

Movement of existence in phenomenology of Jan Patočka

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RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es clarificar el concepto filosófico del movimiento en Patočka's, especialmente en el contexto de la historia. La fenomenología del movimiento de Patočka's se basa en el cambio fundamental en la vida de una persona orientada a la verdad, la libertad y la responsabilidad. Esto a su vez llevado a cabo a nivel individual, donde el hombre se convierte en sí mismo, por un lado y a nivel social, como una transformación del mundo mutuo en la esfera pública, Patočka habla sobre el primer nivel en relación con la vida filosófica; y segundo, en relación con la vida política.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Mundo-Movimiento-Existencia-Libertad-Verdad-Historia.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to clarify Patočka's philosophical concept of the movement, especially in the context of history. Patočka's phenomenology of movement is based on the fundamental turn in a person's life oriented on the life in truth, freedom and responsibility. This turn takes place on an individual level where the man turns into himself on one hand, as well as on a social level as a transformation of mutual world into the public sphere. Patočka

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talks about the first level in connection with philosophical life, about the second in connection with political life.

KEY WORDS: World–Movement–Existence–Freedom–True–History.

Problem of the movement, especially in the context of history in philosophy of the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka is one of the fundamental problems in his whole philosophical work.

As a thinker he was inspired by philosophy of Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. His personal view of a man at all and especially human body is the expression of an ontological understanding to the meaning of bodiness. Patočka has worked out problematics of a subjective body as an essential starting point of a total experience of the world, as the centre of orientation in the world. Bodiness, according to him, takes part at ontological enrootment of existence. That is why Patočka talks about existential status of bodiness which is primary and enables localization among things, acceptance of their influence. He puts body into the group of one's own possibilities that we do not select or behave freely towards, "because we must be them, and only on their basis there are revealed "free" possibilities" (Patočka, 1970, p. 202). Existential meaning of bodiness in the work of Patočka has much to do with elaborating the term of natural world. Man is an original existence in the world which is a physical existence. He understands the bodiness as a "possibility to move"(Ibid., p. 204), as something that in fact enables me to do things. Here is shown the ontological meaning of bodiness, since Patočka understands bodiness as the basic possibility that determinates all other possibilities of Dasein. Thus he works out the concept of basic terms of human life which he understands in the context of history.

Methodological approach to this problem from phenomenological point of view: "Phenomenology is not a science about the structure of the beings out of the fact how the beings appears as it does appear to us. History can be nothing else, nothing more or less than an inevitable skeleton of that appearing, the appearing of the beings" (Patočka, 1990, p. 59).

Grasping the topic of appearing is a theoretical bound the Heidegger's concept of history and historicity who talks about historicity as about an ontological problem and analyses it through existential analytic of Dasein. The interpretation of historicity of Dasein was during writing the work *Being and Time* shown as working out of temporality of Dasein, later temporal character of Being and that in connection of forgetting and hiding the Being. He will talk about history as about history of being itself which man can not influence. How should we understand the role of man's historicity in history?

According to Patočka, history is a process which starts by quaking the sense which is problematic on its own. Talking about the beginnings of history and the role of man there we might come to the question of place *in* history where the man would be placed, i.e. in history as we normally understand it. However, Patočka does not talk about man's placement somewhere "in" history. Such a spatial placement should not be the condition for man's possibility of historicity. Since historicity is understood as ontological structure of Being, man gains history only after having filled out certain historical role, grasping the opportunity that is brought by the experience of quake: "History arise by quaking the ordinary and absolute sense at almost parallel, mutually influenced origin of politics and philosophy. In fact they are the development of possibilities, rudimentary based in this quake." (Patočka, 2002, p. 83)

Quake of a certain sense as the beginning of something is still repeated in history, in its own sense, it makes history a history. Here we can say that the beginning is something constructive.

The starting point of Patočka's project of philosophy of history is noticing a radical turn in man's life which leads towards life in truth, freedom and responsibility. This turn takes place on an individual level where the man turns into himself on one hand, as well as on a social level as a transformation of mutual world into the public sphere. Patočka talks about the first level in connection with philosophical life, about the second in connection with political life. Both levels can be, however, considered just in connection to their common beginning, common experience. In this case the experience is negative which is bound to the quake of the specific sense. But Patočka expresses the sense of history in a constant negation of the sense as it is. History is man's ownest performance. This performance is based on "era", on keeping the distance from all beings that enables free relationship with everything what is not beings, but what is from the Beings's point of view "nothing", i.e. for Being. This relationship of enjambment behind beings thus necessarily gains the image of negation of the sense itself and must keep this image since the hideness of beings necessarily means faleness. However, what matters in history is that the man "always and again somehow stands against permanent danger of faleness in life of an individual and community" (Ibid., p. 293).

Even though Patočka yet develops a certain concept of historical development, history is there rather a history of faleness. Man again and again falls into the situation of pre-historical man, eventually because "he stopped being a relationship towards Being and became a power; he forgot though that history is nothing else but a quaked security of the specific sense" (Ibid., p. 115).

Patočka differs between epochal development of mankind in non-historical, pre-historical and historical phase. History keeps distance from pre-historical era based on the opposition between the given and problematic sense. The given fact of sense is in pre-historical world secured by non-distinguishing between Dasein and beings, as if the man had not enough courage to reveal the world as the world, as the world appearing. Non-historical man does not distinguish between Dasein and beings, thus he lives in “ontological metaphor”: he lives in it because he has not enough courage to look into the face of the difference between Dasein and beings. Therefore disclosing the Dasein appears as disclosing “nothing” and nothing is a loss of sense. On contrary, history is connected with questionableness of sense that reflects in origin of philosophy and politics. History arises by a complete loss of sense, from what arises the real sense - the problematic one. Patočka highlights here the man's performance, his decision towards authenticity and expresses it by words: “history can be just a repeated rise up from faleness” (Ibidem). This performance enables man to see what was hidden to him until then. All what appears on the way of history evokes amazement which is the beginning of asking – stimulus to ask a question which introduces the man into a historical world. This transit from the world naturally given and harmonic into the world of insecurity and unprotected world Patočka demonstrates on a difference between the pre-historical, natural world; “because the community of what fills it up he accepts as something given, as something what shows on its own” (Ibid., p. 39); and a historical world through three life movements: movement of acceptance, defense and movement of truth which puts a man against unity and against that what he discloses. The basic human life movement of acceptance is a manifestation of expressing the given situation; it is a possibility of developing one's own possibilities which are originally constant. These take place not on their own, just for oneself but inter-subjectively, co-beingly since acceptance happens in the world. An important role is played here by specific bodiness. The third human life movement is a movement of breakpoint, movement of own self-projection or truth as well. There the man gets into an explicit relationship towards the world as a unit that manifests itself in its originality.

An important feature in Patočka's explanation is a co-presence of all three movements both in pre-historical as well as historical era. However, movement of the truth in pre-historical era is not the object of so-called thematic orientation. The pre-historical life to which appearing did not become obvious and life did not become problematic, “is not freed from the third basic movement of life – movement of truth, even though not disputably of thematic orientation which is characteristic for historical era” (Ibid., p. 43). Here arises a question whether the beginning of history is also the beginning of topicality. How is the movement of

truth present also in pre-historical era? If we have a look at the inspiration of Patočka's thinking we get back to Heidegger because he expresses the relationship between pre-historical and historical in a structure of ontically-ontological difference. The analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time* has shown Being in its difference from beings. The difference between the disclosed beings and that one behalf of what it is disclosed, or "is" Heidegger called ontological difference. Whatever recognition of beings is possible only when it is freed from hiddenness; when it becomes unhidden. This unhiddenness is something like disclosing, showing up. Thus beings do not get unhiddenness yet by judgment. Right on contrary – whatever utterance about beings is possible just when it has been disclosed before. This structure has much to do with Heidegger's explanation of the truth as aletheia in Greek meaning unhiddenness. Unhiddenness is conditioned by ability of logo to get the true out from hidden content. The true in Heidegger's understanding is an unhiddenness which lets itself be visible, peeped but does not sound violent. The matter of the truth understood as unhiddenness (of beings) is connected with the question of deepening the original asking for Being of beings which means disclosing the dynamic structure of beings's appearing in its own Being. Heidegger, in his historical exchange of Being with beings again discovers the structure of beings's disclosures alongside with hiddenness of Being. Man can not influence this structure based on his wanting or desire since the man in this context does not perform as recognizing, longing, striving subject but as a place of Being (thus Dasein). Disclosures of such an essential structure of Being Heidegger called ontological truth which is the condition for possibility of beings's disclosures, i.e. of an ontical truth. Beings is disclosable when it is recognized in its essential structure. For Heidegger, the hiddenness of Being means that the Being has hid itself in the disclosures of beings and alongside he connects this hiddenness with the problem of oblivion and fallenness. In spite of the fact that Being is the ownmost of Dasein, identifies beings as beings, has an ontological significance, it falls into oblivion. By oblivion he does not mean a mental matter as usual forgetting to think of something. Yet the essentia of oblivion itself contains so called "avoidance of ones own" and fallenness of Dasein how the beings gets hidden and Being remains hidden from "here" which is the closest, i.e. from beings in its way of Being. The nearest closeness is thus at the same time the biggest hiddenness and oblivion. The oblivion of Being did not happen by human oblivion since the oblivion mans an avert of Being itself. In this context Heidegger talks about historical and epochal disclosures of Being or ontological difference. Patočka follows these Heidegger's analyses.

The beginning of history in Patočka's work does not mean an appearance of new phenomena. It means making thematic something what was put together as non-thematic and necessarily with ontical phenomena: ontological phenomena. History starts by uprising of ontological phenomena, i.e. making ontical problematic which is problematic in how it appears and like what we understand it. Problematicity of history that appears in ontical sphere means having realized that things, being the way they do appear to us in their platitude, could be also different. That means a realization of the difference between Being and appearing of beings. Such a realization is possible just in an experience or disclosures of Being's appearance as the one that leaves beings itself to appear. The history interpreted from ontically-ontological difference in fact start by having realized this difference. Only from the point of view of history we can talk about pre-historical era. Just from topicality we can highlight something what was present non-thematically. The same way as the movement of truth was present in pre-historical era, all three movements of human existence make parallelly a human possibility also in history. While the movement of acceptance and defense create for man a need of security and home, they always aim towards keeping all that arises for us from tradition and they are turned towards the past. The movement of truth creates the necessary contra-motion which heads towards the future. The fact that the ontological phenomena has once up risen means that beside every obvious constant there is a question and problematicity that is always ready to outbreak. A disclosed the relationship between the ontical and ontological enables us to ask a question. To troublesome what is hidden in disclosures or to ask a question however assumes that we have a possibility of distance from what is first given to us. This is the way how Patočka characterizes freedom: "History is a domain for free action and freedom ... lies in grasping the possibility to let things be what they are, to let them appear, show themselves; to be willing to be a ground for their manifestation, to be ready for a shake of constants one is used to, to let reveal what really is" (Ibid., p. 136).

He does not understand freedom as traditionally as a possibility of choice from more options but primarily as a step away from what determinates us without being aware if it, as a possibility to decide about things and about oneself on ones own. That means man has gained a space where he can escape by a "step back from beings". Both Heidegger and Patočka use the term let things be in this context which means to let beings be, let it show on its own and at the same time to be a passageway to this self-projection of beings. Freedom means not to be an obstacle for truth disclosures. There is no passive element inside of this letting be. It is the matter of thinking and as it is and it always is a task standing in front of us. We never have

freedom just as it is, it is a performance that must be permanently acted. Man is an incomplete essentia that is realized as a fight for oneself, an essentia that must keep fighting for oneself. The starting point of Patočka's philosophy of history is a performance of a free human existence that is ontologically rooted in historicity of final Dasein. Life of a historical man is a place where is the movement of truth fully applied, where all starts to be recognized and seen in a new light. Historical man is enabled to disclose phenomena from its original hiddenness to the light since he is interested on his own Being in a way of responsibility which he can accept or he can make it easier by hiding it and escaping from it. Freedom is inseparable from authentic understanding since non-authenticity we do not choose but we are being it from birth to death. The authentic possibility of overtaking responsibility for own existence is thus connected with own performance, man's activity while overtaking the responsibility for ones own life and making ones own situation more and more clear – as a man. Projection of human life movements has in Patočka's work a phenomenological meaning since the natural world is shown in its ontological structure in connection between bodiness, things and inter-subjectivity. Further going control of one's own body means that things can be manifested to the man in the way they really are. However, this significantly changes the whole direction of life movement and of the relationship to the world on the whole.

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