

Summary

The main thread of this publication is the topic of universalism, which is certainly presented here in various forms and contexts. Among them is a striving-to formulate the basic or, as the case may be, supreme moral principle of human action for which a positive or negative qualification of value is relevant. One of the most important attempts in formulating such a principle is Kant's „categorical imperative“, among whose constituents, is the conviction, that man as a person is a „citizen“, not only of the „phenomenal“, but also of the „noumenal“ world („mundus intelligibilis“). The possibility of free action, independent of the „causality of nature“ as well as of sensual impulses, is drawn from this position as well.

The subject of liberty as a constitutive element of morality has been reflected upon by a great many philosophers, among them Nicolai Hartmann, in whose theory, liberty is not understood as something beyond the realm of the „real world“ but as the highest stratum („cultural being“) of this world, as just the right condition that enables the establishment of specific human teleological activity, „final nexus“, or the co-called „plus on determination“.

Yet N. Hartmann was inspired not only by Kantianism but, in a broader sense, he was one of the representatives of the phenomenological movement as well. He was an especially important representative of the tradition of „material value ethics“. According to the views of this movement established by M. Scheler, there are emotions, „value-feeling“, that have a constitutive significance in the area of morality: through contemplation of this value feeling we gain access to the hier-

archically structured realm of values and relationships among them.

In this publication, Hartmann is presented as a philosopher inquiring into the specificity of aesthetic values, that depend upon works of art as in the form of material objects.

„Material Value Ethics“ is represented in its basic form by the conservative Catholic philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, whose main topic is an investigation into virtue as a consistent attribute of human behaviour and the moral orientation of man.

The importance of the emotional side of human nature as it relates to moral behaviour is emphasised in the ethical thought of the Brentano-School. Franz Brentano is well-known thanks to his concept of „intentionality“, collecting phenomena of emotions and will into a unified class referred to as „phenomena of interest“. A universalistic basis for these phenomena enables the discovery of not only „correct love“ and „correct hate“, but also preference and the ability to determine the „sum“ of values.

The main line of this philosophical thread is represented in this publication by two Prague philosophers: O. Kraus, an orthodox adherent of the Brentano-School, and Christian von Ehrenfels. In the thought of the latter philosopher, the sphere of values is analysed very carefully, yet there are also some precarious anti-universalistic ideas introduced, especially those concerning the relationship between the „white“ European and „Mongolian“ races.

The „Czech section“ (in the territorial sense) of the publication finalizes the interpretation of J. Patočka's concept of „spiritual man“. The author attempts to correlate Patočka's reflections concerning the role of the intelligentsia in the time of the scientific and technological revolution, his thoughts on the status of the in-

telligentsia as „possessors of reason“ and his concept of „spiritual man“, including his interpretation of the universal character and unconditional validity of the ideas of civil and human rights. The relation between the universalism and the exclusiveness of the philosopher’s „mission“ or endeavour, if you like, is the main topic here.

There is a tendency in philosophical thought concerning universalism within ethical and moral spheres, for it to be regarded as an environmental or ecological philosophy primarily because of its radical emphasis on applying morally relevant judgments upon nature and „extra-human“ beings. This emphasis nevertheless evokes additional problems, especially by underestimating the specificity of the human form of being (or existence) as well as the uniquely human perspective that serves as the starting point for philosophical reflection on these matters. An example of this underestimation is the „physiocentric“ concept of contemporary German philosopher K. M. Meyer-Abich, who was inspired not only by ecological theories (H. Jonas), but also by the fundamental ontology of M. Heidegger.

The main problem treated in this book, universalism, is presented in a variety of ways, focusing on complex and interconnected social relationships. These include political situations within and between nations, as well as intercultural and intra-cultural conflicts and connections. A basic universalism, often included in various theories of intersubjective relationships, is preserved here. Yet more important is the role played by those factors that are dependant upon a particular context (e.g. culture, religion, etc). Within these contexts arise questions as to the relationship between the universal and the particular as well as problems of collective identities, for example, the concept of Europe as „European Union“ and it’s value-laden foundations. The particu-

lar problem at hand is how to specify and interpret basic human rights, their validity and applicability. Disagreement largely surrounds the question regarding to what degree the concept of democracy should be integrated into the sphere of basic human rights. Roughly speaking, the main problem of universalism has shifted from that of seeking a starting point or foundation of ethical theories towards the search for a general model of varying overlapping concepts, an optimal coexistence of diverse human communities in the era of globalisation.