stars, etc., evidently leads to the observation that a man is *free*. In this connection Pa-

¹ Ibid., 323.

² Ibid., 329.

³ Ibid., 329.

točka comes up with a philosophically unambiguous standpoint: „*Aristotle was the first in the history to touch upon the freedom of man through this distinction*” (emphasis V.L.)”¹.

Patočka does not claim that the problem of freedom is absent in Plato’s philosophy. We would not be able to imagine a conception of the care for the soul if a man was freely formed by what he is. Nevertheless, this freedom seems to be evidently conditioned by the measures used for the judgment of man. These measures are in Plato’s philosophy external to man as his *eternal patterns*. The motif of an *external* criterion is not accepted by Aristotle; instead, he places emphasis on the actual conduct through which a man implements his decisions without any significant link to anything external as an eternal measure. How is it related to the problem of the good, and to the Platonean idea? Patočka’s answer is most interesting: „In human conduct which... is also the understanding of something, namely the understanding of oneself, the Platonean idea is of no use, because it bears on what has always been, what *already is*; what we need are the principles of the implementation of something what *is not yet*, what does not exist. This... is the main and substantial reason for Aristotle to abandon the Platonean idea, and to pursue a way different from Plato”².

Aristotle’s positive principle of freedom is related by Patočka to the coincidence of the principles of human conduct. Human freedom necessarily includes a *choice* of our life as well as the *implementation* that follows from the choice. This is the reason for the problem of a free being, the problem of freedom that man cannot be deprived of by anybody or anything. Contrary to this, no such problem can be observed in Plato’s approach. „In Plato’s view, what is good is already present. The good is inscribed in the ultimate essence of things, the good is the first principle from which the whole being stems and on which the whole being

¹ Ibid., 330.

² Ibid., 331.

rests. To concentrate on it and to focus on it means to measure oneself by an absolute measure. The absolute measure identifies the good. *But human life is more problematic. And as such, as much more problematic it is perceived by Aristotle, which is the new basic experience used by Aristotle in treating the problem of the care for the soul. Now we come to know what it is – the soul*” (emphasis V.L.)¹.

By implication, Aristotle’s conception of *touching upon* the divine (i.e., what already *is* and what is *eternal*) when a man philosophizes is different from Plato’s philosophical conception. Patočka is impressed by Aristotle’s observation that man is not only comprehensible in Platonean link to the *eternal*, but mainly through maintaining his amazing *autonomy* from the divine as a finite being. It is here that Patočka places emphasis on the conception of man as a finite being „who does what does not exist yet and who does it according to the principles which are not eternal, which must be first constituted by himself. *The power and the originality of life follows from the man who creates himself and discovers himself in it. This self-creation and self-discovery is one and the same thing* (emphasis V.L.)”².

Through the remoteness of history we can hear the famous Kantian-Hegelean *motifs*: „There is something like moral truth, but it does not refer to anything existing. In the moral world we are *creators*, but this does not mean that we create truth by imagination, absolutely not. *Moral truth is – in terms of humanity – the most specific and the most difficult* (emphasis V.L.)”³. Patočka’s assumption that this is the deepest and hardest problem of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is philosophically highly valuable, and especially, philosophically provoking. This is, in Patočka’s view, a crucial difference between Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptions of philosophy. Unequal *life motions* gave rise to unequal philoso-

¹ Ibid., 337.

² Ibid., 340.

³ Ibid., 340.

phies of Aristotle and Plato in terms of both ontology and politics.

The reason for dealing with this issue is evident. Patočka understands his task as the reflection of what has been created by *history*. Therefore, he raises the question of the *sources of European history* and of the *origins of Europe*. Patočka's hypothesis pertains to the idea of resuming the former European endeavour by its reflection. This entails exactly the idea of the *care for the soul*. It first appears in Socrates' and Plato's philosophies, but Democritus and Aristotle are also its integral part.¹ What matters in history in Patočka's view are *human acts* that have the form of motivated acting (economic or any other). By implication, Aristotle saw something that Plato failed to see – *the problem of human acting*. „Aristotle can see that human acting is not any blind causality. It is a modern way of comprehension. Aristotle knows that when we act this acting is the question of truth”². Patočka's inherent philosophical-human belief that our *acting is a way of truth* is inseparably connected to the fundamental philosophical ideas of Aristotle which are, by implication, most relevant for the present times.

Husserl, Heidegger and the care for the soul

The relation of Patočka's work to the philosophical message of Husserl and Heidegger is a very complex historical-philosophical problem. By implication, it has been extensively discussed (Kohák, Zumr, Dubský, Palouš, Major, Bednář, Petříček, Chvatík, Kouba, Novotný, Blecha, Karfík, Rodrigo, Richir, Martín, Kerckhoven...). It is still an open and great philosophical problem that instigates new and new philosophical *considerations*. It is mainly Patočka's later philosophical works that require it almost *dramatically*.

¹ Patočka, J.: „Evropa a její dědictví. (Skica k filosofii dějin).” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 245.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 349-350.

During a discussion following one of his private lectures (*Plato and Europe*) in 1973 Patočka advocated his radical philosophical standpoint as follows: „I am surprised at one thing, in particular, all of you ask questions about phenomenology and Heidegger, etc., but there has been no question concerning Europe, the topic that was my most substantial thesis; that *European reality consists ... in ... the care for and the preoccupation with soul, resounding strongly in antiquity, and all the related things... I have made an attempt at a philosophy of history, with futile effort to incite some objections in order to put some life into it* (emphasis V.L.)”¹.

Patočka's focus on *historical perspective*, on the development of the *philosophy of history* reflecting European reality as *preoccupation with the care for the soul* was the main objective of his philosophy. His attitude to Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies cannot be adequately understood and accounted for without reflecting this *central* dimension of his work.² The claim that the problem of the *care for the soul* was *ignored* and avoided at his time is serious and therefore cannot be eschewed. His *philosophy of history* is not an end in itself. It is strongly connected to the relevant questions of the present. This can be proved by the following words: „Europe has been constantly discussed in a political sense while neglecting the question of what it stems from. They talk about the integration of Europe: is, however, such an integration possible, and is it a geographical or a purely political notion? It is a notion resting on *spiritual* foundations? Only in this way can we understand the question”³.

Patočka's later theoretical endeavour to develop a philosophy of history, including his brave early hypothesis of

¹ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 313. See also Rodrigo, P.1997. „Jan Patočka, Platón a fenomenologie.” In: *Filosofický časopis*, 45/5, 788 ff.; Rodrigo, P. 2004. „Zrod tématu asubjektivitu u Jana Patočky.” In: *Filosofický časopis*, 52/ 3, 393 ff.

² See Průcha, M. 1994. „Východisko Patočkovy filosofie dějin.” In: *Reflexe. Filosofický časopis* 12, Praha, 1-2 ff.

³ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 313.

the *care for the soul* conclusively indicates the unique feature that should be perceived as the *overcoming* of those theoretical constraints that characterize Husserl's and Heidegger's conceptions. Husserl tried to develop a model of philosophy as a *strict eidetic science*. In contrast to him, Heidegger wanted to return to the beginnings of the pre-metaphysical thinking, to the *great thinkers* (*Parmenides and Heraclitus*), in order to pose the central question of philosophy (*What is Being?*) once again and to vehemently seek its answer in his philosophical doctrine. Patočka's basic philosophical conception clearly differs from the two great personalities – *to return to the very beginnings of Europe and through these beginnings to the very relation between man and his place in the world*¹. This unambiguously articulates the basic philosophical difference between Patočka, on one hand, and Husserl and Heidegger, on the other.

While the question of the substantial difference between Husserl and Heidegger accompanies all Patočka's work, for obvious reasons it gains in power (and maturity) in his later works. Here, Heidegger's philosophy is no more synonymous to phenomenology. „Husserl's philosophy gives the impression that phenomenology is philosophia prima, that phenomenology underlies all sciences. With Heidegger it is different. But in Heidegger's view there is a discipline that cannot but must be approached phenomenologically, a discipline which is a point of departure for any subsequent inquiry: in particular, the fundamental ontology of human being-in-the-world”². Patočka was fascinated by Heidegger's *Being and Time* all through his life. This accounts for Patočka's peculiar philosophical position of *asubjective phenomenology*. It does not follow Husserl's phenomenological ambitions towards an absolute philosophy of *transcendental subjectivity*. At the same time it is highly critical of Heideg-

¹ Ibid. 156.

² Patočka, J. 1993. *Úvod do fenomenologické filosofie*. Praha: Oikúmené, 63.

ger's philosophizing after his *Kehre*. Patočka maintains that Heidegger distanced himself in many important respects from his original theoretical principles as outlined in *Being and Time*. However, as aptly noted by Patočka Heidegger's approach to Being was close to Husserl's subjectivism, and also Heidegger's post-*Kehre* period is characterized by an enormous philosophical endeavour to abandon this subjectivism¹.

Patočka relates Heidegger's profound change in conceiving the problem of *phenomenon* to the question of Being. Traditionally, Being was considered to be something that characterizes things in terms of their structure. Being is treated as a *general structure of existence* by traditional metaphysics. Heidegger, says Patočka, came up with a new idea „by showing that ancient thinkers, like Aristotle, do not conceive Being as a moment of being; instead, they perceive it as a *way things appear*”². No doubt, Husserl was too much connected to the modern subjectivist philosophy – the philosophy of a reflecting subject. Heidegger tried to overcome this philosophical position by demonstrating that philosophy is „in fact the philosophy of appearance, of a phenomenon, and thus the problem of Being falls within the scope of the problem of appearance”³. The emphasis laid on the distinction between *phenomenon* and *appearance* is taken over by Patočka from Heidegger in a most serious way. Interestingly, Patočka makes a crucial correction with regard to Heidegger himself – „*the problem of appearance is deeper and more fundamental than that of Being* (emphasis V.L.). It goes without saying that Heidegger would never agree with this assumption. Patočka's reasons are conclusive: „Simply because the problem of Being can only be arrived at through the problem of appearance, while if I take Being in abstract sense as a starting point what remains of the

¹ Ibid., 304.

² Ibid., 292.

³ Ibid., 293.

concept of Being is an abstract concept, a completely formal sign, not even a category, but something above categories, i.e., it is even devoid of its content”¹.

Patočka is a *philosopher of history* who does not want to lose the dominant philosophical sight of a specific man in a particular historical situation. Consequently, his interpretation of phenomenology is substantially different from what was intended by its *founder* and from the direction followed by Heidegger: „the care for the soul is, in principle, the care which stems from the closeness of man to appearance, the appearance as such, the appearance of the world as a whole that happens in man and with man”². There is no doubt of it, because the *care for the soul* is a *ripe fruit of reflection*. To Patočka, an *obvious expression* of insight is that „the conscious being-in-the-world and the relation to the world as something real mean for man to radically and substantially change the overall comprehension of Being and of oneself and to conform to the measure determined by the existing truth itself. Therefore, Plato can assume that knowledge is practical ability. This is a philosophical message of the Greek heritage. It can also be expressed by Husserl’s words: *opinion should be corrected by insight, not the other way round*” (emphasis V.L.).³ From this it follows that Patočka – all through his life – connects the phenomenon of Greek heritage to Husserl’s phenomenological work.

The same is true of Heidegger. The whole problem is, however, dramatically and contextually loaded. From the position of Heidegger’s main philosophical problem – *the problem of Being* – one can observe a profound change that is not so obvious in relation to Husserl: Patočka neither could nor can accept Heidegger’s unjustified and too narrowly conceived idea of philosophy the gist of which is the question of Being. Patočka claims:

¹ Ibid., 299.

² Ibid.

³ Patočka, J.: *Evropa a její dědictví. (Skica k filosofii dějin)*, 246.

„... *soul is the centre of philosophy. Philosophy is the care for the soul* in its essence and its element... The care for the soul actually reveals us the concept of soul and this concept, aptly explained, provides us with access to all the dimensions of philosophical thinking and questioning. The care for the soul is realized by the *questioning thought*”¹.

The consequences of determining a different *centre of philosophy* in Patočka’s teaching are far-reaching: „The soul that cares for itself is thus in motion from the immediate uncertainty to the demarcating, delimiting reflection. Philosophy is in this motion and this motion is something real. *By implication, philosophy is captured and proved by acting...* the philosophizing itself... cannot be based on anything in heaven or on earth, it neither can hang on it; it is rather created as a *spark* which... first catches fire and then keeps burning itself”². Patočka advocates the *ideal of philosophy as life in truth*³. „The concept of the care for the soul includes something like the *ideal of true life*, in particular, the life which both in practice and intellectual activity pursues *insight*”⁴. No wonder that Patočka keeps referring to Husserl’s theoretical message as an opportunity to further develop what originates in his late works. Husserl’s *Crisis* is a source of permanent inspiration for Patočka’s reasoning of the phenomenon of *Europe*, and thus about *European heritage* that has not been so profoundly reflected by any philosopher after Husserl⁵.

This entails substantial reevaluation of the pivotal problem of Heidegger’s philosophy. Consequently, Patočka explicitly formulates the following questions: „Why is the problem of Being a part or an aspect of appearance and why is the problem of appearance more original, more

¹ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 229.

² Ibid., 231-232.

³ Ibid., 234.

⁴ Ibid., 244.

⁵ Ibid., 286.

basic and more profound than the problem of Being?”¹. Or else: „We understand not only individual things but also the overall nature of things, we have sense for their inherent *essential* nature – it means the *sense for Being*... Is not the concept of Being overloaded with great philosophical traditions, does it not include too many ancient philosophemes? ...we ask the question of whether the problem of appearance is more original than the problem of Being, whether the problem of Being is not merely a *part*, an aspect of *appearance*”².

The answer to these questions is, in Patočka’s view, obvious. Interestingly, this answer is much closer to Husserl than to Heidegger: „... also contemporary thinkers of Being necessarily distinguish between Being and what is needed for the comprehension of Being to be set in motion, to get going, i.e., time – between the original *time and Being*. In that case, the problem of *appearance* is *more fundamental* and more substantial than the problem of Being”³. Patočka is, however, aware of the fact that *Being*, *time*, and *appearance* are closely interrelated. At the same time, he emphasizes that they are not identical. He therefore aptly poses a question of their mutual relation. This is a question he does not want to nor can avoid⁴.

The traditional insight into the problem of Being was, in Patočka’s view, based on the idea that Being is identifiable only through what characterizes things in their structure. Being can only be captured in the meaning of a *general structure of existence*. Patočka conjectures that Heidegger’s contribution to the solution of these problems consists in demonstrating that „ancient thinkers, like Aristotle, do not conceive Being as a moment of being; instead, they perceive it as a *way things appear*”⁵. This shows a crucial difference be-

¹ Ibid., 291.

² Ibid., 266.

³ Ibid., 266.

⁴ Ibid., 267.

⁵ Ibid., 292.

tween Husserl and Heidegger. Patočka points out that the motif of appearance in Husserl's teaching is connected to modern subjectivist philosophy – *the philosophy of a reflecting subject*. „Husserl's philosophy is a philosophy of a self-reflecting subject. Heidegger aims to show that appearance which in Husserl's view draws on Cartesian tradition developed by Kant and German idealism is in fact an offshoot of philosophical theorizing in general. From its inception, philosophy has been a philosophy of appearance, of phenomenon, and therefore, the problem of Being is related to the problem of appearance”¹.

Patočka's observation that the *problem of appearance is deeper, more fundamental, and more original* than the problem of Being is aptly accounted for by assuming that the problem of Being can only be arrived at through the problem of *appearance*. If the problem of Being is considered in an abstract sense as a point of departure, the concept of Being becomes a purely abstract concept – a formal sign. No more would it be a category – it would be something above the category. In a sense, it would lose its contentual nature.

This makes Patočka distinguish between Husserl's and Heidegger's conceptions of phenomena: „*In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger's phenomenological phenomena are not a sort of rhapsodic phenomena. While Husserl always describes particulars Heidegger can see such a spectacular total structure* (emphasis V.L.)... In the course of time, Heidegger realized that this way of thematization of Being was still too close to Husserl's subjectivism, and therefore, his next attempt was aimed to abandon this subjectivism, in particular, to abandon the idea that Being is the performance of a finite subject, the *Dasein*. Consequently, he tried to reformulate his doctrine in order to enable *Dasein* by getting something like Being going, by its happening, derived from appearance”².

¹ Ibid., 293.

² Ibid, 304.

Being influenced by Tugendhat's work¹ Patočka points out that Heidegger conception disregards the problem of *truth* in the proper sense of the word². Heidegger's understanding of truth as *non-concealment* – *disclosure* is related to the theory of phenomena. „But since *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger has identified the problem of *truth* with the problem of *appearance* of things, and has ignored the fact that something may appear in itself as it is and as it is not”³.

To Patočka, appearance itself is a problem that must be conceived contextually. Truth is always appearance of how things are. And the same holds for the conception of phenomenon in the proper sense of the word. Consequently, Patočka rigorously claims: „Heidegger perceives phenomenon in the proper sense of the word, the phenomenon of Being, *outside* this problem”⁴.

Patočka is worried about Heidegger's position articulated in his essay *The end of philosophy and the task of thought* according to which philosophy lacks a measure that would enable us to compare *the perfection* of one period of metaphysics to another. He considers this view to be appalling because it deprives us of the right to assess metaphysical philosophies and their respective conceptions of Being from the point of view of truth⁵. No wonder then that Patočka finds the fundamental problem of Heidegger's philosophy, *the problem of Being*, to be a *premature problem*.⁶ The whole issue should be, in his view, reconsidered, starting from *appearance*, in order to avoid subjectivist consequences. This is now a *big challenge of phenomenology*. Heidegger's assumption that Being is totally objectless is viewed by Patočka as *inconclusive*. While he agrees with Heidegger that

¹ Tugendhat, E.1970. *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*. Berlin.

² Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 308.

³ Ibid., 308-309.

⁴ Ibid., 309.

⁵ Ibid., 309.

⁶ Ibid., 31.

Being is not an object he maintains that „it is not objectless; otherwise it could not be discussed. Heidegger insists on objectless Being – he wants to grasp it though – as something what is not real but is meaningful. But then, the view that Being is something completely non-objectifiable is untenable”¹.

By implication, Patočka resolutely rejects Heidegger’s attempt to think of Being without regard to being, as articulated in his *Time and Being*, and suggests that *Being is the Being of being*. In other words: „Being, when thought of itself gets hypostatized, and this must be crossed out (because Being is not)”².

Patočka also turns down Heidegger’s *defeatist* idea of *the end of philosophy*. This seems to be the best example of the difference between their philosophical positions. Considering the problems of philosophy through the question of *Being* results in resignation from the sense of philosophizing. This problem is beyond philosophers’ power. Heidegger’s way of philosophizing is a case in point. However, if the *care for the soul* and *history* is identified as a pivotal problem of philosophy any considerations of the end of philosophy are unjustified.

Patočka’s *philosophy of history* is based on the postulate that man is a being in whom the process of appearance takes place. As a result, man becomes the domain of that magnificent happening in which „the world appears, in which the reality not only is but also is apparent. In that case, this strange point – which may be rightly expected to be a basic element, a fundamental part of the world in itself, and not only of the world of our subject – means that *man is much more* than all the facts of the world, he resides much deeper than the *material world* and the material elements which we believe to be unimpaired and lasting (even if we

¹ Patočka, J.: „Čtyři semináře k problému Evropy.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 383.

² Ibid., 386.

know that they, in a sense, degrade, and are as if they were not, and tend towards an ever smaller, ever decreasing and more decadent way of Being)”¹.

Man, man, and once again man - this is the key problem of Patočka's philosophizing. This fact enables us to understand the most substantial element in man, in particular, *the appearance* of being. Moreover, *Being* belongs only to *man*. Man is the *place* of Being; however, he is not a *shepherd of Being* or a *neighbour of Being* – as opposed to Heidegger's conception. Man in Patočka's philosophy is first of all a *neighbour of man* who wants to live and accomplish his life in *truth* of his actual doings in the dimension of humanity.

From the perspective of Patočka's philosophy of the preoccupation with the care for the soul, Heidegger can only accomplish a *part of this task* – „he can maintain a permanent dialogue between soul and himself. But this is far too little. Much more important is a meaningful implementation of Patočkean second dimension of the *care* - a dialogue with others. As aptly noted by Gadamer, Heidegger only *talked* to himself. Patočka emphasizes this second dimension: Talking to others is simultaneously a dialogue between soul and oneself, and the care for the soul takes place in this dialogue. And now this is the last day when it should happen...talking to oneself. What will it bear on? The relation between soul, Being and freedom”².

In his improvised reflection on Heidegger's death Patočka points out that Heidegger was „a thinker who accomplished Dilthey's idea to explain man exclusively from man rather than from something alien to man, to explain human life from human life”³. This Patočka's view of Heidegger may perhaps be excused by our inclination to speak positively of the deceased. The central philosophical mes-

¹ Patočka, J.: *Platón a Evropa*, 269.

² *Ibid.*, 271.

³ Patočka, J 1995: „Martin Heidegger – myslitel lidskosti.” In: Heidegger, M.: „Už jenom nějaký bůh nás může zachránit“. In: *Filosofický časopis*, 43/1, 3.

sage of Heidegger is confined to the problem of Being where man (man as a specific historical being with his *humanity*) is almost completely *absent*. The fact that Heidegger does not come up after *Kehre* with anything remarkable may be related to his account of human life from human life rather than from something external to man. Because the *care for Being* is almost as remoted from man as from the boundaries of our galaxy.

If Nietzsche characterizes Parmenides' conception of Being as one that blows *icy cold* on us, this is even more true of Heidegger's later views. Patočka's contemplation of Heidegger's death reflects the basic view of the mission of philosophy and philosopher. It is expressed as follows: in the *passed-away* thinker, I want to see and I want to find what is my basic problem.

Patočka's philosophical effort to *explain human life from human life* is therefore theoretically much more valuable and relevant than Heidegger's approach. This is also true of his reflection of the history of philosophy and enormous philosophical effort to understand the *care for the soul*, an issue totally absent in Heidegger's philosophical message. Patočka's conception represents a unique *weak model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy. It demonstrates that it was Plato who showed that „metaphysics is essentially *practical*, and thus essentially connected to the opportunity of *living in society*; that the care for the soul is actually the care for human life in a *specific order* in which political activities assume a special position. In this way he showed the purpose of *polis*, and established a framework for an order different from the ancient community – it is emplaced in metaphysics, in an invisible world; and the events of this metaphysics which, on the one hand, draws on Plato's ideas and, on the other, on the order emplaced in (theological) metaphysics, are the history of Europe”¹.

¹ Patočka, J.: „Vznik a zkáza Evropy.” In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 783.

A holistic comprehension of Patočka's late philosophical message stresses the observation that apart from the problem of *natural world and history* as two *focal points* of his philosophy¹.

There is another focal point – *philosophy of the history of philosophy* in a weak model. This kind of *model* does not have any ambition to offer a *history* of „definite solutions. Instead, it offers a history of *problems* that mostly lead to other problems. It not only provides historical results, but also draws philosophers' attention to problems and encourages them to intellectual work”².

Philosophical erudition and concentration on the problem of the *preoccupation with the care for human soul* was possible in Patočka's work only on the basis of search for a unique model of a *critical* philosophy of history. As a result, *the unity of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history* has brought, in a *weak model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy, highly valuable philosophical results. The philosophical elaboration of these results is the task for the future. Their author was well awarer of a crucial difference between the philosophy of history as the *metaphysics of history* (from Augustine to Hegel – objectivity of historical events, direct linear time of the ultimate goal, unified mankind), and the new philosophical challenges that must be aptly answered.³ This task could not be accomplished by Patočka himself. Importantly, his message points out the importance of interrelating the historical-philosophical knowledge and philosophy into a variant which will advance the theory of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* as its integral part.

¹ Novotný, K. 2003. „Přirozený svět a dějiny. Ke dvěma ohniskům Patočkovy filozofie.” In: *Hegelovskou stopou*. K počtě Milana Sobotky. Ed. M. Znoj. AUC PhetH 4-1999, Studia Philosophica XIV, 155 ff.

² Patočka, J.: *Aristoteles, jeho předchůdci a dědicové*, 12.

³ Patočka, J.: [Poznámky k „době poevropské“]. In: Patočka, J.: *Péče o duši III.*, 777.

3. Gadamer and the history of philosophy as a mission

The philosophical work of *Hans-Georg Gadamer* is fraught with an intellectual struggle for the comprehension of the history of philosophy from the ancient times to the present. This may be due to the fact that philosophical hermeneutics appears to be a philosophical approach connected with the *interpretation of texts* to an unprecedented extent. Gadamer's intellectual effort to cope with the history of philosophy is unique in several respects. First of all, Gadamer develops Heidegger's philosophical conception that played a central role in Gadamer's lifelong devotion to philosophical hermeneutics. It is not possible to understand Gadamer's philosophical message without taking into consideration this theoretical background.

Furthermore, we should realize that the comprehension of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is conditioned by reflecting his critical reception of the philosophical doctrines of G. W. F. Hegel, E. Husserl and W. Dilthey in a most original *synthetic* philosophical work. Gadamer realized very soon that *philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy* had been an integral part of German philosophizing as its *attributive dimension* since the time of F. E. D. Schleiermacher, and mainly, since G. W. F. Hegel. Before the era of German romanticism the problem of *historical consciousness*¹ was not paid much attention. However, in the first half of the 19th century it came to the foreground of philosophical thought. The development of historical consciousness is, in Gadamer's view, the most important revolution that has been shaping us since the early modern times. By historical consciousness he means „the privilege of the modern man who is fully aware of the historicity of all the present as well as the relativity of any and all views.”²

¹ Cf. Gadamer, H.-G. 1994. *Problém dějinného vědomí*. Praha: Filosofia, 7 ff.

² Ibid., 7.

History of philosophy as a philosophical problem

Gadamer denies the existence of any history of philosophy before the era of Romanticism. What was before Romanticism can at best be labeled as *doxographic knowledge*. Through its greatest tradition it goes back to Aristotle who was the first to integrate it in his philosophical work. Aristotle's approach to the philosophical theories of his predecessors is precisely characterized by Gadamer when he notes that it was merely *recorded learning* without employing *the function of reasoning a philosophy*. The history of philosophy becomes the *philosophy itself* with Hegel; it becomes „a special section within the philosophy of history that, for its part, attempted to place even reason in the history.”¹ This is what makes Hegel's history of philosophy the first *philosophy of the history of philosophy* in the history of the West-European philosophical thought.

In this crucial point of the interaction between philosophy and the history of philosophy Gadamer apparently agrees with Hegel's view that the history of philosophy is the *most inherent* part of the history of the world. A different approach was offered by the Neo-Kantian *history of problems* at the turn of the 19th century, notably by W. Windelband. His approach to the history of philosophy is characterized by a historical dimension. However, Windelband believes that changing historical constellations entail changed answers. A similar position was articulated by the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism.²

A most profound change in the approach to the philosophical dimension of the history of philosophy is, in

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1994. „The History of Philosophy.” In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Heidegger's Ways*. Transl. J. W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 154.

² Cf. Sisáková, O. 2003. „Dejiny filozofie a Gadamerov princíp Wirkungs geschichte.” In: *Filozofia dejín filozofie III*. Ed. V. Leško. Prešov: AFPhUP, 48–64.

Gadamer's view, related to Heidegger. While Germany after World War 1 was dominated by Neo-Kantianism, the phenomenological doctrine of Husserl came to play an important role, too. Furthermore, Dilthey kept being an influential personality by means of his historical-reflexive works.¹ Gadamer maintains that young Heidegger attempted to provide a synthesis of Dilthey's historical problems and Husserl's phenomenology. It was a rather awkward combination because Dilthey's philosophy was sharply criticized in Husserl's *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*.

In the early stages of his philosophical development Gadamer was interested in the problem of *historicity* that *made* Heidegger himself abandon the original position of Husserl's phenomenology. This problem came to the foreground because it was given restricted and, in a sense, philosophically unproductive space in Heidegger's later works (*the history of Being*). Namely, the problems of *historical relativism* were not the focus of his philosophical interest; what he was mainly interested in was Heidegger's *Christian heritage*. Gadamer points out that Heidegger's early lectures and ideas of 1920s (criticism of the official theology of the Roman-Catholic Church) led him to the question of correct interpretation of the phenomenon of *Christian belief* and the attitude of Greek philosophy to the Christian message.

Gadamer was strongly influenced by Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy (1922), which outlines the basic Heideggerean philosophical program concerning the relation between the history of philosophy and the then form of philosophizing. Heidegger's *early „theological essay”*² clearly shows that the history of philosophy „is thus objectively there in a relevant sense for philosophical research if and only if it provides, not a diversity of curiosities, but rather radically simple matters *worthy*

¹ Ricouer, P.1995. *Úkol hermeneutiky*. Praha: Oikúmené, 9–15.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 1966. „Heideggerův „teologický spis“ z mládí.“ In: *Filosofický časopis* 44/1, 3 ff.

of thought; i. e., if the history of philosophy does not divert present understanding into merely seeking an expansion of knowledge, but rather forces the present back upon itself in order to magnify its questionability.”¹

Heidegger’s *philosophy of the history of philosophy* is based on the view that to comprehend the history of philosophy primarily means to deal with *the problematic nature of philosophy itself*, „especially for the present whose very being is constituted by historical consciousness ...”² But Heidegger still expects much more when he says that „anxiety over history and its appropriation calls for a radical understanding of what a particular instance of past philosophical research is put forward as its basic anxiety in its situation and for its time. To *understand* means not simply to recognize established knowledge, but rather to repeat in an original way what was once understood in terms of its own situation and for that situation.”³

Heidegger believed at that time that *critique of the history* can and must be related to the *present*. In particular, critique cannot prescribe to the history what should have been done, but since it should take into account the *present* it must „see to it that it asks questions in a manner which is in accord with the originality within its own reach. History is negated not because it is ‘false’, but because it still remains effective in the present and nevertheless can never become a properly appropriated present.”⁴

Heidegger announces a shocking and alarming fact to the philosophical world of his time: „For the most part today, philosophy operates inauthentically within the *Greek* conceptuality, *which itself has been pervaded by a chain of diverse interpretations. The basic concepts have lost their original functions of*

¹ Heidegger, M. 2007. „Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle.” In: *Becoming Heidegger*. Eds. Th. Kisiel – Th. Sheehan. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 157.

² Ibid., 157.

³ Ibid., 157.

⁴ Ibid., 157 – 158..

expression, functions which were especially tailored to fit regions of objects experienced in a particular way. But for all the analogizing and formalizing which these basic concepts have undergone, some mark of their provenance still remains. These basic concepts still bear within themselves a part of the genuine tradition of their original sense, such that their direction of meaning can be traced back to their objective source." (emphasis V. L.).¹

As far as the introduction of the idea of man, the ideal of life, or the views of Being of human life are concerned, the philosophy of that time keeps drawing on the *Greek environment* as well as the *environment* of the ideals of the Christian conception of man. A radical comprehension of that situation requires, in Heidegger's view, the development of a *phenomenological hermeneutics of facticity* which is expected to loosen up „its unexpressed tendencies and ways of interpreting and, by way of *destructive regress*... toward the original motive sources of the explication."²

But, how can we obtain the original sources? Heidegger has no doubt of the procedure. There is only one effective way, in particular, *destruction*: „*Hermeneutics carries out its task only on the path of destruction*. So long as it has understood the kind of objectivity and being which belongs to its thematic toward-which (the facticity of life), philosophical research is 'historical' knowing in the radical sense of that term."³ The problem, however, gets complicated, because it is necessary to determine what is actually meant by the *destructive coping with the history of philosophy*. In Heidegger's opinion, a mere appendix to philosophical inquiry, serving for illustration as it used to be before, nor any occasional digest of what had been *done* before by others, nor an opportunity to design amusing world-historical prospects. „The destruction is rather the authentic path upon which the present must encounter itself in its own basic movements, and it must

¹ Ibid., 168.

² Ibid., 168.

³ Ibid., 168.

encounter itself in such a way that what springs forth for the present from its history is the continual question: to what extent is it (the present) itself truly worried about appropriating radical possibilities from basic experiences and their interpretations? ... Here the critique which already arises simply by way of the concrete actualization of the destruction is thereby focused not on the bare fact *that* we stand within a tradition, but applies rather to the *how* of our standing there. What we do not interpret and express originally is also what we do not have in proper safekeeping.”¹

These views of Heidegger became much later a major issue of Gadamer’s philosophical investigation. The fact is, however, that Gadamer spent one semester in Freiburg in the summer of 1923 and, inter alia, attended Heidegger’s lectures on Aristotle. These lectures had an immense influence upon him. In his own words, he experienced there „the first introduction to the understanding of Aristotle which, thanks to the phenomenological talents of Heidegger, a young lecturer, meant a *true* revolution. *Aristotle really started to talk to us in our presence* (emphasis V. L.).”² Gadamer’s fascination for Heidegger accompanied him for a long time. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Heidegger’s birthday when his ‘theological essay’ *from the young days* was published Gadamer says: „When reading once again *An Outline of Hermeneutic Situation*, the first volume of an introduction to Heidegger’s Aristotelean studies, *it is as if I found once again a guide for my own philosophical thought and as if I were to resume writing the final version of philosophical hermeneutics* (emphasis V. L.).”³

Gadamer’s autobiographic self-assessment should be taken seriously, if we are not to distort the interpretation of his philosophical reception of the history of philosophy. At

¹ Ibid., 169.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Heideggerův „teologický spis mládí“*, 4.

³ Ibid., 5.

the same time, it should be noted that while Gadamer was bound by Heidegger's way of thinking he was not a biased philosopher totally dependent of Heidegger's philosophy, a *pupil* lacking independent thought. Gadamer, like Heidegger, declares in a compelling way from the very beginning of his philosophical work that the history of philosophy assumes a prominent position in his overall philosophical efforts, especially in his struggle against a *conventional and seemingly historically objective comprehension* of the historical-philosophical heritage. Gadamer aptly notes that „Heidegger does not approach Aristotle as an important historical object; he rather develops his own radical questioning based on the questions of philosophy of that time, on the problem-oriented pressure of the concept of life that came to the foreground of philosophical attention in Germany of those decades. The problem of self-explanation of life, labeled by Heidegger as the *facticity of Dasein* (Faktizität des Daseins), comes to be a guide for a courageous sketch that builds the foundations of philosophical and phenomenological anthropology on Aristotle.”¹

As early as 1923 Gadamer notices immense significance attributed to Aristotle by Heidegger in terms of historical-philosophical reflections. In relation to this Greek philosopher Heidegger unambiguously articulates the way of *approaching* the history of philosophy – „*approached simultaneously with intentions and interest in phenomenological renewal, this was destruction and construction in one* (emphasis V. L.)”² Gadamer realizes the essential dimension of such an approach to the history of philosophy that can be easily illustrated with Aristotle – it is an *updated Aristotle*. However, it is meant as reproach or even rejection. But this is exactly the point that is not perceived by Gadamer as a crucial one.

¹ Ibid., 5. Also cf. Fehér, I. M. 1997. „Die Hermeneutik der Faktizität als Destruktion der Philosophiegeschichte als Problematik.“ In: *Heidegger Studies. Studien the Critical Themshold for Thinking at the End of Philosophy*. Berlin, 47–68.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *The History of Philosophy*, 156.

It brings him to a different philosophical position in approaching the issues of the history of philosophy.

The problem that kept Gadamer's attention throughout his theoretical work and became a stable and exclusive philosophical position for him, i.e., the *hermeneutical problem*, is closely related to *Aristotle's examination of ethics rather than metaphysics* – in contrast to Heidegger. When Gadamer tries to identify this and only this *philosophical problem*, he points out: „*The problem that emerges with hermeneutics can namely be defined by means of the question: What meaning should be attributed to the fact that one and the same message passed by tradition will be time and time again grasped in a different way, that is, in relation to a specific historical situation of the receiver?* (emphasis V. L.)”¹

Gadamer's conception of the *history of philosophy as a message* has postulated from the inception that one and the same philosophical teaching (that is *always the same*) that we try first to understand and subsequently interpret is articulated in various ways owing to different *specific historical situations* of the receiver and the interpreter. Consequently, the significance of the history of philosophy consists in it not being any generally valid interpretation aimed to capture an *eternal truth*. Gadamer maintains that „the requirement of searching and teaching constant truth, valid once and for ever as the Word, should not perhaps be imposed on philosophy.”² Then, the understanding of the history of philosophy makes it possible to devote oneself to creative and free historical-philosophical work that confirms itself as an active philosophical effort aimed at the understanding of what happened in the history of philosophy.

As a result, Gadamer aptly considers Heidegger's approach to the history of philosophy to be *violent*, because great representatives of the history of philosophy, such as Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle,

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Problém dějinného vědomí*, 31.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 1997. Bildende und sprachliche Kunst am Ende des XX. Jahrhunderts. In: „*Zukunft ist Herkunft*”. Gadamer und Schumacher in Jena. Jeaner Universitätsreden 7. Jena, 55.

Descartes, Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Nietzsche mean to him a mere *background* that serves him for the distinction of his own intellectual objectives in a timeless horizon of revealing *the only truth*. Interestingly, this fact conceals Heidegger's effort to *find* a theoretically correct answer to the only one meaningful philosophical question: *What is Being?*

Gadamer is right in saying that in Heidegger's conception metaphysics (philosophy!) „no longer appeared as the question concerning Being; rather, it was portrayed as the actual, fateful obscuring of the question of Being, as the very history of the forgetfulness of Being that began with Greek thinking and continues through more recent thought up to the fully developed world-view and belief structures inherent in calculative and technical thinking, that is, up to today. From then on the <various> stages of the advancing forgetfulness of Being and the contribution of the eminent thinkers of the past were forcibly arranged in a fixed historical order, and this obligated Heidegger to delineate his project from Hegel's analogous attempt at a history of philosophy.”¹ Gadamer's important observation that Heidegger's conception of the history of philosophy takes pains to distinguish itself from Hegel's *attempt* is perhaps the most important philosophical *observation* without which it is not possible to properly understand either Heidegger's or his own hermeneutic philosophy.

Beginnings of philosophizing and Presocratic philosophy – on the road to Plato

Gadamer's work is a new original theoretical attempt to philosophically reflect the ancient philosophy within German milieu. The focus is on the *beginnings of philosophizing* and the philosophical message of the most significant Presocratic thinkers, including *Heraclitus*, *Parmenides*, *Greek atomists*, and mainly *Plato* and *Aristotle*. Gadamer's numerous

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The History of Philosophy*, 157.

lectures and essays provide extensive evidence of his intention.¹

Gadamer is *intrigued*, as admitted by himself, by the *significance of the beginnings* of philosophizing in ancient Greece. Philosophical *provocativeness* of this topic is evident mainly because Gadamer, like Hegel and Heidegger before him, believes that it bears directly on the *essence* of our Western culture. By implication, the examination of *Presocratic philosophy* is not only a common historical-philosophical problem, but it also involves the task of the comprehension of our own destiny both in historical retrospection and its current form. Gadamer demonstrates that if we want to understand the *beginnings of philosophizing* properly, we must realize that the crucial point in this history is neither Thales nor Homer, but it is Plato and Aristotle. In his view, this is the only correct philosophical approach to the interpretation of Presocratic philosophy.

In his ingenious theoretical work Hegel was the first in the history of philosophy to philosophically introduce the *never-ending dialogue between philosophy and the Presocratic's*. In this respect, he is to Gadamer, in a sense, an unrivalled philosopher. In any case, the question of why Presocratic philosophy marks the beginning of European philosophical thought remains to be an open intellectual challenge. The more so that Heidegger's philosophy does not provide a definite answer to this question either. Contrary to this, new and new questions emerge that affect not only the comprehension of the *beginnings* of philosophy but also indicate the relevance of its opposite variant, i.e., the *end* of philosophy. Gadamer stresses their interrelatedness as emphatically pointed out before him by Hegel and Heidegger. Can the beginning and the end be separated from each other? Gadamer's answer is unequivocal – *they cannot!*

In Gadamer's view, the question of *the beginnings of philosophizing* entails another question – *what actually is philoso-*

¹ Ibid., 157.

phy? This question shows that we are not able, in a way, to overcome a number of problematic aspects of true comprehension of *Presocratic philosophy*, primarily due to the *fragmentary nature* of its texts. This has far-reaching consequences that can be summarized in a very simple way: *the only justified philosophical approach to Presocratic philosophy is the focus on the works of Plato and Aristotle.*

But the problem is not so simple as it might seem at first sight. Neither Plato nor Aristotle were *historians of philosophy*, and therefore the *reconstruction* of the original, what happened in Greek philosophy before their time, faces a serious obstacle, in particular, *Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical interests themselves, their search for the object and the content of philosophy.* However, the historical-philosophical study of Plato and Aristotle is indispensable for the comprehension of the *beginnings of philosophizing.* This aspect of Gadamer's philosophy appears to be highly original and introduces the phenomenon of *Gadamerean* philosophical reception of the history of philosophy. *Without Plato and Aristotle we cannot move either direction in the history of philosophy!*

In his essay, *Plato and the Presocratic's* (1964) Gadamer explicitly says that with the *Presocratic message* we face the same situation as with Socrates: „... *Plato, with his dialogues, and Aristotle, with his lecture notes (the two figures who begin the literary tradition of Greek philosophy for us), have so saturated and shaped the entire Presocratic tradition that is accessible to us that we, at the very height of historical critique and with all of its tools, hardly have a viewpoint from which to discern anything with certainty other than the picture of this history impressed upon us by Plato and, above all, by Aristotle* (emphasis V. L.).”¹ What is surprising about Gadamer's position is that while Gadamer himself frequently emphasizes his indebtedness to Heidegger's philosophy, in the depth of seams of philosophical investigations he is much closer to Hegel. At first sight, it may ap-

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1998. *The Beginning of Philosophy.* Transl. R. Coltman. New York: Continuum, 103.

pear as a surprising historical-philosophical fact, but this fact is true: Hegel also considers Plato, and especially Aristotle, the only real philosophical way to the comprehension of the origins of Greek philosophy and its development in Presocratic era. Hegel concentrated on the philosophical reflection of Parmenides and Heraclitus. In his view, they established the true philosophy, a *solid land* for philosophy, that is, the concept of Being („...Being is the truth...” – Parmenides) and the problem of becoming („The recognition of the fact that Being and non-being are abstractions devoid of truth, that the first truth is to be found in Becoming, forms a great advance” – Heraclitus)¹ appear here for the first time as central problems determining the history of philosophical thought up to the present times.

Gadamer's immense theoretical efforts to reconsider and account for Parmenides' and Heraclitus' philosophical message is in many outstanding philosophical works ranked as an integral part of the *golden collection* of exactitude of historical-philosophical work, making extensive use of an historical-philological analysis of Presocratic thought from Schleiermacher up to the second half of the 20th century. Gadamer does not permit to be absorbed by this research because it might distort the most important *philosophicum* pursued in Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy.

A special challenge to Gadamer was Heraclitus, because „what was valid for antiquity still seems valid today. He is still the dark one”.² He can see two negative aspects in the former Heraclitian interpretations. First, they inadequately show how to *find*, in Plato's work, a more or less true message about Heraclitus, and they provide us with an inconsistent view of him. The second negative point pertains to the complexity of the *style* of Heraclitus' philosophical views

¹ Hegel, G.W.F. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1. Transl. E. S. Haldane. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 254, 283.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 2001. *The Beginning of Knowledge*. Transl. R. Coltman. New York - London: Continuum, 33.

that have been preserved. Furthermore, the *picture of Heraclitus* is seriously distorted by some other authors writing as early as the ancient times and mainly the modern times. Gadamer maintains that it was mainly Galilean physics that heavily contributed to a not quite correct interpretation of the giant of philosophical thought from Ephesus. It was not before Nietzsche that the conditions for a radically new view of Heraclitus' philosophy were established. It concentrated on his perception in the original setting of life in ancient Greece.

In Gadamer's view, overcoming the complexity of Heraclitus' style includes, *inter alia*, a morphological approach that aims to specify the structure of sentences typical of Heraclitus. Although this technique does not guarantee the *true result*, it enables us to approach the original hidden under the layers of centuries. Therefore, an inquiry into Heraclitus' philosophy is an *extraordinary task of hermeneutics*. This is essentially related to the way of preserving Heraclitus' ideas, to the uncertainty of the philosophical way that delivered us his fragments. In Heraclitus, philosophy can recognize its beginnings, as done mainly by Hegel. Later on, Heidegger does not consider Heraclitus to be a philosopher. Instead he calls Heraclitus and Parmenides „*greater thinkers...*” (emphasis V. L.) Heraclitus and Parmenides were *greater* in the sense that they were still in harmony with the *Logos*, that is, with the ‘One (is) all’. The step into ‘philosophy’ prepared by the Sophism, was first accomplished by Socrates and Plato.”¹

Gadamer does not accept either Hegel's adoption of Heraclitus' philosophy („there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my Logic”)² or Heidegger's perception of Heraclitus as a thinker of harmony with *logos* – *Being*. In his view, Heraclitus articulates experiences with

¹ Heidegger, M. 1958. *What is Philosophy?* Transl. W. Kluback, J. T. Wilde. New Haven, CT.: College & University Press, 53.

² Hegel, G.W.F.: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1, 279.

the limits and the finiteness of life and understanding. Consequently, philosophical hermeneutics „recognizes itself in Heraclitus.”¹

Gadamer aptly notes that all the available Heraclitean fragments are more or less variations of the presumed original. Both Hegel and Heidegger evidently pursue their own philosophical doctrines rather than real comprehension of Heraclitus himself. For hermeneutics it is an indisputable historical fact meaning that the comprehension of the original philosophical *secret* in its authenticity is only viable by means of an historical-philological analysis. We should keep in mind that what matters is *our* comprehension and this comprehension can never be *objective-definitive* as suggested by Hegel and Heidegger. Gadamer's hermeneutic cognition „must refuse an objectivist style of cognition” as an inherent part of its program.²

The same is true of Parmenides. His *philosophical poem* is the first original text of Presocratic philosophy, and should therefore be devoted adequate attention in the history of philosophy. Gadamer points out that we cannot understand Parmenides' work without taking into consideration an extensive epic tradition since Homer and Hesiod, because the epic-religious view of the world and the conceptual thought are closely related. A question is to what extent is the whole text as one of the major ancient philosophical disputes – *Parmenides versus Heraclitus* – a true dispute. Gadamer assumes that, from our perspective, it is a consequence of Hegel's philosophical construction rather than an actual historical dispute of two Greek Presocratic giants in terms of the conception of *philosophy as a categorical analysis of Being*, including the fundamental categories of Being, nothingness and becoming. While Gadamer does not exclude the other option, he considers it less important. The other

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: „Hegel und Heraklit.” In: Gadamer, H.-G.: 1999. *Griechische Philosophie III. Plato im Dialog*. Gesammelte Werke 7. Tübingen, 32.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Problém dějinného vědomí*, 33.

option namely assumes that, under the influence of Hegel's work, we have fixed the *Parmenidean-Heraclitean dispute* as one that has been determining philosophical thought since the ancient times.

This is best evidenced by Heidegger's philosophy, which uplifted the problem of Being to the most important philosophical problem. Importantly, the *ontological difference* as a philosophical problem *dates back* to Parmenides' poem. Heidegger's effort to make a *step back* in philosophy in order to return before the ontological difference, and thus reveal the *non-concealment of Being*, remained an unaccomplished philosophical challenge. In Gadamer's view, the ontological difference, as frequently emphasized to him by Heidegger, is not something that can be achieved by a philosopher – by his mind. The ontological difference simply exists all the time, it cannot be *introduced* by a philosopher. The ontological difference *opens itself*. Parmenides is very important for Heidegger. Although „the ontological difference is not yet named here, but in a certain sense it is already operative.”¹

Heidegger's made undue effort to reveal the proper meaning of Greek words through their etymology. Gadamer is right in saying that the etymology merely indicates the way, and can never be used as evidence. This is the reason for what happened to Heidegger. While he rediscovers Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides, he does it by embedding their works in his own philosophical constructs of metaphysics. Gadamer prefers to take an opposite way. He is careful in assessing what is offered to us by the heritage of the early Presocratic philosophy wrapped in mystery. Perhaps the best way to grasp this situation is to refer to Socrates' words uttered on acquainting himself with Heraclitus – *what I have understood is excellent, and it appears to me that what I have failed to understand is even more brilliant.*

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Beginning of Philosophy*, 123.

The atomistic philosophy assumes a special place in the history of Presocratic philosophy. Gadamer also tries to produce a *picture of the ancient atomism*. He draws our attention to several problematic points, notably in relation to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. „It is not without reason that we have characterized the whole literary work of Plato as one single great dialogue with Democritus, and the ancient anecdote that Plato wanted to burn the Democritan writings and that he only refrained from doing it because the texts were already in too many hands is not without deeper symbolic value.”¹

An open animosity of Plato and Aristotle to Democritus affects the assessment of the ancient atomism even nowadays. Given the fact that criteria of modern mathematical sciences are frequently employed in this field, the assessment of these extraordinary philosophical efforts does not appear to be quite true. Gadamer aptly says that „ancient atomism is not a research hypothesis of a mathematical/physical science that would have to prove itself by achieving an exact explanation for the reality of experience and that claimed only as far as it was indispensable for this explanation and the interpretation of experimental data.”²

Gadamer perceives the ancient atomism as a theoretical conception stemming from the *philosophical questioning about Being of the reality*. It is in this respect that he conceives it as an integral part of the early period of Greek philosophy „which seeks to think the thoughts of *nature*.”³ The courage of the atomist philosophy rests on the fact that it tries to explain all forms of natural events by means of a single hypothesis. The atomists articulated their conception of the world as a cosmogonic teaching, in the same way as almost all Presocratic philosophers. The uniqueness of Greek atomism is expressed by Gadamer’s thesis of *vacuum* as an

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Beginning of Knowledge*, 99.

² Ibid., 87.

³ Ibid., 87

internal building moment of the physical world. „The idea of the *atom* is thus an ontological postulate and proves to be an attempt to combine the thought of being in the Eleatic doctrine of unity with the demands of our experience of nature through the fact that it recognizes the true being of appearances in the multiplicity of invisible smaller unities.”¹

The connection of the idea of the *One* and the requirements of the experienced nature poses, however, certain problems. Gadamer shows that „within the atomistic idea of nature there lies a distortion of the natural picture of the world oriented toward the forms of things and living beings and, along with this distortion, a *depletion of meaning from all events*. Necessity, which dominates everything and according to which everything occurs by itself, operates as the meaningless cause of a nevertheless meaningful end result: the natural order.”²

Plato takes an opposite view when he, in the 10th book of the *Laws*, conceives nature as a meaningful and spirited order rather than an accident. By implication, it is not surprising that in his dialogue *Timaeus* Plato modifies the Democritan idea of *atoms* as an elementary unit of the matter of the world (the *matter* only, not the *order of the world itself*), because he does not admit the existence of vacuum any more. „The mechanics of the atomic structure of matter have the character of a mathematical synthesis and not that of an anomalous inevitable event. In this radical transformation of the Democritan concept of the atom, we can fathom the effective energy in Plato that forces the explanation of Greek natural science once again under the fundamental law of the Hellenic interpretation of existence. What is supposed to explain the true nature of reality for Democritus – the blind necessity of the inextricable atomic event – finds its limited authority in a double transformation in the mythic world creation of the *Timaeus*. That the

¹ Ibid., 94.

² Ibid., 97.

world is, is an act of construction according to a divine mathematics.”¹

Gadamer’s examination of Greek atomism stresses the fact that, against the background of the late Platonic idea of the world, it was eventually Aristotle who criticized both Democritian and Platonic atomism. However, the most interesting point in Gadamer’s view is that this criticism has preserved its basic significance in the history of philosophy for almost two millennia and that it complies with Plato’s view of the nature as a spirited and meaningful order.

Plato and Aristotle, or the language of philosophical concepts

Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy would be in many respects incomprehensible if he had not delved into the study of the *classical representatives of Greek philosophizing*. This study almost became *fatal* to his work. No doubt, it was not a matter of accident. It goes without saying that the most outstanding achievements of the 19th and the 20th centuries (Hegel and Heidegger) – critically reflected by Gadamer – drew mainly on Plato and Aristotle, *two ancient giants of spirit* who established the *philosophical ground* without which one can hardly imagine Hegel’s, Heidegger’s, or Gadamer’s work. From 1931 when Gadamer wrote his habilitation thesis *Plato’s dialectical ethics* up to his essay *Heidegger and the Greeks* (1990) the golden thread of Gadamer’s work was an enormous effort to comprehend and develop the philosophical message of Plato and Aristotle. This fact is reflected in Gadamer’s *collected works*, three out of ten volumes of which are devoted to Greek philosophy, with major focus on Plato and Aristotle.

All through his life Gadamer was interested in the phenomenon of *Socratic dialogue and Platonic dialectic*¹ – as a highly

¹ Ibid., 100 - 101.

meaningful field for philosophical activities, resulting in the *comprehension of the universe based on the experience of the good*. While Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy was aimed to manifest the *development of the Absolute Idea*, and Heidegger was primarily interested in the *problem of Being*, Gadamer's philosophical reflection of the history of philosophy mainly pursues the *problem of the good*. Because it is this problem that tells us most of all, both philosophically and humanly, about ourselves and about the world in which we live every day. Unfortunately, there are many aspects of this problem we do not understand.

Gadamer's works on Plato's philosophy, starting from *Plato's dialectical ethics* (1931), through his essays *Plato and the poets* (1934), *Plato and the Presocratics* (1964), up to *Plato as Portraitist* (1988), witness to the fact that the comprehension of the *unified functioning* of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies in the project of *philosophical ethics* is of vital importance. From this point of view Gadamer's essential work is *The Idea of the Good Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* (1978). In a sense, it may be claimed that this work precisely articulates what Gadamer pursued in his research into ancient philosophy. All the preceding works served the necessary *philosophical preparation*, and all the subsequent works were its necessary *documentation*.

Gadamer also pondered over the project of *philosophical ethics*. This objective can be traced back to his *first essay* from 1931 – *Plato's dialectical ethics (Phenomenological interpretations to Philebus)*. While this essay *did not satisfy* Heidegger, it systematically examines the problem of *Platonic dialectic, the idea of science, the dialogue and the logos*. Most importantly, it clarifies philosophical significance of *Socratic dialogue*.² This aspect of his work is attractively developed in his *supplement* to Aristotle's philosophy. In the essay *On the Possibility of a Phi-*

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1999. *Griechische Philosophie III. Plato im Dialog*. Gesammelte Werke 7. Tübingen.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 1999. „Platos dialektische Ethik.“ In: *Griechische Philosophie III. Plato im Dialog*, 38 ff.

losophical Ethics (1963)¹ Gadamer points out that Aristotle founded *philosophical ethics* by „eliminating the one-sidedness of Socratean-Platonic *intellectualism* without abandoning its substantial views.”²

This seems to be the *epicentre* of Gadamerian philosophical comprehension of the history of philosophy as a *live and provoking dialogue* between the *knowledge* and *what we are as humans*. This enables Gadamer to say that „the concept of *ethos* as established by Aristotle suggests that *virtue* does not only rest on the knowledge and that the possibility of knowledge rather depends on what man is like.”³ Gadamer’s most significant work on the history of ancient philosophy – *The Idea of the Good between Plato and Aristotle* – philosophically elaborates on his original position of 1931, but this time the overall outcome of his research related to Aristotle and the model of *practical philosophy* is evident. This is conclusively manifested in the very structure of his work taking the *idea of the Good* as a point of departure. Gadamer then proceeds to the phenomenon of *Socratican knowing and not-knowing* in order to show in the next part that ethics is a part of politics – *the knowing of the Good and polis*. This is followed by an account of a highly important project of the *dialectic of the Good in Philebus* and Gadamer’s interpretation of *Aristotelean critique of the idea of the Good*. The work culminates by introducing the *idea of ‘practical’ philosophy*.

Gadamer realized that the first to point out philosophical significance of Plato’s *dialectic (esoteric) dialogues* was Hegel. Nevertheless, Hegel failed to elaborate the pivotal issue. Gadamer is convinced that „the unitary effect connecting Plato’s and Aristotle’s logos philosophy - which did not remain hidden from Hegel – was underestimated, ..., in the period following him and continues to be until this

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: 2007. *Gadamer Reader*. A Bouquet of the Later Writings. Ed. R. E. Palmer. Evanston – Illionis: Northwestern University Press, 277 ff.

² Ibid., 284.

³ Ibid., 284.

day.”¹ There are several reasons for the lack of appreciation. First, it is, in Gadamer’s view, a *secret, unadmitted Hegelianism* of neo-Kantian philosophers (Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer, N. Hartman, etc.). Next, a dogmatic modification of Aristotle’s philosophy in neo-Thomist disguise. Third, a *long-standing animosity* of the modern natural sciences to Aristotle’s natural philosophy. All this came to be a serious obstacle to an adequate understanding of the *Platonic-Aristotelian unity of effect*. As a result, the *way* to a complete introduction of the Greek heritage to our own philosophical thought remained hampered.

The way to the *Platonic-Aristotelian unity of effect* was opened to Gadamer by Heidegger who – following the period of Catholic, neo-Kantian, and phenomenological reception of Aristoteleanism – in a particular period of his philosophical development became a *proponent* of Aristotle.² Heidegger, „in his directness and the freshness of his phenomenological insights, far surpassed all the traditional shadings of Aristotelianism, who surpassed Thomism and, yes, even Hegelianism.”³

Gadamer points out that the close convergence between the Platonic intellectual intentions and Aristotelian conceptual distinctions in the field of practical philosophy entails a serious *methodological problem*. It consists in the fact „that our tradition has preserved two such disparate things as Plato’s dialogical compositions and Aristotle’s working drafts. Since we possess neither an authentic theoretical elaboration of Plato’s teachings nor any of the writings that Aristotle published, we must constantly play off two dissimilar things against each other.”⁴ Gadamer resorts to the *phe-*

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 1986. *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*. Transl. P. Ch. Smith. New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 1-2.

² Cf. Gadamer, H.-G.: *Heideggerův „teologický spis“ „z mládí“*, 3–8.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

nomenological art of description that he learned from Husserl and Heidegger. Then, the theoretical approach to the methodological problems connected with the examination of Plato's and Aristotle's works is obvious: „Neither a *textual analysis* of the dialogues' mimetic form of communication nor of the protocolar form of Aristotle's papers can chain the authenticity of a descriptive phenomenological exposition based on the text - 'a phenomenological exposition of their subject matter itself.'"¹

During fifty years of his philosophical writing Gadamer was thinking over the indicated Heideggerean philosophical inspiration, which guided him more and more to the field of *Platonic and Hegelean dialectic*. The *Platonic-Aristotelian unity of effect* came to be a permanent philosophical challenge mainly due to Heidegger's account of Plato „as the decisive step toward 'metaphysical thought's obliviousness to being (Sein).'"² Gadamer answered with philosophical hermeneutics introduced in his essay *Truth and Method* and elaborated in a number of his other essays. The gist of his theory can be expressed briefly. *Gadamer was fascinated by Plato's dialogic. The speculative dimensions of Plato's, Aristotle's and Hegel's philosophies became his partners in a continuous philosophical dialogue. Therefore, he tried to read Greek classical philosophers in a different way.*

However, what does it mean to read Greek classical philosophers *in a different way*? Gadamer took pains to distinguish himself from the modern critical position that inappropriately believed in it having mastered an infinitely subtler logic than the ancient times. This position is not and cannot be true because philosophy has always been an integral part of human life in which the place of logic is not so crucial as it might seem in *pure* theory. Gadamer assumes „that *philosophy* is a human experience that remains the same and that characterizes the human being as such, and that

¹ Ibid., 5.

² Ibid., 5.

there is no progress in it, but only participation.”¹ This is a very strong and justified philosophical assumption. While it can be called into question, our doubts appear to further strengthen its validity. *Philosophy should always be the same event of human Being*. If we don't perceive it this way, the fault should not be sought in philosophy.

In formulating the basic problems of his philosophical hermeneutics Gadamer wants to cancel an *abstract opposition between the tradition and historical research*. From this it is obvious that the difference between *history and knowledge* is not so sharp as it might seem outside of philosophical hermeneutics. *Historical research and living tradition* belong together, because this is the only way to form an *effective unity* that becomes an object of research as a *network* of mutual interaction. Consequently, philosophical examination of the idea of the good in Plato's and Aristotle's theories is a *hermeneutical problem*. Gadamer defines this problem by asking: „What meaning should be attributed to the fact that one and the same message delivered to us by tradition will be each time grasped differently, that is, in relation to a specific historical situation of the recipient?“² This question does not tell us whether Plato and Aristotle were interested in the hermeneutic problem or its historical dimension. Aristotle in his ethics examines „the precise role of reason in every ethical conduct, and it is the role of reason and knowledge that is strikingly similar to the role of historical knowledge.”³

Philosophical ethics or *philosophy of morality* has not been, in Gadamer's opinion, conceived as *practical ethics* since ancient times. What was *self-evident* in the ancient tradition, i.e., that philosophy „which has been called *ethics* since Aristotle is itself *practical knowledge*”, also assumed other forms in the past. Aristotle mainly expressed „what was basically already implicit in the Socratic and Platonic doctrine about the

¹ Ibid., 6..

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Problém dějinného vědomí*, 31.

³ Ibid., 31.

knowledge of virtue - namely, that we do not just want to know what virtue is, but to know it in order to become good.”¹ The problem with Socratic-Platonic doctrine bears on its *intellectualism* in understanding the good. Aristotle criticized this philosophical-ethical intellectualism (Plato’s idea of the Good is a meaningless generalization),² which made him „the founder of ethics as a discipline independent of metaphysics,” but not of philosophy in general!³

Gadamer therefore strives to reveal the productivity of Aristotle’s criticism of Socratic-Platonic intellectualism. Aristotle replaces the *idea of the Good* with that of „*the good of man*, i.e., the good in relation to human doing”.⁴ Gadamer pays attention to Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s identification of virtue and knowledge and agrees with it. In his view, Aristotle returned the teaching of his teachers to the right position mainly by defining the basic element of ethical knowing of man as *desire (orexis)* and its organization in an active condition (*hexis*). Aristotle assumes that *repetition, habit (ethos)* are the basis of *virtue*. In spite of this justified criticism of his teachers, Aristotle is influenced by them. In Gadamer’s view, this influence can be seen in the fact that Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato, considers knowledge to be an essential aspect of ethical conduct. By implication, in accordance with the Socratean-Platonic heritage, Aristotle as a *founder* of practical philosophy builds his *ethics* on the postulate that „*the good is the practically good* (emphasis V. L.).”⁵

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *On the Possibility of Philosophical Ethics*. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Gadamer Reader*, 284.

² Cf. Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, 126 – 158.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Problém dějinného vědomí*, 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, 128.

Gadamer appreciates Aristotle's effort to articulate a conception of the notion of *ethos*. The reason is that *virtue* is not only conceived as knowing; quite the contrary, the possibility of knowing essentially depends on what is man like. Therefore, Aristotle succeeds in „accounting for the essence of moral knowledge by subsuming into the notion of *preferential option* both subjectivity of moral consciousness which assesses a case of conflict, and the underlying substance of law and morality which determines man's moral consciousness and specific decision-making. His analysis of *phronesis* recognizes in moral knowledge the way of moral Being itself which, accordingly, cannot be separated from the overall concreteness of what is called *ethos*.“¹

In his works, Gadamer strives to elaborate the project of *practical knowledge* dating from 1930,² within which it is confirmed that moral knowledge can learn what is possible. But not in any abstract void. What matters are specific situations. Therefore, moral knowledge stems from considerations necessarily related to a specific situation, or to what should be considered correct in a particular moment. „Thus, it has a logical structure of judgment whose only premise is the general knowledge about what is correct considered in the notions of ethical virtues.“³ However, it is not only *pure performance* of logical judgment. Whether and in what life situations, we give a thing our *consideration* depends exclusively on us. If, for example, we are *overwhelmed* with emotions we are usually lost in our deliberations. „Aristotle explains it by reference to the intoxicated: the unaccountability of someone who is drunk involves no moral unaccountability because he had it in his power to drink moderately.“⁴

Gadamer's examination of Aristotle clearly identifies the *gist* of philosophical ethics of this giant of Greek thought. It

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *On the Possibility of Philosophical Ethics*, 285.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: „Praktische Wissen.“ In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Griechische Philosophie*. Gesammelte Werke 5, 230 ff.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *On the Possibility of Philosophical Ethics*, 285.

⁴ Ibid..

lies in the *mediation* between *logos* and *ethos*. It concerns possible variability of relations between the subjectivity of knowing and the substance of Being. Moral knowledge thus does not climax in ethical notions (bravery, justice, etc.) but rather in concrete application that determines what should be done here and now in the light of such knowledge of the *general*. „It was aptly pointed out that Aristotle’s last pronouncement concerning what is right grounds in a vague phrase *as required* (*hos dei*). Aristotle’s ethics is not based on grand conceptualizations of heroic exemplars and its *table of virtues*, but on undeluded and undeceptive concrete moral consciousness (*hos ho logos ho orthos legei*) that finds expression in such unmeaning and all-encompassing notions as what is *fitting*, what is *proper* and what is *good* and *right*.¹

Gadamer assumes that *philosophical ethics* should not only be a purely theoretical position detached from real life. It must comply with the specific situation of our everyday life. Gadamer appreciates Aristotle’s observation rejecting our effort to be confined to the *deliberation of the good and the right* in general. The actual ethical knowing necessarily depends on the *practical logos*, i.e., we must move from the deliberation of the good and the right to putting our ideas into action. „Aristotle explicitly refers to the mistake of those who resort to theorizing, and instead of doing what is right, just philosophize about it ... Phronesis has to do with finding the right means for a pre-given end. This concrete moral deliberation defines the *purpose* by making it concrete, that is, by defining *what should be done*... The *practically good* (*prakton agathon*) is not only what is right but also what is useful, purposeful, and in that sense *right*. In Aristotle’s view, the interpenetration of these two senses of *right* in humankind’s practical conduct is clearly what constitutes the human good.²

¹ Ibid..

² Ibid., 286.

This, however, does not solve the whole problem of the human good and morally right action. Under the influence of Plato, Aristotle points out that human conduct is an indispensable part of the life of a free citizen in the polis and thus falls within the scope of social Being. *Polis* is what – according to the Greeks – reaches into what is *common to us all*. By implication, ethics is a part of politics. All members of the *polis* bear responsibility for its proper formation. No wonder, then, says Gadamer, that „the pivotal object of Aristotle’s practical philosophy is friendship – not as love of friends but as that mediating element between virtues and goods which is *met’aretes* and whose (permanently endangered) existence cannot be left out of consideration.”¹

Gadamer appreciates the fact that Aristotle’s philosophical ethics – in contrast to Plato and Kant - does not lay stress on the significance of *noble unconditionality* for moral decisions. While Aristotle does not ignore the importance of *theoretical contemplation* in the field of ethics the most important part of his approach is its relation to and its implementation in real life. Gadamer assumes the following: *This ingenious sense of diverse conditionality which underlies the depth of Aristotle’s speculation becomes moral-philosophically fruitful by providing here and only here an answer to the question which makes us anxious, in particular, how philosophical ethics – a human science of what is human – can exist without becoming inhuman self-glorification.*”² Gadamer’s focus on the development of *philosophical ethics* is closely connected with Aristotelean inspiration – *we must take a theoretical position as a point of departure, but cannot ignore the demands of specific life situations*. This is the reason for *continuing* relevance of Aristotle’s ethics.

Unlike Plato and Kant, Aristotle inspires Gadamer’s conception of moral philosophy by his emphasis on „*the conditionality of human life situations; the key role of philosophical ethics and moral conduct is, in Aristotle’s view, the concretization of*

¹ Ibid..

² Ibid.

the general and its application to a specific situation."¹ Aristotle draws a distinction between ethical knowing – *phronesis* and theoretical knowing – *episteme*. This distinction aims to *realize* the moment of *ethical decision-making* that is not dominated by a *single thing*, but the rightness of life as a whole. By implication, *ethical conscience* is what in all situations „has to bear responsibility for its decisions. Ethical knowing does not consult with anybody but itself."² Ethical knowing is the *knowledge-for-self* and can only be completed by knowing *the actually given*. „*Knowledge-for-self* in ethical reflection actually encompasses a complete remarkable attitude to oneself."³

Gadamer maintains that the problem of ethical knowing and moral conduct mainly concerns one's attitude to himself in the field of what is *common to all of us*. Moral conduct starts and ends in us; it lies primarily in ourselves, in our ability or inability to act humanly; however, this is not only for our sake, but also in relation to others. While ethical knowing is in Aristotle's doctrine *secondary* to theoretical knowing, the crucial point is that together they form *the ultimate unity*. „Practical reasonableness, *phronesis*, as well as theoretical reasonableness are 'best-nesses' (*aretai*). That which is highest in the human being – which Aristotle likes to call 'nous' or the divine – is actualized in both of them"⁴ For obvious reasons, *practical philosophy* itself cannot guarantee the rightness of our decisions in any and all life situations. But *philosophical ethics* must be authorized to intervene in real life by its norms. This is what Aristotle pursued and what Gadamer highly appreciated. Gadamer believes that this is why *Aristotle is still alive*.⁵

¹ Ibid., 287.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Problém dějinného vědomí*, 37.

³ Ibid., 38.

⁴ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, 175.

⁵ Ibid., 170.

Hegel, Heidegger and the Greeks

Gadamer's philosophizing is dominated by concentration on Hegel's and Heidegger's philosophical conceptions in *unity* with the Greek philosophy. Obviously, the emphasis is mainly laid on the study of Hegel's and Heidegger's reception of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical works. It should be noted, however, that an important role in Gadamer's work is played by his analysis of Kant's¹ and Husserl's philosophical works.² Although valuable and contributive, the examination of Kant and Husserl does not represent the main *focus* of Gadamer's philosophical interests. Hegel's and Heidegger's philosophical doctrines as a unique and, at the same time, the most significant philosophical problem, are no doubt the central object of Gadamer's philosophizing as an indispensable reference point for refining his own hermeneutic philosophical positions. Gadamer has never disavowed this fact. On the contrary, he avowed their philosophical message, never in uncritical admiration though, which enabled him to come up with a unique philosophical conception.

A case in point is Gadamer's brilliant 1979 lecture, which was later published with a characteristic title *The Heritage of Hegel* (1980).³ In a very concise way, Gadamer expresses his basic attitude not only to Hegel and Heidegger, but also to the ancient philosophy in general.

¹ Cf. Belás, Ľ. 1999. „Gadamer a Kantovo miesto v dejinách novovekej filozofie”. In: *Filozofia dejín filozofie III*. Ed. V. Leško. Gadamer a dejiny filozofie. Prešov: AFPhUP, 114–120.

² Cf. Blecha, I. 1999. „Fenomenologická podnož v hermeneutice – Gadamerův Husserl”. In: *Filozofia dejín filozofie III*. Ed. V. Leško, 97–113.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: „The Heritage of Hegel”. In: *The Gadamer Reader*, 326–344.

Gadamer does not claim that his historical-philosophical investigation covers all the most important aspects of Hegel's work. This reflects the most characteristic *Gadamerean philosophical position* not only to the heritage of Hegel but also to the historical-philosophical heritage in general: „*It should be enough for each person to be the heritage one-self and to give an account of what one has received from this inheritance* (emphasis V. L.).”¹ Gadamer stresses that a philosopher should not strive for *reading* a theoretical message of any of the past philosophers in order to provide an *all-encompassing answer* of his work. Here we can find implicit foundations of the *weak model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy that are articulated as follows – „...*no one should imagine himself able to reap the harvest of an entire epoch or indeed even merely to assess it* (emphasis V. L.).”²

Even Hegel himself did not do it, although he is considered by many a philosopher to be the father of the project of an *absolute philosophical knowledge*, including the motif of the *end of history*. In this connection, Gadamer aptly points out that Hegel himself was very well aware of relativity of philosophical assertions. As for the individual, every one is a *son of his time*, so philosophy also is *its time apprehended in thoughts*. In Hegel's view, „*it is just as foolish to fancy that any philosophy can transcend its present world, as that an individual could leap out of his time or jump over Rhodes* (emphasis V. L.).”³

The main reason for Gadamer's fascination for Hegel's philosophy is mainly his well-known bold claim to *recognize reason in history*. The most important feature of Hegel's philosophical reflection of the *role* of reason in history is *dialectic*. In developing his own philosophical conception Gadamer gave much space to new thoughtful initiatives. In the field of *objective spirit* it was mainly the problem of dialectic: „To be sure, then, what shaped my thinking in this

¹ Ibid., 326.

² Ibid., 326.

³ Hegel, G. W. F. 2001. *Philosophy of Right*. Trans. S. W. Dyde. Kitchner: Batoche Books, 19.

way was a personalized and dialogical Hegel behind whom there always stood the daily, thoughtful interaction with the Platonic dialogues.”¹ *The unity of dialogue and dialectic*, represented by Plato and Hegel in a very specific manner, set free the *hermeneutic experience* for Gadamer’s exploration. „The logic of question and answer proved to be a dialectic of question and answer in which question and answer are constantly exchanged and then are dissolved in the movement of understanding.”²

Gadamer paid much attention to Hegel’s attitude to ancient philosophy in general, and the dialectic in particular. This is evidenced by his essay *Hegel and ancient dialectic* (1961), in which he tried to justify the claim that Hegel is the thinker in the history of philosophical thought who was „the first to actually grasp the depth of Plato’s dialectic.”³ He discovered philosophical greatness of Plato’s dialogues *Sophist*, *Parmenides* and *Philebus*. Philosophy credits Gadamer that these came to be regarded as the basis of Plato’s philosophy. In Hegel’s opinion, Plato’s dialectic frequently plays a negative role in confusing the traditional views. Therefore, it functions as a subjective type of Zenonic dialectic, which by means of sensual perceptions and without positive results, falsifies any proposition. Nevertheless, Hegel, as noted by Gadamer, reveals a *positive-speculative dialectic* in Plato’s philosophy that not only leads to the identification of objective contradictions, but also understands the contradictions, the antithetics of Being and non-Being, difference and indifference, as manifestation of a *higher unity*. Gadamer thus identifies the substance of Hegel’s

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Heritage of Hegel*, 330.

² Ibid., 332. Also Greisch, J. 1995. *Rozumět a interpretovat*. Praha: Filosofía, 5 ff.; Mokrejš, A. 1998. *Hermeneutické pojetí zkušenosti*. Praha: Filosofía 1998, 11 ff.

³ Gadamer, H.-G. 1976. „Hegel’s Dialectic of the Ancient Philosophers”. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hegel’s Dialectic. Five Hermeneutical Studies*. Transl. P. Ch. Smith. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 6 – 7.

dialectic in three basic dimensions: 1. thought is thinking something of oneself and for oneself, 2. as such, it is a necessary common thought of contradictory determinations, and 3. the unity of these contradictory determinations consists in their being raised to themselves.¹

Hegel's dialectic is interesting for Gadamer not only by its attitude to ancient philosophy, but also by its active articulation of creative philosophical potential. This is presented in three essays of Hegel – *Hegel's 'Inverted World'* (1966), *The Idea of Hegel's Logic* (1971) and *Hegel's Dialectic of Self-consciousness* (1973). The central problem of each of these essays is the exploration of consciousness and its dialectic unity with the category of self-consciousness. Fichte's idea that there is no consciousness without self-consciousness was accepted by Hegel without any doubt. However, unlike Kant, Hegel reserves for it a much more prominent philosophical position. An important feature of Hegel's procedure from *consciousness to self-consciousness* is accounted by Gadamer as a procedure of *genuine idealism*. In this respect, he outdoes both Kant's transcendental deduction and Fichte's absolute idealism of freedom.

Gadamer also pays much attention to Hegel's logic. After discussing general problems of logic he examines the method of logic and the beginnings of the science of logic. Finally he reflects logic as such and the problem of speech. In his view, Hegel tried to re-establish the *Greek logos* from the point of view of a modern self-conscious spirit. No wonder then that Hegel reintroduces the term *logic* into philosophical terminology inspired by Plato's totality of ideas. Consequently, Hegel's logic is related to what is referred to as *content*, and determines ideas as a *categorical analysis of Being*.

Gadamer is mainly attracted by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in particular, the *Self-consciousness* chapter. He considers it to be one of the most famous chapters of Hegel's

¹ Ibid., 16.

philosophy because its pivotal question is the *existence of freedom*.¹ Philosophical comprehension and examination of *reason* as a unity of thought and Being rests on the postulate that consciousness is *inherent* in self-consciousness in which it finds all of its truth. An intriguing question in this respect is the way consciousness arrives at knowledge because it encompasses the wholeness of life, the fact „that self-consciousness is life itself.”² Hegel’s *master-slave* dialectic becomes an object of Gadamer’s philosophizing in order to ponder over the question who – in the current industrial society, including all the *relevant influence and consumer pressure* – can actually be free? Gadamer believes that Hegel’s master-slave dialectic indicates the basic truth: „... if there is to be freedom, then first of all the chain attaching us to things must be broken. The path of mankind to universal prosperity is not as such the path to the freedom of all. Just as easily, it could be a path to the unfreedom of all.”³

The biggest contribution of Gadamer’s research into Hegel’s philosophy bears on his in-depth understanding of the basic principles of Hegel’s philosophizing. It consists in the „*unity of history and his system of philosophy* (emphasis V. L.) that sustains Hegel’s theoretic and historical work as a pre-supposition. Hermeneutical philosophy’s point is to recall the truth within these things.”⁴ The *unity of the history and the system of philosophy* encompasses Hegel’s philosophy of the history of philosophy as the first *strong model*, evidently and openly making use of the history of philosophy for developing one’s own systemic form of philosophy. The integration of past thought in one’s own thought is accompanied by both numerous problems and remarkable results. Gadamer admires Hegel’s great synthesis of Christianity and philosophy, nature and spirit, Greek metaphysics and

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: „Hegel’s Dialectic of Self-consciousness”. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hegel’s Dialectic*, 70.

² Ibid., 74..

³ Ibid., 74.

⁴ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Heritage of Hegel*, 341.

transcendental philosophy elaborated to the form of absolute knowing. At the same time, he dissociates himself from it in order to show new prospects of philosophical hermeneutics.

Gadamer does not wish to simply follow Hegel. He perceives Hegel's philosophy as a *philosophical challenge*. „Under this challenge, the basic experience of hermeneutics began to reveal its true universality to me inasmuch as our use of language, or better, inasmuch as the use that language finds in us whenever we think, pervades our whole experience of the world.”¹ *Hegel's heritage* in Gadamer's understanding is captured in three basic points: 1. in the conception of language as *specification of the general*, 2. in the speech-nature of our approach to the world, we are situated in the events of the tradition characterizing us as *historical beings*, 3. human motion in the *space of freedom*. Therefore, Gadamer believes that „precisely therein does it make sense to see oneself an heir of Hegel – not by thinking his anticipation of the absolute as a knowledge that we entrust to philosophy; still less by expecting philosophy to serve the demands of the day and to legitimate any authority that pretends to know what the moment requires. It suffices to acknowledge with Hegel the dialectic of the universal and concrete as the summation of the whole metaphysics until now, and along with this to realize that this has to be summed up ever anew.”²

Hegel's heritage does not only affect Gadamer's philosophical development directly, but also indirectly, through the works of great German philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries, including Dilthey, Cassirer, and especially Heidegger. Paradoxically, this second aspect of *Hegel's heritage* is, in a sense, even more important or, in other words, Hegel and Heidegger appear to be the central problem of philosophical hermeneutics. One without the other is impossi-

¹ Ibid., 334.

² Ibid., 335 – 336.

ble and ungraspable. Gadamer's assumption that *Hegel's heritage* made Heidegger take up a *lifelong dialogue* with Hegel is of great importance. Unfortunately, the available research into Heidegger has programmatically, or without explanation, neglected this crucial point. Gadamer is well aware of its significance, because he has experienced it with deep personal involvement. No one else could follow so closely Heidegger's views from the beginning to the end.

In his essays, *The Language of Metaphysics* (1968), *Hegel and Heidegger* (1971), *Being Spirit God* (1977), „*What Is Metaphysics?* „ (1978), *The Greeks* (1979), *History of Philosophy* (1981) (Cf. Gadamer, H.-G. 1994. *Heidegger's Ways*. Transl. J. W. Stanley. Alnaby: State University of New York Press), *Heidegger and Greeks* (1990), *Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference* (1989), etc., Gadamer emphasizes the fact that, in Heidegger's view, the West-European metaphysics came to its peak with Hegel. This is not related to the mere fact of the history of philosophy. As pointed out by Gadamer, Heidegger primarily means the problem of *overcoming* (*Verwindung*) metaphysics as a theory of the *Being of existence*. Heidegger assumes that it is high time for metaphysics to relate mainly to *Being*. Gadamer notes that Heidegger considered Hegel to be a thinker without any capable follower in the most inherent field of metaphysics. By implication, Heidegger's ideas – says Gadamer – circle constantly around Hegel, and make continuous effort to overcome his achievements in the field of metaphysics. In Gadamer's view, the main point of permanent confrontation between Heidegger's metaphysical ideas (search for an answer to the question – *What is Being?*) and Hegel's speculative idealism is „in his inclusion of history in the framework of philosophy's questioning.”¹

Gadamer assumes that it is neither accidental nor coincidental. Today we know that philosophical exploration of the 19th century was fraught with problems of *historical con-*

¹ Gadamer, H.-G: *Hegel's Dialectic*, 104.

sciousness mainly thanks to Hegel. This is the consequence of changes in the traditions of the world of Christian countries of Europe, instigated by the French revolution. It was a highly radical philosophical attempt to show both the power of reason in the history and the awareness of historical dependence of the general consciousness. The emergence of *historical consciousness* was connected with its philosophical self-justification. One of the *philosophical grand-masters* of this project was Hegel. No wonder then, says Gadamer, that it is Hegel with whom the most grandiose *historical self-justification of philosophy* is connected: „He united nature and history under the rule of this all-inclusive concept of the *logos*, which in times before the Greeks had exalted in laying the foundation for their *prima philosophia*.”¹

Hegel was the first philosopher to recognize the role of reason in history and to unprecedentedly relocated it to the empire of ideas. In addition, as Gadamer aptly notes, the understanding of reason in history without dialectic would be a vacuous philosophical achievement. Hegel draws on the ancient conception of dialectic as a dialogue based on the *confrontation* between contradictory positions. But while the ancient dialectic, mainly in Plato’s philosophy, can be viewed as a preparatory stage, mainly characterized by its *negative position*, Hegel’s dialectic pursues the intensification of the opposites in order to reach the contradictions that unify and enhance the knowledge to a higher level. Hegel’s Heraclitus-inspired observation that it is only contradictions that *move the world* places the main emphasis on the *positive role* of dialectic in discovering the reality.

Gadamer pays much attention to this issue also in relation to the changed significance of the Hegelean key concept *Aufhebung* – *sublation*. This concept originally carried a negative meaning. However, for Hegel it means not only a simple sublation (negation), but also the preservation of all of its positive true characteristics; by implication, it means

¹ Ibid., 104.

the overcoming in which a new form preserves everything productive. Hegel's dialectic thus clearly opposes the one-sidedness of the understanding-oriented (Verstand) abstraction of the particular by stressing the universal power of unification – the unity that is only inherent in reason (Vernunft). Hegel's dialectic is therefore one of the most valuable achievements of the 19th century philosophy, and it still has its solid position in the philosophical views of the 20th century.

Gadamer points out that Hegel saw in reason, „which unifies all contradictions, a universal structure of Being (emphasis V. L.).”¹ Hegel provides an analysis of Being in his famous *Logic* in three basic degrees – *Being, essence, concept* – that represent the gradual coming of the *Spirit to himself*. This idea strongly influenced young Heidegger. This is one of the reasons why Heidegger called Hegel the *most radical* and at the same time the *last Greek*.² This, however, bears on a serious problem. The difference in understanding the Greek nature in the philosophical doctrines of Hegel and Heidegger is too big, or in fact, contradictory. Hegel's *historical self-consciousness*, culminating in the self-consciousness of freedom, is different from Heidegger's conception of the *history of Being* as a gradational history of metaphysics of the *oblivion of Being*. While Hegel stresses the continuous development of human thought, Heidegger makes a *step back* to the peculiar *twilight of Presocratic morning* in which he tries to reveal philosophical depth by means of the light penetrating the shell of *logos*.

Heidegger never deals with the historical necessity in a way characterizing Hegel's philosophy. Therefore, Gadamer is right in saying that Heidegger does not perceive history as a struggled-through past in which the present meets itself in the totality of its implementation. „In his later works

¹ Ibid., 107.

² Gadamer, H.-G. 2007. „Hermeneutical and the Ontological deference”. In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Gadamer Reader*, 369.

Heidegger quite intentionally avoids the expressions *history* (*Geschichte*) and *historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*), which since Hegel have dominated reflection upon the 'end of metaphysics' and which we associate with the problem of historical relativism. Instead, he speaks of the '*fate*' (*Geschick*) and 'our being fated' (*Geschicklichkeit*) as if to underscore the fact that here it is not a matter of possibilities of human existence which we ourselves seize upon – not a matter of historical consciousness and self-consciousness. Rather it is a matter of what is allotted to man and by which he is so very much determined that all self-determination and self-consciousness remains subordinate."¹

Gadamer characterizes Heidegger's metaphysics as the *oblivion of Being*. The history of metaphysics then means the *disintegration of the growing oblivion of Being*, which brings us to the necessity of thought as in Hegel, but from the opposite end. Hegel starts with Plato and Aristotle, while Heidegger reaches beyond Plato and Aristotle – to the beginnings of thought. By implication, Heraclitus and Parmenides are not considered *philosophers* by Heidegger; they are more than philosophers – they are *greater thinkers*.² Both Hegel and Gadamer are of a different view. Gadamer rejects Heidegger's *forced construction* of research into the history of philosophy, and looks for his own philosophical approach to the historical-philosophical heritage. No doubt, he succeeded in his effort.

Gadamer's assessment of Heidegger's attitude to Hegel also pertains to the use of the *German language*, an issue that was common to both of them. „But just as Hegel is able to conjure up speculative truths out of the simplest turns of speech in German, e.g., *an sich*, *für sich*, *an und für sich*, or from words like *Wahr-nehmung* and *Bestimmung*, so too Hei-

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: „Hegel and Heidegger.” In: Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hegel's Dialectic*, 109.

² Heidegger, M.: *What is Philosophy?*, 53. Also Grondin, J. 2001. *Von Heidegger zu Gadamer*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 46–70.

degger is constantly listening for the hidden message which language gives to thought. And both are thus fascinated by the splendid example of Heraclitus.”¹ However, while Hegel discovers in Heraclitus the power of *logos* implementable as dialectic, Heidegger employs *logos* as a starting point for his critique of Hegel’s dialectic. This issue remains an open problem for the late Heidegger. Gadamer points out this fact in several of his essays, and also cites Heidegger’s words from the letter of December 2, 1971: „I myself do not know clearly enough how my ‘position’ vis-à-vis Hegel is to be determined – it would not be enough to put it down as a ‘counterposition’; the determination of ‘position’ is connected with the question concerning the mystery of the ‘beginning’ (*Anfangs*); it is far more difficult because – simpler than the explanation Hegel gives for it before the start of the ‘movement’ in his *Logik* -- I have repeatedly opposed talk about the ‘breakdown’ of the Hegelian system. What has broken down, and that means to have sunk away, is what came after Hegel – Nietzsche included.”²

Hegel was to Heidegger a permanent philosophical *provocation*. In Gadamer’s opinion this is manifested in two basic dimensions – one, in the integration of history into his philosophical teaching and two, in the mysterious and opaque dialectic.³ While Heidegger concentrates on the *fate* (*Geschick*), Hegel focuses on comprehensible *history*. Here too, Gadamer inclines to Hegel rather than to Heidegger. This mainly follows from his unambiguous standpoint to the development of thought about *historical consciousness* and from the emphatic requirement presented in Gadamer’s project of philosophical hermeneutics that „dialectic has to be retrieved in hermeneutics.”⁴

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hegel and Heidegger*, 114.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Heritage of Hegel*, 455 - 456.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Bildende und sprachliche Kunst am Ende des XX. Jahrhunderts*, 55.

⁴ Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Heritage of Hegel*, 341.

Heidegger responds to this idea by saying that both metaphysics and *dialectic* should survive (*verwinden*). He draws Gadamer's attention to the fact that the *language of thought* should articulate Being and its difference from being, but it does not do so because the word itself is attuned to the language of being. Gadamer assumes that Heidegger makes him speak of the *mysterious metaphors*. Therefore, he asks him: „But does not a metaphor become enigmatic and puzzling precisely by reason of the fact that it becomes dissociated as a name from the flow of the discourse? Perhaps the poverty of language (in Heidegger) itself arises from the ideal of naming and ultimately gets overcome by itself, as it were, in the dialogical movement of thought?”¹

Gadamer's assessment of Heidegger's philosophical ideas presents the work of that *magician of Messkirch* in a positive-critical dimension. Gadamer does not diminish his contribution to the German thinking of the 20th century, but at the same time he realizes his limits. Gadamer points out Heidegger's *philosophical radicalism*, which was used as a method of pondering over the history of West-European thinking in order to open space to philosophy in its effort to answer the question of what is Being. Heidegger's philosophical mind of enormous power tried to persuade his fellow philosophers that the way of thought characterizing European philosophy following Plato and Aristotle is a *fatal way of the Western world predetermined by ancient Greeks*. By implication, „the one-sided way of thought that established itself in Europe in the meantime is not any infatuation of the modern age leading eventually to the critical problems of capitalism or colonialism and to the ecological crisis ... In the meantime we found out that it was western metaphysics, that is, philosophy that from its inception prepared the ground for the later critical situation. Heidegger discusses it within the *history of Being* (*seinsgeschichtlich*): metaphysical thought that understands the question of Being as the Be-

¹ Ibid., 457.

ing of being makes such a step from the hide and oblivion of Being that makes decisions on everything.”¹

Gadamer considers Heidegger’s position as *radical and courageous*. At the same time, he emphatically, although not so bombastically as Heidegger, presents a view different from that of his *great teacher*. Gadamer is different mainly in asking whether Plato can really be considered a mere fore-runner of Aristotle’s substantial metaphysics. Furthermore, he asks whether „Aristotle can only be considered a founder of metaphysics. Shouldn’t he also be viewed as a founder of practical philosophy?”² Gadamer will not hear a word against Plato, who should play a typically Heideggerean *negative role* in the history of Western philosophy. On the contrary, the never-ending fascination with the work of the giant of Greek philosophy stems, in Gadamer’s opinion, from the fact that „Plato is on the borderline where dialectic is... the art of both discussion and railing against the misuse of rhetoric and speech, i.e., against sophistics. Plato’s language does not in fact rest on judgments, but on questions and answers.”³

Another problem discussed by Gadamer is Heidegger’s attitude to Aristotle. Gadamer attended Heidegger’s *Marburg lectures* in 1923 the aim of which was *phenomenological comprehension* of Aristotle. This promised a true *philosophical revolution*⁴ as a result of unveiling a completely different Aristotle compared to what had been known before. When Gadamer reconsidered these lectures in 1989, he perceived them as a *guide* for his own philosophical development towards philosophical hermeneutics. The greatness of Heidegger’s philosophical inspiration is here reflected as a

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Evropa a Oikúmené*, 97.

² Ibid., 97.

³ Ibid., 99.

⁴ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Heideggerův „teologický spis“ z mládí*, 4. Also cf. Dostal, R.J. 2002. „Gadamer’s Relation to Heidegger and Phenomenology.” In: *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Dostal, R.J. (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 247–263.

principled critique „directed against the conventional and seemingly historical-objective comprehension of Aristotle on the basis of the Neo-Scholastic tradition...”¹

In the above mentioned text Gadamer grasps the basic philosophical approach of Heidegger to Aristotle when saying that he has not approached Aristotle as an important *historical object*. In his view, Heidegger started to develop his „radical questioning by taking the contemporary philosophical questions as a point of departure, and by reflecting the pressure that resulted from the concept of life which was so inherently present in Germany of that time. The problem of life self-explanation, labeled as the *facticity of Dasein* by Heidegger (Faktizität des Daseins), becomes a guide for a brave sketch in which Aristotle serves him to build the foundations of philosophical and phenomenological anthropology.”² At that time, Heidegger wanted to justify his return to Aristotle as a condition for understanding the Christian history of the West and, at the same time, to comprehend our own present. The purpose was „to grant the floor mainly to anthropology, drawing on the facticity of the lived reality, as presented especially in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *Ethics* by way of the understanding of life of our own present.”³

This *Aristotelian seminar* meant to Gadamer an introduction to the fundamental meaning of *phronesis* – the practical knowledge. He perceived it as a prologue to what was later elaborated mainly in the concept of *judgment*. Gadamer learned from Heidegger that there are only two highest forms of how to *be cognizant* – „on the one hand, *sophia* – wisdom, on the other hand, *phronesis* – practical clarification of one’s own life.”⁴

What the young Gadamer failed to realize at Heidegger’s lectures, the late Gadamer is very well aware of. In

¹ Gadmer, H.-G.: *Heideggerův „teologický spis“ z mládí*, 5.

² Ibid., 5.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

particular, Heidegger's emphasis was on *sophia*. In other words, Aristotelean ontology was preferred to the actuality of practical philosophy. This is one of the major differences between Heidegger's and Gadamer's philosophies. The major part of Heidegger's audience did not understand the objectives pursued by their lecturer. The late Gadamer can see it very well: „Aristotle's introductory chapters apparently pursue the objective to show that an extensive ontological discussion of the question concerning the concept of Being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* relies on the care of human existence for itself and for its Being.”¹

After a long lapse of time Gadamer is able to objectively conclude that Heidegger took pains to explain to his students that all modern age philosophy as well as Christianity with its theology made use of „borrowed means that go back to the original way of questioning in Greek philosophy. In Heidegger's view, these means are not sufficient for the comprehension of the awareness of life and the religious consciousness of the present-day man.”²

Gadamer assumes that the *suggestive power* of Heidegger's ideas precluded the audience from understanding what Heidegger actually strived for in his lectures as well as in his *Being and time* four years later. Thus – what actually did Heidegger strive for? He wishes to understand that „Aristotle meant to Heidegger rather a traditional figure that concealed from the western thought the way to itself and precluded it from finding a free way out.”³

The late Gadamer succeeds in unveiling two crucial motifs of Heidegger's ideas in relation to Aristotle's life-long philosophical work – 1. *critique of Aristotle's concept of Being and critique of the divine as being*, and 2. *appeal for the authenticity of existence to be rediscovered in Aristotle's factual existence*. At that time, Heidegger still believed that when he was trying to

¹ Ibid., 7.

² Ibid., 7.

³ Ibid., 7.

pursue the direction out of himself - to something, to the existence – he was elaborating on Husserl's phenomenological theory of *intentionality*. In Gadamer's view, the pitfall of the overall Heidegger's philosophical doctrine – which he later did not adhere to – bears on one *single* expression, which was fairly popular at that time, notably *making transparent*: „The clarity searched for by human existence coming from itself should primarily consist in us being transparent to ourselves, and in this way we are – irrespective of all of our dependence - able to grasp our own opportunity. The late Heidegger appears to realize more and more that the very essence of history and of human fate is, in a way, the last opacity.”¹

Gadamer attaches great importance to the *ontological aspect* of Heidegger's work, a road followed meticulously all through his life in order to admit eventually that this road leads to an *impasse*. Gadamer aptly refers to Heidegger's effort, characteristic of his work from the very beginnings, to prove, mainly to Husserl, that Aristotle was a *phenomenologist*. In this way, he tries to cope with the then neo-scholastic and protestant theology. All this hides the central philosophical motif of Heideggerean way of philosophizing – *the question of Being*. The significance and the insurmountable difficulties of this philosophical problem are discussed by Gadamer in a number of his essays devoted to Heidegger, characteristically labelled in the collected volume – *Heidegger's roads*. No doubt, there were various *roads* followed in the search for an answer to one of the most demanding philosophical questions – the *question of Being*, which modifies the problem of the *ontological difference* in a substantial way.

Gadamer came across this philosophical term in Heidegger's early Freiburg-Marburg lectures, and considered it to be a *magical word*. The radical distinction between the *ontic* and the *ontological* accompanied all Heidegger's work. In his

¹ Ibid., 7.

later essay *Hermeneutics and the ontological difference* (1989) Gadamer writes that „over and over again Heidegger used the expression ‘ontological difference’ like a pregnant symbolic term. One never spoke of ‘theological’ difference. No, the first minting of this new Heideggerian term was too strong and exclusive. But if one looks at the matter more closely, one still has a right to ask about what *das Sein* (Being) means and at the same time what it meant by the divine God.”¹ Gadamer points out, however, that apart from the expression of *ontological difference* there is one more term of the young Heidegger that attracted him, in particular *being in totality*. Although it seems to be a rather vague formulation, it does indicate something very important, something that should be kept in mind in assessing Heidegger’s philosophy. In Gadamer’s view, „by using such terms Heidegger avoided sharpening the meaning of his terms too much, for at that time he did not want to differentiate unequivocally between *Sein* and *Seiende*, the way that he later took true pleasure in doing, such that in the end *Sein* was seen as not only quite different from *das Seiende* (concrete beings) and their mode of being (*Seiendheit*) but was even written with a *y*, as *das Seyn*. In the terminology of the later Heidegger, all these other expressions articulated the being of what at that time he called ‘beings as a whole’ (*das Seiende im Ganzen*).”²

Gadamer assumes that these Heideggerean concepts can be best understood if they are related to the beginnings of Greek philosophical thought. This enables us to avoid the application of the terminological accuracy of the later philosophical concept of *Being* to the beginnings of philosophical thought; instead we are supposed to use the term *being in totality*. Gadamer considers it to be a highly suitable formulation for the goal expressed by Parmenides in his philosophical poem in the beginnings of Greek philoso-

¹ Gadamer, H.-G: *Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference*, 358.

² *Ibid.*, 358.

phizing. „There the topic is Being (*Sein*), and the term for this in Greek is *to on* (*das Seiende*, the being of beings). What is striking about this word is that it is in the singular.”¹ In this way, assumes Gadamer, Parmenides refused the former Greek tradition of Asia Minor, i.e., the tradition of cosmological, astronomic, and geographical knowledge of the world. „Heidegger’s term *das Seiende im Ganzen* (beings in general, beings as a whole) described in a striking way exactly what Parmenides’ poem was presenting. It was not inquiring there into what the many (specific) beings were, whether water or air or whatever, and how all this was held together in some kind of equilibrium... This neuter word, this singular *das Seiende*, is the first step toward a concept (zum Begriff). Heidegger at that time consciously *held back* from his later formulation *das Sein* – perhaps in order that *das Sein* would not be misunderstood as the being of beings, as what – Being (*Was-Sein*) in the metaphysical sense. Parmenides has in fact described *das Sein* as this ‘being as a whole’, as everywhere proportionally filling up everything like a single huge Ball. Nowhere do you find nothing.”²

Therefore, Gadamer points out that when Heidegger later speaks about the *ontological difference* he primarily refers to the *difference between Being and all being*. Importantly, in 1924 Heidegger did not perceive ontological difference as a special act of his own thought. He perceived it as a difference we face rather than something done by someone. By implication, our thought is from the very beginning on the *road* of distinguishing between being and Being.

Heidegger had the strongest influence upon Gadamer and affected Gadamer’s overall philosophizing by his early conception of the *hermeneutics of facticity*. Strangely enough, Gadamer’s central philosophical theme became the problem of *life* rather than the problem of *Being*, and he adhered to it in all his works. Heidegger’s early position was that

¹ Ibid., 359.

² Ibid., 359.

„what one had to do instead was to find the roots of philosophical questioning in (the being of) the concrete, factual human Dasein (*faktischen menschlichen Dasein*). This is what ‘facticity’ means. The concrete, factual existence of the human (*das Dasein des Menschen*).”¹ Gadamer perceives this view as an effort to bring metaphysics *back to life*. Gadamer’s different philosophical position in terms of *hermeneutic facticity* later appears to be crucial in his work. It is something that distinguishes him meaningfully from the *philosophical violence that dominates* Heidegger’s doctrine.

Gadamer discusses this point in several of his essays. Perhaps the best articulation of the difference between his and Heidegger’s philosophies can be found in his idea that „*the paramount principle of philosophical hermeneutics... is that we never can completely say what we would like to.*”² Heidegger was convinced of the opposite all his life. He believed that *he* would be the one to provide an answer to the only question of philosophy that makes sense – *What is Being?* The effort to accomplish this goal was accompanied with so many human and theoretical acts of enforcement, which Gadamer could not but speak of.

That is why he writes, for example, that he has „not been able to accept many of Heidegger’s linguistic violences with language and ... powerfull interpretations ...”³ chiefly bound to Plato and Aristotle, but some other philosophers, too. Gadamer’s approach was an opposite one. He did not try to pass the intellectual development of the West as a predefined road; instead he took pains to enter into a *dialogue* with the giants of philosophical thought and to take part in the effort to identify the proper language for what he was examining. This indicates a big difference between Gadamer and Heidegger. This is also related, *inter alia*, to Gadamer’s view that *the art of understanding is primarily the art*

¹ Ibid., 362.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Europa a Oikumené*, 91.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference*, 370.

of listening, i.e., something that was not Heidegger's *virtue*. Gadamer gives a testimony about their *exchange of views*: „We have never had a successful conversation (emphasis V. L.). Heidegger was so suggestive in pursuing his point without any digression that I could not find the right connection due to the concurrence of my ideas.”¹

In contrast to Heidegger, Gadamer always preferred a *dialogue* aimed at the understanding of each other. However, its basis must be the understanding of oneself. We must be well aware of the fact that the moment we want to say something to the other party with a chance of being understood we are endangered with *the petrification of our notions*. Only if we try to understand each other, we implement *hermeneutic experience*, i.e. „we must break down resistance in ourselves if we wish to hear the other as the other.”² Heidegger only *listened to* his own questions and his own answers. He was not interested in listening to other views. On the contrary, he thrust his views upon others. This is the reason for numerous *philosophical violations* of Heideggerean provenance that eventually led to an unavoidable breakdown of this way of philosophizing, which searched for an answer to the only fundamental philosophical question: *What is Being?*

This explains why Heidegger *did not bear* one of the best philosophical treatments of this question offered in the 20th century German philosophy. It was formulated by Gadamer in his essay *Truth and Method* (1960): „... language is a medium where I and world meet or, rather, manifest their original belonging together... This activity of the thing itself is the real speculative movement that takes hold of the speaker. We have sought the subjective reflection of it in speech. We can now see that this activity of the thing itself, the coming into language of meaning, points to a universal ontological structure, namely to the basic nature

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Evropa a Oikúmené*, 91.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference*, 371.

of everything toward which understanding can be directed. *Being that can be understood is language.* The hermeneutical phenomenon here projects its own universality back onto the ontological constitution of what is understood, determining it in a universal sense as *language* and determining its own relation to beings as interpretation.”¹

Heidegger’s philosophical work aimed at mastering the question of Being is brought to its peak in the 1960s and 1970s in the form of an almost total resignation that is easily spotted in his posthumously published interview for Spiegel (1976). This was later confirmed by Gadamer in his essay *Europe and Oikumene* where he wrote that „towards the end of his life Heidegger went so far as to *stop using the word philosophy* (emphasis V. L.), because the task of driving metaphysics as a form of conceptual thinking, established in Greece by Plato and Aristotle, to new horizons of the future appeared to him as irresolvable.”²

Gadamer realizes that *a meaningful dialogue* with the history of philosophy cannot be violent. The point is whether we at all wish to primarily *listen to* the original *voice* of this part of the history of human thought without forcing upon it those questions that guarantee the answers we expect. Gadamer provides masterful arguments in favour of his position when confronting Hegel and Heidegger in his essay *Hegel and Heidegger* (1971). He examines whether and how Heidegger’s approach can be integrated into *Hegel’s empire of thought*.³ German philosophy of the 20th century cannot be comprehended without this type of confrontation. Heidegger’s persistence in dealing with Hegel is definitely not of peripheral importance. In a sense, there was just one *rival* to Heidegger’s philosophy. It could not be

¹ Gadamer, H.-G. 2006. *Truth and Method*. Transl. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall. London – New York: Continuum, 469 – 470. Cf. Gadamer, H.-G.: Text and Interpretation. In: Gadamer, H. –G.: *The Gadamer Reader*, 162.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Europa a Oikúmené*, 86.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Hegel and Heidegger*, 103.

anybody else but Hegel who – to him – meant the culmination of West-European metaphysics. Where the two philosophers are of *spirit* is the area of *integrating history in the fundamental philosophical inquiries*.¹

In Gadamer's view, this is in no way accidental, because the nature of philosophical knowledge in the 19th century is unthinkable without *historical awareness*. In this particular case, i.e., the examination of history through the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy, Heidegger gets the short end of the stick. The historical self-reflection of philosophy elaborated by Hegel has been unparalleled. Gadamer admires Hegel's unification of nature and history under the *rule of the dominant* philosophical concept of *logos* originally used by the Greeks for the justification of the *first philosophy*. Hegel's recognition of the significance of *reason* in history and the reintroduction of the dialectic as a philosophical method for the examination of problems of this world (nature, history and man) is what made him, in a sense, an unrivaled philosophical personality.

In the Hegel-Heidegger confrontation, Gadamer clearly favours Hegel. He believes that Heidegger's historical self-awareness is deliberately developed in opposition to Hegel's approach to absolute knowledge, including its culmination in the form of self-awareness of freedom. Heidegger guides us purposefully to the *dusk of Presocratic morning*² in order to demonstrate that a *return* to the beginnings of thought is evidently ahistorical, mediated by a thoroughly thought-up *end*. Therefore, Gadamer asks the question: „Does not history always present a continuity? Coming to be in passing away?“³

Gadamer assumes that Heidegger later deliberately avoids the terms *history* and *historicity*, which in Hegel's philosophy form firm foundations for philosophizing. Heidegger comes up with a different couple of concepts – „*fate*“

¹ Ibid., 104.

² Ibid., 108.

³ Ibid., 109.

(*Geschick*) and „our being fated” (*Geschicklichkeit*) that suggest a sort of human resignation to and reconciliation with the events around us. As a result, Heidegger’s conception of the *history of metaphysics* as the *history of the oblivion of Being*¹ is not acceptable to Gadamer: it disregards all of the complex and contradictory reality of the actual *life*, including all its advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, claims Gadamer, *the dialectic has to be returned to hermeneutics*.

It is therefore understandable that Gadamer’s conception of the history of philosophy is closer to Hegel than to Heidegger, and that „our understanding of history is not only a matter of acquiring knowledge and familiarity or of the development of the historical sense; it is also a matter of the shaping of our destiny... the dialogic structure of all understanding and all agreement... has proven to be of such wide-ranging importance that our relationship to tradition and especially to the thought history of Western metaphysics is modified by it. Even what appears in Heidegger’s perspective to be a growing forgetfulness of being still makes a case for this partnership in the conversation of thought with itself (emphasis V. L.).”²

Gadamer attempted to develop his own conception of philosophical approach to the history of philosophy – *philosophy of the history of philosophy* which, in confrontation with Hegel’s and Heidegger’s *strong models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy ranks among the most significant *weak models*. His model does not come up with any universal model of history in general, and the history of philosophy in particular, but it is characterized by enduring effort to *listen to* – *to adjust oneself to the voice of the history of philosophy* in order to maintain a meaningful *dialogue* without violence, because the history of philosophy is a *message* of the past, and we should take pains to understand it time and time again. This is the only way how we can better understand ourselves. Philosophy should enable us to understand „that there are many things we cannot know and that with this

¹ Ibid., 109.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *The Heritage of Hegel*, 328, 340.

knowledge we must live..."¹ It was so in the past, it is so today and, apparently, there also will be things in the future that will defy our understanding. That is precisely why we should keep in mind our responsibility for the future in close connection with the past, including its inexhaustible and diverse forms also affected by philosophical thought. Gadamer maintains that philosophy „must be a critique of traditional attempts to think, is the actualization of such hermeneutics, which blends the total structures worked out in semantic analysis into the continuum of translating and comprehending within which we live and pass away.”² Furthermore, „*in every new present, history must be written anew.*”³ This also applies to the history of philosophy. The critical dimension of philosophy in Gadamer’s intellectual message is inherent in his *weak model* of philosophy of the history of philosophy, which is an integral part of his overall *hermeneutic philosophy*.

¹ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Bibbende und sprachliche Kunst am Ende des XX Jahrhunderts*, 63.

² Gadamer, H.-G.: *Philosophical Heremenutics*, 94.

³ Gadamer, H.-G.: *Text and Interpretation*, 160.

Conclusions

Our examination of *strong and weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy from Hegel to Gadamer has revealed a number of serious philosophical problems that should be paid much more attention by historians of philosophy. The most characteristic feature of *philosophy of the history of philosophy* is identified by the observation that *philosophical conception* of the *history of philosophy* has become an integral part of the system of Hegel's philosophy, including the principle of the *unity* of philosophy and the history of philosophy. Hegel's idea that for philosophy its own history is an indispensable and irreplaceable internal component, became a theoretical basis which, in different modifications, has been accepted by all the other *strong model* representatives, including Schelling, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger.

The basic principle (*unity* of philosophy and the history of philosophy) is not adhered to so rigorously and, in a sense, violently in *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy. The unity of philosophy and history of philosophy is much looser in the weak models. Hegel's history of philosophy itself was philosophy, a part of the *philosophy of history* whose aim was to prove the presence of *reason* also in the history of philosophy. Consequently, Hegel perceived the history of philosophy as the *most inherent* that can be found and understood in the world's history.

Thus, if the history of philosophy is defined as *the most inherent* in the world's history it assumes an indispensable place in the contemporary philosophy. Hegel's philosophy of the history of philosophy as *philosophizing of philosophy* is a metatheoretical motion *within* the objective of historical-philosophical thought, which is in no way an external-empirical description of the historical-philosophical process. Instead, it pursues its understanding as an integral part of addressing the most relevant current philosophical problems. In Hegel's conception, the history of philosophy was

put on pedestal of the most important theoretical efforts that also decisively co-constituted the spiritual climate in the history of mankind. This fact can be recognized in all of the examined models, although the conclusions of the individual models considerably vary, and sometimes they even contradict each other.

This is the consequence of an unequal application of the principle of the *unity of philosophy and the history of philosophy* owing to different philosophical conceptions, methods and goals of the individual philosophical conceptions. What is, however, common to all of them is the effort to come to grips with philosophical problems and to justify one's philosophical conception through the history of philosophy. An important role is played by the *teleological principle* with its updating relevance. Hegel makes use of it most consequently, but it is also employed by the other *strong models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy. Nietzsche, for example, points out that the past can only be explained from the greatest *power of the present*. Furthermore, Husserl takes pains to account for teleology through the historical development of philosophy, in particular, the modern age philosophy. The *teleological principle* is almost totally absent in the *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy.

The *strong models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy deal with the philosophical problems in theoretical confrontation with the history of philosophy to the degree, which obscures the specific historical reality in many important respects. A case in point is Heidegger's philosophy, which in its treatment of the history of philosophy, according to Gadamer, manifests *violence* of the thinker driven by his own questions, primarily serving his own comprehension.

Hegel's methodological maxim of philosophy of the history of philosophy – „one should know what to search for in the old philosophical systems ...” – is implemented more or less consequently in all strong and weak models of philosophy of the history of philosophy. This facilitates the under-

standing of why the historical-philosophical thought is *inherent* in the development of philosophical teaching. Hegel's history of philosophy as philosophy, perceived as an integral part of the growing historical-philosophical knowledge is an inevitable *system-creating* form of the existence of philosophy.

Another factor that contributes to a common unifying platform for strong and weak models of philosophy of the history of philosophy is a critical reception of Hegel's philosophy in general, and his historical-philosophical conception, in particular. Without reference to Hegel both strong and weak models of philosophy of the history of philosophy would be incomprehensible.

It is therefore understandable that Schelling analyzes Hegel's philosophy in order to provide its overall critical interpretation. The philosophical work of Marx, especially his early achievements laying emphasis on a critical account of the ancient philosophy (mainly Democritus and Epicurus), would be unthinkable without a critical reference to Hegel's philosophy. Nietzsche's model of philosophy of the history of philosophy heavily relies on the refusal of Hegel's monumentalist conception of history. Nietzsche was the first to unveil the *problem-oriented message* of the classics of the ancient philosophy, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, which enabled him to highlight, in contrast to Hegel, the significance of Presocratic philosophy.

By his emphasis on *reason*, rationality and its place in the modern times from the perspective of transcendental phenomenology, Husserl radically reestablishes in philosophy the original Hegelean motif of the importance of the history of philosophy for the development of human culture. A major philosophical confrontation with Hegel is offered by Heidegger. We witness, in a way, a total *philosophical struggle* for a true comprehension of the *origins of philosophy* and the most significant results of *Greek philosophy* in general. Heidegger's effort to provide a new account of Anaximander, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle is unthinkable.

able without reference to Hegel and his account of Greek philosophy as an indispensable basis of European philosophizing.

The representatives of the *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy also pay much attention to Hegel's philosophy in general, and his historical-philosophical conception, in particular. The most important among them is Patočka who provided a highly concentrated analysis of Hegel's model of philosophy of the history of philosophy.

The strong models of philosophy of the history of philosophy foreground the question of the applicability of an absolute referential system to the history of philosophy. Hegel's model is built in compliance with such a system. Schelling's and Marx's models are less rigorous, but also have pretensions to this system. Nietzsche's and Husserl's models similarly pursue the same objective. Heidegger's model of the philosophical conception of the history of philosophy has been, following Hegel, the most *violent* one in the history of philosophical thought. The history of philosophy is, in Heidegger's approach, fully subjected to the search for an answer to the question *What is Being*.

The weak models of philosophy of the history of philosophy, as developed by Fink, Patočka and Gadamer, directly respond to numerous problems identified in Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophical conceptions, including their account of the history of philosophy (with a special emphasis on Presocratic philosophy and classical Greek philosophy – Democritus, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle). At the same time, they are, in an interesting way, revitalized through return to Hegel for the sake of re-establishing critical meaningfulness of the questions of the *philosophy of history*. The unity of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history in their philosophical conceptions has established a theoretical space for a new philosophical treatment of the problems of man and his *spiritual history* with clear understanding that *history must be rewritten by each new present*.

In their *interpretation* of the history of philosophy, the representatives of *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy did not aim to *predetermine* the meaning (so characteristic of the *strong models*) instead they took pains to *search* for it. They did not understand the history of Western philosophy as a *predetermined route*. All their intellectual vigour was focused on a *dialogue* with it. In addition, they realized that *the dream of a rigid philosophy and absolute metaphysics must be abandoned* because man neither is nor can be a *shepherd of Being*. He only can be a *living human being* whose defining characteristics are mainly *work, love, humanity (morality) and history*.

An active influence of the history of philosophical thought in the process of the development of the individual forms of philosophizing most strikingly concentrates on the main question of philosophy of the history of philosophy – *What is philosophy (metaphysics)?* The treatment of this question via self-critical reflection of the history of philosophy offers several interesting ways of comparison of the achievements of *the strong and the weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy. The *strong models* seem to have exhausted their essential creative capacity. New philosophical inspirations are predominantly connected with the *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy. Fink, Patočka and Gadamer were the first to set out on this journey of philosophizing and showed its extensive theoretical potential. The development of this way of philosophizing in the second half of the 20th century can also be found in the works of other great philosophers, such as Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida. But this is another chapter of the *weak models* of philosophy of the history of philosophy, a chapter which has not yet been sufficiently examined from the historical-philosophical perspective.

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Názov: Philosophy of the History of Philosophy
(Strong and Weak Models)

Autor: prof. PhDr. Vladimír Leško, CSc.

Vydavateľ: Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach

Technický redaktor: PhDr. Eugen Andreanský, PhD.

Preklad: prof. PhDr. Pavol Štekauer, DrSc.

Náklad: 100 ks

Rozsah strán: 408

Vydanie: prvé

Tlač: EQUILIBRIA, s. r. o.

ISBN 978-80-7097-872-6

EAN 9788070978726



ISBN 978-80-7097-872-6



9 788070 978726