Cognition in Moral Conduct

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Edícia kognitívne štúdia

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1. Introduction

Ethics as a philosophical discipline has undergone many transformations in history.[1] Contemporary philosophical ethics takes into account the results of other sciences, such as psychology, neuroscience, genetics, education, law and psychiatry. Ethics has become an interdisciplinary study. In countries with a strong Christian tradition, it is necessary take into account the theological ethics as well. Ethics is an important discipline, for without it a man loses his basic value orientation.

It is necessary to distinguish between the current professional discussion in the field and the classical presentation of philosophical ethics. The presented publication is limited in pages by the sponsoring authority, therefore, it provides an insight into various ethical issues and it offers incentives for further college study. Only keywords are offered here and there for the further study, because it was not possible to do otherwise. The bibliography mentioned in the text may serve students as the standard for the study of philosophical ethics. Ethics is usually understood as the study of criteria that helps mankind to distinguish between good and evil. Currently, there are a number of issues (e.g. genetics) that do not allow for rapid black–and–white vision of the world. It is not possible to offer correct and simple answers to a vast number of partial moral issues. Ethics requires time, in which it is proven,

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1) Cf. Remišová, A.: (ed.), Dejiny etického myšlenka v Európe a USA, Kalligram, Bratislava 2008.

whether the espoused ethical theories were well justified or not. Ethicist draws his knowledge from the philosophical traditions of past generations, from the works of prominent thinkers and current interdisciplinary studies. *Modern times call for a reflection on ethical pluralism* with a question of its legitimacy or its relativity and the sufficiency of justification. Ethics would never be a dictate to others; a significant aspect is its *acceptance by society*. *Ethics is associated with cognition* of itself, with the cognition of the world and number of other contexts in the field of human knowledge, including the cognition of *free choice* of individuals and society. There is a variety of approaches how to address epistemological issues that were pursued in antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance period and modern times, as well as contemporary authors. Gradually, everyone in historical context seeks a credible interpretation of facts and cognition while building on his predecessors and contemporaries. The exception is the period of classical ancient philosophy, which thanks to ancient scholars and thinkers has established the first findings of epistemology within their possibilities, such as the search for the essence of the world and its origin, the meaning and human ability to identify and formulate opinions and ideas into a coherent theory as a possible legacy for future generations and a challenge of a specific period in the development of human community. The fact that their legacy has not been lost, but has become an important point for all subsequent thinkers, is evident from the history of European philosophical thought until now. The importance of the theory of cognition is demonstrated by the fact that at present a terminological differentiation is being used for specific geographic areas. Apart from the familiar epistemology, the Anglo–Saxon world, for example, uses the concept of epistemology, the Germanophone area uses the term of noetics. From the perspective of the philosophy of history, it is very interesting to observe the conclusions of different epistemologies, from Plato to the contemporary, submitted by philosophers such as M. Heidegger.

The presented text "Cognition in moral conduct" highlights the importance of the relationship between morality and human activity in the ethical dimension. The text is aimed at existing different and yet continuous comments of philosophers who have dealt with the problem of cognition in moral conduct.

2. The Origins of Cognitive Science

Keywords: *science, ethics, interdisciplinarity, knowledge*

Since its creation, human society has undergone a complex and gradual development. During this development, it is possible to capture the changes that have been beneficial in some periods and harmful and stagnant in others. Throughout the whole evolution, there is a noticeable quality of the self–preservation of the human race. The efforts of individuals or groups of individuals for cognition of their own potential in order to create a theoretical potential on the field of science may be observed at various times. These social efforts are complemented by the cultural maturity of the society, exceptional individuals in particular who were able to realize the importance of progress and enriched science and thinking with new progressive knowledge. This conduct applies to science as a whole.

Science has its own specifics. Bacon divided science into humanities and exact. Within his classification it is possible to talk about individual fields of study, which he attempted to isolate and point at founders of these sciences. Let us not forget the traditional classification of sciences by Aristotle, who created the first classification of sciences. And we may hold a long discussion on the leading personalities of European science, the results of scientific research and its benefits.

In the preface to the Czech edition of P. Thagard's book[2] it is stated: "The emergence of cognitive science at the end of the 20th century is a direct consequence of the development of mutual interaction, as well as conflicts of several seemingly unrelated disciplines, mostly born in the just–completed century. At the birth and during early development of cognitive science there prevailed an attempt not only to organize these disciplines one next to the other, but to interconnect them productively, so that a new knowledge might emerge from their mutual interactions."[3]

It is possible to agree with this fact. It is the consistent interconnection of those disciplines that have reached their success in the late 19th century. It was psychology (experimental psychology, which has its origins in Leipzig in 1879), as well as philosophy and exact sciences, which have resulted in many branches of medicine, cybernetics, biology, etc.

Science as a system of knowledge in a given field has its own terminology, the boundaries of acquired knowledge and also its own historical tradition. The oldest system of knowledge and theories about the world and human nature is offered by philosophy, from which psychology separated as a science in the late 19th century. At the same time the expansion of natural sciences occurs and they established criteria of scholarship and knowledge for the following period. In his book Thagard writes that: "Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary activity concerned with thought and intelligence and it includes philosophy, psychology[4], artificial intelligence, neuroscience, linguistics and anthropology. It acquired the form of scientific discipline in the mid–seventies with the establishment of the Society for Cognitive Science (…) and the establishment of the Cognitive Science journal."[5]

When we are moving at the level of cognitive science, we are able to solve the questions of thinking and cognitive processes. Socrates'

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2) Cf. Thagard, P.: Úvod do kognitivní vědy. Mysl a myšlení. Portál, Praha 2001.

3) Op. cit., p. 7.
4) Cf. Slaby, J., Stephan, A. et al.: *Affektive Intentionalität. Beiträge zur welterschließene Funktion der menschlichen Gefühle*, Mentis, Paderborn 2011.
5) Op. cit., p. 11.

thinking already became the basis for the so–called Socratic school and his best pupil Plato. Socrates argued that a person has his soul in his power and the main task of knowledge is self–knowledge. Hence Socrates' famous dictum: Know Thyself. "Knowledge is the determination of common for a variety of things. Knowledge is therefore the concept of the subject and it is achieved by the definition of the concept. This definition is particularly important in ethics. According to Socrates, not only each specific action should be directed by a known purpose, but there should be one common and supreme purpose, to which all individual purposes are subjected, and which is the supreme absolute good."[6]

Ethics of Socrates is aimed at conduct that is based on knowledge and virtuous behavior. "Human behavior is determined by how a person conceives nobility and goodness; there is no such person, who, even though he knows he can do something better, would do worse."[7]

Socrates' legacy remained a topic for future generations even from the point of view of philosophical thought. The main problem of Socrates' thinking lies in the self–knowledge. By rejecting the knowledge of the outside world, Socrates set the problem of the method of self–knowledge for his pupils as well. Wisdom is a perfect knowledge that directs man to the knowledge of moral behavior, which is driven by its purpose. Everything thus leads to the highest good. A person ascends to it from knowledge of virtue (arête), through daimonion (a sort of inner warning voice in every man) and gradually reaches happiness (eudaimonia) as the highest purpose.

As Thagard states: "Attempts to understand what the mind is and how it works, can be traced at least to the Hellenistic period, to Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers who indulged in the essence of human knowledge. Plato assumed that the most important

knowledge comes from innate concepts that are independent of our own sensory experiences (such as honor). He provides a basis for the tradition of rationalism, which can be characterized by a conviction that knowledge may be attained by thinking and reasoning; it's most important modern representatives were Descartes and Leibniz. Aristotle, on the other hand, derived knowledge (e.g.: that all men are mortal) from the rules of acquired experience. This approach, represented in modern times by Locke and Hume, is called empiricism. In the 18th century, Kant made an attempt for the unification of these two currents; he hypothesized that human knowledge is a result of both sensory experience and innate abilities of the mind."[8]

This example also includes the fact that the human mind is influenced by acquired experience and, at the same time, it provides the storage for the system of processes innate to man at the moment of his birth. That is what the entire development of human endeavor is about.

In his book F. Furger states: "Know Thyself — this requirement existing from the early days of western spirituality leads not only to the understanding of own being as a physical — spiritual existence and related to social, but rather, at the same time, it shows the existence, despite numerous material and social givenness, which determine it, as a requirement imposed by own free formation."[9] This, however, also states that man gradually improves and his moral ability is reflected in the plane of contradictory behavior. It is clear that his abilities are limited by his own imperfections and the effort to become morally perfect and self–sufficient. All this has an impact on the sentiment, conscience, competence and voluntary expressions that relate to the psyche and intellect. In the social environment, man becomes prisoner of used standards and

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6) Team of authors: *Dějiny filozofie*. Svoboda, Praha 1976, p. 60.
7) Op. cit., p. 60.

8) Thagard, P.: op. cit., p. 20.
9) Furger, F.: *Etika seberealizace, osobních vztahů a politiky*. Academia, Praha 2003, p. 10.

their application in social life. Standards based on moral experiences are influenced by the very human and social ethics.

"Although from the basic ethical principle of the gospel, that of charity," mentions Furger, "as a necessary correlate of love for God, any egocentrism is alien to Christianity, and we might even describe selfishness as socially interpersonal perk as its own sign of sin and well–ordered self–love it is not at all excluded."[10]

A person is capable of self–realization only in communion with others. He acts for his own benefit and should be mindful not to jeopardize the position of other person by his actions, not to hurt him intentionally and purposefully. A person in this world should be grateful to God for his life, for which he should care and he should cherish all living things. Life must be lived in love, understanding and tolerance of fellow human beings. It is clear that at certain times in human life appear strongly individualistic interests and a person is trying to promote his personality for the sake of success and self–realization.

Science has achieved its success based on cognitive manner of moral life. The entire process began more than two thousand years ago, in the cradle of European culture, in Greece. It became a model for dozens of generations, which all had their giants. We are bound to all of these individuals for the knowledge that today we can study, read original sources and compare in terms of time period and partial conclusions of theoretical research. The de facto division of disciplines has been a very lengthy process that represented self–realization of cultural phenomena, individuals and various schools. It is evident, however, that from the cradle of science, scientific knowledge extends to the whole of Europe and it is applicable to a wide range of human creative activities with regard to moral conduct.

Philosophical applications can be understood in the dialogue with psychology and natural sciences, where we ask about the development of scientific knowledge in fields such as computer science and neuroscience.

Philosophical questions may include the following:

What can influence the human behavior? What is the relationship of psychology and ethical evaluation?

Are the values and meaning of life purely given by cerebral activity? What is the role of emotions in moral behavior?

Recommended Literature

Achim, S.: Emergenz. *Von der Unvorhersagbarkeit zur Selbstorganisation. (Theorie & Analyse / Theory & Analysis*, Band 2). Dresden, München: Dresden University Press, 1999. 2. Aufl. Paderborn: mentis, 2005.

Thagard, P. (ed.), *Philosophy of Psychology and Cognitive Science*, Elsevier, Amsterdam 2007.

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10) Furger, F.: op. cit., p. 17.

3. Classification of Philosophical Ethics

Keywords: *structures of ethics, summaries, new incentives of ethics, individual authors*

Herlinde Pauer–Studer[11] summarized ethics in an appropriate manner for students of the fundamental course:

She begins by explaining normative ethics and metaethics; she points out the most important and normative ethical theories; she differentiates the individual and social morality the relationship, ethics and religion, normative and applied ethics and ethical pluralism.
— In the next step, she deals with the concept of ethics in Kant.
— She examines utilitarianism and then builds on virtue ethics.
— She explains the concept of "social contract".
— She presents feminist ethics.
— She points to the ambivalence of normative ethics and offers an example of Nietzsche's concept of morality.
— She concludes the overview of ethics with a chapter on metaethics.

Nicolai Hartman[12] divides his work into seven main chapters:

— Contemplative and normative ethics
— Multiple ethics and unity of ethics
— False track of philosophical ethics
— Kant's ethics
— The essence of ethical values
— The nature of having
— Metaphysical views

Each chapter has subsections, which students may study. Hartmann's work titled *The structure of ethical phenomenon* is vast and requires a careful judgment.

It is worth to mention the book by H. Hrehová[13], in which ethics is divided into the following chapters:
— Socio–philosophical fore field of J. Maritain's ideas
— Maritain's condition of moral science
— Maritain account of the "nine lessons" of moral philosophy
— Good and values
— Judgments about the value and degrees of cognition
— Universality of moral values and the meaningful goal cognition
— Moral experience and the final goal
— Immanent dialectic of the act of freedom
— Obligation and moral obligation
— The contrasting realities of the world in Maritain's retrospective

In this work of a noted author Maritain, we can find claims that morality must have its justification in rationality, in the knowledge and understanding of natural law. It is clear that Maritain refers to the Decalogue and God's revelation.

The college textbook on ethics by Petr Nesvadba[14] deals with the following topics:

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11) Cf. Herlinde Pauer–Studer, Einführung ind die Ethik, Facultas Verlag und Buchhandels AG, Wien 2010.
12) Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, Struktura etického fenoménu, Academia, Praha 2002.

13) Cf. H. Hrehová, Morálna filozofia Jacquesa Maritaina. Reflexe o etike a morálke, Trnavská univerzita v Trnave, Trnava 2011.
14) Cf. P. Nesvadba, Filosofie a etika, A. Čeněk, Plzeň 2003.

— Ethics as thematization of what should be (search for values)
— Moral virtue and conscience problem (search for orientation)
— Ethical concepts in European history and the present (search for patterns)
— The Company and moral standards (search for "polis")
— The relationship of morality and justice (search for stability)
— What is justice? (search for rate)

Josef Dolista[15] in his textbook specifies the ethical reflection on employees in the public sector and highlights the problem of:
— The spatial dimension of "social justice"
— Environmental Ethics and Education
— Euthanasia or palliative care?
— Corruption as the biggest problem of public administration.

Tomáš Sedláček[16] offers ethics in dialogue with economics. His reasoning system is different than that of the author A. Remišová.[17] I. Rolný and L. Lacina reflect on the relationship between ethics of and globalization.[18] Similarly, so is P. Seknička in more detail in the book Úvod do hospodářské etiky.[19]

Murray N. Rothbard is devoted exclusively to the ethics of freedom.[20] His book is important from the perspective of contemporary ethical issues and politics.

Sonia Dorotíková contributed to the debate about the ethics of conduct.[21] She puts emphasis on the evaluation of conduct, value regulators of conduct; she provides an insight into the value ethics and reflects on moral values and their discovery.

Radim Brazda points to comparative ethics and his book contains a chapter devoted to the justification of ethics in sociobiological and evolutionary perspective, which may be considered as important.[22]

As a sensible division of philosophical ethics for college students, it is possible to establish the following structure:

Ethical Theories in the Overview
a) Metaethics and descriptive ethics
— Systematic review of metaethics
— Cognitivism / noncognitivism
— Eealism / intuitionism / naturalism
b) Normative Ethics
c) Teleological approaches
— Aristotle
— Eudaimonia
— Utilitarianism
— Value ethics
d) Deontological approaches
— Kant
— Discourse Ethics
— Reflection on justification of moral conduct
e) Regulatory and contextual approach
— Coherentism
— Ethics of Virtue and Wisdom
— Communitarianism
— Hermeneutic ethics / narrative ethics

— Applied Ethics
— Bioethics
— Research ethics

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15) J. Dolista, Profesní etika, VŠERS, České Budějovice 2007.

16) Cf. T. Sedláček, Ekonomie dobra a zla. Po stopách lidského tázání od Gilgameše po finanční krizi.pub. 65. pole, Praha 2009.

17) Cf. A. Remišová, Etika a ekonomia, Kalligram, Bratislava 2001.

18) Cf. Rolný, I., Lacina L., Globalizace, etika, ekonomika, pub. J. Piszkiewicz, Věrovany 2004.

19) Cf. P. Seknička et al., Úvod do hospodářské etiky, ASPI, Praha 2001.

20) Cf. M. N. Rothbard, Etika svobody, Liberální institut, Praha 2009.

21) Cf. S. Dorotíková, Etika. Příspěvek k etice jednání, UK — Pedagogická fakulta, Praha 2005.

22) Cf. Brázda, R.: Úvod do srovnávací etiky, KLP, Praha 1998.

— Ethics in genetics
— Ethics in culture
— Ethics in media
— Medical ethics
— Political ethics
— Ethics in technology
— Ethics in working with living creatures (animals)
— Environmental ethics
— Economic ethics
— Ethics in public administration

This division is the most advantageous for a complete picture of the studies in ethics.[23]

Recommended Literature

Anzenbacher, A.: Úvod do etiky, Zvon, Praha 1994.
Hartmann N.: Struktura etického fenoménu, Academia, Praha 2002.

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23) Cf. Handbuch Ethik, ed. M. Düwell, Chr. Hübenthal, M. H. Werner, J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart — Weimar 2006.

4. Cognition of Moral Conduct in Antiquity

Keywords: *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine*

The question of morale belongs to the oldest phenomena of human civilization. As soon as the 5th century BC, there were several fundamental shifts not only in society, which changed from the aristocracy and tyrants to slave democracy, but in the transfer of spiritual affairs from Greece to southern Italy, as well. A great importance is placed on autonomous entities, the so–called polis (Greek city states), which were represented by elected bodies and thus free citizens participated directly in the political and spiritual life of society. Eleates already addressed the issue of laws in terms of their origin. Whether they are determined or formed gradually based on the regulations by people. The importance of moral conduct in the ancient Greek society was reassessed by the representatives of sophistry. Sophists (also known as teachers of wisdom) taught the three basic human skills — thinking (logic), speaking (grammar, rhetoric) and conduct (ethics). They came out of the belief that every single citizen of Athens must dominate the aforementioned human skills in his favor. Their teaching rose on the basis of public demand for the good of Athens as a model for all Greek cities. Not everyone understood that core value for a person should be his welfare and good, which representatives of sophistry (Gorgias and Protagoras) tried to secure through rhetorical prowess and oratory. The common view of sophists was the idea of the relativity of all ethical norms and human behavior. This formed

the base of their idea that the righteous is what is useful (only to somebody), each society set such laws that provide it with power, control over others or benefits. The question of moral conduct applied to those who are subject to moral standards and participate in the administration of the Greek polis.

Initially, the teachings of sophists influenced Socrates himself, who, however, soon turned away from them. Socrates' moral philosophy is the teaching about how to live. How should a person act in relation to himself and to his surroundings, so that he did not do evil and sought to achieve virtue, goodness and blissful life? It is at least interesting that Socrates, although the ruling aristocracy accused him and brought him to trial, never questioned his beliefs. Socrates was condemned to death by his teachings, which he presented to his court. Individual parts of his teachings were taken over by students who followed Socrates and the continued the legacy of this great moral teacher (prominent schools included the Cynics — they recognized ascetic morality and necessity of personal freedom; the Cyreniacs — in their opinion, it is not necessary to adhere to ethical standards, they came out of the belief that human sensations are the main source and object of knowledge; others schools included the Megarians and the Elis–Eretrian School).

The question of morality and moral behavior was discussed in the works of the ancient classics thought Plato and Aristotle.

Morality is a common theme of Plato's dialogues. Ethical categories may be found, for example, in the dialogue Laches, which deals with the fortitude; the dialogue Protagoras is addressing the issue of virtue; the dialogue Socrates examines the polemic with the Sophists; the dialogue Gorgias is about the importance of rhetoric; in the dialogue Menon, Plato addresses the importance of virtue and knowledge; in the dialogue Philebus, Plato examines the relationship between good and pleasure; Laws and Constitution. Almost in all the dialogues (except Philebus) Socrates serves as the main acting person who engages in dialogue, talking with incoming persons and raises questions that have no clear answer, hence the conclusion.

"Plato's ethics is also connected to Socrates, proving that virtue is based on knowledge and there exists only one virtue albeit under different names, for bravery is only knowledge about what is bad and what is not bad. And Plato concludes as well that evil or sin is merely a mistake and that virtue may be learnt. It is eudemonistic, as well, because it considers happiness as the ultimate good. At first, he can see happiness in the search for pleasure and rejection of sorrow, so ethics is actually a moderation of pleasures and sorrows (Protagoras). In Gorgias, he picks many worthy and useful pleasures and chooses from them the good as the objective of actions. In Philebus, he renders happiness only as a component of the good, but far less important. The good is mainly a mixture of the measure, the beauty, the truth (used as well) and the pure delight that although contribute less to the happiness of life, but they are still necessary."[24] Plato as a faithful disciple of Socrates builds on the idea of virtue, which is close to people and freely available (can be learned). Socrates' triad of virtue, eudemonia and happiness is reflected in Plato's concept as well. This moment is in the fact that the ultimate good is happiness. At the same time, the idea of good in the overall hierarchy of ideas occupies the highest position. And from the moral point of view it is happiness that is the conflict of pleasures and tribulations that accompany human life. Moral behavior of a person is directed towards the denial of tribulations and a certain degree of human experience by cultivation of pleasure, which do not cause harm to a person and contribute to the development of the human being in the world of ideas, thus in the metaphysical plane as well.

"In Gorgias, he already understands evil and sin as the disease of the soul, which philosophy has to treat by punishment, and he understands a virtue as the order and harmony of the soul: the moderation is the essential virtue of the soul and with it one may

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24) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Přehledné dějiny filozofie. 2. vydání, Česká grafická unie, Praha 1947, p. 42.

obtain justice, fortitude and piety, so he who observes moderation and harmony, is perfectly good and blessed."[25] Therefore, Plato stated four cardinal virtues — wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. These basic virtues are the essence of an ideal man, whom Plato uses in his theory of the ideal state, where the society is divided into three classes: soldier, producer (farmer) and ruler. Even in this state, the main objective is the education of the individual for the entity and for the world of ideas as a whole. Very interesting is the Platonic idea of the education of individuals, both men and women, in terms of labor division.

Among significant Plato's students belonged Aristotle. He created a rich literary work that is as eloquent as was his life. Aristotle's ethics is contained in several works, one of which is important for our purposes — The Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle set apart ethics as a practical philosophical discipline that addresses moral virtues and moral behavior. "The fundamental concept of Aristotle's ethics is the notion of center, by which Aristotle understands the art of proper orientation, to correctly choose the appropriate action. The virtue chooses the middle path between excess and deficiency. But in the appropriate it is not possible to see the very center: it is necessary not to choose the medium from the good, but the best from all good things."[26] In his doctrine Aristotle divided virtues into dianoetic and ethical. Ethical, according to Aristotle, are virtues of character and dianoetic are virtues of intellect. A person (zoon politikon) as a living being (social) is endowed with reason and also able to control his psyche, which is based on a sensory experience. "Aristotle, as well as any Greek, has no doubt that for a man the supreme good is happiness. The perfection of each creature is based on perfect development of activity that is specific to it."[27] Aristotle's ethics as applied discipline merges into Aristo-

tle's political theory. J. Popelová states that: "Aristotle is the first person to systematize ethics. In the system, he accurately reflects the commitment of a citizen to his own community, both in public and in private life. Aristotle's ethics is (...) a kind of politics."[28] Politics addresses the ethical aspects of the community as a whole. The system of rules and standards for the citizens is provided by ethics itself. In his ethical system, Aristotle gave the interpretation of several ethical categories — for example, he took notice of happiness, virtue as psychological quality, feelings, moral conduct, which he divided into voluntary and involuntary, pleasure, goodness and friendship.

Aristotle's Ethics is the first comprehensive system, as it is the combination of several disciplines — philosophy, psychology, logic and knowledge. This system, which also governs relations between people in a limited social unit — the village, where the conduct of an individual is focused on happiness and the good of the whole. The authors Höffding and Král state: "Aristotle's moral ideal embodies the views of the Greek citizen willing to reasonably enjoy his social benefits."[29]

Hellenistic philosophy appeared with significant ethical attitude towards life, which was according to the spirit of the Greek polis crisis. It was also essential that Athens became part of the empire of Alexander the Great. In the late 4th century BC, the Greek society was undergoing a collapse that hit both spiritual and social life. This period was typical for the emerging trends — stoicism, skepticism and Epicureanism. If we examine these orientations, we can see that one of the most widespread was stoicism, which passed from Greek environment to Rome.

"Ethical theories of Hellenistic and Roman periods have some common features — they are stemming from a common economic

25) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 43.
26) Team of authors: Dějiny filozofie. Svoboda, Praha 1976, p. 75.
27) Störig, H. J.: Malé dějiny filozofie. Zvon, Praha 1991, p. 137.

28) Popelová, J.: Etika. Nakladatelství Československé Akademie věd, Praha 1962, p. 28.
29) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 55.

and social situation, common class interests and common cultural traditions. In the major philosophical schools ethics is the discipline, by which culminates the whole system. The subject of ethics is an individual, primarily a philosopher. Ethical rules are not civil rules for all citizens, but only for members of school, for the initiated and wise men. The purpose of ethics in troubled external situations is to guarantee internal steadfastness, ataraxia — apathy — peace of mind that comes from indifference to the outside that is deliberately cultivated. All ethics have their theoretical part, based on epistemology and physics; they have their own moral rules and their moral types. For example, Epicurean sage is embodied in the figure of Epicurus, as well as, represented in Lucretius and in more apolaustic form in Horatio. Different forms, letters, dialogues, symposia and brief statements are chosen… all these moral theories are generally natural. They are looking for a natural origin of morality; they also understand the concept of human dignity quite naturally; they do not seek divine reward for virtue. They are non–religious."[30] It is precisely Stoicism and Epicureanism, which represent opposite approaches to human experience and moral attitudes.

The founder of Greek stoicism was Zeno of Citium. His aim was the establishment of ethics, which is based on physics and logic. "For the Stoics the world is the only living and divided body penetrated by physical breath that animates it."[31] This also means that the world is united and connected with God. "Conduct of people is no different, whether it is exercised freely or without freedom, for all conduct results only out of necessity, but only whether the necessity, which is in all cases inevitable, is carried out voluntarily or by force"[32] This stoic position in opinion on freedom differs from other currents of this period. The essence of Roman stoicism

was founded by T.L. Carus and L. A. Seneca. Blissful and happy life lies in the ability of man to renounce material possessions and take care of his spiritual life. In stoic ethics virtue represents happiness. Therefore, the virtue is a quality of a person as a whole. In terms of moral conduct stoics addressed society and its living transformations in the newly formed civilized structure, even with its decline.

Pure individualism manifests itself in Epicureism. "The well–being of the individual, the philosopher, is being sought. As with all Hellenistic ethics the main problems are: what is the supreme good and what is the ultimate evil; what to do and what not to do, so a person may achieve the supreme good and the ultimate evil is avoided."[33] L. Carus in his work "On the Nature of Things" (Prague, 1948) describes the natural evolution and development of society based on natural selection, human suffering and evil that reigns in society. It reflects on the coherence of intellectual experience and individual at a particular time. A man is destined to the knowledge of morality based on inner experience.

Morality as a system of moral attitudes that a person assumes and simultaneously creates in terms of self–realization was an important moment in the collapse of slavery and in the development of a new feudal system. Under these conditions, a new stage in the development of European culture occurs — the Middle Ages. Christianity had to undergo a long struggle with paganism, and not only in the whole of Western Europe. Influence of Manichaeism, Gnosticism and apologetics was so widespread, that even tradition of ancient authors interfered in the new battle for spiritual values. Christianity could not immediately become the dominant spiritual priority. In this environment and in the tradition of Neo–Platonism Christian apologetics arises.

The biggest influence on the development of philosophical thought in the Early Middle Ages — patristics — had A. Augustinus. His moral attitudes are reflected in his writings On the duties

30) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 39.

31) Team of authors: Op. cit., p. 81.

32) Team of authors: Op. cit., p. 81.

33) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 41.

of priests, Confessions, City of God, On Free Choice of the Will and On the Trinity. Influenced by Manichaeism, reading of Cicero and Plotinus and philosophical studies, he created anthropocentric teachings, whose main component is the effort of man to know his soul and God. He made man with his desire to know and be directed to knowledge by wisdom the center of philosophical views. "The path from the questioning to the certainty of knowledge, at least in terms of its own existence and self–consciousness, showed him the realization that even if we doubt the truth in ourselves, we have truth inside ourselves that we not only doubt, but we know that we live, we remember, we understand, we want, we think and we conclude. God is the Supreme Being, immutable, the principle of existence and knowledge and rule of life. God created the world from His totally free will and created it from nothing and continues its creation by maintaining it. Therefore, the matter is not the cause of evil and body is not a prison of the soul. Created world culminates in man, who himself is the reflection of essential features of the world, therefore he is a microcosm and by his reason he connects the material world with the spiritual world. The soul is immaterial substance, a thinking being, it is present in whole body and in each individual part and it is not only a principle of life. Evil is not an original existence beside good, but only lack, limitation or deprivation of good. By original sin man lost his freedom, he was unable not to sin, the good that a man does in this situation; he does only by the grace of God."[34] Human race is burdened by original sin and only Adam was the first man born without sin.

Augustine has undergone a long spiritual development associated with his studies in Europe. He was baptized by Bishop Ambrose when he was 33 years old. By his diligence and exertion he became a bishop and leaves Europe to his birthplace in North Africa. "In his doctrine Augustine reflected the contradictions of crumbling slave society and birth problems of feudal society (...).

In his doctrine on predestination he reflected helplessness of individual personality that is unable to change the order ruling the world, to actively influence events and forces that are hostile to man and that are operating in this world."[35] Man occupies a special place in Augustine's system. He is the center (the microcosm) and his moral behavior is reflected in God, through which he acts as well. The idea of creationism played a major role in Augustine's philosophy. The bottom line is the opinion that the world was created from nothing by good will of God and He does not interfere with the further development. He created a man who is in the world trying to fulfill his will in oppression by heading towards death, which is his reward for original sin.

Recommended Literature

Berka K.: Aristoteles, Orbis, Praha 1966.
Graeser, A.: Řecká filosofie klasického období, Oikoymenh, Praha 2000.

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34) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 92.

35) Team of authors: Op. cit., p. 109.

5. Cognition of Moral Conduct in the Middle Age

Keywords: *Thomas Aquinas*

An important thinker of scholasticism is undoubtedly Thomas Aquinas (Doctor Angelicus). Typical for him was extraordinary education (for that time) and simultaneously a visible link to the teachings of Aristotle. In his philosophical and theological teaching — Thomism — he comes partly from ancient traditions, as well as from pagan thought and Christian orientation. "The human co-existence, according to Aquinas' view, is destined to support purposes of morality in the spirit of Catholic teaching. In his social theory he affirms the idea of the superiority of the Church over civil society; earthly life in the state is only a preparation for the future spiritual life."[36] For the period of T. Aquinas it is typical that it was dominated by Aristotle. *Thomas sought interconnection of relations between free will, reason, and God's grace. The Supreme good is God to whom are submitted the criteria for assessment of the individual right to happiness and self–satisfaction.*

Numerous authors have taken the path of commentaries to Aristotle's works, their apologetics and translations. In many parts of Aquinas' philosophy is the answer **provided by or** based on Aristotle and builds on his tradition. "Ethics builds on the doctrine of the soul and the theory of knowledge. As a precondition of moral conduct Thomas emphasizes freedom of will. Even here there is

a noticeable contrast to Augustine and Franciscan theology that builds on him. With regard to the virtues Tomas accepts traditional four cardinal Greek virtues: wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, and adds the three Christian virtues: faith, love, hope."[37]

The love of God is superior to faith. Quintessence of man is his mind, which creates the phenomenon of humanity. "True happiness can therefore occur only in the afterlife; here on earth one can attain bliss, if it is not contrary to supreme good. (...) people are required to preserve their lives, to know the truth about God and to live in society. By a particular natural power (synderesis) we know these latest regulations, which are general and immutable, and conscience (conscientia) determines the use of these rules to individual cases of conduct. Imperfections and shortcomings of human reason and law are corrected and supplemented by the law of God, particularly with regard to the eternal destination and man's salvation revealed in Scripture. According to these two components he also distinguishes virtues as natural and supernatural. Natural, obtained are Platonic ones — wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, to which he adds the Aristotelian **rule of middle path**. These lead to natural happiness. In addition to these there are supernatural virtues, instilled (infusae) — faith, love and hope, which one gets by divine grace, and which leads one to his own goal, already here on earth."[38]

The moral conduct in the Middle Ages is reflected into many sub–philosophical attitudes that create contemporary image of the society in relation to the divine predestination and faith. The dependence of man on God and his attempt to equate played an important role in various theological teachings. Human behavior is determined by the will of God. Most authors, P. Abelard among others, place the main emphasis on internal beliefs and address the issue of the relationship between reason and faith. At the same time,

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36) Team of authors: Op. cit., p. 116.

37) Störig, H. J.: Op. cit., pp. 190–191.
38) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 110.

however, without faith it is impossible to obtain knowledge. This scholastic motto (credo, ut intelligam) was expressed by Anselm of Canterbury. The penetration of spiritual diversity of approaches under the influence of secularization of the church occurs at this time.

The moral transformation of society may be observed in the first third of the 15th century in Bohemia. Criticism of indulgences and the division of society by J. Hus, moral criticism of oppressors of rural people and disparities between them in works of P. Chelčický, which shifted into criticism of all higher classes of society. It is also the attribute of social changes as a result of existing divisions and necessary criticism of the whole society.

Recommended Literature

Heinzmann, R.: Středověká filosofie, ed. Olomouc, Olomouc 2000.
De Libera, A.: Středověká filosofie, Oikoymenh, Praha 2001.

6. Cognition of Moral Conduct in Modern Times

Keywords: *Renaissance philosophy, Pomponazzi, Manzolli, Patrizi, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza*

The ideals of the new era represent a cultural movement that gradually affected the whole of Europe. It was able to transform moral conduct of entities that were adapting to the political and cultural transformations. A new ideal of science is getting to the foreground, which is cultivated in all kinds of human activity. This period closes and at the same time opens a new era in the history of human civilization. It's the period of Renaissance and humanism. The return to the ancient world, as Renaissance is often called, has several important reasons. First of all, return to the ideal of ancient culture and art in general. Artistic freedom and freedom of speech affected all types of art. These changes have produced gems that can be seen and visited even today. Renaissance moral theories arise as part of cultural and social changes and authors come out the knowledge of previous generations and the tradition of the classical theories of the ancient period. The element of nature is a new theme; knowledge of nature and its development into a comprehensive theory, which was labeled by pioneers of new science as heliocentrism (unlike the Church advocated geocentrism). An important aspect is also the emergence of new exact sciences, which obtain their form through enthusiasm and passion of researchers and scientists, who are trying to achieve the perfect image of possibilities to understand nature by man. Renaissance authors open

up new possibilities of scientific knowledge and the formation of moral attitudes in society. The society itself is undergoing changes and a new part of society, the bourgeoisie, appears.

Renaissance philosophy is based on the tradition of Neo–Platonism with a focus on people and new knowledge of nature. At this time, a close link between the natural and the exploration of existing knowledge in epistemology are being promoted. The eternal theme is a man, but with limited capabilities. This is also reflected in new approaches (social and moral). The admiration of human capabilities is reflected in travelogues, medicine, inventions and new overseas discoveries. There occurs a blending of cultural entities (both European and non–European) and in some cases forced assimilation of indigenous peoples of non–European origin. All of this creates a new form of human civilization between the 15th and 17th century, with a focus on individualism.

Introduction to Renaissance philosophy may be examined in the writings of P. Pomponazzi De immortalitate animae (On immortality of the soul, 1516).[39] This is a scholar whose work followed and upheld the Aristotelian authority of scholastics. He did not come out the framework of medieval scholarship, because he wrote his works in Latin without the knowledge of ancient Greek. He was also inspired by commentaries on Aristotle and recognized the work of his contemporaries, humanists and ancient classicists. "Humanists blamed scholastic for confident ignorance. In his lectures, Pomponazzi repeats as Socrates, "I only know that I know nothing."[40]And in the treatise "On fate, free will, predestination and divine providence" he writes in his own words: "... against his own ignorance."[41] [42] The method of his works is interesting, because it is based on Aristotle and in addition, he accepts or does not accept

39) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 121.

40) Nardi, B.: Studi su Pietro Pomponazzi. Florencie 1965, p. 46.

41) Pomponazzi, P.: Libri quinque de fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione. Lugano 1957, p. 2. Cit. by Gorfunkel, A.Ch.: Op. cit., p. 171

42) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Renesanční filozofie. Svoboda, Praha 1987, pp. 171–2.

other theses that he comments extensively with all the details. Pomponazzi's most famous work is "The Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul" made him a key figure of the history of philosophical thought, just by the fact that the theme of immortality was addressed in the classical period of ancient philosophy in Greece. It is also a certain contribution to the emerging philosophical terminology of Renaissance thought and culture. „The Treatise on Immortality of the Soul… not only proves the impossibility of rational and philosophical proof of immortality of the soul, but also refutes the idea of the incompatibility of mortality of soul with morality that was widespread in medieval theological and philosophical thought. Since the observance of moral rules was conditioned by the posthumous reward, it seemed that removal of posthumous reward and punishment is extremely dangerous and leads to the collapse of all moral authority."[43] Pomponazzi divides ethics into a system that is distant from a man and morality of man, which prevails over ethics. "In addition, the claim of mortality of souls urged to the different solution of the issue of aim of human existence, as well as the question how to achieve human happiness in earthly life. The aversion from religious ideas of higher posthumous goal of humanity required to examine the ways how to carry out the earthly destiny of man. Pomponazzi draws up his own teaching on goals of human existence, which is a distinctive variant of Renaissance anthropology. While according to Aristotle, the supreme good, and therefore a goal to a man, is higher intellectual contemplation, and this goal may be achieved in this life, Pomponazzi recognizes and takes into account that this ideal cannot be reached by all of the people, all mankind. The main opposition against the ancient spiritual aristocratism was Christian doctrine, which claimed that the ultimate goal, posthumous bliss, may be achieved by all people, not only intellectual elite."[44] Goodness is the ultimate goal

43) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 177.

44) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 178.

of mankind, the whole human race. During their lives, individuals are trying to steer towards this good and they are also committed to laws that serve people for their peaceful coexistence. "In order to achieve a common goal, the benefit of all mankind, the people must be involved in the three types of reasoning: perceptive, practical and employed. The first type is used for mental cognition of the world, the other to distinguish between good and evil, and the third for the development of mechanical art. The goal of human society that can be achieved in this life resides in the participation in all three types of reasoning, and not in mere intellectual perception, which is possible only for philosophers."[45] This differentiation of knowledge is a guarantee of a harmonious entity and functioning of the entire organism. The morality of people, who are in their conduct subject to social norms, also unfolds from here. Good and evil is a moral issue since the earliest times. Not even Renaissance thinking could avoid the question. Human activity is varied according to the skills and abilities of individuals who learn different kinds of art according to their talents. The art is also a reflected sensations, emotions and inner feelings of an artist who through his talents shows his extraordinary capabilities that set him apart from any other individual. "Prevalence of man is not in immortality, but that he is capable of knowledge and virtue."[46] Immortality of the human soul is not an evidence of loss of morality, but a manifestation of active suffering, feelings of a man. Virtues that people cultivate in life are extremely important for every individual. They influence the moral standards and moral conduct, as well as they are an indicator of intellectual level of a man. A person is a subject to vices and belongs to human life. "Man's freedom is thus conditioned and limited by natural necessity."[47]

The celebration of man, his pride and love are topic for a number of authors. An important position among them belongs to the Italian humanist philosopher P. A. Manzolli. His work "The Zodiac of Life" is a poem composed of twelve books as a legacy of antiquity. Manzolli reacts to the events of the time and in his poem echoes a fierce critic of secular rulers and clergy. On few places he even claims that the times, in which he lives are the worst, they could not be worse. Manzolli's ethical views were formed under the influence of study of ancient and medieval authors and philosophers. They are an essential expression of resistance against reality and corrupt social life. "Manzolli, however, does not seek salvation and consolation in the hope of personal immortality. His own view of immortality of the soul Manzolli formulated very carefully and with many reservations. Manzolli does not dare to openly voice his doubts about the religious dogma of personal immortality and believes that he must hide from the crowd, who merely out of fear of punishment after death, does not commit crimes. He has in mind earthly bliss of earthly man. The welfare, which one may achieve, is the sum of earthly values and exemption from woes. As the first and supreme good and the binding condition of dignified human existence the poet declares freedom. The principles of true virtue are calling for active, worldly and social morality. These are the rules of civil coexistence and of life in the world, in the family, in the state. Virtue is a subject to strict ethical criteria. Manzolli as poet and philosopher does not reject moral experience of Christianity, but he gives it a new meaning."[48] It is interesting that Manzolli, who released his work under the name Marcello Palingenio Stellato, creates a fundamental requirement of human morality, which is valid also for the future generations in terms of the preservation of human civilization. Manzolli's work is the real legacy of the Italian Renaissance, due to its depth a philosophical legacy, as well.

45) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 178.
46) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 179.
47) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 184.

48) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., pp. 197–199.

Christian Ethics during the period of humanism is inextricably connected with the name of Erasmus of Rotterdam and his work "The Praise of Folly". He described his system of thought as philosophy of Christ. He refuses a medieval tradition and subscribes to the principles of Renaissance thought. Fundamentally, he responds to a society, which is imbued with civil conflicts, improper orientation of the spiritual life, intolerance of the Church and clergy. He considers Christianity itself to be the pinnacle of human culture. "The world was created as good and beautiful, and man was created as good and beautiful, as well. Christ's greatness is precisely in the renewal and revival of the original good nature."[49] Although it is not a comprehensive ethical–philosophical system, it is a unique and original ontological processing of ethics. Its design is in broad terms is similar to that of E. Levinas, that philosophy is based on the basic disciplines — ethics. Maintaining the moral rules of Christianity is the prerequisite of every individual Christian. "Since the divine nature is intangible, it is necessary for one to be filled with love for God and people, and fulfill his duty of love and mercy towards them. To be a philosopher and to be a Christian is, according to Erasmus, the same and it means to strictly observe the natural rules of morality."[50]

T. More, the contemporary of Erasmus of Rotterdam, is most often associated with his utopian vision of society and the state. His rapprochement with humanists gave rise to his ethical teachings, which are usually neglected in various texts. It is essential that More refers to the ancient tradition and does not recognize medieval philosophical teachings. "The understanding of God as creator and nature as a mighty and wondrous spectacle suggests that More shared a humanistic vision of a beautiful world open to human knowledge."[51] More, in principle, does not fit together the

basic principles of the religion, which expresses the steepness and curtailment, and the very ethics, which is to deal with virtue, pleasure, good and freedom. In religion the individual egoism is evident, which is not linked with moral conduct of man, who is acting for the society. In the same time, a man is subjected to God and man cannot substitute his importance and substitutability on earth by a ruler or other person emerging from power. For prosperous society, he preaches religious tolerance and boldness, and at the same time, obedience to God. Man is given pleasure by nature, which should not interfere with man's physical beauty, effort and telling a lie. "Therefore, in the ideal state the full freedom of religious belief is allowed..."[52]

In a sense, we can talk about More as the successor of G. Pico della Mirandola — especially, in the doctrine of the dignity and freedom of man. A world, in which one lives, is beautiful. According to G. Pico della Mirandola, it is possible to explain the concept of beauty as a harmony of contrasts. The very beginning of a young Florentine is located in the ancient tradition and is based on the teachings of Heraclitus and Empedocles. Beauty has its opposite. Man is not merely the executor of certain regulations; he is given the space for self–fulfillment in moral conduct. This conduct is preceded by acquired experience, which must include the contradictory consequences of our actions. The experience is not always gained and verified in practice; man makes mistakes and creates contradictions at the heart of his personality. A man stands alone against the world and creates its own world, which is in the contrast to the cosmic world as a whole. "Oration on the Dignity of Man" is a major work of G. Pico della Mirandola, which is focused at the celebration of man and his freedom in the world. The influence of Neo–Platonism on this work is noticeable, as well as absolute rejection of established traditions of spiritual life and optimism in harmony with the whole. "Pico, continuing in the humanist

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49) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 137.
50) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 138.
51) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 147. Further cf. More T.: Utopie. Praha 1978, pp. 18 — 89 a.o.

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52) Gorfunkel, A. Ch:. Op. cit., p. 148. Cf. More, T.: Op. cit., p. 107.

tradition of celebration and deification of man, focuses attention on the freedom of choice as a condition of every act and his moral evaluation."[53]

The fact that natural philosophy is being developed throughout this period is not worth mentioning. The evidence is the new conception of the world, the emerging world views in the teachings of leading persons of that time such as Nicholas of Cusa, M. Ficini, L. da Vinci, Copernicus and, of course, the founders of Renaissance spirit F. Petrarca, D. Alighieri and others. Social and political theory is represented by Florentine N. Machiavelli.

Platonic line in the Italian philosophy of the new era is shaped by F. Patrizi. The ethical teachings of this native of Dalmatia are presented in an unfinished work "Philosophy of Love". That he is a platonic author is verified by the fact that the work is a dialogue based on the Greek term philautia.[54] His ethical teachings are known as ethics of philautia. "All the love in the world, from the earthly and human love to the love connecting cosmos, is a manifestation of the love of everything that exists for itself. Philautia is the beginning, the source and foundation of all other kinds of love, all emotions of our soul and every thought and action. Philautia, converted into a universal law, is the basis of all morality. Because the love of each other, people should love their neighbor. Not only mutual love between people, but also their love for God, arises out of the same love for oneself."[55] Good of the individual (person) is the foundation of all morality and human behavior.

In the Renaissance science nobody compares to G. Bruno when it comes to bravery. His philosophical positions are laid out in writing "On Cause, Principle and Unity" from 1584. "Bruno combines the idea of the infinity of the universe with the idea of dynamic unity and eternity of the world. The world is eternal, because only the individual things in it are subject to change and impermanence; the universe as a whole is a single being, and therefore indestructible. The world is a dynamic unity, because the cosmos consists of a large living organism and is controlled and moved by a single principle."[56] In many respects, Bruno comes out of his contemporaries and also denies the doctrine as a whole. "The way Bruno describes the relationship of God to the world is incompatible with Christianity. He rejects the notion that God runs the world from outside, as charioteer rides his carriage. God does not stand above the world and outside of the world; he is present in the world, acting as ensouling principle of the whole world and every part of it."[57] In the work "The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast" from 1584 "(...) he provides a new assessment of human virtues. The truth is the premise of all valid assessment and work is the result of a task that given to a man, namely, that man has to follow not only nature, but also to create a new, higher nature, to become the God of the Earth."[58] Bruno's ethics is directed against the ascetic self–denial and passivity of man in the world. It is human activity that is the standard of moral conduct, nothing can be truer. "Divinity of man in Bruno's philosophy is to be understood in two ways. Man is divine because the divine nature, which created him, and of which he himself is a part. Also his zeal for knowledge and noble deeds make him divine. A man makes himself divine in the heroic ardour when he merges with the deified nature."[59]

Ethical teachings of the Renaissance and humanism are permeated in mutual relationship of man, nature and world, a man and Christianity. He resolves the problem of the fulfillment of possibilities to know God by man and, at the same time, moral aspects

53) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 103.

54) Greek term philautia may be translated as self–love. According to Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 271.

55) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 271

56) Störig. H. J.: Malé dějiny filozofie. Zvon, Praha 1991, pp. 218–219.

57) Störig, H. J.: Op. cit., p. 219.

58) Hoffding, H., Král, J.: Přehledné dějiny filozofie. Česká grafická unie, Praha 1947, p. 135.

59) Gorfunkel, A. Ch.: Op. cit., p. 306.

that contribute to man to obtain that knowledge. After all attempts to understand as much as possible of nature and current human knowledge comes the end of the 16th century and along with it new systems leading to staggering changes in scientific knowledge and human possibilities appear. This creates new problems and ethical issues that are associated with the expansion of science and formulation of theoretical conclusions.

In the European context, we can observe the ethical interpretation of the world in works by J.A. Comenius. His moral theory is based on the doctrine of the Unity of the Brethren and the ideals of the Renaissance period. Comenius created cognizable moral conduct of practical human activity, yet in the spirit of education and pedagogy. His writings cover a range of natural science ("Krátký výklad fysiky podle světla božího upravené" from 1663), metaphysics, ethics, pedagogy and didactics. Comenius creates the basic principles of his system according to the tenets of the Unity of Brethren. The basic concepts are structured family life, courtesy, diligence, faith and man's effort to explore. Comenius criticizes the moral level of society and formulates his opinions in his widely read work "The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart." Comenius sees the problem in education and in the moral education of the individual.

This education should begin at an early age. In this period, the adolescent acquires habits that are later transferred to his personal and family life. Comenius presented the process of forming the moral education in the work "General Consultation on an Improvement of All Things Human" (published in 1656 — 1661). "In Pampaedia (Universal education), the moral education is conceived as an important part of general redemption of the world and is further developed and methodologically refined from early childhood to the very downhill of life, transforming from education to self–education and wise guidance of way of living graded according to human age."[60] According to Comenius, the redemption of the world

is primarily a moral correction of society and social norms. It also includes the correction of Church and new approach of man to Christianity. The specific steps of correction lead an individual to meaningful live and valuable family harmony, where the individual finds its application and happiness. Individual guidelines are graded according to age and demands of the position. It is not possible for a young person to try everything at same time and that is the reason for abovementioned hierarchy of instructions and guides on how to improve and maintain reasoning. This should ensure managing individual moral rights of man. Major role also plays practising proper ways of living that lead to peaceful life. These benefits are provided in Comenius' "Pansophia".

"Man is not merely a passive part of the created world; he is endowed with such activity, that three other worlds are created from his activities: the world of tangible human creations (mundus artificialis), moral world (mundus moralities) and finally the spiritual world. A systematic interpretation of the moral world, which contains all the relationships, which are formed in the human coexistence, contains thoroughly thought–out ethical theory."[61]

Comenius sees the broader context of morality as part of the general political life. Personal and social spheres are important for a man. On a personal level, (prudentia) is a fundamental attribute. Comenius further subdivided prudence according to its level, where it is reflected and in what area of social life. In his sense, it is a perfectly coherent system that does not forget the valuable suggestions and recommendations with didactic elements. Man as an individual part of nature is fully responsible for his growth and moral actions. At that time, Comenius' vision was something completely unique in the world of new knowledge and scientific expansion.

Comenius does not judge man with his morality in terms of imperfection, as some of his predecessors and peers, but his improvement requires time and his personal efforts, in which he

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60) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 84.

61) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 84.

must primarily involve himself with his qualifications and level of responsibility. On the other hand, Comenius moral conception occurs when the new social group, which is not keen on a versatile individual commitment, is being formed. Comenius' vision, in terms of assumptions, encounters manifestations of power and desire to limit the activity only to some. "Thus Comenius derives a moral order not to harm anyone from the principle of "do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you, then "from the standard of "love thy neighbor as thyself" and from the metaphysical principle that equal belongs to equal."[62]

If we compare Comenius' prudence to Plato's ideas in terms of hierarchy, it is possible to argue that it stands higher and it is the pinnacle in the same way as an idea of good for Plato. Rectification of human affairs includes political participation of individuals in society. Education of the individual, to that extent, is a prerequisite for restoring the society and its moral attitudes along with social development and prosperity. In this respect, Comenius' ethics is an important part of the restoration of social order.

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Röd, W.: Novověká filosofie II., Oikoymenh, Praha 2004.

7. Getting to Know the Moral Empirical Philosophical Tradition

Keywords: *Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Bentham, Mill*

The English thinkers and philosophers with an empirical focus are an important part of the modern times theories. From the history of philosophy point of view they represent the empirical ethics. Hobbes is usually considered a father of the ethical theories. Other representatives of the empirical tradition are J. Locke, D. Hume, A. Smith and J. Bentham. Ethical concepts of the English thinkers are very practical and rooted in the human nature and the life of a man in society.

T. Hobbes presented his theory during the times of fundamental changes in the English society. Hobbes differentiates a natural state from a state, where a man is a wolf to his fellow man. "In a natural state, people live totally isolated from each other. It leads to a war of all against all. In this state, there is no justice or injustice, the main virtues of war being violence and fraud. Justice and injustice are the faculties of neither body, nor mind. If they were, a man that would be alone in the world would also have them, in the same way, as he would have his senses and passions. However, it is not that way. Law and justice are meaningful only for a man living in society, not in solitude."[63] A war of all against all has several reasons. One of them is power resulting in social hierarchy. It is also related to law and morality. War leads to poverty, unhappiness, the

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62) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 86.

63) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 91.

winner and the loser. "It is obvious that Hobbes aims at the inner peace, not a peace between the nations."[64] In the natural state, a man relies on himself and knows about others' existence, but there is no need for protecting himself or his property.

Hobbes differentiates between the natural law and the law of reason. "The core of morality and law in Hobbes's philosophy is an honest and persistent effort to subdue all actions to the command of the reason. Morality is transferred into the man and there, and only there, it is binding for him. It is different to the outer action. That requires reciprocity. A man, who would act morally and according to law at all times, even if others do not, would act against reason. That is why individual cannot start alone with keeping the moral rules, even the agreement of more people would not be sufficient. The common will of all — the social power — is necessary that will force the will of individuals under the threat of punishment and in that way guarantee the necessary conditions to establish the general safety."[65] Morality is also connected with upbringing and the ethical behaviour of a man.

J. Locke's examination of the validity and possibilities of human cognition is strongly reflected in his ethical theory. The age itself brings new knowledge, important scientific theories and discoveries, while the human element stays in the background. Thoughts, opinions and scientific theories are all created by the human spirit. That means everything is influenced by the individual psychology hidden behind all this. That is why it is typical for English thinkers including J. Lock that they include psychology into their systems and ultimately the psychological aspect into the classical cognitive theory. There is no gnoseology without psychological dimension. Ethical behaviour is related to cognitivity and its structure that is directly involved in the total view of the scientific world of knowledge. Ethical dimension of the society is based on the gnoseologic

one. The knowledge of ethical behaviour comes from the true cognitivity of the world. In other words, it is about how we are able to recognise ethical laws in our reason and also use them in everyday life. J. Locke's opinion that the human experience is gained gradually and that the human mind is at birth "tabula rasa" is helpful to him. By disagreeing with the representatives of the theory of innate ideas (R. Descartes) he expresses his doubts about the possibility of the innate moral attitudes. "Only theoretical principles can be so clear and generally valid, which were proven not to be innate. All basic moral principles (i.e. we should treat others as we would treat ourselves) need justification. Justification can differ with each person, i.e. a Christian would justify the principle of keeping the contracts by God's will, while Hobbes's follower would use the social contract and a pagan philosopher the human dignity."[66] The nature of a man is to desire happiness and he tries to reach it by ethical behaviour. If the members of the society agreed on their opinions, it can happen only because by agreeing they try to preserve the whole. And they do it in the aim of general prosperity. That remains innate.

The rest is to be learned by experience and upbringing. „When Locke in his first book of essays (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*) refuted the existence of innate ethical principles, he shifted his focus to the ethical opinions in his second book. Good and bad is nothing else than pleasure and pain or what causes them. Moral good and evil are a more specific concept, based on complying our voluntary actions with the law or breaking it and causing reward or punishment according to legislator's will. Locke differentiates between divine law, civil law and law of opinion or reputation."[67] One's opinion is an expression of his moral attitudes that form inside of a man, not outside. Locke translates his ethical theory into the sphere of politics and political behaviour as well. In

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64) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 92.
65) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 93.

66) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 95.
67) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 96.

that way, his theory of ideas is mirrored — their origin and validity is separated by him. However, it is not valid for his follower D. Hume.

During the first half of the 18th century D. Hume presents his systematic approach. "D. Hume explores how the content of our minds is created. He believes that all content of our mind comes from perceptions. There are two kinds of perceptions:

a) impressions — alive, immediate sensations that we experience when hearing, seeing, loving, hating etc.;

b) ideas — that can be simple — produced by reflecting about impressions — or complex — compounded by association out of several simple ideas. The ideas are associated together mechanically, based on resemblance, time and space contiguity or cause and effect relationship. The space, where the science is possible, is clearly specified for him. On one hand, it includes examining the relations among ideas in a pure thinking process and on the other, examining relations between facts, which is the focus of natural sciences."[68] Hume's impression is an immediate sensation of the reality we experience. Of course, there is infinite number of these sensations that remain empty without the law of association (not being in a relationship with other content). Hume's ethics is sometimes interpreted as based on feelings (with elements of scepticism) with the aim to distinguish the sentiments of approval and disapproval: "...*duties* are *a priori* to *practical reason or conscience.*"[69] The notion of conscience implies the dilemma of good and bad. Hume claims the point is not what is good or bad, but that good and bad are a priori objects of the practical reason.[70]

Already now we can conclude that with the English empiricists the total tradition of ethical theories, born in ancient times, is changed. The question of general concepts that constitute a man moved to the man himself, who is capable of perceiving and reacting on his reality and radically altering the contents of his reason at the same time.

There is a separate movement within the English ethics named utilitarianism by its founders (J. Bentham and J. S. Mill). The basic category for them is utility. J. Bentham speaks as a representative of utilitarianism about maximising happiness for as many people as possible. "Every institution, action, quality and input is to be judged by this principle, so obvious in his eyes."[71] From all English empiricists, Bentham is the one most gravitating towards psychology. Human action is influenced by the psyche of man. What we wish for or can achieve is influenced by our psychological state. There are various attributes of moral and will expressions of a man, which directly influence his psyche. Each person has a different sense of sensitivity and experiencing the feelings of hunger, happiness, pain, evil or pleasure. Bentham's pleasure and pain depend on the psychological states of a person.

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68) Anzenbacher, A.: Úvod do filosofie. Portál, Praha 2004, p. 121
69) Anzebacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 283.
70) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 283.

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71) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 232

7. Getting to Know the Moral Philosophical Tradition of the Enlightenment period

Keywords: *Helvetius, Turgot, encyclopaedists: Voltaire, D. Diderot, Rousseau*

Cognition in the ethical actions during the Enlightenment. France and Germany can be set as a classical example of ethical theories of European Enlightenment. Of course, it would be possible to look at all European countries and their transformation into a new form at greater detail, but for our purpose, a close look at English and German heritage in science, arts and literature will be sufficient. All ethical theories start from a new premise that the ideal of a new era was born in man's ability to rule the world and rule his reason. The proof should be seen in the theoretical scientific results, emanation of a nature by a man and his ability to explain newly discovered and previously unknown things. It was a belief in a maximum power of a man and due to the enthusiasm and famous figures of the age, certain possible obstacles of a man and his imperfections were overlooked. In this atmosphere some exceptional ethical theories were created that were not only typical for the times, but also influenced the thinking of many authors to come. The Enlightenment is said to be the cultural movement originated in France that advocated the priority of reason over religion. The important change in ethical opinions of the Enlightenment thinkers is that they are focused on subjectivism and they derive the ethical behaviour from a relationship a man experiences with himself. Another difference is that the authors search and find usefulness only for the individual and do not look for happiness and the greater good for the whole as the utilitarians did. The explanation is obvious. The important factor was the position of a man in society. The society itself was divided into several social layers that were unchangeable and mutually impenetrable. Within each social layer, there is a certain mechanism of ethical actions inherited among the generations. That is why the ethical theories of the Enlightenment authors are focused on a certain social layer and describe values, morale and feelings dominant in that layer.

The origin of the theory about the equality of all man is usually credited to Helvetius. Helvetius in his work *Treatise on Man* (1773) contemplates the difference between personal and social interests that was supported by the despotic structure and form of government in France. "The criterion of a moral good depends, according to Helvetius, on what we consider useful for us. Our self–interest guides us to search for pleasure and avoid pain. This self–interest is common to all people and it is an integral part of their being. It drives our aspirations and all our affections, they are only the focus of our self–interest on one object or the other."[72] A certain measure and form of subjective egoism is a part of each man's upbringing. Through our education we gain certain habits that we take into our lives, gradually change them and continuously gain new patterns of behaviour. "The only motivation of a moral behaviour is reward."[73] Morality and immorality do not depend on a man and his moral standards, but on a good legislation. "In moral life, as in mechanics or physics, the effect always equals the cause. How live the affections are, depends partially on the means that the legislator uses to bring them up in us and partly on circumstances that our destiny put us in. However, the stronger our affections are, the bigger the effects they cause. Upbringing and destiny create the man."[74]

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72) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 120.
73) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 121.
74) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 121.

The French Enlightenment can be divided according to its content into French materialists (Holbach, Helvetius, Turgot), encyclopaedists (Voltaire, D. Diderot, J. d'Alembert) and authors of social theories (J. J. Rousseau). If we were to summarise the opinions of these authors (especially French materialists) the following conclusion could be drawn:

"The ethical theories of French materialists are not only non–religious, but mostly stand strongly against the religion. They prove that a non–religious ethics is not only possible, but that no true ethics can be religious. They are based on different concepts of human nature. They are no longer the innate principles of the metaphysics of the 17th century that were overcome in gnoseology and ethics as well. It is a nature of human senses and human mind …ethics is based on sensuality. … Sensualism has its specifics; it is definitely not an opposite of reason, but its ally instead. The ethics of French materialists … is … focused on society. The association of ethics with politics and legislation causes that in the search for factors influencing morality, legislation and political circumstances are always mentioned, along with the climate and customs. As soon as the importance of legislation for morality is recognised, it leads to an increasing importance of education and hence the postulate that education should be a matter of state and not the Church."[75] The French materialists differ substantially from the English empirics in expressing an open disagreement with the religious morality. Morality is subjective and for each man or society it is rooted in the upbringing and that is an important topic for all authors mentioned. What more, the French materialists claim the knowledge of ethical behaviour is based on sensations and human nature. Knowledge based on moral principles is subjective and it is only temporary. A man gets to know himself and the outer reality in relation to time and with the goal to subdue the nature to his intentions. Nature became an important object of human discovery and a topic for philosophical reflection at the same time. Religious tolerance is an important subject for most of the authors.

The period and the society were influenced by ethical and philosophical thinking of a French Enlightenment philosopher J. J. Rousseau. His work is a unique reflection on the contemporary society. In his writings: Émile: or, On Education (Prague, 1926), *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Prague, 1949) and *On the Social Contract* (Prague, 1949) he describes social and spiritual atmosphere of the revolutionary France. Rousseau becomes a critic of the ruling aristocracy and at the same time, he cannot do without the involvement with the upper class. Rousseau himself had been for some time proud of his social status in the royal family. It is typical for him to attempt to disrupt the social order and suggest a new social system and society as such — the social contract. Rousseau's social theory is close to the concept of Socialism.[76] "Rousseau knows that the natural human desire for community and the pleasure of it is a natural state of ordinary people. The natural sociability is a must, without which the human society could never develop. Compassion is a natural human sentiment. The more the observing being identifies with the suffering one, the greater the compassion. … while reason and thinking cause a man to focus on himself, they cause separation."[77] A man in his view is much more open, ready to enjoy the life and its pleasures, he does not attempt to put him and his humanity into a pre–arranged pattern. It is the main difference between Rousseau and his predecessors, as well as his concept of moral education of the individual that he presented in his novel Émile: or, On Education. Rousseau is the source of inspiration for modern concepts of society and natural law.

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75) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., pp. 123 — 125.

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76) Srov. Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 312.
77) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 130.

9. Getting to Know the Ethics of I. Kant and G. W. Hegel

Keywords: *the work of Kant, duty, deontological ethics, categorical imperative*

Getting to know the ethical behaviour in German classical philosophy. It is not possible not to mention the history the ethical theories in the works of famous philosophers, such as I. Kant, J. G. Herder, L. Feuerbach, J. G. Fichte and G. W. F. Hegel.

For our purposes it will be enough to focus our attention on the ethical theory of I. Kant. With him we enter an era that is typical for its criticism to the preceding period and a desire to create a thorough philosophical base at the turn of 18th and 19th centuries.

Kant's critical philosophy surpasses the philosophical systems of modern philosophy.[78] He follows the tradition of rationalism and empirism. In each of these systems he gets to the very basic and the strongest phenomenon and uses it as a starting point for his own concept. Reason and experience, they both have their positives and negatives. "Kant's transcendental reflection shows that both positions are partly justifiable. However, he sets the boundaries to their totalistic demands. Knowledge that is based or not based on sensations is mutually dependent and together they build our human knowledge."[79] While in his *Critique of Pure Reason* he focuses on the structure of knowledge that is the base of

a new philosophical concept, his *Critique of Practical Reason* contains his ethical theory that is supplemented by the *Metaphysics of Morals*. The structure of knowledge is created by transcendental aesthetics, transcendental logics, transcendental analytic and transcendental dialectic.

In transcendental aesthetics ("aesthetics" meaning based on sensations) Kant explores how something based on human experience becomes representation (based on sensations). "Kant shows that the representation is possible only because there are a priori (meaning non–empirical) transcendental forms of representations. In that way, the variety of sensation material becomes evident."[80] Kant distinguishes two forms of intuitions — space and time. Transcendental logic is divided into analytic (focused on understanding) a transcendental dialectic (the main focus is on pure reason). "In the *Critique of Practical Reason* it is not only the philosophical theory of moral law we find, but a philosophical method that can solve the question of religion as well."[81] The Critique goes to the roots of European Philosophical thinking on the gnoseological level. At the same time, it goes beyond empirical and rationalist traditions in order to create a new philosophical system. As J. Patočka puts it in his epilogue: "What was Kant's motivation for revising these concepts? V. Delbos in his extensive work on Kant's practical philosophy considers it more than probable that it was a philosophy of history that Kant was occupied with soon after the release of *The Critique of Pure Reason,* one of the reasons being to come to terms with Herder's thoughts in his *Outline of Philosophical History of Humanity*. History for Herder is a realisation of humanity (...)".[82] In Kant's moral philosophy his moral law — categorical imperative — has two meanings: it is gnoseological — dealing with

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78) Srov. Kant, I.: Základy metafyziky mravů, Svoboda, Praha 1974.
79) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 123.

80) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 128.
81) Kant, I.: Kritika praktického rozumu. Svoboda, Praha 1944, s. 289 (See Afterword to Kant's Critique of Practical Reason by J. Patočka in the edition by J. Laichter, Praha 1944).
82) Kant, I.: Cit.dílo, Afterword by J. Patočka, p. 291.

the process of getting to know the outer reality and it has ethical dimension as well — dealing with how we act based on our knowledge of reality. "Pure reason can become a practical reason by itself as well. It is sufficient and determining reason of will. While being sufficient and determining, it is not sufficient and imperative." [83] A simplified conclusion can be drawn from a literal interpretation of the categorical imperative: Do not do wrong to others, you also do not like, if they do you wrong. Will is not only determined by laws, but by the purpose as well. "Duties are categorical laws of reason. Duty is what I recognise as reasonable independently from all motivations of pleasure or pain. For Kant an action is moral only if it is done for the sake of duty. Kant sees the duty originate in the personality of a man, in his freedom and independence on the mechanisms of the whole nature. I can act immorally or morally wrong only if I let myself to be led by tendencies that oppose the duty. By a morally wrong action we got to a disagreement with what creates our dignity as people. The moral law keeps us beyond natural causality, in the space of self–determination based on freedom." [84] Our actions are determined by the freedom of our will. From the point of view of human dignity, our actions are always determined by natural causality. Reality comes from freedom that we gradually accept and strive to do good. „The purpose we were assigned is a purpose of freedom and although by realising it the man of senses suffers, the true metaphysical nature comes forward and it is free of sensation pressure, it is a part of imagined world and is truly free. Thus freedom is a base, from which the goal originates and at the same time, a goal in itself (...)".[85] Imperative that dictates the act of will, does not need any reasonable explanation. It is an opposite of hypothetical imperative that describes, what needs to be done to reach the goal. As the experience has two obvious sources

(empirical and a priori), similarly human freedom is a freedom of individuals in this world. Kant "in his cognitive theory starts with an opinion, to which the concepts and principles of reason are related and ends with the ideas of understanding that organise them systematically."[86] Cognition in moral actions is dependent on the moral law. Its meaning is based on the principles of practical reason. "Practical reason, similarly to a speculative one, falls into antinomy. This antinomy originates in the idea of the highest good that is not only a moral law, but a unity of a moral law and happiness, the realisation of bliss, that a moral person is worthy of."[87] Each man is drawn from his nature to strive for morality. Each human action is good, while it originates in the moral law. It could seem that Kant's ethics is commanding and distinctive. On the other hand, Kant attempts to connect cognition with ethical (moral) ideal. It has to be inevitably formed by a man, not outside of him, but in himself. Perception and reason are tied together aiming to get to know the beauty and the good in a man.

Kant's moral theory and principles had a significant influence on the further development of philosophical ethics. Many followers tried to exceed, adopt or continue in his theory. However, most of the attempts failed. Some authors chose their own way to reach and build the moral reality. One of the examples is a system built by G. W. F. Hegel.

Hegel created his philosophical system in order to end the partial attempts in philosophy at the turn of 18th and 19th centuries. The traditional segmentation of reality dominates his system. It is a truly well–thought–through system that incorporates philosophies and natural sciences, logics, aesthetics, politics, arts and religion as well. Hegel's system exceeded in its complexity all the previous ethical and philosophical theories as well as systematic approaches of the ancient Greece. Hegel himself was in many

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83) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 277.
84) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., pp. 278–279.
85) Kant, I.: Op. cit., Afterword by J. Patočka, p. 291.

86) Kant, I.: Op. cit., Afterword by J. Patočka, p. 294.
87) Kant, I.: Op. cit., Afterword by J. Patočka, p. 297.

cases inspired by the ancient Greek philosophers and used them as a source of his work. His system is created by the knowledge of Plato, Aristotle, Christian thinkers and the whole Enlightenment period up to Kant. These resources can also be traced in his work *Phenomenology of Spirit* that is a certain way of introducing the problem of philosophy. Thus it is not possible to interpret his phenomenology and its explanation with the current meaning of the word as a philosophy of essence. Hegel's attempt to unify several traditions into a single system is apparent in the total concept of his thoughts. The leitmotiv of his work is dialectics leading to an absolute knowledge. Hegel's dialectics is a method that includes all the topics previously addressed in the philosophical tradition. "Morality is understood as a world created by a man in the process of history."[88] Morality cannot be created from nothing. Morale is not a shallow phenomenon, but it is an inner part of every social system, it is a relationship between the accepted tradition and sensuality. "Still, if it is easy to spot the main traits of Hegel's ethical concept, it is difficult to clearly explain his system. It is because Hegel never puts morality itself in his focus. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* it is connected to history of philosophy, in his *Philosophy of Right* it is a part of the philosophy of right."[89] That is what makes Hegel's ethical concept quite difficult to embrace. "Because history is a gradual self–expression of an idea, it is understandable that objective morality, morality of the era, is replaced by the morality of an individual that is determined by it. And general interest is morally higher that the individual moral experience and the action inspired by it."[90] Dialectics is an expression of being. It is a basic law of existence and it is determining the ethos of the being. In the phase of an objective spirit there is a triad of right, morality and ethics. Morality is a conscience that belongs to an individual and

each member of a social order as well. Ethics is a result of a social cohabitation and norms in a state. "Modern state is an organisation of freedom, however, that does not allow each individual to decide about the totality according to his individual feelings."[91] An individual does not decide about the whole, but it shares the decision of the power. His freedom is a freedom of a master and his decision. Morality is divided into separate positions and social levels. "Morality is a subjectivity of a will. Moral is what is in line with my principles, while the judge is my conscience."[92] According to Hegel, conscience is subjective and its purpose is to give a signal to our inner morality. Morality is a barometer and an indicator of good or bad at the same time. However, subjective opinion can be mistaken and we cannot guarantee it will last. Morality can be understood as a set of principles that are established and lasting. What more, Hegel concludes that a public morality exists. It involves all the moralities that a man can develop in him. "Hegel was right in his observation that each morality is a social morality and that moral life is possible only in the society."[93] This morality is an inevitable part of life of a civil society. Hegel distinguishes an individual morality and a social morality. Will is for Hegel related to thinking and it distinguishes a man from the animals. "Hegel strictly differentiates between free will and arbitrariness. Arbitrariness selects among instincts, inclinations and impulses — the choice is determined by indefinity of the "I" and definity of the content coming from outside. Consequently a man is dependent on this content. A simple man believes he acts freely, when his actions are arbitrary, but arbitrariness is an opposite of a free will."[94] Arbitrariness is a man's freedom to act and it is for him good with regards to inclinations. Free will is guided by reason and for a man it represents a wilful

88) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 141.

89) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 142.

90) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 143

91) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., p. 210.

92) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 143.

93) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 145.

94) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 146.

action to reach the feeling of good and bliss. Thus it is a connection between the practical and theoretical action of a being directed to higher goal and to God. Hegel's ethical theory gained many supporters and opponents as well, who attempted either to continue in the finalised system (J. G. Herder), or to find a radically new way (J. F. Herbart).

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9. Getting to Know the Ethics in Romanticism

Keywords: *Kierkegaard, existentialism*

Second half of the 19th century is ruled by critical Romanticism throughout the Europe. Within the ethical concepts and philosophical and theological discoveries, it is necessary to focus our attention on a Danish thinker S. A. Kierkegaard. His name is very often related to the beginnings of Existentialism. It is by no means accidental. Kierkegaard was the first who attempted to explain the word existence in its ethical dimension. Most of his predecessors attempted to interpret this concept in the ontological, metaphysical, theological and other levels. To sum up Kierkegaard's attitude, it is important that his concept of existence is the result of a process of levelling. Levelling can be explained as a process of socialisation, where in the beginning a man is a part of the crowd, society as a whole. However, there are brief moments, when he, based on his everyday actions, wants to be with himself. This is when he fully expresses himself as existing and lets others know about him. As soon as he is with himself, he is solving his accumulated problems and inner conflicts. To be with oneself is at the same time an expression of the meaning of existence — being. He decides about his faith and his matters, he does not feel any responsibility for others. It is about his 'existere' — presence. Kierkegaard has serious apprehension against the crowd. Crowd that he describes is the masses that try to stick to their wealth and do not do almost anything for the good and honour. That is why the crowd represents almost a

danger for him that needs to be avoided. But how to avoid it, where to go, what will be next? These are the questions that Kierkegaard answers in his major works, incorporating his personal bitter life experience.

Kierkegaard is more known as a writer and theologist than a philosopher. His works *Either/Or*, *Philosophical Fragments*, *Practice in Christianity*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *On my Work as an Author* etc. contain a clear evidence of the author's sensitivity and precision in expressing himself and an accurate description of author's emotional world.

Existentialism is more than a philosophy, it is a life attitude and a social style of the era. In fact, it can be said that Kierkegaard establishes a tradition that would change in the 20ᵗʰ century into the philosophy of self. The key issue is, except for existence and being, the problem of the difference between subjective and objective reflection. "What does this differentiation mean? A regular experience, which is a source of philosophy, can be reflected by a man. Existentialists believe that there are two basic options for doing it: a man can abstract from himself, from his personal individual subjectivity and inner motions and focus his attention on what is objectively given. Existentialists believe that philosophy developed mostly in line with this objective reflection. A man can also consider himself as a possibility. In this subjective reflection, he reflects his own self that is called existence. It is a radical freedom to consider oneself as a possibility and project oneself like one."[95] A man is invited to realise himself. An individual is called to choose directly itself and its being. It can be considered the main ethical issue. In fact, that also creates a fundamental question for philosophy — a search for the meaning of our existence. A man experiences himself as a freedom, throwness and a possibility by a specific choice in the finality, because each existence is time–bound (birth and death are two horizons of each man).

A basic notion, a backbone of the whole ethical concept, is anxiety. Solitude, loneliness and disappointment had certainly their place in Kierkegaard's life and are authentic to his life experiences. Kierkegaard's thinking is in general a statement against big philosophical systems of the time, against the clarity in all the absolute concepts and the language of a categorical apparatus. It is also typical that most of his works were written under different pseudonyms. He often writes about the herd mentality of the society, he is especially critical towards Danish society and the Church. "Against them, there is the individual in Kierkegaard's work, valuable by his direct relationship with God."[96] This relationship to God Kierkegaard describes using the example of the biblical story of Abraham, who is willing to sacrifice his long–expected son in the name of the faith. A simple man is faced with a difficult situation here and neither a spotless morality, nor a moral codex can help him. It is about the faith as the readiness of a man to this act. Kierkegaard describes here a leap of faith, which is the only way of handling the task. During the whole life a man is getting ready for faith, without knowing when the trial will occur. A decision has to be made in an instant and behind that limit of time, there is a limitless eternity awaiting that is volatile to man. Kierkegaard differentiates three stages of existence, a leap is needed to enter from one to another, which is beyond logical explanation. "In the lowest level there is an aesthete (aesthetic stage), living in the current moment; an ironicist, who knows already the inner life that is not possible to fully express in any given moment; then there is ethicist (ethical stage), who positively develops this inner life by a faithful activity in family and state; a humourist, who views all human relationships as lasting compared to eternity and lives in painful resignation that is most often hidden behind the mask of humour; a man in a religious stage that experiences life as a continuous suffering, because a finite and time–bound existence cannot make peace with an eternal

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95) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., pp. 135 — 136.

96) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 243.

truth; the Christian finally recognises his suffering as a result of his own sin and the contradiction of time and eternity is volatile with the eternity reflecting in time and it is preserved in a paradoxical faith."[97]

The final stage is the religious stage, where a man is still searching and not able to find a peaceful place, he is passionate about others and feels the necessity of the life struggle. Previous stages are the evidence of human beingness (Dasein) and satisfaction, the interest in inhabiting this world. They are satisfied with their place. At the same time, it is an expression of the consumerist mentality of the society and a compliance with the Church. It is not about a moral man, but the morality in him.

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97) Höffding, H., Král, J.: Op. cit., pp. 218 — 219.

11. Getting to Know the Ethics of F. Nietzsche and the German Philosophic Tradition

Keywords: *philosophical work of Nietzsche, Übermensch, Antichrist, Husserl, Scheler*

Philosophical literary work of F. Nietzsche is a complete rejection of the previous European tradition. He experienced in his life many obstacles and that translated into his work and the emotional tone of some of his literary endeavours. In almost all Nietzsche's works we can find ethical and moral topics together with the religious and philosophical themes. His work has a typical style. It is a matter–of–fact critique of a social morality and a man on the turn of the centuries. Nietzsche is not interested in particular moral categories as it was in ancient Greece or Middle Ages, but value becomes a crucial concept throughout his work. Nietzsche announces a radical change of values and of the system that men were used to at the end of the 19th century. They cannot image his life without these values. Rejection of these values is a challenge for all people around Nietzsche as well. Christianity with its moral and ethical norms should also be transformed. In the near future, the reign of the strong and the Übermensch will take place and he prepares all the necessary means for his arrival. During his first creative period he was influenced and interested in classical philology, after that designing the theory of double morality. He divides the total development of humanity into master morality (active will to power) and slave morality (resentment, reactive will to power). Master morality is a morality of dominance, embodied

in the figure of an emperor, ruling class, it is an original morality and an exceptional position of a few individuals in a society. That is why Nietzsche says that this morality is a driving force of the social development and it is designed only for the privileged ones (Übermensch). On the other hand, the slave morality is a morality of subservient, all those that Nietzsche describes as obedient masses. Slave morality developed as a second, dependent on the existence of the master morality. "The master morality is a true Aryan morality. Nietzsche sees its ideal in the rigorous caste separation of the inhabitants in India and the tough caste morale derived from it. Each compromise of the strict attitude of masters to slaves is a way of weakening the vitality, decadence and weakening of the race. Vitality, instincts, race, all of these are biological concepts that Nietzsche brings into ethics and into the philosophy of culture and their use gives blessing to inequality, superiority of the strong ones over the masses."[98] Even though in history there were few attempts to change the position of the slave morality, according to Nietzsche, it was always the case of interrupting the course of the history development. The development of history itself showed the inability of the majority to rule over minority. The proof can be found in Nietzsche's works *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Will to Power*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *The Birth of Tragedy Our of the Spirit of Music*, *On the Genealogy of Morals, Human, All Too Human* etc. "The revolt of slaves in morality leads to revaluation of a natural and noble set of values as well as the notions of good and bad. The active good revaluates to bad, while the bad revaluates to reactive good."[99] The set of values valid for the humankind needs to change. The change involves, according to Nietzsche, all people, because there are strong and weak individuals in the society as well. His theory of the Übermensch is a part of this change. Übermensch is a new advanced kind of man. He is the embodiment of the active

will–to–power. The Übermensch rejects everything that is reactive and subordinate. It is about the power and ability to dominate others. In his free will to power he should rule the newly introduced values and "… in that way rozvrhovat his being in the development …"[100] Nietzsche attempts to strengthen the meaning of the humankind in his new projection, with no weak individuals and no lack of interest of a man in his development. A strong individual is a guarantee of free decision making and action, full–fledged realisation based on his own actions. His will to power is a focused search for everything new and, at the same time, a proof of the capacity of the Übermensch as a representative of the active will to power. Nietzsche's contribution lies not only in his theories and opinions preserved in his writings, but most of all, in the totality of his message that influenced many contemporary authors, philosophers, writers and artists.

Parallel to Nietzsche's concept of values there is another remarkable theory arising in Germany created by M. Scheler. As a student of E. Husserl he belongs to leading personalities of German philosophical tradition. "German neo–augustianism used as a creative source phenomenology and philosophy of values of neo–kantianianism. Its agenda was formulated by M. Scheler. According to him, the knowledge of God can fulfil its purpose only when the great Augustinian ideas are constituted anew. The knowledge of God is mainly about a new and alive reflection of an immediate contact of a human soul with God."[101] The proof can be found in the sources that Scheler used as well: works of A. Augustine, F. Nietzsche, but mainly E. Husserl. Scheler continues in Husserl's work and is his follower. *Formalism in Ethics and Non–Formal Ethics of Values*, *Ressentiment* and *The Human Place in the Cosmos* belong among his main works. Strongly influenced by Husserl's phenomenology,

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98) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p.. 180.
99) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p.. 183.

100) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 185
101) Letz, J.: Netomistické metafyziky. Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, Trnava 2009, p. 243

he creates a movement characterised by its specific focus on values and applies the phenomenological method into ethics. "Each goal has a certain value. A man always attempts for values. Values are absolute, self–sufficient and unchangeable essences. Only our knowledge and relationship to values can change. Phenomenological method enables us to embrace the (material) content of values."[102] Values change only with our understanding, age. Ethics can be based as a separate discipline on these values. In this sense, Scheler rejects Kant's knowledge of forms of things that constitute ethics (moral laws). At the same time, he denies the view of some philosophers of life that values can be derived from a man and his behaviour in a certain environment. Scheler creates a strict hierarchy of values (value–rank). "There are positive and negative values, higher and lower ones. "Sensible values" are the lowest, than come values of pleasure and pain and vital values above them, followed by values of noble and vulgar, still higher are spiritual values of truth, beauty, justice and their opposites."[103] The value–rank mentioned is a specification of Scheler's view of the world of values. The spiritual values are the highest, because the spiritual sphere is, similarly to Augustine, the highest expression of a human being. A man has a special position — Scheler calls him a person. That is why in the total hierarchy we can find personal as well as material values. From the point of view of meaning, personal values are the higher ones, because a person is a spiritual expression of the reality. Material values come second and are expressed as material things that a person gets surrounded by during its life. A man realises their meaning immediately in time and that is why their meaning is relative for him.

Scheler is also a founder of modern philosophical anthropology. A man has a specific position here, he not only comes from an animal, but he is an animal himself. In Scheler's theory of love,

love is not social or physical, but it is the highest expression is a love of God. Scheler conceives this love of God as participating on God's love to the world. According to him, that is the main essence of love. "This Scheler's program was worked on further and more specified by J. Hessen, who was influenced also by the philosophy and theology of Tübingen theologians H. Schell and J. Müller, whose works were rejected by the Catholic Church ... Intuitive knowledge relates to immediate reality and mainly to the world of values (ethical, aesthetic and sacred), which is not accessible to logical, deductive thinking and can be understood only by observing values. Although the world of values is ideal for Hessen, it is in metaphysical perspective (...) manifested as an alive, personal value centre — God."[104]

An American author J. Deset is a contemporary of M. Scheler, who within pragmatism worked on the reconstruction of ethics. Values originate from man's thoughts and thoughts can be considered pure instruments, by which a man rules in the world of material and spiritual values. "The ultimate purpose and goal of life is not perfection, but a continuous process of enhancement and humanization."[105] Morality is based on growth. This growth and improvement is individual. These are the basic characteristics of personalism that has some common features with pragmatism, i.e. the moral values and religion are based on the relationship of a man to human values and adhering to them.

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102) Störig, H. J.: Malé dějiny filozofie. Zvon, Praha 1991, p. 440.
103) Störig, H. J.: Op. cit., p.. 440.

104) Letz, J.: Op. cit., p. 243.
105) Störig, H. J.: Op. cit., p. 415.

12. Getting to Know the Ethics of the French Philosophical Tradition

Keywords: *Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze, Sartre*

Contemporary knowledge of moral behaviour. Today we speak about postmodernism or a postmodern age. It is a very broad intellectual movement that originated in the United States. The influence of postmodernism can be found in different spheres of culture. The aim of postmodernism is a rejection of big theories and concepts. It is about plurality of opinions and thinking processes. A major change happens in the society and the many scientific disciplines are intersecting. For example, philosophy is not a "pure" abstract science, but it is intersecting with literature, arts, architecture and exact sciences. Postmodernism is against variety, individuality is popular, as well as immediate mental reality reflected in the works of its authors. Philosophical ethics of these turbulent times was formed in France during the second half of the 20th century. Its representatives are among others M. Foucault, J. — F. Lyotard, J. Derrida and G. Deleuze. Each of these authors contributed to a new mental construction of reality and prefers different motives. The base also differs with each of them. It can be anything from literature, through psychology to linguistics. Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* from 1979 can be considered as a basic text of this period. Lyotard offers here an evaluation of the situation in the society and its current state. Most of his other works are an impressive analysis and evaluation of the status of the society from a point of view of different sciences: philosophy, law and psychology.

The question of morality and moral behaviour is getting into new dimensions and the authors are much more open and critical about everything related to human identity. It is interesting that the authors do not publish compete works with a monographic focus, but they prefer literature collections (i.e. Aisthesis collection). These collections are always focused on a specific topic and authors (contributors) publish their studies in a free style. This genre became very popular and gained many new readers. Moral problems were connected to the life standard of the society, social prestige and moral feeling of national units. History is often revisited and many social questions are compared with contemporary situation. For example, Plato and his ideal state is in focus again, as well as theory of Machiavellianism, Rousseau's social contract, Lock's legislative system and principles of liberalism and socialism. "The French postmodernism was also influenced by structuralism. It attempts to show that the differences between various languages, national cultures and eras can be interpreted as systemic structural complexes or certain contextual ways of approaching. By that, a postmodern perspective comes to life and advocates for the plurality of equal approaches, structural basis or paradigms. Historical change of such structural complexes or ways of approaching in history of law, morality and science was a subject of impressive analysis of M. Foucault."[106] It was Foucault, who switched from his medical practise to philosophy and created a whole collection of writings focusing on postmodern analyses. These were among others: *Thinking the Outside, Thinking of the Native Nations, Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Foucault also attempted to analyse the power in society, where power is divided according to purpose and function. He derives a conclusion that power changes human behaviour in social environment in a radical way. Power at the same time regulates relationships in the society and it is an objective cause of the social classes. Morality has no rules in this order and

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106) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 187.

society functions based on power of influence. It is also confirmed what Foucault reminds us from Nietzsche's work that in the fight for power, there are no moral rules, but everything is driven by the right of the strongest. At the same time, a question arises that Foucault leaves unanswered: Can plurality be the last phase of human development of thinking? Is plurality the final stage of philosophy? We are under the influence of various social networks of institutions and many individuals, who act towards the others from the position of their power, often in an unseemly manner, even offending human dignity. This is the picture of current social reality.

Current times are also typical of social plurality that leads to identity and tolerance. We often speak about identity — national, human etc. It is about identity and tolerance up to the level, when they do not restrict human rights and freedom of the other. Concept of morality is different from the previous development of the human society. There are few open approaches to morality and it depends on the person, which one will be chosen. The choice is usually influenced by the social status, professional orientation and social environment influence. Exceptional is also that the moral actions do not influence the social morality directly, i.e. are not based on a strict concept apparatus and isolated in the attempt to understand individual concepts that are said to be important for the composition of moral concept of the individuals in a society.

It is important that the morality develops a new form also due to plurality of thinking and social order. Postmodern authors do not ask any more about what is morality and where does it come from? Sartre's idea of freedom gains in importance. Each man tries to find the meaning of life in a free and morally unrestrained environment, into which he gets. He strives to live fully, a lot of things can be changed by a conscience choice, but it can also come to a dead end. It is all presented to us in our everyday life. It is free as much as we let it be, through our feelings and experience. A man wants to live a happy and satisfied life.

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13. Key Concepts in Ethics

Keywords: *values, freedom, conscience, moral norm*

Towards the end of our material we will focus on the selected ethical concepts that were used in the text and are important from the point of view of moral behaviour. The individual concepts are not aligned in chronological or any other order. It is a purely subjective choice of these notions that create a base of the morality in the works of the individual authors or theories mentioned.

Values. Each man has certain values during his life that create his lifestyle and help to navigate him in his everyday actions. They are always subjective and change during the course of a human life. Family, education, school, friends and coevals — they all have influence on creating the values. It all creates a complex that influences how a man reaches from his inner conviction to reality. The highest value of each man is his life. To care for is a basic human need and a characteristic of a man. All other values are recognised as derived, i.e. moral values, material values. While talking to someone, his hierarchy of values can always be established. The subjective judgement of what the values are about and which values are preferred can differ in the opinions of the individuals and also can have some common traits. With the help of values, a man creates his own life and is often guided when deciding about complex life situations. In most cases a value has its specific goal. That is why the goal is tied up with value. "(...) a goal is a general summary of all values and vice versa the values are a specification of the goal,

eventually conditions to reaching the overall goal ..."[107] It would be enough for a separate treatise to write about the history of values. It is enough for us that the ancient Greek philosophy specifically pointed out a reality that represented values and was later on assigned different names. For example: necessity, possibility, essence, movement etc. Even within the ancient Greek period, there was an evident shift towards specifying the concept of value. For example the stoic definition of naturalism and Aristotle's teaching about matter and form. Later on, the moral values overlapped with ontological and gnoseological topics. So value was not a philosophical category as is the case of other concepts of moral behaviour (good, bad, conscience, beauty etc.). "There is a strong shift between norms and values. Ethics recognises only norms. Aesthetic values are the subject of judgement."[108] Most of the authors agree that with Nietzsche the value becomes a philosophical category. It is also due to the fact that axiology is not understood as a complexity, but it is divided into individual concepts that find its own interpretations. In the same sense the cultural, moral, economic and spiritual values are mentioned. Different concepts of values (theories) originate: philosophical theory of values (M. Scheler), theological theory of values (P. Tillich, personalism), pragmatic theory of values, psychological theory of values etc. It is typical for all of them that value becomes an ethical category, together with other already established categories. The neo–kantian school significantly contributed to a more specific definition of values (W. Windelband, H. Rickert). The whole German historiography of the 19th century works with cultural value and attempts to create its specific definition (O. Spengler, W. Dilthey). Even positivists work with value and they try to find its place in the axiological order (A. Comte, H. Spencer). In the personalistic approach the value is related to religious values that are a means to understand God (E. Mounier, J. Maritain). We also

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107) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 345.
108) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 346.

focused in our explanation on values in the works of M. Scheler and his followers.

Moral value is also an expression of human benefit and utility. It is a root of human efforts and development of the social order. Moral values are a base of social morality. They express a close relationship between a man and the society and his acceptance of the fact that the values change during the course of a human life and with a relation back validity have the objective nature.

Freedom. There are only few concepts that do not have their own definition. Freedom is one of them. Even if this concept has been known from classical Greek times already, no one has been able to define this moral category precisely. Today freedom of each citizen in our country is guaranteed. We can use an example of J. P. Sartre, who made within the concept of existentialism a very unique analysis of freedom (i.e. his collection of short stories *The Wall* etc.). Nowadays people are born to freedom. It was not the case in previous times and people desired freedom and to be (become) free. However, we will not devote our attention to the history of freedom, but rather to the concept itself and its many connotations. Freedom is obvious for a man today, nobody contemplates about not being free and wanting to become free. According to Sartre, freedom is "unfreedom" to a man. In what sense? Freedom always brings certain restrictions and principles with it that people fulfil and execute in their own interest. What more, freedom is conditioned by choice. By taking a choice, I decide about myself and about others at the same time. Who realises the seriousness and responsibility of this choice, is completely helpless. That is the form of so called outer freedom. "It is completely different with inner freedom. According to Aristotle, in the sense of inner freedom, voluntary is, the principle of which rests in the person taking action. ...action is as free as much the initiator destines himself to action."[109] Sometimes a man acts with his inner freedom based on the outer impulse and that is why the outer freedom is a defence mechanism in his behaviour. Some authors contemplate the relationship of freedom and determinism, which gained its place due to the development of the philosophy of science and formulating some phenomena based on natural causality. At the same time it has to be clear that freedom has nothing in common with the empirical base. We are getting to know freedom based on our moral attitudes and our co–habiting in the world along with others.

Conscience. It is a pillar of all moral categories that we know and are able to name today. Conscience is a category so vital that it relates to a meaning of practical reason. Conscience is related to a certain extent to our responsibility and duty. People approach conscience only after certain action that is finalised. Meaning of conscience is most probably different for each person and also each of us lives through our everyday problems and destinies with a different intensity. Human conscience changes as the situations differ and it certainly can be influenced by upbringing and social situation. "Autonomy of conscience means also this: No one can morally bind us to something, if we alone are not consciously aware of it. Conscience applies a general practical principle to a specific situation. This moral a priori has a character of duty and good or bad. Kant formulates a priori moral principle in his categorical imperative. By applying the moral a priori to the situation, the practical reason gets to a practical judgement about what is here and is a duty now. Duty in the moral sense exists only when the practical reason relates its moral a priori to the action in the situation and in that way, it reaches the practical judgement. That is when we talk about the autonomy of conscience. Moral value of our actions depends exclusively on the preceding conscience."[110]

Moral norm. Contemporary society has been successful in coping with many different things during its development. It is also the case of the moral norms that have their steady place in the

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109) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 272.

110) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., pp. 286 — 287.

categorical apparatus of ethics. In general, the norm is considered a regulation that we fulfil in order to reach the goals set. This regulation is valid in a certain society and that society has a restricted character. The reason is that the moral norms in one social locality can substantially differ from another locality (place of occurrence of a different society). Moral norms do change, at the same time, however, they last longer than values. "In order to preserve the moral relationships, the moral norms have to be preserved. A goal that someone wants to reach, as well as the system of regulations that needs to be fulfilled to achieve this goal, are the inevitable presupposition of normative relationships."[111] Moral norms also set up certain valid regulations of our actions and behaviour in a certain social order. We can talk about division into moral, social or legal norms. Sometimes norms are connected with the meaning of the work code, but it is necessary to distinguish the two. A norm differs from a code in not stating that something can be requested from an established practise (medical code, engineering code etc.). Validity of norms is more or less given by a subjective attitude of the evaluator. "Individual conscience and norms are mutually related and interdependent. On the other hand, conscience is formed and developed in the confrontation with norms of social ethos."[112] A logical question arises — are norms inevitable and important? Yes, norms in the society are legitimate and have their valid position in the social environment. Norms guarantee the development of the society and its relationships. They are a guideline and can be crucial for securing the humanity of the mankind.

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111) Popelová, J.: Op. cit., p. 393.
112) Anzenbacher, A.: Op. cit., p. 288.

14. Conclusion

This text, in which we considered cognition in moral actions, shows that morality is formed in the same way as the ontogenesis of a man. Moral action always corresponds with the atmosphere in the society and to a spiritual reflection of the culture.

The ancient Greek period substantially contributed to formulating of the basic ethical questions that were a part of the life in Greek polis. Moral behaviour was a question of man's engagement in practical and theoretical environment. The credit for creating the wide range of questions, essence of which continued to following periods, goes to ancient Greek thinkers. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were inspired in their thinking process by the practical life and experience that were created in the social environment. What more, Plato also did not got rid of the influence of mythical stories, based on which he created the broad concept of his work. A question that is common for the authors of this period is the goal of a human life, which each of them finds in pleasure, ideal world or good living. Many attributes that help a man to follow the desired goal are created. Even late ancient Greek philosophy, through the movements of Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism, created primarily ethical concept rooted in the possibilities of the moral world and ethical ideals that helped to create ethical norms of the Hellenistic period. It is again the striving for a perfect life that is reflected in the way of living of those times and most of all, in the social circumstances in Greek and later on, in the Roman society and its set up. The Hedonistic way of life, peace of mind and balance,

striving limited by the human possibilities and the world ruled by the Deities — all of that offers certain possibilities to a man and a degree of responsibility for one's own life and a share in the social happenings.

During Middle Ages, there is an important shift towards the question of man. In the centre is an attempt to proof the divine existence on a philosophical basis. A very thorough dogmatic teaching arises that incorporates elements of philosophical thinking and theology. During the whole time of a centrist view of the world, the classical dogmatism was at a centre of the attention of the scholars, philosophers and theologians. The question of morality became a part of the a priori vision, in which a man is subordinate to God and with his mercy attempts the most perfect knowledge of the Creator. We can find this topic in different forms in the works of A. Augustine, T. Aquinas and others. The meaning of the theory of T. Aquinas — the Thomism — is important during the whole following era and events. The teachings and activities of different monastic orders had an important role in preserving the writings and teachings of the Greek authors. Ethics becomes an inseparable part of scholastic scholars. Individual ethical categories are postulated and often are a part of Christian teachings and basics of philosophical — theological systems. The starting point for the authors of these times was Aristotle's philosophy and selected parts from his work that were translated into Latin — the language of the scholars of those times.

The period of modern times is typical with its expansion of human knowledge. With the beginning of overseas exploration, conquering new and unknown territories, inhabitants and traditions, Europe gradually tries to spread Christianity to non–European countries as well, similarly to the Middle Ages period. New philosophical orientations arise that differ in their place of origin. It is not possible to talk about philosophy as a whole anymore that would be typical for a specific area. What more, on quite a narrow geographical area new differing attitudes and theories arise. The

ideal of science gains importance. Exact sciences also develop and the change is visible in the world view as well (geocentrism vs. heliocentrism). Moral theories are related to social changes and the meaning of a man and his position in the world is not restricted. Times of the Renaissance, humanism and the Enlightenment attempt to derive morality from the nature of a man itself and without neglecting the human factor. Moral theories suddenly begin to differ within specific territories under the various approaches of the authors themselves. They perceive as a base the limitlessness of a man, of the human potential, humanity and goodness, reason and experience. The human culture changes following the progress and recording the tradition. Society of this period is still directly connected to religion. First ethical theories arise that elaborate on different categories in connection with the demands of the era. Some of them react radically against the established social rules. An example can be Nietzsche's call for change of the established moral values and towards the change of the society. Another example is Scheler's analysis of values in line with the social conditions.

Contemporary social ethics and various empirical approaches form the current form of morality and moral attitudes of the culture of the 21st century. From their beginnings many theories went through a substantial time period and many are still valid for contemporary humankind. We can conclude from the above stated facts that the knowledge of the moral actions has its valid history and famous personalities that contributed to its development. However, in our times, there still arise new approaches under the influence of rationality in the society, for example, the environmental ethics of K. Lorenz. Existential ethics keeps its popularity as well. All these well–known conclusions recognised by people contribute to the consolidation of the mankind.

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