Dimitry N. Mentuz

THE IDEA OF KNOWLEDGE AND ITS EVOLUTION IN MODERN DISCOURSE

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This study conducts an epistemological and contextual discourse analysis of the idea of knowledge in the philosophy of the 20th century. The main key stones of this work are as follows: the identification of the essential characteristics indicating the ontological genesis of the existing crisis of epistemological and ethical foundations; consideration of the main distinctive features of knowledge interpretation in epistemology and contextualism as a possible knowledge production instrument; study of the possibility of restoring an integral picture of the world based on phenomenological ontologies; study of possibilities in the language domain from a hermeneutical point of view in the light of the resolution of epistemological contradictions.

For all people interested in modern philosophy.

I dedicate this book to my mother Maria and my friend Egor with appreciation for their spiritual support

With great gratitude to Dr. Noor Mazhar for valuable recommendations during my work on the manuscript

Special thanks to the Warnborough University Alliance for the possibility to finish this PhD text

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Introduction

One of the most important dilemmas of the modern world is the striving for universalization in the sphere of morality, the pursuit of unity in the sphere of law, the desire to achieve a common understanding of justice for all people on the one hand, and an existential longing experienced by separate groups and individuals, states, and communities to establish and preserve their own uniqueness on the other. The stumbling block is precisely the answer to the question of a uniform understanding of the world and human behaviour. Superficial preservation of diversity obviously does not help to solve this difficult dilemma of modernity.

It is possible to move towards humanism through mutual recognition; the struggle leading to slavery and domination is tragic. Masters are only recognized by their slaves. There can only be one reasonable solution to the struggle for recognition– mutual recognition among equals. Is it possible in a society where people are united only by a common goal or a common idea? Even a common goal, which brings people together, may ultimately result in tyranny – with tragic consequences.

Is there an alternative? Is liberalism based on the equality of civil rights an adequate alternative? In this case, it is necessary to consider the issue of different cultural contexts. Depending on a cultural context, equal rights can be interpreted differently. Hence, the question is whether the idea of equal rights, interpreted in a particular cultural context and depending on this context, is the only possible interpretation.

The current crisis of epistemological and ethical foundations is caused by the fact that the era of metanarratives in continental philosophy has come to an end. The crisis is associated with the attempts by analytical philosophy to find reliable bases of knowledge using its own methodology. These attempts ultimately end with a crisis and require analysis in context. Contextualism, in its turn, cannot provide a complete and comprehensive answer to the question of the foundations of knowledge and ethics. However, it can be an effective instrument in clarifying the above problems, along with the hermeneutic tradition of continental philosophy and the developments of phenomenological ontology.

The contextual approach is appropriate, provided that the contextualism of cultural specificities is essentially an adequate response to contemporary challenges. If cultural contextualism is adequate, it would seem that the accusation, made by various societies, of global unification is well-grounded. However, cultural contextualism – just like any other – may not be an adequate solution to epistemological and ethical problems, while the restoration of a single ontological picture of the world may be really important. The immediate problem of knowledge production amid the calamities of the twentieth century, the importance of understanding ethical guidelines in the light of the epistemological crisis of modernity, and the high scientific value of interpreting a complex of epistemological and ethical issues in today's realities have determined the choice of the research topic.

Purpose and objectives of the study. The purpose of the study is to conduct an epistemological and contextual discourse analysis of the problems of knowledge production

in the post-catastrophe era, namely: the identification of the essential characteristics indicating the ontological **genesis** of the existing crisis of epistemological and ethical foundations; consideration of the main distinctive features of **knowledge interpretation in epistemology and contextualism as a possible knowledge production instrument**; study of the possibility of restoring an **integral picture of the world based on phenomenological ontologies**; study of **possibilities in the language domain from a hermeneutical point of view** in the light of the resolution of epistemological contradictions.

As for the method, the study covers a transition from existential to social phenomenology. It contains a critique of epistemological and contextual fundamentalism, induction and reflexive quest, interpretation of ethical and aesthetic foundations as part of the movement and critique mentioned.

To identify epistemological and ethical foundations, the study focuses on the concepts developed by Continental philosophers (Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricœur, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-François Lyotard, Jürgen Habermas, Donald Verene), analytical philosophers (Edmund Gettier, Michael Williams, Oswald Hafling, Gilbert Harman, Alvin Goldman, David Clarke, Kate Lehrer, Peter Klein, David Lewis, Stewart Cohen, Edward Keyserlingk, Barry Hoffmaster, Earl Winkler, Richard Shusterman), and representatives of German analytical philosophy (Gerhard Ernst and Erich Ammereller).

Chapter 1. Knowledge: scepticism and epistemology

Kant's search for synthetic a priori propositions applicable specifically to ethics, Hegel's idealistic reinterpretation of the master-slave dialectic, the Marxist emancipation of the proletariat were, in the author's opinion, prerequisites for a number of large-scale disasters of the twentieth century: from a series of Russian revolutions in 1905–1917, the fascist reaction to revolutionary liberation movements to modern scepticism, claims for a new world order, on the one hand, and the crisis of discourses of human rights and international law, on the other hand. Marxism and critical theory were a reaction to Hegel's philosophy and to the philosophical views of the Enlightenment. The left-wing Hegelian critics were more radical and believed that Hegel's dialectic was far from complete. Karl Marx took their side. Marx believed in the complete abolition of private property and the capitalist production system as a whole in order to overcome the class structure of the state and the individualism of the civil society.

Marx believed that only the working class, or the proletariat, was up to the task in the interests of all mankind. Liberation of the proletariat was not the only idea – emancipation of the proletariat implied universal human emancipation (Marx, 1974, p. 41). Marx identified four types of alienation that occur to the workers labouring under a capitalist system: their alienation from their product, from the act of production, from their work as an act of creativity and, finally, from

other workers as a result of antagonistic class relations. However, Marx's theory of alienation is largely based on Hegelian criticism. Marx combined a version of Feuerbach's materialism with the historical dialectical progression of the forms of knowledge developed by Hegel. As a result, Kant's universal and eternal categories were reinterpreted in terms of history and sociology. An understanding of reality reflects the social forms prevailing at the moment; ideas are not the essence of being, but historical social being determines ideas. This is not an abstract person or the disembodied subject of the Enlightenment. It is also not the historically unfolding spirit of Hegel, which is the essence of man, but the ensemble of all social relations. The meaning of history is not an idealistic dialectic of absolute spirit, but a series of modes of production. The very history of Marxism appears in the twentieth century as a tragedy: from hopes under Marx's banner to deep disappointments and new enslavement, from emancipation to the revival of class societies and new grinding tyranny, followed by the attempts at theoretical rethinking and critical analysis in the period after World War II.

Let us briefly describe the spiritual atmosphere of this post-catastrophic state as part of the discourse of Continental philosophy. Philosophers from the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research attempted to rethink creatively and preserve the significant legacy of Marxist theory. They proposed the renewal of Marxism by returning to Hegel. Then the focus shifted to the earlier works of Marx, resulting in a return to dialectical, philosophical, non-dogmatic Marxism and consequently to the revival of the philosophical discourse itself, which is essentially impossible in dogmatic Marxism or Marxist fundamentalism.

According to dogmatic Marxism, science and revolutionary practice are able to replace philosophical discourse completely. The theorist of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas, has a different point of view. Philosophy still plays a crucial role in the interpretation of both social relations and the individual's existence. The theorists of the Frankfurt School do not consider Marx an anti-philosopher, while Kant's abstract rationalism and that of the Enlightenment are subjected to criticism. At the same time, they agree with Marx's materialistic criticism of the Hegelian idealist dialectic. According to them, the self-development of the Absolute Idea is not a determining factor in the historical process. Even the proletariat's role in the emancipation of mankind is questioned, especially if one takes into account the support of fascist and Nazi regimes by ordinary workers.

The most important contribution of the critical theorists consists in the criticism of Marx's concepts with regard to political economy. The theorists of the Frankfurt School believe that science cannot explain the human subject's behaviour, and Marx's refusal of the concept of 'utopia' was erroneous in explaining alternative points of view on morality, which is vital in the process of emancipation of social groups. Utopia is an important example of negative thinking. Utopian revelation is similar to a mytheme and may be an important factor in explaining social relations. Myth and enlightenment must be dialectically interrelated. Reducing the human exclusively to instrumental and scientific reason can be a prerequisite for the loss of the human itself.

Postmodernism. Postmodernism is a series of sceptical and anti-essentialist concepts, whose context is quite wide – from architecture, art, and literature to psychoanalysis and philosophy

in general. *Jean-François Lyotard* questioned the possibility of the emergence of metanarratives of history in the second half of the twentieth century. He treated all claims to universal truth and objective morality with scepticism and rejected the claims of the Enlightenment to the omnipotence of reason.

Postmodernity is 'the state of culture after transformation, which dictated the rules of the game in science, literature and art at the end of the nineteenth century' (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 9). The metanarrative mechanism of knowledge legitimation (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 10) is becoming obsolete, and is accompanied by a crisis of philosophy and higher education institutions. Scientific knowledge is turning into a production force, taking the form of a commodity, becoming one of the stakes in great power rivalry (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 20). Both Hegel's and Marx's philosophical concepts are denied. Suspicions are aroused, in particular, by phenomenology and existentialism, whose attempts to restore the subject are criticized. And the Subject himself/herself becomes the main embodiment of evil.

One of the contexts of postmodern movements is philosophical. In these philosophical discourses, the spirit of the Enlightenment is criticized; all claims to universality are denied. Both positive science and the attempt to instrumentalize the human, objectivation, and reduced rationality are renounced. The connection with the Enlightenment project remains virtually in the denial mode. 'The question of the legitimacy of science has been indissociably linked to that of the legitimation of the legislator since the time of Plato. From this point of view, the right to decide what is true is not independent of the right to decide what is just' (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 27).

The following context for the formation of postmodern movements is the context of the history of Western Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Two changes are crucial for understanding the concepts of identity and the philosophical concepts of recognition in the modern world. The first change is the collapse of social hierarchies that served as the basis for honour narratives and inequality narratives, that is, honour used to be a matter of privilege. The concept of honour in hierarchical societies was gradually replaced by the modern concept of human dignity, inherent in all people, in every individual, by nature. The concept of human dignity is based on the inner voice of truth, the voice of authenticity, in contrast to the concepts of hierarchical societies, where a sign serves as a basis external to man: social origin, hierarchy, order from above, hypostasized ideas, or dogmatic ideology.

On the one hand, one of the main ideas of modernity is that each of us can have our own individual authentic way of being. Diversity in the modern era becomes a moral postulate. The driving force behind history, which undermines the social hierarchy, is the emergence of ideas of authenticity and human dignity inherent in people by nature, expressed and manifested in human rights. According to Marxism, the driving force of history is the development of the productive forces that result in the intensification of the class struggle, most highly expressed in the social revolution. In this connection, human rights are the final and supreme manifestation of the human spirit, which reveals the true concept of human dignity, or is it a temporary consensus between the oppressors and the oppressed, between the right and the left, between the forces of reaction and revolution – and is humanity still in the same space of struggle

and absolute freedom, that Sartre's plain of life, with no justification whatsoever?

In his Categorical Imperative, Kant emphasized the importance of the autonomy of the will. 'Autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself independently of any property of the objects of volition.' Therefore, the principle of autonomy is reduced to the following: 'Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law' (Kant I., 1994, V. 8, p. 219). Kant postulates that under no circumstances should a person use another person merely as a means to an end: people must – under all circumstances – be treated as ends in themselves. 'Man, and in general every rational being, exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will' (Kant I., 1994, V. 8, p. 204). But what – and exactly how – should one do in a particular situation? If the universal postulate does not give a definite answer, is the postulate necessary at all and is it possible to give a broad interpretation without 'opening a Pandora's box' (Kant I., 2001, p. 125)? According to Immanuel Kant, we are rational agents guided by two main principles – universal and human. This potential should be respected in every human being. There is a demand for equal treatment of all people; we must also recognize and even cultivate the features promoting the policy of equal dignity.

Further, the establishment of totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century, world wars, nuclear confrontation, loss of hope for a peaceful and rational resolution of social conflicts, military offences and crimes of genocide, ongoing problems of discrimination undermine the entire landscape of culture and knowledge, and cast doubts on the very possibility of a ratio-

nal explanation of existence and evolutionary social changes. In this respect, the fate of Marxism, which in the twentieth century evolved from theory to practice, the tragedy of failed hopes, the Stalinist reaction that followed instantly, the revival of class societies and terror – all these undermine the faith in a rational and humanist subject.

The state of philosophical thought, as well as the historical legacy of recent large-scale calamities, leave an indelible imprint on literature and art in general and constitute one of the postmodern terrains. The key features of postmodern art are self-reference and epistemological scepticism. Styles are mixed, the narrative of absolute space and time becomes a thing of the past, and the elementary concept of causality and genesis disappears along with it. They are replaced by uncertainty, fluidity, and the metaphysics of the moment. Faith in liberalism and socialism is lost, concepts of reason and liberation are discredited, everything is questioned.

Nevertheless, not everyone welcomes such a state in philosophy and art. Jürgen Habermas sees in this concept attempts by neoconservative circles to restore power (or at least influence) by permanently abandoning the unfinished project of the Enlightenment. Well aware of the problems caused by the Enlightenment, Habermas, however, does not support those who question human rationality. As a concept, a rational pragmatic and ethical discourse is proposed, which will make it possible to avoid both subject absolutization and mind instrumentalization, as well as fulfil the expectations of the Enlightenment.

Creating intersubjective paradigms of mutual understanding and recognition might be a solution. According to Habermas, truth is the result of an ideal free discourse, that is, this

concept is procedural in nature. 'The paradigm of cognition of subjects should be replaced by a paradigm of mutual understanding between subjects capable of reasoning and acting' (Habermas J., 2003, p. 306).

The dogmas of historical materialism are criticized: progress in working conditions and social relations does not necessarily lead to progress in mutual understanding. 'Hegel and Marx never managed to achieve a paradigm shift, Heidegger and Derrida tried to get rid of metaphysical subjectivity, but the philosophical tradition was too dominated by them' (Habermas J., 2003, p. 306).

The task of communicative rationality – the concept of Habermas – is the correction of the concept of 'reason', which dominated during the Age of the Enlightenment and still remains its legacy. *Formal is replaced by procedural discursive.* At the same time – and it is important to note this – according to Habermas, hermeneutic knowledge does not reveal the ideological roots of knowledge. As a reconstruction of the meaning of expressions, hermeneutics does not always reasonably take into account the *reason* for this or that context, where an expression is used.

Hence, according to Habermas, hermeneutics cannot be effective in criticizing ideology. Ideology as a system of beliefs and values is an apology for the interests of a particular group. Habermas believes that any act of communication is an attempt to find a rational response. Totally free rational discourse is the only way to get a rational response.

This is not the only point of view on the path of knowledge proposed in a post-Hegelian era in the aftermath of the large-scale disasters of the twentieth century. Sartre, for instance, considers *formal deduction and procedural discourse* to be tools

of knowledge, while pure knowledge can only be *intuitive*: 'There is only intuitive knowledge. Deduction and discursive argument, incorrectly called examples of knowing, are only instruments which lead to intuition' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 172).

Emmanuel Levinas contrasted the uncertainty and openness of intuition, as well as the discursive, free, and symmetrical nature of ethical discussions in the aftermath of World War II with the *asymmetry of relations with the Other*, where asymmetry is understood as a duty to the Other: serving the Other and responsibility to the Other are personalized, it is necessary to see the face of the Other. In this context, the Other is not understood universally or as the same general being: 'Otherness is a non-reciprocal attitude… Due to his difference, the Other is not just an alter ego, he is something that I am not… He is what he is by virtue of his being' (Levinas E., 1998, p. 90).

The relationships between the Self and the Other are in asymmetry; the Other chooses to build a relationship. At the same time, the question is: What is the common denominator for all people? This common denominator can be found only by understanding your responsibility to the Other. 'Responsibility precedes freedom' (Levinas E., 1998, p. 207).

The Other is not another Self for me, the Other exists for himself, the Other is the Self only for himself, the Other does not possess the characteristics that the Self attributes or may attribute to him. The positivity of the Other does not open in accordance with the possibilities that open up to me (the Self). In this regard, thinking about the Other is not reduced and not reducible to instrumental thinking.

In the light of responsibility to the Other, the concept of the social is reinterpreted: '… through discourse, the Same and the

Other maintain themselves in relationship; [for this reason] the Other cannot be qualified as the Identical One and remains the Absolute in a relationship. This is the end of the solipsistic dialectic of consciousness, always suspecting that it is held captive by the Identical. An ethical attitude that implies verbal conversion is not a kind of consciousness emanating from the Self. It questions the Self. And the reason for this challenge is otherness' (Levinas E., 1998, p. 200).

The social is not an aggregate of individual units; it is not constituted by a purely personal self-consciousness. In society, we respect the Other not because of abstract humanism or by virtue of abstract universal requirements. Respect for human dignity arises from empirical or historical data depending on the specific situation. Additionally, society is no longer a universal subject in the Hegelian sense, that is, neither does it historically become a whole, nor does it differentiate itself (Hegel). ***A universal individual is a self-conscious Spirit*** (Hegel G. W. F., 2000, p. 20). ***The whole is the self-moving interpenetration of the individuality and the universal*** (Hegel G. W. F., 2000, p. 210).

Representatives of the liberal and communitarian branches of philosophical thought build their concepts of relationship with the Other around mutual recognition and equality, while conscience, responsibility, and the Other stand aside. The Other acts as a partner, the relationship is symmetrical. Phenomenology inspired Levinas. Intentional analysis opened the horizons forgotten by science. But Levinas focused more on 'practical philosophy', the beginning of all beginnings. For Levinas, metaphysics is not ontology or epistemology, but ethics.

Heidegger's fundamental ontology comprises criticism of the alienated mass being, which he calls *Das Man*, originating in technification, mass industrialization, and depersonalization. Heidegger's fundamental ontology is built from a certain perspective – from *Dasein*. This is still philosophy of the Subject, and, therefore, there is a suppressive core in it. Yet again, everything originates from the Self, though asking about its own being. According to Heidegger, the Other appears in *Mit-Sein* modus – being with others – where there are no asymmetrical relations of responsibility. Heidegger focuses on the responsibility for the truth of Being, though it should be underscored that he is quite clear about the issues of responsibility and conscience: 'The voice does call back, but it calls back beyond the past deed onto thrown being-guilty, which is "earlier" than any indebtedness [Verschuldung]' (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 279). Thus, the call of being is retrospective; it can be traced back to the abandonment of being-guilty, which precedes any guilt.

Sartre asserts that responsibility lies in individual action; according to Sartre's existentialism, man, while acting, cannot pass beyond his own subjectivity. It is the deeper meaning of existentialism (Sartre J.-P., 1996, p. 68). Again, it should be noted that for Sartre, cognition precedes action, and cognition is exclusively intuitive, while deduction and discourse are the instruments of cognition, that is, instruments of intuition. Surely, Sartre accepts discourse, deduction, and intuition. At the same time, he provides detailed descriptions of particular relations with the Other, the Other's view and conscience in terms of 'bad faith'. Action in itself is not the starting point for existentialism. The differences, in my opinion, lie in the key

points that each of these authors highlights while considering this or that sphere.

For Levinas, this is a sphere of concrete relationship with the Other, where the Other acts as a Face. The content of this relationship is responsibility, conscience, duty towards the Other, which, in actual fact, reconciles his views with those of Sartre. In our opinion, no strict asymmetry is found in the works of Sartre and Heidegger in relation to the Face of the Other (Heidegger uses the concept of guilt: in this context, the sameness rethinks itself as guilty, as thrown into guilt (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 279), while Sartre's human totality is both transcendental and immanent, and the relationship with the Other is expressed in modes of shame, where the 'Self' is subordinate to the other, being-in-the-world for the Other [Kafkaesque process], as well as in modes of love). For Levinas, responsibility towards the Other is the foundation of his whole philosophy, where the metaphysical, the moral, and the social are synonymous.

So, what is sociality here? This is one of the central questions. As a proponent of humanism, Levinas set out to provide an answer to the question of whether humanism of the twentieth century was in effect humane. Levinas comes to a negative conclusion. Making humanism really humane was one of the main ideas and recurrent themes of Levinas's philosophy. According to Levinas, *humanitas of homo humanus* is not blind freedom at the centre of things, which is understood as autonomy from everything and everyone. Real humanism, according to Levinas, is primarily about the rights of the Other. Responsibility precedes freedom.

For Levinas, the concept of transcendence is manifested in the Face of the Other, which looks at me. The Other is not con-

stituted. We encounter the Other. Sartre draws a similar conclusion. According to him, my attitude towards the Other is the relation of Being to Being: 'If we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 244). Levinas agrees with Sartre that the Other is encountered. This is not institutionalization, coming from the Self. To understand oneself as finite, the Self must possess the idea of the Infinite. If the finite has no alternative, then there will be no difference between good and evil. The relationship between the Self and the Other is not a cause-and-effect relationship, the relationship between the Self and the Other is *the Speech, the Word*.

In Dimitrova's interpretation of Levinas's concept (Dimitrova M., 2016, p. 20), we serve the Other, but this service is not slavery – it is responsibility. The Self turns into sameness only through answering questions, to the call of the Other. And depersonalization, in turn, can be overcome, if the Self is permitted to support the Other in his/her otherness, without being hostile towards the otherness of the Other. First, we enter into a personal relationship, which, in turn, forms the basis for any other relationship with the Other.

Paul Ricoeur takes into account the significant role that *language plays in passing judgment.* 'We are dealing with a combination of argumentation and interpretation, where the former term designates the logical aspect of the process – deduction or induction; the latter term emphasizes inventiveness, originality, creativity' (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 255). 'To judge is to cut the Gordian knot in order to put an end to uncertainty' (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 147). 'To judge in the end is to have an opinion' (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 148).

For Ricœur, the acts of fair-minded people are a choice – *against violence in favour of discourse* (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 151), acts of justice, and, therefore, rational and efficient acts can be purely institutional, otherwise they risk becoming revenge. Numerous institutions of justice should be established, for example: 1) legislative institutions for adopting general rules; 2) judicial institutions; 3) a specific method of taking legal action (represented by a specific person in authority – a judge); 4) the legal system as a whole; 5) everything must be subject to debate; 6) a decision/a sentence are elements of justified acts; and finally; 7) there must be a possibility for rehabilitation or forgiveness. All of the above should collectively ensure the right to speak out in certain circumstances (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 157).

Hence, for Ricoeur, the consolidated social Third one acts as an independent judge. And this is the power that rises above individuals and has a monopoly on violence, **but not on revenge**. Here we find courts, judges and laws that restrict judges. Ricoeur emphasizes that these judges are neither angels, nor gods. These are people who judge other people. In this category of the Third Party, Ricoeur includes all people related to the exercise of judgment.

Ricoeur insists that it is necessary to legitimize, justify, and protect formalism: due to the codification of cases, similar cases can be treated in a similar way. Formalism also regulates the legal process of exchanging arguments. Another important aspect is procedurality. However, Ricoeur's concept is not reduced to formalism and procedurality: 'Applying rules to a case or finding rules for a case in both cases is the production of meaning' (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 256).

In Levinas's theory, there is a movement from the culprit to the law. In Ricoeur's theory, an act and a sanction are defined.

In this case, the law is above the parties to the conflict, the necessary component of justice is the distance between the act and the sanction: 'A fair distance between crime and punishment is the essence of justice' (Ricœur P., 2005, p. 156).

According to Lyotard, speaking of justice, we mean regulations. However, one should take into account that it is not the imperative that says 'You must', but a person who states it clearly. Lyotard believes that culture reproduces itself through the narrative: in this case, we are dealing with *'narrative knowledge'*: 'In the first place, scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge, which I will call narrative in the interests of simplicity…' (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 44). 'Contemporary hermeneutic discourse is based on the same assumption, which ultimately gives it some cognitive value and thus conveys the idea of a legitimate history and, in particular, the history of knowledge' (Lyotard J.-F., 1998, p. 65).

The question is how the narrative is related to prescriptions. In a tribe, there are no autonomous individuals; before speaking, people are spoken to; before having a chance to articulate a prescription, they get one. The narrative repeats itself, but it is never the same, because we see different variations of the same theme. Most importantly, at the beginning of a long chain of narratives, there is a precognitive agent. The narrative is a mechanism for transmitting and activating a prescription. ***In this respect, speaking is an act of duty***, one cannot ignore the fact that one is being spoken to. In paganism, people, individuals, are not authors. They struggle with their fate, play with it.

On the one hand, the concept of a 'moral code' is deemed contradictory, the fact is that morality is extra-historical and

it is very difficult to find a Universal moral code. On the other hand, human bondage begins with a face-to-face encounter. The meaning of injustice coincides with the meaning of being socially unrecognized at the level of institutionalized rights and freedoms, leading us to the conclusion that all individuals and cultures must be treated equally. Equal treatment of individuals and cultures after World War II constituted in the second half of the twentieth century the essence of such a phenomenon as multiculturalism.

However, considering the current state of multiculturalism, one should note an acute struggle for the survival of various cultural contexts. It is a collective goal that will almost inevitably require varying interpretations of the law, depending on the circumstances. Hence, we have unity, the collective goal, the desire to survive, and various cultural contexts. Such is the dilemma of the modern era, where different cultural contexts face the conflict with universal human rights for example.

There exist other forms of liberalism, where such relationships are considered from a different perspective. Alternative forms of liberalism call for the protection of certain rights without any options. There should be no doubt about cultural differences that determine the use of *habeas corpus*. To attain their goal, these alternative forms are used to compare completely different historical situations. In this paradigm, the integrity of cultures is extremely important. The question is whether cultural survival can be recognized as a legitimate goal. Can we assume that different cultures have the same value? For example, we can take the equality of men and women in universal human rights and some restrictions put on women in some cultures, for instance in Islamic societies.

The main challenge of multiculturalism, in my opinion, is the need for the recognition of a new culture while preserving the autochthonous canon. This averaging factor for both new and autochthonous elements resembles an attempt to fit the pattern. As part of this pattern, the culture suffers as well. But the issue remains unresolved. There is ethnocentricity. There should be something in between a non-authentic and averaging need for recognition of equal value on the one hand, and strict ethnocentric standards on the other.

It seems to be a moral issue: *if we consider the merging of cultural horizons as Good,* then it will be reasonable to continue regular and equal cultural studies with the possibility of merging horizons. M. Walzer supports the idea (Walzer M., 1994, p. 99) and argues against the so-called elevated moral absolutism. The essence of this first type of liberalism is the rights of individuals and, consequently, a completely neutral state, namely, a state without cultural and religious projects or, in fact, any kind of collective goals beyond the personal freedom and mental security, well-being, and safety of its citizens.

Liberalism of the first type is the official doctrine of immigrant societies such as the United States or Canada, since the United States is not ultimately a nation state, but a nation of nationalities – a social association of social associations. Liberalism of this kind presupposes that there is neither a privileged majority, nor excluded minorities. In the case of the liberalism of the second type, the state seeks to ensure the survival and prosperity of a certain nation, culture and religion or a group of nations, cultures and religions, while protecting the basic rights of citizens. However, multiculturalism is another form of liberalism, ensuring that responsibility for the cultural survival

of minority groups is assumed. In fact, multiculturalism results in a movement towards liberalism of the first type, which can be observed at the moment: the Anglo-Saxons of the New World is a social association of social associations, a country of immigrants, where each association lives at its own risk and peril (1-A, p. 6–12).

Hence, in today's diverse cultural contexts, there are different approaches to knowledge production: formal, procedural, discursive, hermeneutic, and intuitive. The same is true about various interpretations of the attitude of man and Self towards guilt, justice, and the Other. The era of metanarratives is over, the subject is dissolved in discursive practices. However, in the author's opinion, under certain circumstances, discursive practice may give rise to endless sceptical arguments and, accordingly, provoke and generate nihilism, followed by the complete elimination of knowledge as such.

Let us consider in more detail the issue of knowledge production using sceptical reasoning in the discourse of analytic philosophy. Analytic philosophy is a branch of the post-Kantian philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon world. It took a different approach as compared to continental philosophy. Does the analytical approach solve existential and epistemological issues, is it an adequate response to classical scepticism, what are the features of this approach in knowledge production at the current stage? Let us consider the Gettier problem here.

According to the classical definition given by Plato, knowledge is equivalent to justified true belief (JTB) (Plato, 1856, p. 12). However, Edmund Gettier argued that knowledge could be something other than justified true belief (Gettier E. L., 2011, p. 192–194). This question has been

discussed for more than half a century after the publication of Gettier's short three-page essay 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?' in 1963. The problem associated with Gettier's counterexamples, as well as with sceptical issues, is central to epistemology. Gettier gives three counterexamples to demonstrate that knowledge is something other than justified true belief.

Most philosophers agree that there is no knowledge without justification, but it is justification that plays a key role in sceptical reasoning. Sceptics do not deny that we have true belief; sceptics deny that our beliefs (faith) can be justified. We can conclude from here that we do not possess knowledge, when its justification is required (3-A, p. 79). It is advisable to provide a number of examples reflecting the historical stages in the study of the Gettier problem, as well as the problems associated with the definition of knowledge and possible solutions to it.

Let us start with the original counterexample provided by Gettier in his essay in 1963 (Gettier E. L., 2011, p. 192). Smith and Jones came for a job interview. Smith has good reason to believe that Jones will get the job. Smith also knows that Jones has 10 coins in his pocket. Based on the above, Smith concludes that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job. Indeed, the man who has 10 coins in his pocket is hired, but not Jones. Smith himself gets the job and does have 10 coins in his pocket, although he is unaware of the fact.

Smith had a real and justified belief, but we cannot call it knowledge. It can be argued that Smith's false justification is almost obvious. Smith's conclusion, which made him believe that the man with 10 coins will get the job, is incorrect. Why did Smith think that way? Because he believed that Jones would get the job. However, this is not the case. Thus, his belief cannot

serve as a convincing basis. Causal relationships are represented in the form of '*X* because of *Y*'. Both parts – *X* and *Y* – must be true and must not have a false cause and effect relationship for the phrase '*X* because of *Y*' to be true. In this case, *Y* is false, therefore the phrase '*X* because of *Y*' is also false (Amereller E., 2005, p. 58). Thus, Gilbert Harman in 1973 ('Thought') (Harman G., 1973, p. 10) and Kate Lehrer in 1964 ('Knowledge, Truth and Evidence') (Lehrer K., Paxon T., 1969, p. 168–175) suggested that justification should not be based on false premises. However, this does not solve the problem. Let us consider the 'fake barns' scenario described by Alvin Goldman (Goldman A., 1976, p. 772).

Henry is driving in the countryside and sees a barn through the window of his car. He concludes that he drove past a barn. But Henry does not know that the neighbourhood generally consists of many fake barns. If Henry knew about fake barns, he would not have thought that he had seen a real one. But Henry did see a real barn, the only real barn in this place. Henry has a justified true belief; moreover, his reasoning is not based on a false premise. However, one cannot agree with the fact that in this situation Henry possesses knowledge, despite the correct causal connection, serving as the basis for his true belief. Henry's justification may be eliminated, if additional information is obtained, namely that the area is full of fake barns. As a result, Peter Klein added another condition to the definition of knowledge (Klein P., 1971, p. 471).

S knows that *P*, assuming no information can be added to the justified true belief *S* about *P*. However, Henry's justification is not the case. It can be eliminated by submitting additional information. Therefore, Henry does not possess knowl-

edge. Nevertheless, the above definition is quite important, but it is erroneous, as it excludes various situations, where subjects really possess knowledge, and, consequently, it excludes numerous cases, not allowing one to assert confidently that this definition contains both necessary and sufficient conditions to define knowledge. The definition suggested by Klein is redundant, unlike the previous definitions, which were insufficient. Let us consider the Grabit example introduced by Keith Lehrer and Thomas Paxon (Lehrer K., Paxon T., 1969, p. 168).

The librarian sees Tom Grabit steal a book from the library. His belief that Tom stole the book is true and justified. But the librarian does not know that Tom's father is mentally disabled and is currently in hospital. Tom's father, while in hospital, tells other people, that Tom has a twin brother who does not exist in reality. Tom's father does not want people to think that his son Tom is a thief. The librarian, however, is unaware of his mental disorder. He only knows that Tom stole the book. If someone tells the librarian about the fantasies of Tom's father without mentioning the mental disorder and the hospital, the librarian's faith can be shaken. Even though there really was a theft. The justification of the librarian is *not resistant to additional information.* Such justification is easy to eliminate. Therefore, the condition regarding *any additional information* is too strong. The justification should be resistant not to any, but only to the *relevant additional information*. Let us consider the following definitions (Ernst G., 2013, pp. 69–83).

S knows that *P*, if *S* has a true belief in *P*, and *S* is justified in believing that *P*, when his justification cannot be refuted by ***relevant*** new evidence. Or: *S* knows that *P*, if *S* has a true belief in *P*, which is ***personally or factually*** justified. Or: *S* knows

that *P*, if *S* has a true belief in *P*, which is duly justified. The Gettier counterexamples, in case of analysis of the concept of 'knowledge', on an intuitive level, lead the judging subject to certain perspectives the judge, where it is necessary to understand such terms as *'properly justified'*, *'relevant additional information',* and *'actually justified'* (Ernst G., 2013, pp. 69–83). This is due to the nature of epistemic causal relationships. For someone unaware of a mentally ill father and his fantasies, the justified belief is that Tom stole the book. And for someone who knows only the father's part of the story, this is an unconvincing argument. The same applies to the example of fake barns. For someone who knows nothing about fake barns, as well as for someone who does know about them, but also knows that there is a real barn in this particular place, the fact that someone has driven past the barn is a sufficient justification. But for someone who only knows about fake barns, the fact that this barn looks like a real one is not a justified belief.

Gettier's counterexamples create certain perspectives for the judging subjects to find justification and estimate the knowledge of other subjects. Owing to the relativity of perspectives, there is no certainty as to how to treat such counterexamples. In this context, the judging subjects tend to forget that their own perspective is relative (3-A, p. 79). A natural question arises: What is the solution to the Gettier problem? Sceptical questions are also related to the relationship between knowledge and justification. Two approaches may be applied to solve the Gettier problem – a revisionist approach and a descriptivist approach. Revisionists generally argue as follows: having considered Gettier's counterexamples, we can see that ordinary language creates contradictions. Therefore, it seems

inappropriate to use this language in order to consider the concepts of 'true belief' and 'justified belief' in philosophy and for its purposes. Philosophy should use another language, while ordinary language is suitable for everyday contexts. Descriptivists, however, argue that such a separation is merely a change of subject, which does not solve the original problem. In their opinion, one should stick to the normal use of language. One encounters philosophical problems wherein everyday expressions are removed from their usual context and used in a strictly philosophical context. The language used in Gettier's examples is ordinary. A competent speaker is nevertheless able to use the language competently in appropriate contexts. The question here is, who is this competent speaker? Hence, if the language is not meaningless, there is no Gettier problem.

Additionally, it is necessary to analyse the fact that in Gettier's examples there is a lack of reference for a subject who passes judgment on the use of language. For this purpose, analysis of the common use of the word 'knowledge' is required. Additionally, as we will see, the word 'knowledge' may be used in two completely different situations (Ernst G, 2013, pp. 69–83).

On the one hand, we may already possess knowledge and judge from the point of view of the knower, and on the other hand, we may not be aware of something and so look for the necessary information. In such situations, we are interested in different things and set different goals. Depending on the situation, different types of knowledge analysis may be applied – an analysis that is not based on perspective, an objective analysis of knowledge, in case we already possess it. If we lack the necessary knowledge, other types of knowledge analysis will take some perspective into account (Ernst G., 2013, pp. 69–83).

Stuart Cohen (Cohen S., 2011, pp. 706–721), David Lewis (Lewis D., 2011, pp. 691–706), and Michael Williams (Williams M., 1996, p. 64) are proponents of contextualism, claiming that knowledge depends on the context, and the truth of the expression '*S* knows *P*' also depends on the context, where the validity of standards for asserting that a subject possesses knowledge may be different.

According to Cohen, contextualism has been proposed as a way to resolve stubborn epistemological paradoxes. Where *P* is some common sense proposition about the external world (for instance, I see a zebra) and *H* is some sceptical hypothesis (for instance, I see a cleverly disguised mule), the paradox takes the following form:

1. I know *P*.
2. I do not know not-*H*.
3. I know *P* only if I know not-*H* (Cohen S., 2014, p. 69).

These propositions constitute a paradox because each is independently very plausible, yet jointly they are inconsistent. Because our intuitions about knowledge lead to paradox, scepticism poses a threat.

What are the alternatives for a subject to reject? In what contexts and situations can this occur? Which alternatives should be validated in the pursuit of knowledge and true justified belief? There is no single answer to these questions. The essence of contextual theories of knowledge is that the significance or insignificance of an alternative is determined based on the context. In this respect, there are two contextual factors – the context of the subject who chooses between alternatives and the context of the person to whom knowledge is attributed – the alleged knower, that is, the context of the subject that

should provide judgement. The level of standards set in judging knowledge or lack of knowledge can also be considered the basis for explaining contextualism.

Hence, there are two bases for contextual theories of knowledge:

1. The alleged knower and the subject who judges, who claims that *S* knows *P*. They are in different contexts.

2. Different standards apply to knowledge in different contexts: a) conversational context; b) particularly demanding epistemological context; and c) sceptical context.

Many contextualists, including Cohen and Lewis, believe that one must be able to accept and understand different epistemological standards in order to overcome scepticism. According to Lewis, the problem arises because of the sceptic's unrealistic demands, which are so high as to be meaningless. And its solution consists in the ability to ignore these meaningless alternatives offered by sceptics, if there are valid reasons to do so. What are the relevant alternatives? In this respect, Lewis suggests rules of *Actuality, Belief, Resemblance, Reliability, Method, Conservatism, and Attention* (Lewis D., 2011, pp. 691–706).

First, there is the Rule of Actuality. If a possibility is actual, it is never properly ignored. Thus, we get a factor that depends on the subject: '*S* knows that *P*' is true. For instance, Lewis maintains: 'Actuality is always a relevant alternative; nothing false may properly be presupposed. It follows that only what is true is known, wherefore we did not have to include truth in our definition of knowledge. The rule is "externalist"–the subject himself may not be able to tell what is properly ignored' (Lewis D., 2011, p. 695).

The second rule (the Rule of Belief) says: a possibility that is believed to obtain, or that ought to be believed to obtain, is not properly ignored. In other words, if there is a possibility that the subject believes he should obtain, it is never properly ignored, regardless of whether he is right or wrong to believe it. 'A possibility that the subject believes to obtain is not properly ignored, whether or not he is right to so believe' (Lewis D., 2011, p. 696).

Next, there is the Rule of Resemblance. A possibility which saliently resembles a possibility that is not properly ignored, is itself not properly ignored. The Rule of Resemblance is decisive. The third rule could solve the Gettier problem. In the Gettier problem, there is always an alternative, similar to actuality, which cannot be eliminated by the subject's evidence (3-A, p. 79).

In the example of the fake barn, it is obvious that Henry cannot get rid of doubts about the alternative that is not properly ignored. In other words, it may seem real, when he is passing through the area full of objects that look exactly like barns. In accordance with the Rule of Resemblance, these alternatives are not to be ignored. But here is the main problem regarding the Rule of Resemblance: neither the subject of the Gettier case – nor Henry – who is in the area full of fake barns, possesses knowledge. Thus, the Rule of Resemblance makes room for scepticism. The sceptical hypothesis resembles actuality, and, so, cannot be properly ignored, according to Lewis's own concept of resemblance. This brings Lewis to a radical solution – ***to ignore all ad hoc arguments of sceptics.*** In fact, it is hardly a solution at all, since sceptics are simply ignored *ad hoc*, despite all arguments.

The Rule of Attention is another important rule of Lewis's that is worth mentioning. A possibility that is not ignored (just

mentioned) is not properly ignored. As soon as a sceptic attracts our attention to his sceptical hypothesis, he cannot be ignored any more. But in an everyday context, when our attention is not drawn to some alternative hypothesis, that is, in the usual scenario, other conditions of the Rules of Actuality, Belief, and Resemblance are taken into account. Similarly, by attracting our attention to the sceptical hypothesis, the sceptic excludes the knowledge '*S* knows that *P*'. Thus, Lewis's theory leads to the solution of the Gettier problem, but when it comes to sceptical arguments, it mystifies them (Lewis D., 2011, p. 80).

According to Cohen, Lewis's theory can solve the Gettier problem, but the focus should be shifted from the alleged knower to the person attributing knowledge, that is, to the subject who judges – hence, the Rule of Resemblance may be reformulated. It means that not all alternatives resembling actuality should be considered, ***but only those that are considered by the subject who judges***, that is, those which resemble actuality only for the subject who judges. In this case, *ad hoc* alternatives of sceptics should not be ignored. Once again, we cannot solve the Gettier problem, as we need the factors ***depending on the subject who is inside the Gettier case*** instead of the factors of the subject who judges.

The theory of contextualism, therefore, is not flawless, and the problem of relevance remains unsolved. Different solutions to this problem are presented in the works of Gerhard Ernst (Ernst G., 2013, p. 69–83), Oswald Hanfling (Hanfling O., 1995, p. 40–56), and David Clarke (Clarke D. S. Jr., 1990, p. 188–190). For this purpose, they suggest analysing ***the subject's interest*** in various situational contexts, where knowledge is an object of interest. Here, the context has two components:

1) the interest of the unknowing, and 2) the interest of the knowing (Ernst G., 2013, p. 69–83).

If we lack knowledge, we are looking for a trustworthy person, that is, an informant, who could provide us with reliable information. Hence, in a situation of lack of knowledge, we may characterize this information provider as follows: the subject *S* knows that *P*, when the *JTB* conditions are met, where justified true belief is understood in classical terms. In this way, *S* can dispel our doubts about non-*P*. The relevant doubts in this case are those created by the unknowing person, passing judgement on knowledge, attributing it.

So, what is the character of these doubts, created by the speculating subject in search of knowledge (by the unknowing person)? When important interests are affected, the level of doubt surely increases. The second factor is some other information available to the unknowing person. If the subject is sufficiently convinced, he provides judgement. It means that this unknowing person attributes knowledge to the subject *S*. He claims that *S* knows *P*.

In general, in philosophical contexts, in particular, in the context of the Gettier problem, people judge from one perspective or another. Contexts make the judging person choose a certain perspective, although he/she might not notice this. The first case: the perspective of the unknowing person who judges. He is in search of a good information provider and relies on the perspective of passing judgment, provided that the informant removes his doubts. And the second case: the person who judges takes the place of the alleged knower. If we face the Gettier problem, we intuitively tend to take the position of the unknowing person. Despite the fact that these paradoxes indi-

cate the possibility of error, we begin to have doubts, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, and need to get them cleared. In the Gettier cases, the actor cannot remove our doubts in all of the demonstrated situations (3-A, p. 81).

In the situation, where we are looking for a reliable information provider: in the general context, being of sound mind and memory, we are able to choose a certain perspective. In a philosophical context (or in a complex historical situation), everything depends on the particular case. What is the perspective of the Gettier case? We do not have a final solution, since we almost always have reasons for doubt. And we have a final solution, if we find it ourselves as subjects who judge, paying attention to some highlighted points that allow for some kind of doubt.

The Gettier problem can be described as a deep philosophical problem. The attacks of sceptics are aimed at justification. Such attacks can take knowledge away, make subjects defenceless against deep scepticism, and doubtful even in familiar everyday contexts. In general, it can be argued that approaches to solving the Gettier problem, which are directed exclusively at philosophical contexts, have been found, but they are not sufficient. The problem arises in a real, normal language, which can be considered as a variant of scepticism. It can be both destructive and enlightening for ordinary people.

In the ordinary language, scepticism can have serious consequences, making many people uncertain and weak-willed. Hence, it can be argued that productive approaches to solving the problem are within the limits of a normal language. Approaches that are exclusively associated with philosophical contexts objectify the term 'knowledge' and do not take into account another aspect, where knowledge exists, although it

plays an important role in relation to the expression of will, that is, subjectivity is ignored (3-A, p. 82).

We believe that an approach based on ordinary language, the philosophy of everyday language may be more productive in finding a solution to the so-called Gettier problem. Even though two definitions of knowledge are used in its analysis (one – dependent on perspective and the other – objective, independent of perspective), it does not eliminate subjectivity from the philosophical context, which, in fact, is impossible to eliminate. The subjectivity of expressing one's will and evaluating oneself as the alleged knower takes into account knowledge, depending either on perspective or on context. Both types have their own meaning.

Chapter 2. Positivism and humanitarian discourse

The modern West's self-awareness was formed after 1500 CE as a result of several inter-woven processes like the Renaissance, New Humanism, the Age of Discovery, advances in the natural sciences, the Reformation, the rise of capitalism, and the emergence of the modern system of nation states. In the 17th century, Francis Bacon and René Descartes started a philosophical reframing of the new era and a dismantling of the existing worldview.

But is a paradigm of thinking aimed at external knowledge of the world exhaustive and adequate for a human? If we base our future solely on scientific knowledge, gained by experience, will we lose something very important in our lives? Will such a situation lead to catastrophe and dehumanization as a consequence? What kind of knowledge can act as a solid foundation for modern culture, if modern culture needs a foundation in terms of values, human rights, goals for humanity?

My first step is to analyse the rise of Positivism by tracking the views of the first positivists. The representatives of early positivism – Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill – proposed a new look at the scientific paradigm: henceforth, according to the positivists, science should be based on empirical observation and experimentation instead of being speculative or metaphysical. There was a tendency to view the empirical fact as the basis of knowledge. Philosophy was assigned a methodological role in the process of cognition; that

is, the task of philosophy in this system was the systematization of knowledge, the description of the process of cognition, and the development of effective methods of cognition in the positive sciences. But is this paradigm a sufficient basis for a civilization? What is the goal of knowledge? Can knowledge be an evil or senseless routine which does not answer the existential questions of humans?

Modernism made yet another attempt to identify being and cognition. The free action of cognition, which does not have any external goal, finds itself in self-reflection. The wisdom of the first philosophy was reduced to self-knowledge.

My next steps will be to analyse reactions on positivist and modernist paradigms and to track different attempts to humanize the scientific and the positivist approaches. According to my point of view, these were made by philosophers like Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans Georg Gadamer – both belonged to the hermeneutic tradition. The aim of Dilthey's hermeneutics is the application of a rigorous method for understanding and interpreting Being. In general, a primary factor in understanding human life is examining the historical course of thought and history.

Wilhelm Dilthey simultaneously combined history and the philosophy of life. However, an absolutization of will and subjectivity can lead to dangerous tendencies in the development of irrationalism. Therefore, without ignoring the rational, Dilthey attempted to bring together a scientific objectivity and human subjectivity. In general, Dilthey believed that expositors would be able to overcome their historical subjectivism and find a universally acknowledged interpretation by remaining subjective.

Hans Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, 1998, 114–122) critically considered the mind based on the technique and calculation (calculation, instrumental reasoning) of the concept of the culture of modernity inherited from the Enlightenment. This concept of culture found its embodiment in, first, the bourgeois and, later, industrial societies.

Edmund Husserl belonged to the phenomenology tradition of continental philosophy and saw the crisis of positivism as well as the modernist paradigm in Europe. In his Vienna Lecture (Husserl, 1996, 7–15), Husserl accentuated the crisis of the European humankind or the crisis of the philosophical idea in Europe. Husserl believed that the roots of this crisis were in misunderstood rationalism, although rationality itself was not evil in his view.

Husserl proposed distinguishing between philosophy as a historical fact at a certain time and philosophy as an ideal of a non-completed task: every philosophy is an attempt to understand infinity and the truth.

The ideal scientist is motivated by nothing more than a desire for knowledge. However, despite that, it is a foundation of our civilization – and science has become the foundation of our civilization, playing a significant role in the modern world, which is still full of conflicts, wars and misunderstanding. We must repeatedly ask ourselves if we have omitted anything. The hand of the scientist is half in the dark: could this knowledge, obtained in semi-darkness, become destructive? This problem is actually universal.

To analyse the genesis of the positivist and the humanitarian hermeneutic ideas, to stress the main critical points of the modernist world view and find answers to the questions indicated above one of the key points of this study.

The representatives of the first positivism, namely Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill, proposed a new vision of the scientific paradigm. According to positivists, science should be based on empirical observation and experiment as opposed to speculative, i.e. metaphysical knowledge. Positivism was characterized by a shift towards empirical fact as a basis of knowledge. Philosophy was assigned a methodological role in the cognitive process with the following objectives: knowledge systematization, description of the cognitive process, and development of effective methods of cognition in the positive sciences.

A positive scientist should never move beyond the establishment of laws, i.e. the identification of stable recurring relationships in Nature. While criticism of metaphysics is one of the tasks of a positive scientist, any attempt to go beyond the sphere governed by the laws of cause and effect excludes the scientist from positive science, turning him or her into a speculative metaphysician. Criticism of metaphysics has a negative attitude towards intuition. At the same time, positivists recognize that although it is impossible to avoid hypotheses, one must be very careful in putting them forward. All scientific hypotheses are subsequently subjected to critical analysis so that the corpus of science is only made up of facts and their associations.

Speaking of facts, they can either be singular or have a certain degree of generalization, including individual observations and general concepts that are based on a set of observations or a scientific law derived from these concepts. Moreover, facts can be abstract as in mathematics, or concrete and empirical such as in physics and medicine.

According to Comte, true knowledge about society can only be provided by sociology: 'All that can be rationally proposed in our day is to recognize the character of positivity in social as in all other science, and to ascertain the chief bases on which it is founded' (Comte, 1998, p. 195). This science explores the laws of phenomena that refer to a person's real social standing. In this context, sociology is a positive science. Thus, a positive scientist receives a set of facts and observations to be organized in some fashion. In contrast to the metaphysics of the past, the focus is not on the system, as for instance in Hegel's philosophy, but on the method. Originally, the word 'method' meant 'a way'. It is intended to help coordinate the search for knowledge. The methodology of positivists lacks certain features of metaphysical systems, including their complete and unconditional character, and the finality and absoluteness of Truth.

In this regard, according to positivists (Lenzer, 1998, p. 146), there is not much difference between a theory and a hypothesis. Both appear as guiding ideas, carrying equal weight as methods designed to systematize observations and factual material.

It should be noted that recognizing both theory and hypothesis as necessary methodological steps makes it impossible to reduce positivism to mere empiricism. A hypothesis (a certain assumption, a belief) and even more so a theory (a certain methodological system) go beyond mere empiricism. The fact is, the positivist's anti-metaphysical attitude rejects absolute truth, but it does not (in general) reject truth as an 'organizing form of experience'.

In *Discours sur l'esprit positif*, Comte outlines the development of the human spirit (Lenzer, 1998, p. 293, 328), evolving through three stages: the theological or fictitious stage, the metaphysical

or abstract stage, and finally, the positive or scientific stage. In Comte's opinion, the theory of three stages is a law and does not need any further justification – it is enough to describe or explain them. The craving for absolute truth, and the quest for ontological fundamentals are characteristic of the first stage, which is manifested in religion. At the second or metaphysical stage, there is a gradual depreciation of theology, therefore, in Comte's view, philosophy appears as a simplistic religion. Finally, positivism appears at the third stage as a result of the critical rethinking of philosophy: the illusory, the otherworldly, and the concept of absolute truth are rejected; while the main motto is 'to see in order to foresee', thus summarizing the idea of rational anticipation.

Comte comes to the conclusion that the laws of nature are unchangeable and represent stable relations in the world of phenomena (Lenzer, 1998, pp. 499–502). Comte describes the principles of social coexistence in three sections, they are: social statics, which describes the interaction of social institutions here and now; social dynamics, which refers to the evolution of social systems; and social policy as a programme of action (Comte, 1998, pp. 263–279).

According to Comte, the cornerstone of social progress is primarily the improvement of the human spirit, which can further define 'material' progress (referring to improving external living conditions) as well. Further, Comte highlights 'physical' progress (referring to the physical improvement of humanity) and 'intellectual' progress (here Comte means that, as a result of intellectual improvement, 'positive philosophy' will become a mass ideology).

Again, the evolution seen here falls under the law of three stages as provided by Comte. The first stage is theological, di-

vided into fetishism, polytheism, and monotheism. The second stage is metaphysics, it is transitional and has a critical character while passing through the Era of Reformation, Enlightenment, and Revolution. And finally, at the beginning of the 19th century, the last stage occurs, which is positivism. As a result of industrial development, the third stage spreads the ideas of altruism, and the positivist philosophy is viewed as a worldview paradigm.

According to Comte, 'positive philosophy' will become the religion of humanity (Lenzer, 1998, p. 381). This will be made possible by artists, scientists, and positive philosophers, who will gradually be transformed into the so-called 'positive priests'. With the help of this force, the synthesis of feelings and reason, science, and faith will become real. Thus, the positive sociology of Comte is not a simple description of experience and facts, nor is it pure empiricism. As shown above, it is clear that 'positive' sociology has adopted many of the patterns from the old metaphysics and Comte's law of three stages was influenced by Hegel's and Turgot's dialectics, wherein the ethical orientation of his sociology is a continuity of the previous metaphysical systems of continental philosophy, which stresses the improvement of the human spirit, as for example in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

John Stuart Mill was both a student and a friend of Auguste Comte. He is the author of such works as *On Liberty* (1859), *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), *Utilitarianism* (1863), and *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848). *Three Essays on Religion* (1874) which expresses his religiosity was published posthumously. As for Mill's ontological views, he states "'We cannot

acquire any genuine knowledge *a priori*'. Mill holds that knowledge can be obtained only by empirical observation, and by reasoning which takes place on the ground of such observations. This principle stands at the heart of his radical empiricism" (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Mill J. S.). However, here it is necessary to consider the shift of positivism to experience, and experience is always associated with the human personality; human existence, no matter how fluid, is the same being and the only life; it is the 'life existence' that remains constant from birth to death throughout the process of living.

Science does not consist of sensory data alone, it needs both laws and hypotheses about these laws (here, hypotheses means theories). If random observations are not directed by theory, they will reveal nothing about whether the law is true or false. Inductive logic, therefore, acts as a confirmation and verification of the above principle, both in nature and in society. There is no logical circle here.

'We are, Mill claims, naturally inclined to reason inductively, and upon critical inspection, acts of induction strike us as 'deserving of reliance' (18, System, VII: 319). 'We adopt induction "spontaneously" as a method of reasoning – and under free consideration, it seems to us reasonable to do so' (18, System, VII: 317).

Moreover, Mill, unlike Comte, draws attention to the fact of self-reflexion. Comte (1998, p. 195) denies that this could be a fact. And it should be noted that self-reflection of the spirit was a burning topic during the 'metaphysical era' and in the transition period of positivism, because it gave a person an experience that was more than the available experience of 'here and now'. In this regard, the 'meaning of existence', according to Mill, is revealed in his thesis concerning spirit:

'If, therefore, we speak of the Mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future; and we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the Mind, or Ego, is something different from any series of feelings, or possibilities of them, or of accepting the paradox, that something which *ex hypothesi* is but a series of feelings, can be aware of itself as a series' (18, Examination, 194).

Here we can draw parallels with idealism from Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the process of self-realization turns to the phenomenology of spirit. The realization of existence opens the spiritual basis of the world, perhaps as an 'empiric' interpretation in the sense of Berkeley's subjective idealism. This is the main difference between Mill's and Comte's ideas, the latter believed that no positive knowledge is possible in relation to itself. According to Comte, positive knowledge only consists of physical and physiological processes and sociological facts: they (entirely) determine our mental state and consciousness due to the state of society. This leads to the conclusion that the positive science of Comte, unlike Mill's idea, can only be sociology, not psychology.

Mill does not agree with this point. According to Mill, there is an unbreakable divide between how nature and the soul (mental) are explained. The phenomena in these spheres are different and irreducible to each other. Thus, psychology becomes both an independent subject and a basic discipline. The knowledge of science is generalization, it is not knowledge of the deep essence of existence.

'We spontaneously take certain initial inductive moves to be justified. Induction's self-examination then leads to an increasing

confidence that induction is a warranted way of reasoning about the world, and to a general sharpening of that method of reasoning. Induction could have been self-undermining – its success as a form of reasoning about the world, established on its own terms, is not trivial' (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Mill J. S.). Thus, general knowledge is not the source, but the result of induction. Mill does not reject deduction either, he denies its metaphysical basis. He believes deduction is useful and helps to get faster results in the technical sciences.

Herbert Spencer is recognized in connection with the third classic of positivism. Spencer decisively breaks away from metaphysics. Moreover, he divides the world of 'real' positive existence, like Kant, into two layers: the cognizable layer of phenomena (involving science) and the unknowable layer (similar to Kant's thing-in-itself). Spencer asserts that the knowledge of phenomena requires empirical demonstration. As a result of this view, he held that the nature of reality in itself is not known and therefore, there is something that is fundamentally 'unknowable' (this includes the complete knowledge of space, time, force, motion, and substance) (Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, a peer reviewed academic resource. Spencer H.).

In addition, Spencer does not believe that religion will lose its position with the development of science. According to Spencer, science and religion must be reconciled as well. '… knowledge cannot monopolize consciousness and … thus for our mind there is a constant opportunity to do what lies beyond knowledge. Therefore, there must always be a place for some Religion. For religion in all its forms differed from everything else as its subject was that something that lies beyond experience' (Spencer, 1911).

According to Spencer, both science and religion contain a postulate of faith. Science recognizes objectivity (reality of thing-in-itself) beyond the world of phenomena, but religion postulates the primacy of the ideal. 'But while we cannot know whether religious beliefs are true, neither can we know that (fundamental) religious beliefs are false' (Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, a peer reviewed academic resource. Spencer H.). Thus, even the spirit of positivism, no matter how down to earth it may be, remembers its former greatness, which means that the spirit of positivism does not think only about external physical facts, the philosophy of positivism is also engaged with problems of sociology, psychology and other humanitarian issues.

Both Dilthey and Husserl consider the positivism paradigm to be restricted in its world view, because it neglects the human spirit and many humanitarian issues. According to Husserl, philosophers and scientists have a one-sided understanding, but there is no truth that can be absolutized; the philosopher must be devoted to understanding the full context of philosophy and the totality of the infinity horizon. However, whenever necessary the philosopher must go through naivety and provide a space for criticism by irrationalism.

The most appropriate name for this naivety is objectivism, including various forms of naturalism and naturalization of spirit, which is expressed exclusively in a causal, deterministic understanding of will and spirit, and the human. At the same time, the comprehension of the nature of finiteness as an objectivity in itself, opens the way to an idealization that permits us to understand infinity. For example, contemplation in geometry and calculation of numbers in arithmetic.

The discovery of physical infinity also affects the spirit – the spiritual turns out to be spread on the surface of physical objects. Materialism and determinism are mentioned for the first time at the beginning of philosophy – Democritus. However, originating from Socrates (and thanks to him), the human attains his place as a personality in society, though, according to Plato and Aristotle the human stays in the objective world as he has aims, norms, ego, etc.

Reason as understood in the modern age demonstrated its great power in the comprehension of nature, but this naïve subjectivism of the New Age is the main challenge. The main task is to show how temporary success in one sphere could result in extensive crisis in all other spheres.

It is remarkable that the idea of distinguishing between scientific and humanitarian discourse had been introduced by Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) long before the modern debate about the hermeneutic philosophy approach began. 'The challenge, however, is to develop this science in such a way as to understand the facts of the human world without either reducing them to mere contingency or explaining their order by way of speculative principles of the sort generated by traditional metaphysics. They must be rendered intelligible, that is, without reducing them, as did the Cartesians, to the status of ephemera. Vico satisfies this demand by distinguishing at the outset of *The New Science* between *il vero* and *il certo*, "the true" and "the certain." The former is the object of knowledge (scienza) since it is universal and eternal, whereas the latter, related as it is to human consciousness (coscienza), is particular and individuated. This produces two pairs of terms-il vero/scienza and il certo/coscienza-which constitute, in turn, the explanan-

da of philosophy and philology ("history" broadly conceived), respectively. As Vico says, "philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human choice is author, whence comes consciousness of the certain" (Element X, § 138, p. 63).' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Giambattista Vico).

Subsequently, Vico's views influenced the work of Wilhelm Dilthey and Karl Marx. Both philosophers refused to see a human being as a pure object constructed by science. Wilhelm Dilthey developed further the hermeneutical approach and Karl Marx paid a great deal of attention to human practice in economic relations and to a critique of political economy. Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics aims at the application of a rigorous method to achieve understanding and interpretation in the humanities. In general, the history of understanding, interpretation of meaning, and subjectivity are emphasized as being of great importance as opposed to the natural sciences in many fields of continental philosophy. The historical flow of ideas and history as a whole are the main factors in understanding human life.

The primary sources of genuine understanding are: subjective experience, history, and the accumulated experience of mankind. Wilhelm Dilthey combines historism with the philosophy of life, simultaneously paying due attention to the natural sciences. History is the key to understanding human life; people and society are understood exclusively from a historical perspective; therefore, the application of positivist methods of science to understand human beings is doomed to failure.

However, absolutization of the will and of the subjective can lead to the dangerous tendencies of evolement and rationalism. In this regard, Dilthey does not neglect the rationality,

objectivity, and rigour of the natural sciences. Rather, he attempts to reconcile scientific objectivity with human subjectivity and human life, giving due weight to historicism, philosophy of life, and romanticism.

Dilthey also believes that all knowledge ultimately comes from experience. He adopts an empirical view from epistemology. However, unlike his predecessors, Dilthey draws attention to emotions and will. He explains and applies specific objective standards to a number of disciplines (history, classical philology, literary studies, anthropology, and psychology) in order to avoid and minimize the influence of positivism on them. People, according to Dilthey, have both physical and mental qualities. Thus, the methods applied in the humanities differ from those used in positivist science, and one should study a person from a different perspective. A perspective where historical knowledge is of primary importance for understanding.

Dilthey distinguishes two approaches to obtaining knowledge, namely explanation and comprehension. The purpose of the natural sciences is to provide an explanation. Explanatory science is the main subject of Kant's critique of pure reason. In contrast, the humanities focus on the expression of mind or spirit – they study actions, statements, institutions, etc., and have an intrinsic meaning. The methods of obtaining knowledge in these sciences are different. Dilthey tried with his hermeneutical approach to analyse the components of comprehension and objectification of the mind. Comprehension is a process, where we get to know from signs given sensually to us, the true sense, which these signs originally express.

The task of hermeneutics is to interpret the controversial and unclear fragments of various texts, including religious ones. How-

ever, even if a piece of text seems to be clear, it does not necessarily mean that one has grasped its meaning, because context changes with time, and the meaning of words in certain historical contexts can be different. Therefore, the importance of hermeneutics should not be underestimated, and it should be addressed not only in challenging situations of understanding sacral and philosophical texts but in the understanding of modern cultural context as well. Dilthey believes that the 'part to whole' relation is important in interpretation, just as the understanding of a text as a whole. The understanding of the text as a whole makes it possible to appreciate its individual fragments, since the same words can mean different things in different contexts – the context is essential. The practice of interpretation may be circular in nature, since both the whole text and its fragments matter. The elements of the system cease to be mechanical in meaning and words, because they matter as a whole. They have a holistic character (holism). We should also attribute the text to a certain tradition, discourse, and genre. We should try to understand authors from the point of view of their cultural environment and their historical context. Dilthey believes that by 'complete obedience to the text' and through knowledge of the context, we can constantly achieve a better understanding, rediscover and update the original meaning of the text, and derive a meaning as close as possible to the author's original intentions. In later works, Dilthey was influenced by Edmund Husserl's critique of psychologism. He focuses on 'the insight that experience itself is organized by symbolic structures' (Habermas, 1972, 147), such as language. Decoding these symbolic structures is the task of hermeneutics. In general, Dilthey claims that, although the interpreters remain

subjective, it is still possible for them to overcome their own historical subjectivity and find a universally accepted interpretation.

Unlike Dilthey, Gadamer treats hermeneutics as a key to the nature of truth. The truth is revealed by understanding and interpretation. Understanding has an ontological character; therefore, **hermeneutic claims can be universally similar to the claims of natural science.** The development of a method to guarantee the objectivity of results was Dilthey's project. But unlike Dilthey, Gadamer aims at finding the limitations of this method. This means that the human sciences can achieve objectivity only by abandoning a claim of methodical objectivity. These sciences must rely more on the human being's fundamental abilities, such as understanding. Gadamer believes that philosophy must investigate the life-world itself as a historical and intersubjective horizon of human experience.

Firstly, contrary to Dilthey's view, hermeneutics is a relation between two horizons. Since a primeval transparency of the original text is impossible, we can only seek to avoid a distortion of the truth. We not only attempt to understand a certain situation, but also what is important from the situation and the horizon. The vision is inseparable from the point of view. A situation is a point of view but it limits the vision. Secondly, the problems in any historical context have developed under the influence of a specific tradition of the same texts. The interpretation addresses the present needs to ensure better understanding, but we should remember that these problems originated in past traditions. Thirdly, the meaning is rather inexhaustible and no one interpretation is able to reconstruct the meaning of the work to its full extent. However, it does not mean that all interpretations are the same.

According to Gadamer (Kearney, 1996), ***the meaning is similar to a thing-in-itself.*** Although the thing-in-itself is non-cognizable, it supposedly explains the sequence of phenomena comprising our experience of the external world as indicated in Kant's philosophy. Consequently, a corresponding theory of interpretation is impossible. We can only investigate a chain of various interpretations. As in the case of experience in the external or physical world, exposure to a wide range of phenomena is inevitable.

Language is the fundamental mode of activity of our being in the world and an all-inclusive form of the constitution of this world. At the same time, we constantly perceive a non-verbal communication of science and our task is to reconnect this with our world, that is, to merge the objective world of technology with fundamental forms of human existence.

No judgement can be understood if it is not understood as an answer to a question. Methodology and knowing methodology are very important for science, but there is such a notion as 'sterile methodology'. By using some methods, we can deal with entirely insignificant issues, but such methods and solutions cannot lead to the creation of new things.

The endless dialogue in the direction of the truth is possible solely due to our finitude – in which we also find the particularity of our being in the variety of languages. Again, language appears in vocabulary and grammar, as always, and never without the inner infinity of the dialogue that is in progress between every speaker and the listener. That is why the hermeneutical circle is endless.

This fundamental dimension of hermeneutics – genuine communication which wants to speak out – however, does

not produce primarily arranged signals, but rather seeks words which allow reaching another person – it is not only a universal human task, but also the task of the hermeneut, who has an opportunity to utter a new word that will remain written.

In 'Culture and the World', Gadamer (1998) develops his idea that culture empowers a person. However, such a positive definition of culture has always raised questions. With regard to culture, there has always been a note of pessimism, and the debate on the culture concept continues to this day. As Gadamer aptly noted, we all understand that there is culture, both instinctively and intuitively, but defining this concept still remains a rather complex task: 'although we would all know that culture is something that supports us, none of us would be so knowledgeable as to say what culture is' (Gadamer, 'Culture', 1998, p. 1).

In Gadamer's view, the Enlightenment's faith in human reason was arrogant. He believes that the subsequent development of bourgeois society and industrial society not only failed to remove this arrogance and its negative consequences, including dehumanization, disregard of the Other, and uncontrolled industrialization, but also exacerbated the existing problems. In this regard, one of the key questions of Gadamer's philosophy is the following: 'What moral advancements does mankind owe to the unfolding of the sciences and the arts?' (Gadamer, 'Culture', 1998, p. 1).

Gadamer notes that the main directions of development in twentieth-century society also challenged the bourgeois idea, which consists in upholding the ideal of equality. According to Gadamer, he himself belonged to the generation of those who 'went to the woods'. At the same time, industrial society was

also based on the legacy of the bourgeois system. Gadamer has no illusions – science dominates in modernity and postmodernity. In 'Man and His Hand in Modern Civilization: Philosophical Aspects' (5), Gadamer describes the form of the modern era in full detail and poses the following questions: how can a person, a creator, coexist with the given data? How can one preserve the ability to create, where loss can be equated with the ultimate loss of oneself and the loss of mankind as a whole in a dehumanized industrialized world, where people have become tools? It is worth noting that the emphasis on this kind of knowledge is put on the technical side of the question, with reliability and mathematization leading to a new culture of dehumanized knowledge. In general, the process of dehumanization leads to barbarism, which is most clearly manifested in the externalization on to the Other.

Any persistent differences between people can be overcome through reconciliation. Insuperable otherness can be eliminated only by way of reconciliation in a verbal culture. The key word is reconciliation. At the same time, Gadamer, in his fight against the dehumanization of society, suggests going deeper into human 'non-specialization', where our flesh ('our hand') is the creating organ of the man-creator: The hand is an intellective organ, a limb that serves for many things and makes many things serve it. That is why this part of the body is so closely linked with language. The hand not only makes and handles things, it also points to things' (Gadamer, 'Man and his Hand', 1998, p. 116).

Here, Gadamer establishes a connection between the 'intellectual hand' and the voice, thus creating an allegory of the notion of culture, that is, the 'verbal culture'. 'Together the hand and the speaking voice represent the highest perfection of human non-

specialization' (Gadamer, 'Man and his Hand', 1998, p. 116). Man has always been looking for an answer to the following question: what is human nature; what is the role of homo humanus, that distinguishes him from all other living creatures, making him stand out from the rest of the animal kingdom, and giving meaning to his existence in the cultural community as opposed to the 'instrumentalized' slavish existence that lowers him to the level of a thing, and reduces him to nothing more than a cog in a machine, which strives solely to boost good fortune? Additionally, an artificial human specialization occurs, which we can only overcome by force of will and action. Gadamer famously said on the subject: 'Man needs to form himself into something' (Gadamer, 'Man and his Hand', 1998, p. 114).

According to Gadamer, people can engage in self-reflection, express doubts, and eventually choose who to become, which in turn requires certain criteria serving as a basis for rational choice. Gadamer opposes the rational to the demonic impulse and instincts. However, our cognitive process helps us predict the possible outcomes, so that we can control our instincts, that is, think before we act. Gadamer claims that the main challenge consists in finding the right balance between our instincts and moral aspirations; 'Clearly, the problem of man is this: How can we find a balance that fulfils the law of our nature when we are just as much sensuous creatures as moral ones?' (Gadamer, 'Man and his Hand', 1998, p. 115)

Thus, Gadamer does not deny the subconscious in man, although he insists that our common nature can be explained by much more than a self-preservation instinct, which is underscored by the fact that culture, history, progress, and regress are all natural. Our human capabilities – the original 'non-special-

ization'–give us a chance to be creators of culture. However, this 'non-specialization' poses a threat by creating an artificial trend of differentiation. Man ceases to be a creator and becomes a machine, a tool in the hands of others: 'As a result of our whole cultural process, the individual finds himself more and more in the service of functions, circumscribed by functioning robots and machines – a new kind of universal slavery has come over mankind' (Gadamer, 'Man and his Hand', 1998, p. 117).

As a result, man is falling into a new form of slavery. One may wonder how to balance these patterns in the paradigm suggested by Gadamer. Gadamer argues that there is no conflict (nor should there be any) between the senses and the intellect. The creating hand is an intellectual organ, and our senses are spiritualized and cultivated to the extent that they are 'inspired' by the human 'hand', which has absolute freedom. It can touch, embrace, specify, and create. The senses have their own intellect. According to Gadamer, this intellect protects us from wild instincts and deep prejudices. The 'cultural senses' are the result of the development of the human capacity for choice and judgment.

Both theory and hypothesis recognized in positivist philosophy imply that reason and intuition (faith) can be considered as crucial methodological key stones which would tend to deny that the philosophy of positivism is pure empiricism or simple materialism. However, we must state that the positivist's anti-metaphysical approach rejects Absolute Truth even though nobody from among the positivists rejected truth in general as an "organizing form of experience".

Auguste Comte believed that "positive philosophy" could become the religion of humanity. Artists, Scientists, and Positive Philosophers would make this possible; they would become

so-called "positive priests". With the help of their attempts, the synthesis of feelings and reason, science and faith would become real. However, this is not possible without self-reflection because one can never discover a soul without self-reflection.

Furthermore, Mill paid more attention to the facts of self-observation than Comte, who denied that this (self-reflection) can be a positive fact as well. It should be stressed again that the self-reflection of the Spirit was one of the main topics during the "metaphysical era", that is in Hegel's phenomenological approach (Phenomenology of Spirit) and in the transition period of positivism. Self-reflection gave and gives much more than the simple experience of "here and now". Nevertheless, it is remarkable that even in the philosophy of positivism Mill does not agree with this point, that self-reflection could not be a positive fact. Mill believed that there is an unbreakable wall between the way of explaining nature and the way of explaining our soul. This was a point for further development in the hermeneutic approach. Thus, the paradigm of thinking which only aimed at external knowledge of the world cannot be exhaustive and adequate for humans and we cannot base our future solely on scientific knowledge gained by experience. Doing so could mean running the risk of losing something very important in our life, that is, losing our own subjectivity and, thus, subjective goals for own free life. It is also remarkable that Spencer too did not believe that religion would lose its position with the development of science. According to him, science and religion must be reconciled.

One of the first philosophers who introduced the way 'to understand the facts of the human world without either reducing them to mere contingency or explaining their order by way of

speculative principles of the sort generated by traditional metaphysics' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vico Giambattista) was Giambattista Vico. Thereafter, the notion of reconciliation between scientific and humanitarian discourse was developed by the philosophers of the hermeneutic tradition: Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans Georg Gadamer. Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics war aimed at finding a rigorous method of understanding and interpretation in the humanities, where subjectivity is emphasized as being of great importance as opposed to the natural sciences. The historical flow of ideas and history as a whole were the main key stones for achieving understanding.

The dualistic interpretation of the world, according to which nature and spirit and realities are deduced from one another by a causative-consecutive approach, is erroneous. Spirit is in itself, for itself, and self-sufficient, and only this allows its rational comprehension. To overcome the crisis of European society, Europe must consider the historical endless aims of reason arising from the philosophical spirit. The cause of the current crisis is misunderstood rationalism, namely, not rationalism itself but rationalism interpreted as naturalism and objectivism.

The cognitive process is as old as humanity itself; therefore, a hermeneutic approach to symbolic structural units is extremely important. Ideology requires critical hermeneutics; hermeneutics should reveal a hidden, distorted, obscure meaning lying motionless under general, superficial truths of life.

What could replace the Absolute spirit, the abstract idea? Many proponents of the analytic and hermeneutic approaches drew attention to language, to this ideal substance which is neither immanent nor a pure abstraction precisely because it is connected with human nature. Gadamer's hermeneutics focuses on

the word, namely on its enlightening quality. According to Gadamer, we are a unified history of mankind, a "conversation".

It is clear that scientific and technological progress has not been accompanied by humanitarian progress, nor has it defused the conflicts, which may pose even greater threats than those experienced by humanity in the 20th century. The word of reconciliation should be the first and the last word – the alpha and omega that can prevent humanity's slide into barbarism. The task of true philosophy is to bridge this gap and eliminate this difference between the world, as it is understood by science and our ordinary life-world.

We need to connect the notions of positivism and hermeneutical transformation and the concepts of reason and faith more closely with the acquisition of structure and meaning, with patterns of world-interpretation, and with the space that is thus opened up for interpretative conflicts. Then, the hermeneutical transformation of the aforementioned aspects would affect a revision of the main prejudices: reason and intuition would be both abilities and competences (the mind will have an ability to ground and justify, to find and give reasons; intuition and faith will be an ability to foresee and imagine, to understand the present and to foresee the future). Then, both reason and humanitarian discourse might be considered as dimensions or equivalent structures of culture, or to be more precise, as the ways of arriving at a cultural understanding of the world.

In consequence, reason and humanitarian discourse can be understood in a broader historical context than that of the 20th century: they should be considered as the basis of the modern humanitarian culture development, engaged in its scientific approach towards the world and in self-reflection dialectics.

Chapter 3. Attempt at synthesis in phenomenology

Having analysed the postmodern state of continental thought and identified the fundamental epistemological difficulties of the analytical tradition, we believe that the main factor in understanding human life is the *historical course of thought and being in general*. The analytical approach can only serve as an effective tool in clarifying certain concepts and perspectives, but it is not placed in the historical context, and, for this reason, remains in formal and instrumental space.

For a more detailed analysis of the outlined problems, let us consider the hermeneutic philosophical tradition from the point of view of the interpreted concept of 'knowledge'. Hermeneutics consists in the application of a rigorous method for understanding and interpreting, which, at the same time, combines history with the philosophy of life. However, absolutization of will and subjectivity can lead to dangerous tendencies in the development of irrationalism. Therefore, without neglecting rationality, hermeneutics tries to gather facts of scientific objectivity and human subjectivity by placing emphasis on the interrelation of parts and the whole for interpretation, since it is necessary to understand the text as a whole. The practice of interpretation is circular, as both parts are generally significant. It is necessary to consider the authors and their cultural environment in their historical context. Retaining subjectivity, interpreters are nevertheless able to overcome historical subjectivism and find a generally accepted interpretation.

According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, hermeneutics is the key to the nature of truth. The truth is revealed through understanding and interpretation. Understanding has an ontological nature, so hermeneutic claims may be similar to the claims of the natural sciences. The development of the method guarantees the objectivity of the results, but it is not Gadamer's goal. Gadamer seeks to find limitations to this method. This means that the human sciences can achieve objectivity only by abandoning the search for methodological objectivity. They should rely more on the fundamental abilities of a person. Understanding is one of the examples.

Gadamer believes that philosophy should explore the lifeworld as a historical and intersubjective horizon of human experience (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 84). There is no fixed transcendental field of subjectivity, as may be required by methodological dogmatism. Hence, education cannot be considered a reliable method. There is only a questioning technique. There is no single true interpretation of texts for all times and for all nations, but a better or worse interpretation is possible. Firstly, hermeneutics is a link between two horizons. Original transparency of the source text is impossible, but one should strive to avoid distortion of the truth. Not only are we able to try to gain insight into this or that situation, but also – which is just as important – consider this kind of situation from the point of view of the horizon. Vision depends on the point of view. A situation is a point of view, but, at the same time, it limits our vision. Secondly, all issues in the historical context were influenced by a certain tradition of interpreting the same texts. Interpretation satisfies the requirements and provides a better understanding of the present, but we must remember that

these issues originated in the past. Thirdly, the meaning is inexhaustible, and a single interpretation cannot reconstruct the meaning of the full text. However, this does not mean that all interpretations are identical to each other.

According to Gadamer, meaning is similar to the thing-in-itself. Although the thing-in-itself is not knowable, it allegedly explains the sequence of phenomena, including our perception of the external world, as noted by Kant. Therefore, a corresponding theory of interpretation is out of the question. We can only study a chain of different interpretations. Similar to the experience of the external or physical world, the diversity of phenomena is inevitable (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 84).

Heidegger believes that avoiding the erroneous execution of the Absolute is possible, if we take a different course at the basic level, that is, at the level of ontology. Heidegger's most famous work is 'Being and Time' (1927). Understanding can be achieved by attracting the essential and historical categories in their original unity. Such an approach requires an answer to the question of 'What is Being?' (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 35). The question can be posed by man from a certain point of view. Not only does man exist, he is also aware of the fact. This information, as well as the ability to ask a question about one's own nature, characterize human existence.

Heidegger and Sartre developed their fundamental ontological theories based on a phenomenological approach. The traditional perception of reality is centred around dualistic oppositions: abstract and material, mind and body, reality and possibility, visibility and essence. According to both philosophers, phenomenology makes it possible to abandon the aforementioned dualism and restore the ontological unity of

the world on a different basis. Despite the fact that both authors were greatly influenced by Husserl, who represented the phenomenological philosophical tradition and used the same method, their ontological theories have a number of significant differences, namely: the principles of interpretation of the structure of being, the concept of human freedom, and the relationship of man to the Other, as well as the understanding of language and the role of art.

It is advisable to consider a detailed explanation of being and existential relationships as they were presented in Heidegger's ontological work. Heidegger coined the term for the kind of being intrinsic to human existence, calling it *Dasein* (German *Dasein*–'being there'; *Da*–'here, there'). This kind of human existence is constantly present in the world, forming a single and indivisible structure with the latter; moreover, and most importantly, such a particular kind of being is capable of raising (and it raises) the question of its own being.

Human being is fundamentally different from the existence of other things. The term 'Dasein' applies only to human existence and may be the key to understanding being in general. *Dasein* exists (German *existiert* – to exist, to be), which is its main difference from other objects on the Earth: a rock or a tree do not inquire about their own existence; hence, they do not exist. In other words, they are incapable of being or not being by themselves: 'Being-in-the-world belongs to Dasein's ontological constitution. Nature, extant entities, can be without a Dasein existing because Dasein's world is not the natural world but rather a phenomenal world. The phenomenal world is more than the natural world, and Dasein cannot exist without the phenomenal world because the phenomenal world be-

longs to Dasein's Being. Therefore, in a traditional sense, there are radical differences of ontological constitution between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*' (Çüçen K., 2008, p. 60).

Existence precedes essence: the existence of human reality is primary, and only then it defines itself. This is the moment, where existence means the possibility of *Dasein* to 'be itself or not itself' (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 33). Ultimately, existence encompasses the full responsibility of human reality for its realization: the ability of a person to ask himself/herself questions and define his/her own being in relation to the world and forming a single structure with the world.

According to Heidegger, to confirm the interpretation of the structure of the relationship between *Dasein* and being, it is first of all necessary to raise the question of being, which, according to the philosopher, was forgotten in the context of the Western metaphysical tradition. The evolution of the question of being begins with an analysis of a particular kind of being, which is able to raise the question of its own existence, and so it has an implicit understanding of being – from the existential analysis of *Dasein*. The authentic and inauthentic being of *Dasein* is structurally revealed in existentials. The fundamental existential of *Dasein* is care; 'being-in-the-world' is the most important element of *Dasein*; structure is revealed in authentic (**understanding and interpretation**) and inauthentic *(ambiguity, curiosity, and idle talk)* modes (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 34).

Dasein is a participant in the world process, not a standalone observer. For *Dasein*, things are 'ready-to-hand' (German *zu handen*) rather than existing in general. The world is inseparable from conscious being, and being, in turn, is inseparable from the world – this means unity, a single structure. This is

Heidegger's challenge to objectivist subjectivism, where the subjective and objective spheres are separate. The basic structure of Dasein also coexists with others. Apart from the things that are ready-to-hand ('*zu handen*'), we also have an opportunity to get to know other *Daseins*. At the same time, relationships with other people may be inauthentic – there is a possibility of existence in the impersonal mode of *das Man*.

Moreover, *Dasein* is free to identify itself as a true being. At the same time, *Dasein* is always situation-specific and characterized by freedom of self-determination. *Dasein* has a limited number of possibilities presented by the world. Authentic *Dasein* is possible only if it comes to realize its own mortality, that is, it is necessary to understand that death as the possibility to end all possibilities is inevitable at some point. Facing its own mortality, *Dasein* becomes true and authentic. Heidegger's 'Being and Time' had a profound influence on the continental philosophy and philosophers of the twentieth century. Most importantly, on such philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Hannah Arendt, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

As opposed to Heidegger, Sartre's ontological project is focused on Being and Nothingness. Nothingness is considered as a phenomenon of human reality, but from a slightly different perspective (as compared to Heidegger). For Sartre, it is essential not to reduce it to the dualism of the preceding metaphysical concept. Additionally, Sartre develops his theory in the phenomenological context. The principal characteristic of consciousness in phenomenology is its intentionality, that is, a focus on an object. This object ('noema'), which is materialized through an act of thought ('noesis') directed to it, is attributed to the consciousness, namely to the process of thinking (no-

esis). In this regard, Sartre believes that Nothingness may also have the characteristics of being (for instance, Pierre, whose absence in the cafe was not immediately noticed by the person who had fixed a meeting with Pierre in this cafe) (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 9). *Non-being in phenomenological ontology is just as real as being of a 'positive' thing.*

There are two sides of being: being-for-itself (being of consciousness) and being-in-itself (positive being as totality). Being-for-itself is a special way of being, which is realized through a series of negations of everything, and so can be opposed to everything else. For-itself is such a being, which, approaching the issue of its own nature, turns out not to be a being at all, since it immediately considers it different from itself – this is a specific mode of human being (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 181).

When it comes to cognition, being, which is not 'Self', is 'absolute totality', 'being-in-itself'. This implies that everything that represents the object of cognition is the world – the world as totality: 'Yet it is not a purely subjective modification of the for-itself since it causes all subjectivity to be possible. But if the for-itself is to be the nothingness whereby 'there is' being, then being can exist originally only as totality. Thus, knowledge is the world. To use Heidegger's expression, the world and outside of that – nothing. But this nothing is not originally that in which human reality emerges. This *nothing* is human reality itself as the radical negation by means of which the world is revealed' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 181).

The 'proscenium' of multiple groups of things in their entirety is space. Thus, space represents the world's instability: 'Space is not the world, but it is the instability of the world apprehended as totality, in as much as the world can always disintegrate

into external multiplicity' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 184). In this passage, Sartre points out the existential origin of space, implicit (forgotten, not quite understood) in science; thus, in geometry, for instance, hypostatization of external multiplicity into matter existing in itself has occurred.

Arguing further about knowledge, Sartre interprets it as follows: *'Knowledge is nothing other than the presence of being to the For-itself, and the For-itself is only the nothing which realizes that presence*. Thus, knowledge is by nature ecstatic being, and because of that fact it is confused with the ecstatic being of the For-itself. *The For-itself does not exist in order subsequently to know*; neither can we say that it exists only in so far as it knows or is known, for this would be to make being vanish into an infinity regulated by particular bits of knowledge. Knowing is an absolute and primitive event; it is the absolute upsurge of the For-itself in the midst of being and beyond being, in terms of the being which it is not and as the negation of that being and a self-nihilation' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 216).

Thus, **knowledge** is, by nature, an ecstatic being and is nothing more than the presence of being-for-itself, which (For-itself) is, in turn, Nothing, aware of this presence. For-itself does not exist for the purpose of knowing later; at the same time, it is impossible to say that it exists for itself only when it 'knows'. According to Sartre (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 216), when it comes to being, this is a case of absolute denial and self-denial.

Hence, according to both Heidegger and Sartre, the being of human reality is ecstatic and pre-reflective, which makes it different from the Cartesian reflective *Cogito*, where being is the product of thinking. According to Heidegger, the being of human reality forms a single structure with the world, while

being-in-the-world is its basic characteristic. According to Sartre, the single structure of being-in-itself and being-for-itself is a mobile quasi-totality with points of attraction between the two types of being. At the same time, being-for-itself transcends into the 'state of awareness' by deliberate action. The result of this transcendence, according to the philosopher, is the world as a proven being. These points of view are neither idealistic nor realistic, since there is no struggle for the ontological superiority of a particular structure of being.

In addition to 'being-in-the-world', coherence with the world and understanding of the world are among the main existentials. Understanding of the world is rooted in the act of understanding rather than in the knowledge of things. We perceive the world through our intuitive understanding of things. Let us compare the views of Heidegger and Sartre in this respect. Sartre believes that every single cognitive process is ultimately intuitive: 'There is only intuitive knowledge. Deduction and discursive argument, incorrectly called examples of knowing, are only instruments which lead to intuition' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 172).

The dialectic of our freedom and being-in-the-world is revealed through our special states: sadness, anxiety, and fear. The main state here is 'disposedness' (Germ. *Befindlichkeit* – mood, state of mind). Existential states are elements of this structure, characterized by spontaneity – for instance, what happens to a person when feelings overwhelm him/her (Germ. überfallen – attack, overwhelm). These states do not depend on human will. Such existential states are not subjective. At the same time, there are social existential states (Wrathall M., 2006, p. 30). However, such states are non-objective and secondary to the existence of the world: 'So disposedness [Befindlichkeit] is an

"attunement", a way of being tuned in to things in the world, and tuned by the things of the world. This disposedness is something we can never fully master. But far from that being a detriment to our freedom, it is the condition that first makes it possible' (Wrathall M., 2006, p. 4).

Attunement is uncontrollable. Sartre represents his understanding of being in a completely basic, universal, and comprehensible form of disgust or total negation, which is reflected in his novel *Nausea*. Here we have the motives of abandonment in the world, attunement with the Absolute, monotony – the spontaneity of overpowering existential anxiety, revealing the very being, the true essence of things.

The question of authenticity is one of the fundamental questions of human being raised in the philosophical theories of Heidegger and Sartre. Studying the impersonal phenomenon of *das Man*, explaining ways to understand human consciousness, 'bad faith', and sincerity – all this occupied the minds of both philosophers dealing with the subject of human existence in the world – the issue of being yourself. The phenomenon of *das Man* (derived from the impersonal singular pronoun *man* in German), analysed by Heidegger, encompasses impersonal Others. This phenomenon is impersonal, but it has a voice, a general understanding, and acts in a conventional way.

According to Heidegger, a person can hear the voice of conscience. It is a call to be yourself, to be human. This voice exists exclusively within *Dasein*, preceding any action and any real guilt. Social consciousness is the voice of *das Man*. Following the voice of *das Man*, *Dasein* loses its authenticity: 'The voice does call back, but it calls back beyond the past deed onto thrown being-guilty, which is "earlier" than any indebtedness

[*Verschuldung*]. But the call back at the same time calls forth a being-guilty, as something to be seized upon in one's own existence, in such a way that authentic, existential being-guilty precisely comes after the call, and not the other way around. Basically, bad conscience is so far from reproving and pointing back that it rather points forward by calling back into thrownness' (Heidegger M., 2010, p. 279). Thus, this brings Heidegger back to basic existential structures, such as care (upon serious reflection and realization of one's commitment) and ecstatic being, which are not an assessment of the events that have taken place. Additionally, Heidegger speaks about authenticity, responsibility, and the incompleteness of *Dasein*.

In his writings, Heidegger paid special attention to the category of inquiry and its structure. Thus, the following are the structural elements of inquiry: the content of the question (das Gefragte), that which is interrogated (das Befragte) and that which is to be found out by asking, that is, the intended answer (das Erfragte). That which is inquired has an obligatory connection with such categories as thinking and being. The category of inquiry can reveal being from the point of view of dialogism, representing it as Mit-sein, as well as a relationship of such aspects as Self and non-Self, or Self and the Other.

According to Sartre, man may face a tough choice or be trapped in a specific paradigm of subordination, which is comparable with the loss of authenticity. Unlike Heidegger, Sartre does not focus on 'public opinion', 'voice of *das Man*', or 'care'. Instead, he describes the phenomenon of 'genuine' self-deception, that is the phenomenon of 'bad faith', which is, in other words, a conflict between 'for-itself' and 'in-itself'. The 'bad faith' of man manifests itself in a negation directed at itself:

man subjectively denies something, but in reality, does the opposite in a customary, disinterested, and sincere manner. There is a deception of 'bad faith' behind such inconsistency. Another example of 'bad faith' is a situation where a man/woman claims or denies something, but the meaning of his/her words either neutralizes or invalidates his statement or negation. Thus, the decision is hidden from itself in a situation of self-denial, which is also 'bad faith'. 'Bad faith' is a state. The opposite of 'bad faith' is authenticity. However, authenticity is not a state, but rather a requirement to be who we are. It is not equal to being-in-itself, as, for example, being a table or any other object. The desire to be truly genuine is a feeling of being-for-itself, growing out of a sense of guilt, which Sartre called existential guilt.

Thus, both philosophers share the same view on the original existential guilt of man, which is based on our desire to be authentic, to be ourselves. Nevertheless, they use different methods of explanation. The most important philosophical problem for Sartre, which reveals to a great extent his ontological position and its difference from the views of Heidegger, is the problem of the Other: 'Others are the Other, that is the self which is not myself. Therefore, we grasp here a negation as the constitutive structure of the being-of-others' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 230). This point of view makes Sartre stand out among materialists and idealists. According to materialism, bodies are located in physical space. Ontologically speaking, the negation 'I am not' expresses the same idea as the phrase 'the table is not a chair'. Idealism distinguishes between two types of consciousness, using the traditional method of hypostatization. The difference lies in the fact that the space, where the two types of consciousness are distinguished, is ideal. From the point of

view of materialism and idealism, the Other is presented in consciousness as something external, merely pertaining to it. Sartre, by contrast, uses a phenomenological approach. In my opinion, his point of view cannot be called materialistic, idealistic, or dualistic. In Sartre's ontology, 'matter' is not important.

In the first chapter of the third part of 'Being and Nothingness', Sartre studies the concepts of three philosophers: Husserl, Hegel, and Heidegger. These concepts include expectations of solipsism, deemed inevitable, if the issue is considered from the point of view of dualism: in other words, the two substances are separated from each other to explain the relationship between the Self and the Other. In fact, any attempt to combine the separated substances will be weak. However, we can try to understand the relationship between the Self and the Other from the phenomenological point of view – as they originate in the intentional activity of consciousness itself. In this case, such consciousness is not *Cogito*. On the contrary, we encounter the Other without *Cogito* and the existence of the Other brings *Cogito* into existence the moment we see ourselves as objects. For Sartre, the existence of a universal abstract structure of the Other, the issue of personal aspirations is more important: 'If we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 244).

Heidegger also attempted to get around solipsism. He introduced new concepts to describe human reality: 'being-in-the-world', where 'world', 'being-in', and 'being' are all moments of the same structural unity. Ways of sharing reality with the Other are moments that are essential to being human (subordination), authentic 'Being-with' (German: *Mit-sein* – being with

others). In this case, the Self encounters the Other afterwards, in *Dasein's* ontological structural whole. This concept of being is different from *Cogito*. It is *Dasein*, 'which belongs to me'. The moment of building a relationship with the Other is a moment in the structure of *Dasein*.

The difference in the positions of the two philosophers lies in connotative interpretations of the relationship with the Other. For Heidegger, this can be 'Being-with' ('Mitsein') or *das Man* (inauthentic 'they-self'). For Sartre, the relationship with the Other is a fatal 'conflict'. According to Heidegger, *Dasein* always understands itself in terms of possibilities; it is future-oriented in its authentic being. A very interesting question arises: What is the cause of the transition from inauthenticity to freedom? Can philosophy be the trigger mechanism? 'What motivates the transition from inauthenticity, as the initial mode of human Dasein, in which it "initially and for the most part" is, to the authenticity of its very being at all? Heidegger's answer is: anxiety (die Angst). < … > …anxiety has the same function as philosophizing, namely that of bringing-back Dasein to its existentiality as its proper way of being' (Patkul A., 2014, p. 136).

If we proceed from the idea that human capabilities are limited by the world and humans' own character, this may cast doubt on the relationship of freedom with the structure of the world. Once again, the question arises: What is the cause – the trigger mechanism – for the transition to the 'authentic being' to freedom? While Heidegger believes that the voice of conscience can be a motivational factor, Sartre argues that freedom should be defined as the actual ability of man to create projects. At the same time, in his opinion, freedom in itself can never

exist outside a 'resisting world', where 'success is not important for freedom' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 483).

To exist, freedom needs neither Aristotle's 'matter', nor the Stoic 'pneuma': in relation to being-in-itself, being-for-itself produces a negation. Sartre maintains that *'a situation and motivation are one and the same'* (Sartre J.-P., 2003, p. 487). This brings us to the paradox of freedom: freedom is possible only in a certain situation, but a situation is always associated with freedom. 'We are a freedom which chooses; but we do not choose being free: we are condemned to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown into freedom or, as Heidegger says, "abandoned"' (Sartre J.-P., 2003, pp. 484–485).

In 'Existentialism is a Humanism', Sartre maintains that if existence really precedes essence, then man is responsible for what he is. We, according to Sartre, are left alone on the plain with other people, without a justification or a reasonable excuse. This situation reflects our position in the world and correlates with the movement of the given towards the intended purpose: all that is given is turned away from *incompleteness–'it is not there yet'*, and so there will be *no situations that could provide 'more freedom'*.

A comparative analysis of the views of the two philosophers leads to the following conclusion: both Heidegger and Sartre use a phenomenological approach to raise fundamental ontological issues in their works. Heidegger's 'Being and Time' focuses on the explanation of the concept of *Dasein* by analysing its existentials, including the most important ones–'being-in-the-world' and care. Sartre, in turn, begins to develop his theory, focusing on Nothingness, which is just as real as positive being as a whole, divided into two components: being-for-itself and

being-in-itself. Both philosophers believe that human being is ecstatic: while *Dasein* consists in care and forms a single structure with the world, Sartre believes that this separate structure is a quasi-totality with points of attraction between the two types of being. At the same time, being-for-itself transcends into the 'state of awareness' by deliberate action.

According to both Heidegger and Sartre, the problem of authenticity is one of the main issues of human existence. In both cases, the phenomenon of authenticity is closely connected with the inner voice of human consciousness and the existential guilt. Sartre recognizes the importance of interpreting a special relationship with the Other. The difference in the views of the two philosophers lies in connotative interpretations of such a relationship. According to Sartre's interpretation, the relationship with the Other constitutes an inevitable 'conflict'. As for freedom, Sartre considers this phenomenon using a far more radical approach – it is impossible not to be free, and man is the embodiment of freedom. In his later writings, Heidegger focused on rethinking the phenomenon of the alienated human reality in the Technosphere. Also, the views of the philosopher are reflected in the analysis of the phenomena of art and language, which he believed to be the 'house of being'. At the same time, Sartre's literary and philosophical genius was able to describe human existence, the feeling of being 'abandoned' in the world, the fatal borderline states of human existence, as well as the situation of a fateful choice both in his early writings ('Nausea' and 'The Wall') and in later novels, plays, and essays ('Situations II: What Is Literature?', 'Existentialism is a Humanism').

Although primarily a philosopher, Sartre pays attention to the performative role of language and art. Thus, the proposi-

tional function of language is not reduced to merely a significa-
tion of reality or ideas: 'Similarly, the signification of a melody,
if one can still speak of signification, is nothing outside of the
melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered
in several ways. Call it joyous or sombre. It will always be over
and above anything you can say about it' (Sartre, 1949, p. 10).

Consequently, we can comprehend the living truth through
the greatest works of art, where a word of a genius of literature
may become for us a part of our spiritual endeavours. Sartre
also believed that art helps a person arrive at complex philo-
sophical ideas. Sartre's main philosophical categories– freedom,
consciousness, choice, the Other, bad faith, and truth – were re-
flected in his brilliant essays, the novel '*Nausea*' and his plays. For
his literary work, Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize, which the
author chose to refuse, emphasizing the independence of his po-
sition with regard to any institution. Apart from his philosophi-
cal and literary contribution, Sartre was deeply engaged in civic
activities, and fought in the French Resistance during the Nazi
occupation. The great philosopher's views were appreciated by
people who held on to left-wing ideas in France and around the
world, and many intellectuals saw the true value of Sartre's philo-
sophical, literary, and civic activities. More than fifty thousand
people came to pay their last respects to Sartre after his death in
Paris. First and foremost, Sartre's basic philosophical concepts
are briefly discussed in my essay: being-in-itself, being-for-itself,
Nothingness, and the possibility of knowledge. Sartre belongs
to the phenomenological school of philosophy. For this reason,
I will occasionally compare Sartre's views with those of Hus-
serl and Heidegger in order to clearly outline his position. Be-
sides, such important aspects of human existence as freedom,

conscience, and bad faith will also be discussed while analysing Sartre's literary works: the novel '*Nausea*', the essay 'Existentialism is a Humanism', and three of his plays '*No Exit*', '*The Flies*' and '*The Victors*'.

Does freedom have limits? How does Sartre understand freedom? And what does he mean when he says 'humans are free'? Do people have unlimited possibilities, and, if not, what is the ultimate expression of freedom for each person? And how should we understand conscience, which is directly related to both freedom and truth? How can a free person gain knowledge and what is the Truth for a human being?

Sartre's novel *Nausea* was published in 1938. It is set in a provincial town with its measured and calm life. The protagonist of the novel is a certain Roquentin, a researcher, working on a biography of the nobleman Marquis X for the rich heirs of the latter. Soon it becomes clear that the work does not give Roquentin any pleasure. In fact, his clients are indifferent to it, too. Neither party is interested. Roquentin starts to suffer from bouts of nausea for no particular reason. In the agony of introspection, Roquentin gradually comes to realize that it is precisely the lack of interest that causes this disgust for the world, as well as the nausea. But what is the essence of this disgust? Can it be the most basic and universal form of negation associated with being that Sartre conveys allegorically in his novel?

According to Sartre, being-for-itself is such a being, which in terms of its own being is essentially a way not to be a certain being, which it immediately recognizes as different from itself. In the limelight of existence, being produces a series of consecutive negations that gets to the essence of things. There is nothing left but existence, all words are peeled off like varnish, while

things are turned into a 'single viscous mess': 'And suddenly, suddenly, the veil is torn away, I have understood, I have seen.

'6.00 p.m.

'I can't say I feel relieved or satisfied; just the opposite, I am crushed. Only my goal is reached: I know what I wanted to know; I have understood all that has happened to me since January. The Nausea has not left me and I don't believe it will leave me so soon; but I no longer have to bear it, it is no longer an illness or a passing fit: it is I.

'So, I was in the park just now. The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn't remember it was a root any more. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things, their methods of use, and the feeble points of reference which men have traced on their surface. I was sitting, stooping forward, head bowed, alone in front of this black, knotty mass, entirely beastly, which frightened me. Then I had this vision.

'It left me breathless. Never, until these last few days, had I understood the meaning of "existence." I was like the others, like the ones walking along the seashore, all dressed in their spring finery. I said, like them, "The ocean is green; that white speck up there is a seagull," but I didn't feel that it existed or that the seagull was an "existing seagull"; usually existence hides itself. It is there, around us, in us, it is us, you can't say two words without mentioning it, but you can never touch it. When I believed I was thinking about it, I must believe that I was thinking nothing, my head was empty, or there was just one word in my head, the word "to be"' (Sartre, 2000, pp. 127–128).

Thus, amid the existential angst, the total disgust for the world and nausea having reached an extreme point, the

protagonist understands what it means 'to be'. Roquentin does not commit suicide, bouts of nausea continue, and he realizes that they may never disappear, but they no longer make him suffer.

Sartre represents his understanding of being in a completely basic, universal, and comprehensible form, namely, in the form of disgust, which is depicted in the novel as a total negation. Here we have the motives of 'abandonment' in the world, being attuned with the absolute, monotony – the spontaneity of sudden and overpowering existential anxiety, revealing the very being, the true essence of things.

Existential anxiety is only one of the states of mind, where the meaning of life is revealed. But there are many other situations, such as existential angst or a life choice. Sartre brilliantly describes these situations in his plays: *The Victors*, *The Flies*, *The Devil and the Good Lord*, *No Exit*, as well as in the philosophical essay 'Existentialism is a Humanism'.

Sartre's essay 'Existentialism Is a Humanism' is his response to certain critical remarks of Catholics and Communists on existentialism. In short, Communists claimed that existentialism is a philosophy of inaction, ultimately leading to a 'quietism of despair'. Others accused existentialism of focusing only on the dark side of life, neglecting many bright and positive aspects of human existence – this accusation came from Catholics. Both Communists and Catholics criticize existentialism for ignoring the solidarity of humankind and concentrating on the individual as an isolated being. That is, according to Communists, existentialists consider a person based on Descartes' 'Cogito' statement and, what is more, at the moment of self-reflection in solitude, which, in their opinion, closes the door to solidar-

ity. Christians blame existentialists for their denial of reality, as well as for diminishing the value of human actions.

Sartre responds to these critical remarks and defines existentialism as a doctrine making genuine human life possible, which states that the truth and actions imply both an environmental and a human subjectivity. Sartre distinguishes two groups of existentialist thinkers: Christian existentialists, such as Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, a professed Catholic, and atheistic existentialist, such as Heidegger and the French existentialists (including himself). Representatives of both groups, however, believe that existence precedes essence or, according to Sartre, that 'we must begin with from the subjective'. (Sartre, 1996, p. 66). It does not mean that Sartre is solipsist or subjective idealist, 'to begin from the subjective' means that we recognize the humans' free will, and that their free choice is not determined externally.

Sartre further provides some examples of essence preceding existence. For instance, God as the creator is regarded as a 'supernal artisan'. Whatever the doctrine – that of Descartes or of Leibniz – it is always assumed that the will is, to one degree or another, the consequence of understanding, it means that humans' will is predetermined in some way by understanding externally. For instance, when God creates, He is well aware of what He is creating. (Sartre, 1996, p. 67) Thus, the concept of a 'man' in the mind of God is similar to the concept of a 'knife' in the artisan's mind. In this particular case, essence is prior to existence. Then Sartre argues that the philosophical atheism of the eighteenth century may have limited the notion of God, (Sartre, 1996, p. 67.), but not the idea that essence precedes existence, which is expressed to a varying degree in the works of Diderot, Voltaire, and Kant.

Humans possess a specific human nature, that is, every single person is only a special case of the universal concept of 'Human'. According to Kant, for instance, this universality means that the human of the woods – the natural human – and the bourgeois are defined in the same way and possess the same fundamental qualities. Consequently, here again, the essence of the human precedes his/her historical existence. At the same time, atheistic existentialists are more consistent. They argue that even if there is no God, there is at least one being, whose existence comes before essence. This being is human or, as Heidegger puts it, the human reality. Hence, existence precedes essence. In the beginning, the human exists, he/she is found in nature, appears in the world. Then he/she defines himself/herself. Humans cannot become anything until later, and then he/she becomes what he/she makes of himself/herself.

Consequently, there is no human nature, as there is no God Who would conceive it. Humans will become what they choose to become. Now that he exists, man is able to conceive himself and express his will; he is only what he makes of himself – this is the first principle of existentialism. That is, an individual is above all a project, which is experienced subjectively, not some kind of moss or mould.

A human will become what he/she purposes to be and not what he/she may not wish to be. By a wish we usually understand a conscious decision, taken by most people after they have made something of themselves. I may wish to join a party, write a book or marry, but all this is only a manifestation of a more original, more spontaneous choice than what is commonly known as will. Nevertheless, if existence really precedes essence, then a human is responsible for what he/she is.

Existentialism means, on the one hand, that an individual chooses himself and, on the other hand, that man cannot go beyond the boundaries of human subjectivity. It is the second deep meaning, which is essentially existential. Man is anxiety. If an individual makes a conscious choice in favour of his own being, he commits not only himself but acts as a legislator making a commitment on behalf of all mankind.

Existentialists are concerned that there is no God, and without God – and they believe that this is indeed the case (Sartre, 1996, p. 67)–all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven disappears. Sartre believes, that we are on a plain, surrounded only by other people. Justifications or excuses are neither behind us nor before us in a luminous realm of values. We are left alone without excuse – a human is condemned to be free. A human did not create himself and, yet, is thrown into the world, where he/she is responsible for his/her deeds. Existentialists do not believe that a human can find help on earth through some sign – a human interprets signs as he/she chooses.

Who can choose a priori? No one. To choose an adviser means to commit oneself to that choice: 'I cannot affirm that the Russian Revolution will necessarily lead to the triumph of the proletariat: I must confine myself to what I can see. Nor can I be sure that comrades-in-arms will take up my work after my death and carry it to the maximum perfection, seeing that those men are free agents and will freely decide, tomorrow, what man is then to be. Tomorrow, after my death, some men may decide to establish Fascism, and the others may be so cowardly or so slack as to let them do so… There is no reality except in action. …Man is nothing else but what he purposes,…

the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is' (Sartre, 1996, p. 74–75).

No other truth apart from 'I think, therefore I am' can be the starting point. It is the absolute truth of consciousness. To define the probable, one must possess the truth. Consequently, for any truth to exist at all, there must be absolute truth – simple, easily attained, accessible to everybody and immediately grasped.

Contrary to the philosophy of Descartes, contrary to that of Kant, when we use the 'Cogito' formula, we get to know ourselves in the presence of the Other, who is just as real as we are. Thus, the human who discovers himself/herself directly in the Cogito also discovers all the others, who are, in fact, the condition of his own existence. In order to obtain any truth about myself, I should recognize the Other and act through him/her. The Other is essential for both my existence and self-reflection. Thus, a human discovers a whole new world of inter-subjectivity, where he/she has to decide what he/she is and what others are.

A moral choice is similar to the creation of a work of art. A human is obliged to draft his/her own moral law, it is not provided to him/her a priori. A human creates himself/herself by choosing the morality of pressure. The circumstances are such that he/she cannot fail to choose his/her morality – we define a person only with regard to his/her decision to take a position.

In each particular case, freedom can have no other purpose but itself. Once a human has admitted that in a state of abandonment he/she is the one to establish all values, he/she can now strive for one thing – freedom as the foundation of these values. Life has no meaning a priori. Life is nothing until humans find their way to live it. Humans must give it a meaning.

The meaning humans choose is what their life is worth. Existentialists do not treat humans as an end, because humans are always an unfinished project and are capable of choice.

Existentialists do not believe that humanity is something with which people can set up a cult, after the manner of Auguste Comte. Humanism can be understood differently. A human being is constantly beyond himself/herself; it means projecting himself/herself to show that he/she exists as a human being, while pursuing transcendent aims and self-surpassing.

Being transcendental, a human being is at the heart of self-surpassing. There is no other universe here except the human universe. This relation of transcendence as a constitutive characteristic of humans (not in the sense of transcendent God, but in the sense of self-surpassing) with subjectivity (meaning that a human is not confined within himself/herself but is forever present in a human universe) is what existentialists call existential humanism (Sartre, 2000, p. 76). More precisely, it is the relation of transcendence and subjectivity that constitutes an individual. Plunging humans into despair is not the intention here.

Authenticity is one of the most important concepts of human existence in Sartre's philosophy. Studying the impersonal phenomenon of man, explaining the understanding of human consciousness, 'bad faith', and sincerity – all this occupied the mind of the philosopher dealing with the subject of human existence in the world, addressing the issue of being yourself.

According to Sartre, a human may face a tough choice or be trapped in a specific paradigm of subordination, which is comparable with the loss of authenticity. Unlike Heidegger, Sartre does not focus on 'public opinion', 'voice of das Man' or 'care'. Instead, he emphasizes the phenomenon of 'genuine' self-

deception, that is the phenomenon of 'bad faith', which is, in other words, a conflict between 'for-itself' and 'in-itself'.

A person's 'bad faith' manifests itself in a negation directed at itself: a human subjectively denies something, but in reality does the opposite in a customary, disinterested, and sincere manner. There is a deception of 'bad faith' behind such a discrepancy. Another example of 'bad faith' is a situation, where a person claims or denies something, but the meaning of his words neutralizes or invalidates his claim or denial. This means that the decision is hidden from itself in a situation of self-denial, which is also 'bad faith'.

'Bad faith' is a state. The opposite of 'bad faith' is authenticity. However, authenticity is not a state, but rather a requirement to be who we are. It is not equal to being-in-itself, as, for example, being a table or any other object. The desire to be truly genuine is a feeling of being-for-itself, growing out of a sense of guilt, which Sartre called existential guilt.

In his play, *The Flies*, (Sartre, 1989, pp. 47–125) Sartre uses the power of artistic expression to convey such fundamental concepts of human existence as guilt, conscience, will, and freedom in a dramatic situation. Sartre resorts to the allegories of the ancient myth of Electra and Orestes. The story is set in ancient Argos, where many years ago, Aegisthus and Queen Clytemnestra had united to kill Agamemnon, the legitimate king of Argos, get rid of Orestes, heir to the throne, and make Electra, daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, a servant.

The townspeople heard the cries of Agamemnon fighting for his life in the palace and understood what was happening, but pretended not to hear and preferred to remain silent. Subsequently, their tormented conscience tirelessly reminded

them of their fault. For this purpose, Sartre introduces flies – the tormenting Furies of Guilt, the goddesses of remorse. Tyranny was established in Argos after the king's assassination. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra skilfully took advantage of the guilt of the townspeople, playing on people's feelings, organizing an annual phantasmagoria to commemorate the dead. But Orestes was destined to survive and return to Argos.

At first, his will is asleep. In Argos, he meets Zeus, one of the characters in the play. Orestes tends to shift the responsibility for his actions on to others' shoulders. He asks the gods to give him signs, which Zeus does at once. Taking these signs seriously and acting on their basis, Orestes refuses to accept full responsibility for his decisions, since it is the hand of Zeus that shows him the way through signs. In this case, the will of Orestes is out of his hands.

Little by little, however, Orestes forces the weakness out; Electra, his sister, helps him along the way. She dares to appear at the ceremony of commemoration with a delay and in a white dress, declaring: 'These dead are not mine!' She knows that her conscience is clear, that she has been wrongfully humiliated, and has been made to suffer unfairly. Electra makes Orestes choose the path of revenge, helping him to realize that she relies on him and is grateful to him for giving her hope. Finally, Orestes makes up his mind and kills the criminals – Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

But Electra is mentally broken by the murder of her mother. Tormented by the Furies, Electra lacks the will to resist them. Orestes, realizing what he has done, understands that it is he who bears the burden of responsibility for all his deeds, past and future. He realizes that Zeus has no power over him, since

he does not believe in his signs any more. Now that he has his will under control, he chooses not to entrust the Furies (or any magical creatures) with his guilt.

Neither divine signs nor remorse can paralyze him now. He understands that it was a fair trial of murderers and that he, Orestes, is the master of his own destiny, the author of his own actions. In the play, Sartre clearly demonstrates that in a situation of facticity, a man of common sense always has a choice. This does not mean that a human possesses or will ever possess supernatural or absolute powers. Far from it. A human being has no characteristics of the Absolute. However, a human is absolutely not determined by the situation of facticity he/she finds himself/herself in, which means that in every situation there is at least one more alternative.

After all, the citizens of Argos had heard the death screams of their king, a victim of assassination. They could have come to his rescue. Naturally, many of these situations may lead to counter-violence, non-being, as was shown in the play, *The Victors*. But this does not change the ontological state of things. There is always an option in human existence; it is a permanent ontological characteristic of the human being, who does not possess absolute powers in a given situation.

Neither is it determined by signs or the situation itself. A human being is both the author of his actions and the doer. The question is whether this human is fully aware of 'bad faith' or leans towards it.

This is an example of a fundamental and transcendental connection of the Self with the Other, which is established by consciousness itself. This is similar to Hegel's being-for-others, which he claims to be one of the stages of development of self-con-

sciousness. The path to myself goes through the Other, through the recognition of the Self by the Other, since I can only become an object for myself if I first become an object for the Other.

Sartre describes the relationship of the Self with the Other as that of being to being: 'if we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge. We have seen Husserl's failure when, on this particular level, he measures being by knowledge, and Hegel's when he identifies knowledge and being. But we have equally recognized that Hegel, although his vision is obscured by the postulate of absolute idealism, has been able to put the discussion on its true plane' (Sartre, 1956, p. 244).

Sartre does not try to solve the problem of the Other's being using idealistic methods. Instead, he resorts to phenomenological ontology and concentrates on the problem of finding the Other, which is brilliantly demonstrated in his literary work, *No Exit* (Sartre, 1989, pp. 1–47). Sartre's play, *No Exit* provides an outstanding example of 'bad faith' and the fight against the Other. The play is set in hell. The main characters are Joseph, Inès, and Estelle, three damned souls, who ended up in hell. Their punishment was to spend eternity together.

Each of them bears the burden of guilt as a result of their actions. Being already in hell, each, nevertheless, attempts to conceal his or her story along with the shame and tries to appear in the eyes of the Other as a better person. Estelle killed her child, Inez's actions caused suicide, Joseph Garcin mistreated his wife for five years. He used to be a journalist and a political activist, but when a military dictatorship was established in his country, he lost his nerve and decided to flee. Eventually, he was captured and shot.

Now each of the three has to share his or her story with the others, as it is no longer possible to keep it secret. They believe their stories are unique, but as they describe the details of their fall, it becomes clear that the Other knows it all too well. Using Sartre's terminology, each of the souls in hell is in a state of being-in-the-world for the Other. Being-for-itself is lost. Inès, Estelle and Garcin have to spend eternity together. They have no choice – the Other is unavoidable. In the finale, Garcin says: Hell is – other people' (Sartre, 1989, p. 45). But what if hell started much earlier, outside of the one-act play room, in the previous life, which is over at the moment when a person took the wrong path, abandoned freedom, mistreated the Other, impinged upon the rights of the Other to life, to freedom? In the situation of hell, in being-in-the-world for the Other, selfhood and will are lost. Even when Garcin manages to open the door of hell, which had been locked for ages, he does not dare to leave, but stays in hell, because he has no will to cross the threshold. Thus, Inès, Estelle and Garcin remain judges and executioners of each other, each being completely objectified in the world of the Other, having lost their being-for-itself.

Ultimately, the purpose of the Self is to be authentic, to remain free, while being 'different' for the Other: I am both the Self and the Other at once, in which case a contradiction arises, as I want them to merge. This, according to Sartre, is the controversial and unattainable ideal of love (Sartre, 1956, pp. 364–365)

The protagonists of the play, *The Victors* (Sartre, 1967, pp. 83–147) appear to face difficult life choices amid tragic historical events. The play is set in a coastal city of France during the Nazi occupation. After disrupting a military operation,

which resulted in civilian casualties, a group of resistance fighters are detained by the police, collaborating with the Nazis.

Each of the main characters has to go in for questioning and face torture. None of them is sure if they will manage to endure it. At the same time, they have no information on the exact whereabouts of their leader. Meanwhile, the main task of the police officers, intensely conducting the interrogation, is to find his location. As the play progresses, another detainee is placed in the cell. The guerrillas recognize him as their leader at once. He was accidentally arrested during a raid. Police do not know that this is Jean, the commander of the group. But now they all face a tough choice. Now they know where their commander is. Nevertheless, they must remain silent under torture. They also know what torture is, as some of them have been interrogated.

Lucie, a young woman from the group, remains steadfast to the last; neither violence nor torture has broken her. She does not betray Jean and returns from the interrogation with an unbroken spirit. Her fifteen-year-old brother is the next one to be interrogated. After a short conversation, it becomes clear to everyone that the boy will not endure it, that he will falter. The prisoners decide to kill Lucie's brother, and she does not stand up to them. She is in grief over the death of her brother, but now she sees things clearly. At the same time, not all the prisoners are willing to admit that they killed him. Some of them tend to blame others, they are not fully aware of their free will. But Lucie has come to recognize it. She is ready to die.

Jean, their commander, is eventually released. Before going away, he tells his comrades to put the police on the wrong track by leaving his documents with the body of a man in his recent

hideout. He reveals the name of this place to his friends and offers to tell the police about it. Now the prisoners have hope. But Lucie, who has suffered torture and violence, has no expectations. She rejects Jean's plan and insists on silence until the very end, until her death.

The rain scene is the key and most dramatic one in the play. At this very moment, on the edge of a dramatic existential choice Lucie grasps, just like Roquentin does in *Nausea*, the true meaning of 'being'. Despite the deal, the resistance fighters are executed by being shot. Lucie's life and that of her companions ends at the moment of full awareness of being, in a situation of extreme cruelty, when they are just a step away from non-being, fully conscious of their choice and its consequences.

Once again, the question arises: what is the cause, the trigger mechanism for the transition to the 'authentic being', to freedom? While Heidegger believes that the voice of conscience can be a motivational factor, Sartre argues that freedom should be defined as the actual ability of man to create projects. At the same time, in his opinion, freedom in itself can never exist outside a 'resisting world', where 'success is not important for freedom' (Sartre, 1956, p. 483).

To exist, freedom needs neither Aristotle's 'matter' nor the Stoic 'pneuma': in relation to being-in-itself, being-for-itself produces a negation. Sartre believes that 'a situation and its motive are one and the same' (Sartre, 1956, p. 487). This brings us to the paradox of freedom: freedom is possible only in a situation, but a situation is always associated with freedom: 'We are a freedom which chooses; but we do not choose being free: we are condemned to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown

into freedom or, as Heidegger says, 'abandoned' (Sartre, 1956, pp. 484–485).

Sartre develops his ideas and maintains that if existence actually precedes essence, then man is responsible for who he or she is, since he or she *cannot go beyond the boundaries of human subjectivity* (Sartre, 1996, p. 68)–this, according to Sartre, is the deep meaning of existentialism. It is impossible to discover any values, including the noumenal world. We, according to Sartre, are left alone with other people – without a justification or a reasonable excuse.

This situation reflects our position in the world and correlates with the movement of the given towards the intended purpose: all that is given is turned away from *incompleteness – 'it is not there yet'*, and, therefore, there is no situation that can provide 'more freedom'.

On a final note, Sartre uses a phenomenological approach to raise fundamental ontological issues in his works. He begins to develop his theory, focusing on Nothingness, which is just as real as a positive being as a whole, divided into the two components being-for-itself and being-in-itself. The philosopher believes that the being of human reality is ecstatic, a separate structure that is a mobile quasi-totality with points of attraction between the two types of being, while being-for-itself transcends into the 'state of awareness' by deliberate action.

The problem of authenticity is one of the main issues of human existence. Sartre puts it at the centre of his philosophy. According to Sartre, man may face a tough choice or fall into a specific paradigm of submission, which is almost equal to losing authenticity. Sartre's focus is not on 'public opinion', 'voice of das Man' or 'care', but on the phenomenon of 'genuine'

self-deception, that is, the phenomenon of 'bad faith', which, simply put, is a discrepancy between the concepts of 'for-itself' and 'in-itself'. However, in both cases, the phenomenon of authenticity is closely connected with the inner voice of human consciousness and existential guilt.

Sartre recognizes the importance of interpreting a special relationship with the Other, constituting, in his opinion, an inevitable 'conflict'. As for freedom, Sartre considers this phenomenon using a far more radical approach. He maintains that it is impossible not to be free.

The literary and philosophical talent of Sartre was able to describe human existence, the feeling of being 'abandoned' in the world, the fatal borderline states of human existence, as well as the situation of a fateful choice, both in his early writings (*Nausea*) and in later novels, plays, and essays. Thus, according to Sartre, human freedom is limitless, even though there are certain limitations of human physical abilities. Absolute abilities and freedom are completely different things. Freedom, according to Sartre, is an inevitable, fatal characteristic of human existence, which essentially comes down to a state of choice. A person has at least one alternative. A person can choose to do and not to do, even if the choice is made in a tough situation or in a situation of extreme cruelty, taking into account the facticity of the human condition, as shown in Sartre's dramas *The Flies*, *The Victors*, *No Exit*. In this choice, man is not determined by anything. Facticity is the "stage" of choice in a situation, where a person has at least one more option. Only physical objects have no alternatives, as they are subject to the laws of nature. A human makes a choice himself/herself. This is what Sartre means by his famous statement 'humans are free'

and are an absolute expression of the freedom of each person. The path of conscience is the path of authenticity. There is an opportunity to learn the truth only by making a choice, by being sincere to oneself, by avoiding bad faith, that is, recognizing one's choice and embracing it, by accepting responsibility for one's actions. However, knowledge and truth, according to Sartre, are intuitively attainable. It is impossible to go beyond the boundaries of subjectivity, this is the true essence of existentialism, a philosophical doctrine to which Sartre made a great contribution. Deduction and discourse are important, but are only the tools to obtain knowledge. A human being can obtain knowledge and the truth only if he/she makes a choice and acts. Free choice makes a genuine human being.

Chapter 4. Myth, its stryctural analysis and criticism in the modern world

Post-Enlightenment philosophical thought offers a certain set of tools for man to get rid of scepticism and gain confidence in himself and his mind. Such techniques that are aimed at treating scepticism include the development of philosophy and society, as well as a rigorous in-depth analysis of the speech of subjects and language as a system of signs and laws of interconnection and functioning of the signs. The methodology for such an analysis was developed within the philosophical school of thought known as structuralism.

From the point of view of structuralism, the Subject must be replaced – whether by an impersonal system of linguistic signs (Ferdinand de Saussure) or by cultural codes (Lévi-Strauss), by subjectivizing discourses and disciplinary practices of knowledge (Michel Foucault), or an endlessly disseminating field of différence (Jacques Derrida).

An important source of alternative thought of the post-Subject era is Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics. Saussure focuses more on the language than on the speaking Subject. Language exists as a system of signs, words, and meanings, independently of the specific linguistic acts of individual subjects.

One of the varieties of structuralism and its use as a method for research in the humanities is the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Like the rules of language, social organization is passed on to future generations unconsciously and

unintentionally. Hence, one cannot fully understand society by studying the actions of its individual representatives.

Lévi-Strauss paid particular attention to his studies of the social structures of the archaic, preliterate Aboriginal societies. Beliefs, taboos, kinship systems, and especially myths were structurally analysed. In an archaic society, myth has an important epistemological function (total explanation of the world of phenomena), a social function (resolving social conflicts, reflecting social hierarchy), and a therapeutic function (elimination of fear of the future by explaining the mechanism of action of the Universe structures).

Apparently, myth has existed as long as mankind. Did myth and mythological thinking fall into oblivion as one of the stages in the development of the human spirit in preliterate societies? Far from it. Philosopher Roland Barthes continued the structural, linguistic, social, and anthropological analysis of myth. Myth permeates the social life of modernity. Myth itself has become modern. What are the positive and negative aspects of mythological thinking in the present stage? What conclusions can we draw by studying the structure of myth and mythological thinking in order to minimize the negative aspects of modern mythmaking? How do such phenomena as power, myth, political ideology correlate?

Ferdinand de Saussure expressed a revolutionary opinion that language should be considered a system of structural relations, which precede any supposed statement, sound, or word. The new theory of language was named semiology. Saussure believed that semiology, as a discipline, could potentially be expanded to analyse all systems of culture which use symbols.

Saussure noted that the acoustic aspect of language represents the system of relations and sounds, or binary oppositions,

which enable sense. Thanks to differences in phonemes – the smallest acoustic units – we can differentiate words in English: for example, 'bad', 'had', 'cat', 'sad', etc. – all these words have different meanings, but the difference between them only consists of one phoneme (Kearney, 1996, p. 290). Our ability to articulate and hear such binary phonemes, different from each other, is the key to constituting the meaning within the self-regulated system called language.

Saussure distinguished between language ('langue') and speech ('parole'). The difference between them is at the centre of structuralist analysis. Language is a totality of an abstract system governed by rules that already comprise individual words, individual statements. Hence, language is a social phenomenon, not just an expression of ideal essence or speculative grammar. Language is always available to us on a preliminary basis: we never make it up, but participate in it.

Speech activity has two sides – individual and social – and they cannot be understood separately. Speech activity presupposes both the established system and its evolution. At any moment, speech activity is simultaneously an acting formation and a product of the past, and it is difficult to separate them.

There is only one way to overcome these dialectic contradictions – we must take language as the basis for any other manifestations of speech activity from the very beginning.

It is not our speech activity (like talking) that is natural and peculiar, but our ability to create language, that is, a system of differentiated signs corresponding with differentiated notions.

Distinguishing between language and speech, we distinguish between social and individual, essential and incidental, more and less accidental. Language is not an activity of the

speaker; language is a finished product registered by the speaker in a passive way. On the contrary, speech is an individual act of will and reason; in this act, we must distinguish combinations of the language code used by the speaker to express his or her thought.

As a matter of fact, every society knows, and has always known, language only as a product inherited from previous generations, which must be accepted as it is. That is why the question of the origin of language is not as important as is generally assumed.

Learning a language implies, first of all, mastering a system of differences and contrasts – every language has this system. A child learns to speak by learning to draw a basic distinction between words, not by learning the meaning of an increasing number of words. Meaning, therefore, is not bound up with individual speaking Subjects. It is only possible to say something in your own words thanks to the already existing system of semantic oppositions, which is inherent in the language. In fact, structuralism is the extension of Saussure's structural method to the entire field of the humanities.

One of the varieties of structuralism and its use as a method for research in the humanities is the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Like the rules of language, social organization is passed from generation to generation unconsciously, unintentionally. Hence, one cannot fully understand society by studying the actions of its individual representatives.

According to Lévi-Strauss, all human cultures have a single underlying structure. Consequently, there may be a common human nature that determines the way people think, rather than what they think.

Lévi-Strauss deliberately transfers the methods of structural linguistics to social life and anthropology (Lévi-Strauss, 1945, pp. 33–53). His line of reasoning is as follows: both linguistics and anthropology have a social dimension; at the same time, linguistics achieved tremendous results in the 20th century, using the structuralist method. Considering the development of phonology and the structural analysis of language, this method can be productive in other human sciences, particularly in anthropology.

Models and methods established as a result of structural studies in anthropology may prove useful for solving problems in other social sciences (Lévi-Strauss, 1953, p. 525). Social relations are a kind of material for building models, where social structures can be recognized later (Lévi-Strauss, 1953, p. 525). Accordingly, the structural method can rightly be used to analyse myth as a social and linguistic phenomenon.

In ancient times, not only did myth constitute a story, an allegory, but also performed the function of an important social institution that guaranteed the stability of the world that people lived in at the time. Myth reflects life, its aspirations, fears, contradictions, provides explanations for the Universe as a whole, and for individual events that take place both in nature and in society. This is concrete, life-oriented thinking and, despite its ancient origin, it will always be the heritage of mankind. While analysing myth, I will try to show that mythology plays, at times, a very important role in modern society. The mythological way of thinking, therefore, has not disappeared. Myth, being a product of immature thinking, is not an established fact. This way of thinking requires explanation, while the very structure of myth requires analysis, as long as understanding of this mind-set leads to man's self-understanding.

The origin of the world, gods and man, stages of life, elements of nature, heroic deeds, and death are among the recurrent themes in myth. In ancient times, myth was both a universal form of consciousness and an expression of the worldview of ancient man. Myth was created in the search for the unity of man and nature, as a means of explanation and resolution of social contradictions and worldview formation. Myth had an invaluable and indelible influence on the entire future culture of mankind. Mythical epics contributed to the development of classical antique literature early on. Myth has a positive impact on culture even today.

To analyse myths, Lévi-Strauss formulated the following methodological postulates:

1. The meaning of myth is not to be found in its isolated constituent elements, but in the way in which these elements are combined.

2. Myth is a linguistic phenomenon.

3. Myth exists outside ordinary language, in metalanguage (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 310).

Preliterate societies, where mythological consciousness prevails, are not necessarily governed by physical needs; they may also have abstract thinking, and myth is one of the forms of such thinking, despite the harsh material conditions characterizing their existence. All people strive to understand society and the world, and explain phenomena and social life.

At the same time, abstract thinking should not necessarily be scientific. In 'Myth and Meaning', Lévi-Strauss maintains that 'it remains different in a way, and inferior in another way. It remains different because its aim is to reach by the shortest possible means a general understanding of the universe – and

not only a general, but a total understanding' (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 12). Thus, the task of myth in a preliterate society is to give a total explanation and ultimately to gain a total understanding of the world. In my opinion, this is a task not only for preliterate societies. As we shall see later, myth is still alive today. Apparently, total understanding is one of the basic human needs. In this regard, mythological thinking cannot but differ from scientific thinking. If myth gives us a total understanding of the world, removes the contradiction between knowledge and ignorance – and this is one of its main tasks, at least in a preliterate society – then scientific thinking works in a completely different way, gradually postulating, solving local problems one by one, leaving the process of cognition incomplete, believing that there is always something to learn.

Nevertheless, Lévi-Strauss agrees that myth 'gives man, very importantly, the illusion that he can understand the universe and that he does understand the universe. It is, of course, only an illusion' (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 13).

In analysing myth, Lévi-Strauss to some extent defends preliterate societies with mythological thinking. One such thesis of Lévi-Strauss is the need for cultural diversity. In order for a culture to produce something, it needs uniqueness, originality and, even, 'to some extent, <…> superiority over the others' (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 15). On the one hand, there is a tendency towards universalism, unification of cultures, and on the other, an opposite tendency towards new distinctions. Although Lévi-Strauss did not give an explanation, he realized this contradiction intuitively: 'The more a civilization becomes homogenized, the more internal lines of separation become apparent; and what is gained on one level is immediately lost on

another. This is a personal feeling; in that I have no clear proof of the operation of this dialectic. But I don't see how mankind can really live without some internal diversity' (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 16).

A structural analysis of myth led Lévi-Strauss to the conclusion about the key role of binary oppositions or the binary way of thinking in its functioning. As an example, Lévi-Strauss considers a myth from Western Canada about a skate, which succeeds in mastering the South Wind. It goes back to the beginning of time, at least to an archaic period, which is one of the distinguishing features of myth in general.

Ancient tribes were extremely bothered by the winds, since the winds made it impossible for them to fish, to gather shellfish on the beaches, and, in general, were rather disturbing. This problem required a solution, and the skate entered the story as one of those who calmed down the South Wind, making him promise not to blow all the time, but only once in a while. The skate is a key figure here, just as the subsequent zoning of the South Wind, appearing at times, following the skate's order. First, people needed to deal with the fear of the South Wind: its constant and powerful whiff could lead to hunger. Obviously, this caused the fear of death in society.

To eliminate such a social fear, it was necessary to find a reasonable explanation for its periodicity, and this explanation would put the fear of death aside. The choice of the skate, acting as the lord of the wind, was not random. It is a fish that can dodge an arrow, quickly bending its flat body. Thus, it instantly changes its shape: now it is horizontal, showing its flat profile, the next moment it is vertical. The transformation is immediate, and its body is invulnerable. In this allegory, a 'yes'

or 'no' binary opposition is obvious. The skate is believed to be an invulnerable creature, the embodiment of 'yes' and 'no': on the one hand – a flat body, on the other – a vertical line, when it suddenly turns or slips and shows only its profile. First, the fear of death, second, the phenomenon of nature, which is uncontrollable, and third, the skate as an invulnerable lord of the wind: resolving the contradiction, explaining the phenomenon of nature, and relieving the fear of death.

Thus, myth gives people solid ground to stand on, eliminating social fear, explaining the Universe and satisfying their need to understand the world. 'This is the originality of mythical thinking – to play the part of conceptual thinking: an animal which can be used as what I would call a binary operator can have, from a logical point of view, a relationship with a problem which is also a binary problem. If the South Wind blows every day of the year, then life is impossible for mankind. But if it blows only one day out of two –'yes' one day, 'no' the other day, and so on – then a kind of compromise becomes possible between the needs of mankind and the conditions prevailing in the natural world' (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 17). Tracing the binary opposition in the myth, we can understand the way the myth functions and what it refers to.

Some people believe that every society uses myths to expresses the basic emotions and universal feelings of love, hate, and revenge. Others claim that myths are an attempt to explain obscure phenomena: astronomical, meteorological, etc. However, some ethnologists, just like psychoanalysts, tend to replace the naturalistic concept with other explanations, more specifically, mythology is becoming a reflection of the social structure and social relations. The results are contradictory –

in a myth, everything is possible. It seems that any subject can take any predicate (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 308).

To understand the mythological way of thinking, we must recognize that myth is both an intra-linguistic and an extra-linguistic phenomenon. According to Saussure, language has structural and statistical levels. Language is reversible in time, while speech is not. The third system is temporal. It combines the properties of both structural and statistical systems, and is particularly relevant. Myth always refers to the events of the past, before the creation of the world, at the beginning of time, or at least long, long ago, but all these events are also timeless.

And this is the point of myth. It explains past, present, and future. There are plenty of similarities between mythology and political ideology. The dual structure of myth – historical and non-historical at the same time – explains how myth relates to speech as such and to the language in which it is told. The third level of its analysis is something Absolute.

The third level also has a linguistic nature. Myth is the exact opposite of poetry, despite the similarities. Poetry is difficult to translate into another language. At the same time, the value of myth as such cannot be destroyed even by the worst transla-tion. The accuracy of myth is not in its style, form of narration, or syntax, but in the story itself.

Myth is a language that works at the highest level. One can separate its meaning from the linguistic basis on which it has developed (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 310).

Thus, myth is determined by the way its elements are com-bined. Myth is a phenomenon of linguistic order. Nevertheless, the language of myth reveals specific properties, located above the general level of linguistic expressions. To put it simply,

these properties are of a more complex nature than the properties of linguistic statements of any other type, including poetry.

Let us draw conclusions from these three postulates and develop a working hypothesis. The first conclusion: Myth, like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units.

The second conclusion: these constituent units imply the existence of basic structural units of language, namely, a phoneme, a morpheme, and a semanteme. Each subsequent unit has a higher degree of complexity than the previous one. Therefore, Lévi-Strauss identifies the 'gross constituent unit' of myth or mytheme, as it is of a different order to that of the phoneme, morpheme, or semanteme, and is characterized by a relation with the highest level of speech and communication. One should identify these structural units at the phrase level.

A predicate is attributed to a subject, representing the most important relation. The gross structural unit is by its nature a relation.

But this does not explain the dual nature of time in myth: reversibility and irreversibility, synchronicity and diachronicity. Another hypothesis suggests that the constitutive elements of myth are not isolated relations, but 'bundles' of relations (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 311), and that these elements become functionally important only as a result of the combinations of such bundles.

Similarly, a functional significance is expressed in the harmony of an orchestral score (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 312). An orchestral score makes sense only when it is read diachronically along one axis, namely, page by page, and synchronically along the other axis, that is vertically up and down the page for different musical instruments. All the notes along the same

vertical line in an orchestral score, that is played synchronously, represent a gross constituent unit or a bundle of relations.

Myth generally deals with contradictions, tending to their gradual removal and mediation.

Assuming that the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (which is impossible, if a contradiction is real), a theoretically infinite number of slates will be generated, each one slightly different from the others. Thus, myth grows spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which produced it is exhausted.

The growth of myth is a continuous process. Myth, therefore, is a creation of language, whose position in the realm of the spoken word is similar to that of a crystal in the realm of physical matter. It is an intermediary entity between an aggregate of molecules and a perfect molecular structure.

Myth therefore occupies a position between language and speech. Language is an aggregate of molecules, a statistical dimension. Speech is an ideal molecular structure. Myth is a link between the two.

Thus, the kind of logic in mythical thought is as rigorous and strict as positive, scientific logic. In fact, they are quite similar. The difference lies not in the quality of logical operations, but in the nature of the phenomena analysed.

Consider the following well-known fact: what makes a steel axe superior to a stone axe is not that the first one is better made than the second – they are equally well-made – but steel is quite different from stone. And perhaps one day it will be evident that 'the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well' (Lévi-Strauss, 1996, p. 325).

Roland Barthes defines myth as a type of speech in full compliance with its etymology (Barthes, 2017, p. 265). Surely, it is a special type of speech: 'myth is a system of communication, … a message… myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form' (Barthes, 2017, p. 265). Barthes believes that the suggestive power of the world of messages is infinite, and, hence, anything can become a myth. However, myth is not defined by the subject of the message (it is possible to say anything about anything), but by the way the message is uttered. Hence, according to Barthes, mythical speech is a message, whether oral or written, represented in the form of an image, a pictogram, by means of modern photography etc.

Taking into account that mythology deals with types of speech (more precisely, with a particular kind thereof), Barthes believes it to be a part of a more general science founded by Saussure – semiology. Barthes maintains that mythology is 'a part both of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is an historical science: it studies ideas-in-form' (Barthes, 2017, p. 269). In semiology, we single out two necessary elements characteristic of any semiological system: a signifier and a signified, which are in a relation of equivalence. In other words, there is no equality between these elements, but a correlation. The result of this correlation is a sign. Saussure dealt with the semiological system of language, where signs are represented by words, and the signified are the objects of the world around us. According to Barthes, myth has the same three-element system: the signifier, the signified, and the sign.

Then Barthes provides the key definition of myth: myth 'is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before

it: IT IS A SECOND-ORDER SEMIOLOGICAL SYSTEM. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second' (Barthes, 2017, p. 271). Thus, phrases, images, pictograms of the first semiological system (everyday language) are embedded entirely in the new message with its new predicate, arrangement, and meaning. To make a point, Barthes analyses the front cover of Paris Match magazine (Barthes, 2017, p. 273). It is an image of a young black man, who is saluting, with his eyes uplifted. Apparently, he is looking at the tricolour. However, the described facts are the data of the first-order semiological system: a person with dark skin, saluting, looking up. But this is the first-order subject with its first-order predicates. Barthes comments: 'whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors' (Barthes, 2017, p. 273). Along with this secondary message, there is a semiological suprasystem – a myth.

In this system, the primary message from the ordinary world (the fact of saluting in itself) is a fact from reality, the meaning, the signifier. In the myth itself, in the second-order semiological system, this meaning (the signifier) is lost, but not completely, not entirely. Myth in its secondary form ('France is a great empire') feeds on meaning (the primary form), making it either more or less prominent. 'It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth' (Barthes, 2017, p. 276).

The essence of this statement, in my opinion, is that the primary message does not entirely lose its meaning, a complete break from reality is impossible; but at the same time, there are allegorical implications, forming a second-order semiological system. The presence of text and subtext enables human subjectivity, either to bring the primary meaning closer or reduce it, giving preference to the myth itself, its secondary allegorical form, the very concept of myth, which is always based on a story, aimed at something, which brings myth into being.

Barthes claims that the concept is in no way abstract (Barthes, 2017, p. 277). It is 'a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation', 'the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be appropriated'; myth is aimed at a particular audience. There are several mythical concepts that repeat themselves throughout history. Their number is limited. However, there is an abundance of primary forms of myth and ways of its expression. 'This repetition of the concept through different forms is precious to the mythologist, it allows him to decipher the myth' (Barthes, 2017, p. 278).

Let us now consider how concept and form correlate in myth, as Barthes describes it. Myth does not hide anything. Both form and concept are provided to us directly, but not in the same way: form – as a material carrier – and concept – as a bunch of vague ideas. The relationship between form and concept is essentially a relationship of deformation (Barthes, 2017, p. 280). Concept obscures form, the primary message, it carries another message, which is imperative, a motivational thought, addressed to the consumer of myth.

How do we read a myth? It depends on our focus. If we focus on the second-order semiological system, that is on the

concept (or the minimized meaning of the primary semiologi-cal message), such a reading will be literal. For instance, the saluting African soldier is a symbol of the French Empire. This form of reading is peculiar to producers of myths. If one distin-guishes between the first-order and second-order semiological systems, the deformations of the primary form by the concept, as well as intentions, and, in some cases, the deceit of the pro-ducers will become evident. In this case, the African soldier will be considered as a kind of 'alibi' for the French Empire. This type of reading is characteristic of a mythologist, who seeks to decipher a myth. His task is to identify a distortion of the first-order semiological system caused by the concept of myth. If, however, we focus on the indissoluble unity of the first-order and second-order semiological systems (an inextricable whole of meaning and form), we become readers of a myth, dealing with its fabric and the direct effect it has on our consciousness. The first two types of reading destroy the myth, and only the third type is dynamic; the story is at once true and unreal.

It is the third way of reading a myth that makes it possible to pass from semiology to ideology, to understand the purpose it serves today. Myth cannot conceal anything; both the first-order and second-order semiological systems are evident. If one reads it using either the first or the second way, such a myth will be destroyed. A myth relying purely on everyday language may turn into a banal political statement. Myth comes into being when it uses the primary semiological message as a kind of natural, in-trinsic justification. In other words, what is reported implicitly, metaphorically, must nevertheless be real and 'objective'.

The primary image (the African soldier) should naturally produce the concept (French imperiality) in the eyes of the

reader. Myth arises at the moment when the aforementioned reader (using the third way of reading) starts to perceive French imperiality as a natural phenomenon. Resulting from this way of reading, the reader sees myth not as a semiological system, but as an inductive one, that is, instead of a semiological relationship, there is a causal relationship between the form and the concept. The concept becomes a consequence of the form.

Barthes' view of contemporary bourgeois society was negative. Let us remember his famous inaugural lecture at his accession to the Chair of Literary Semiology at the Collège de France. Analysing myth, Barthes proceeds with the political analysis of modern society. He distinguishes between the myths of both left and right ideologies.

If myth is a second-order semiological system using metalanguage, then, as Barthes puts it, for purposes of demystification, it is possible and necessary to refer to language once again. According to Barthes, there is a language that destroys myth – the language of man as a producer. It serves to transform reality, rather than eternally preserve it, it provides a total explanation, and removes all contradictions: 'There is therefore one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things, metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible' (Barthes, 2017, pp. 306–309).

For this reason, revolutionary language cannot be mythical. 'It is because it generates speech which is FULLY, that is to say initially and finally, political, and not, like myth, speech which is initially political and finally natural, that Revolution

excludes myth' (Barthes, 2017, p. 309). This does not mean that there are no myths 'on the Left'. Barthes believes that left-wing myths arise when left-wing forces lose their revolutionism: 'Left-wing myth supervenes precisely at the moment when revolution changes itself into "the Left", that is, when it is prepared to wear a mask, to hide its name, to generate an innocent metalanguage and to distort itself into "Nature"' (Barthes, 2017, pp. 311–312).

Barthes characterizes left-wing myths as essentially poverty-stricken: they are not as diverse as bourgeois myths, affecting only some levels of human existence. They are used as part of a tactics, a deviation; they are limited in time and purpose.

At the same time, myth on the right-wing side of the political spectrum is much more widespread and diverse (Barthes, 2017, p. 312). Bourgeois myth is rich, flexible, since the language of the bourgeoisie is more developed than the language of the proletariat. The main function of such a myth is to postulate the unchanging world and supposedly resolve social contradictions.

Bourgeois myth is characterized by rhetorical forms – a set of fixed, repeating figures in the mythical signifier (first-order semiological system). Among the principal rhetorical forms of bourgeois myth, Barthes distinguished the 'inoculation'–admitting the accidental evil of a class-bound institution the better to conceal its principal evil.

Another rhetorical device is the 'privation of history', dictating the enjoyment of a beautiful object or wealth 'without wondering where it comes from'.

'Identification' is a rhetorical figure, commonly used in the petit-bourgeois world: 'The petit-bourgeois is a man unable to

imagine the Other'. He either denies the Other, or transforms him into himself.

'Tautology'–defining like by like (for instance, 'Drama is drama'). In tautology, according to Barthes, we have a double murder: one kills rationality because it resists one; one kills language because it betrays one. 'Tautology is a faint at the right moment, a saving aphasia' (Barthes, 2017, pp. 316–317). Examples of tautological replies: 'BECAUSE THAT'S HOW IT IS', or even better: 'JUST BECAUSE, THAT'S ALL' (Barthes, 2017, pp. 316–317).

Another rhetorical device that Barthes unveils is 'Neither-Norism'–balancing the one by the other so as to reject them both ('I want neither this nor that') (Barthes, 2017, p. 317). The essence of this device is as follows: first, reality is reduced to limited options; then both options are weighed up and both are dismissed; finally, based on the above, reality is got rid of. To put it differently, by focusing on formal opposites, which balance each other only inasmuch as they are purely formal, a decision about the actual actions is made on a formal mythical basis.

An example of Neither-Norism in astrology: ill luck is always followed by equally good luck. In fact, therefore, one no longer has to choose, to act as a subject, and one can only drift with the current of events, where 'yes' and 'no' are formally balanced, and wait where it takes you, because nothing will change, and the subject has no control.

Furthermore, Barthes describes the 'quantification of quality', and takes the bourgeois theatre as an example (Barthes, 2017, p. 317): on the one hand, reflections on the true essence of the theatre may not be dismissed, on the other hand, bour-

geois dramatic art rests on a pure quantification of effects, that is, the emphasis is on quantity.

Finally, the 'statement of nature' is a rhetorical figure, based on common sense and produced in order to perpetuate the status quo, 'for the Nature, in which they are locked up under the pretext of being eternalized, is nothing but a Usage. And it is this Usage, however lofty, that they must take in hand and transform' (Barthes, 2017, p. 320). Its transformation inevitably will come into conflict with power.

Barthes was concerned with studying the phenomenon of power and language. Power, language, and myth are inseparable. Myths are products of a certain power, the power of a clan or community, as in ancient archaic societies, of certain classes and strata, such as left- and right-wing myths, bourgeois myths, as considered by Barthes at the present stage of historical development. However, being such a product, myth always remains unique due to language, a special organization of its semiological systems: language as object and metalanguage.

Power and myth are not only political, but also ideological phenomena. There is an opinion that it is always one thing. And yet, what if powers were plural, like myths? Voices which authorize themselves to utter the discourse of all power, to convey the myth of superiority, are ubiquitous.

According to Barthes, the object in which power is inscribed, for all human eternity, is language activity ('langage'), or to be more precise, its necessary expression – the language we speak and write ('langue').

'Language' is legislation, 'langue' is its code (Barthes, 1996, p. 365). In 'langue', we are no longer free: we use cases, this or

that gender of a noun, conjugations. Grammatically, we must speak so and in no other way.

Once uttered, speech ('langue') enters the service of power. In speech, two categories appear: the authority of assertion, the gregariousness of repetition. In langue, servility and power are inevitably intermingled. If we call freedom not only the capacity to escape power but also and especially the capacity to subjugate no one, then freedom can exist only outside language.

The trouble is that human language has no exit – it is a confined space. We can get out of it only at the price of the impossible: by mystical singularity, as described by Kierkegaard when he defines Abraham's sacrifice as an unparalleled action, or by the Nietzschean 'yes to life', which is a kind of exultant shock administered to the servility of langue.

In this case, Barthes believes literature, namely language games in literature to be the solution. Literature and literary discourse can be mythologized (see Barthes' work 'Myth Today' [Barthes, 2017, pp. 295–297]). At the same time, myth itself can be analysed from a literary perspective.

The forces of freedom that are in literature do not depend on the writer's civil position nor on his political commitment. Literature's force is its force as representation. From ancient times up to the efforts of our avant-garde, literature has been concerned to represent something.

To persist means to affirm. Literature's ability to resist and survive the typified discourses, the philosophies, sciences, psychologies, myths, which surround it, is unparalleled.

The structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure revolutionized the methodology of the studies of the humanities and society. According to Saussure, language is a system of re-

lations that precede any statement, sound, or word. The name of the new science was semiology, and it was assumed that its method of structural analysis would become universal for analysing cultural symbols, relations, and structures.

Claude Lévi-Strauss succeeded in using this method in his anthropological research. Social organization and social structure are, in many respects, identical to the structure of language, but on a different dialectical level. Social organization is passed from generation to generation unconsciously, unintentionally, just as the structure of language precedes the content of a phrase.

It is impossible to understand society if one only studies its actions, without understanding its deep a priori structures. The diachronic approach, which literally means "through time" and therefore historical (δια means through, and χρονος means time) prevails, but the structures should be explained not only historically, through their origin, but also as they are, through their current position and way of action and interaction. Based on this approach, models and methods are created that may be useful in related social sciences. The structuralist method is also considered appropriate for analysing such social phenomena as myth and mythical thought.

Myth is a very important social institution. In antiquity, it gave people solid ground to stand on, providing a complete and total explanation of the world and the phenomena around them. In this case, we are dealing with concrete, life-oriented thinking. However, this way of thinking still plays an important role today, and, consequently, mythic thought and myth itself, having changed in comparison with ancient myth, retained their distinctive structural forms and so their stable position in the social structures of modern societies.

Total understanding of the world and resolution of all contradictions are basic human needs. Myth satisfies this need, but this is the principal difference between mythic thought and scientific thought, which has prevailed since the beginning of the modern era. Scientific thought works in a completely different way: it gradually postulates hypotheses, step by step, always leaving the unknown behind, never resolving contradictions completely. It solves local problems, but the learning process is far from being over. Myth explains the world from the day of its creation, resolves its contradictions in the drama of the world, provides a complete picture of the world. In the structure of myth, binary oppositions play a key role (and this is an important conclusion of Lévi-Strauss). In other words, myth functions due to the binary way of thinking. Myth is always based on opposition. Contrasts are vivid and rigid, making reconciliation ever more wonderful. Myth is a form of language. But for Levi-Strauss, it is a language functioning at the highest level, explaining past, present, and future.

One of the most important researchers of myth, its semiological structure and principles of functioning in modern society, was the French philosopher Roland Barthes, who defined myth as a type of speech, a communicative system, a means of signification.

Barthes was a proponent of the structuralist approach originally developed by Saussure and considered mythology to be part of a more general science – semiology. According to Barthes, the key component of myth is its structure, the sequence of first-order and second-order semiological systems, where an image from the world of objects, the world of primary reality, becomes the signifier in the second-order semiological

system of myth, acquiring a completely new sound and meaning. Perceiving the unity of the first-order and second-order semiological systems (the unity of messages from the world of objects and the concept of myth), we become its actual readers, as myth directly affects our consciousness.

Myth cannot conceal anything; if one reads it relying purely on everyday language, myth will turn into a trivial political or ideological statement. Myth always appeals to nature, its primary semiological message should be perceived as completely natural and authentic, in which case it leads to the creation of myth.

However, this authenticity of myth, as well as its ability to resolve social contradictions, may result in the exploitation of a form of mythological utterance, including in the current political situation, at this stage of social development. Political myths can multiply at both ends of the political spectrum. The key element of power here is language. We are not free in its power, we are obliged to use cases, declensions, comply with the structural rules. Paradoxical as it may seem, a possible way to free ourselves from these oppressive structures of totalitarian power can be language itself, but in a different literary mode. Literary discourse is an unparalleled way to move away from the standard patterns of discourse of any kind: scientific, philosophical, psychological, political, etc.

Hence, the more we study myth, its structure, its repetitive concepts representing its content, the more it reveals to us both positive and negative aspects of the mythological way of thinking. On the one hand, myth satisfies our epistemological and psychological needs in cognition, provides us with a complete picture of the world from the day of its creation to its end, and resolves the emerging social contradictions using

its power of miracle. On the other hand, we may fall victim to political myth if we fail to consider the possibility of exploiting the structure of myth for the sake of creating modern mythological concepts and using them for political purposes.

Resistance to exploitation of this kind can be twofold: on the one hand, one can crack the code of myth, analyse its use of binary oppositions and its semiological system, recognize the primary and secondary semiological messages, and the concept of myth itself. On the other hand, literary discourse is another example of resistance. It is such discourse – and especially literature itself – that can oppose political ideologies and political mythmaking within a statement.

Chapter 5. Knowledge in culture: myth, metaphor and cognition

The understanding of being, the very cause of existence, lies in the possibility of thinking; hence, the rise of knowledge is equal to the rise of spirit, of intellectual life. In this regard, 'Book *F*' and 'Book *A*' of Levinas, as well as Aristotle's 'Metaphysics' contain explanations of the first encounter with the Absolute, that is, a reference to the Absolute, which is self-defined as being-in-itself. Cognition is the concept of intellectual activity or actions through thinking. It is a mental process that occurs through experiencing the process of understanding and turning the understood into something for oneself.

According to Aristotle, we can only deal with our own consciousness. This kind of independence is a treasure, even if it is limited by biological needs and death. Levinas believes that, in this regard, the human sphere coincides with the heavenly life. This structure has a semantic composition, in which representation and objectification are the necessary models. All human experience is transformed into teaching, turns into science, and is expressed in teaching (Levinas E., 1983, p. 107).

While earlier an attempt was made to identify and understand life using knowledge, modernism made another *attempt to identify being as cognition.* There was a transition from thinking to existence, because the free act of knowledge, which has no external goal, finds itself reflexively. Its purpose is the free act of cognition, which is a mystery in itself. *The wisdom of the first philosophy consists in self-cognition.*

Hans-Georg Gadamer and Emmanuel Levinas criticized the mind, guided by technology and calculation (computational, instrumental reason), based on the concept of modernity, inherited from the Age of the Enlightenment. This cultural concept was dominant in bourgeois and industrial societies. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the aforementioned philosophers considered different ways of overcoming the crisis of dehumanization that broke out in the modern era.

Developing the idea that culture supports man, Gadamer writes 'Culture and World'. However, such a positive definition of culture has always raised questions. With regard to culture, there has always been a note of pessimism, and the debate on the concept of culture continues to this day. As Gadamer aptly noted, 'We all understand *that* there is culture, both instinctively and intuitively, but defining this concept still remains a rather complex task' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 218). Both Gadamer and Levinas criticized the understanding of culture as a process of conceptual inheritance of traditions of the Enlightenment, namely a culture of knowledge based on instrumental, computational reason.

Levinas described the relationship between man and knowledge in terms of externalization (externally manifested acts). In the culture of instrumental reason, the Other is no longer a human being, but a 'depersonified' object, while transcendence transforms into immanence. The Other appears in the form of an object, in the form of an undeniable reality of our knowledge. In this case, it is worth noting that we are talking about rational instrumental knowledge, which originated in the Age of the Enlightenment or even earlier – in the teachings of Stoicism. It should be emphasized that the views of

both philosophers – Gadamer and Levinas – coincide, when it comes to criticizing the concepts of the Enlightenment and those of modernity: 'That one could be lifted up above the rawness of the state of nature and progress along this path to become a perfect "policymaker", toward complete humanity – this was the arrogant confidence of modernity at its beginnings' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 148).

In Gadamer's view, the Enlightenment's faith in human reason was arrogant. He believed that the subsequent development of bourgeois society and industrial society not only failed to remove this arrogance and its negative consequences, including dehumanization, disregard of the Other, and uncontrolled industrialization, but also exacerbated the existing problems. In this respect, Gadamer focused on one of the key questions of philosophy: 'What moral advancements does mankind owe to the unfolding of the sciences and the arts? (from the spirit of the Enlightenment)' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 152). If we consider progress from the point of view of understanding, it may be defined as the degree to which one person can understand another person. This is a way from complete misunderstanding to understanding the Other in a situation, when the Other is not only indifferent to the fact of being understood, but also is initially in a state of self-misunderstanding, failing to grasp the concept of the Self. From this point of view, many philosophers have criticized bourgeois society, whose ideology is based on the principle of equality. According to Levinas, the state of asymmetry in the relationship between the Self and the Other – where the Self should react if addressed by the Other – has a long history.

Gadamer noted that the main directions of the development of twentieth century society also challenged the bourgeois

idea, which consisted in upholding the ideal of equality. According to Gadamer, he himself belonged to the generation which 'went to the woods'. At the same time, industrial society was based, among other things, on the legacy of the bourgeois system. Gadamer has no illusions – science dominates in modernity and postmodernity. In 'Man and His Hand in Modern Civilization. PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, pp. 190–198), where the form of the modern era is reflected in full detail, Gadamer posed the following questions: How can a person, a creator, exist with the given data? How can one preserve the ability to create, whose loss can be equated with the ultimate loss of oneself and the loss of mankind as a whole in a dehumanized industrialized world, where man is nothing but a tool? Levinas asked similar questions in his works on barbarism and a 'universal meaningful culture' as a culture of knowledge. It should be noted that emphasis on this kind of knowledge is put on the technical side of the question, reliability, mathematization, leading to a new culture of dehumanized knowledge. In general, the process of dehumanization leads to barbarism, which is most clearly manifested in the externalization of the Other.

Levinas contrasted barbarism with an ethical culture, where responsibility for the Other is the centrepiece of transcendence. Gadamer, in turn, studied the origins of the dehumanization of modernity, trying to work out ways to resist the process of dehumanization, experienced by the industrial society of the modern period, by returning the world's attention to culture, beginning and ending with the most important word of reconciliation: 'The reconciliation brings an increase into the world. Only through reconciliation can the otherness – the insuper-

able (*unaufhebbare*) otherness that divides man from man – be overcome' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 215).

Any persistent differences between people can be overcome through reconciliation. Insuperable otherness can be eliminated only by way of reconciliation in *a verbal culture*. The key word is reconciliation. At the same time, Gadamer, in his fight against the dehumanization of society, suggests going deeper into human 'non-specialization', where our flesh ('our hand') is the creating organ of man-creator: 'The hand is an intellective organ, a limb that serves for many things and makes many things serve it. That is why this part of the body is so closely linked with language. The hand not only makes and handles things, it also points to things' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 195). Here, Gadamer establishes a connection between the 'intellectual hand' and the voice, thereby creating an allegory of the notion of culture, that is, the 'verbal culture'. 'Together the hand and the speaking voice represent the highest perfection of *human non-specialization*' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 196).

The solution proposed by Levinas is mainly ethical (ethics is the basis of culture), and human nature is characterized by an asymmetric relation to the identity of the Other. In this regard, the Other has an advantage – I can neither hear nor dismiss the Other's call to me. Man has always been looking for an answer to the following question: What does it mean to be human? What is the function of *homo humanus*, distinguishing him from all other living creatures, making him stand out from the rest of the animal kingdom, giving meaning to his existence in the cultural community as opposed to the 'instrumentalized' slavish existence, lowering him to the level of a thing, reducing him to nothing but a cog in a machine that strives solely to

boost wealth? Additionally, an artificial human specialization takes place, and we can only overcome it by force of will and action. Gadamer famously said on the subject: 'Man needs to form himself into something' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 197).

According to Gadamer, people can engage in self-reflection, express doubts, and eventually choose who to become, which also requires certain criteria serving as a basis for a rational choice. Gadamer opposes the rational to the demonic impulse and instincts. However, our cognitive process helps us predict the possible outcomes. Thus, we can control our instincts, that is, think before we act. Gadamer claims that the main challenge consists of finding the right balance between our instincts and moral aspirations: 'Clearly, the problem of man is this: how can we find a balance that fulfils the law of our nature when we are just as much sensuous creatures as moral ones?' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 197).

Gadamer, therefore, does not deny the subconscious in man, although he insists that our common nature can be explained by much more than a self-preservation instinct, which is underscored by the fact that culture, history, progress, and regress are all natural. Our human capabilities – the original 'non-specialization'–give us a chance to be creators of culture. However, this 'non-specialization' poses a threat by creating an artificial trend of differentiation. Man ceases to be a creator and becomes a machine, a tool in the hands of others: 'As a result of our whole cultural process, the individual finds himself more and more in the service of functions, circumscribed by functioning robots and machines – a new kind of universal slavery has come over mankind' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 197). As a result, man is falling into a new form of slavery.

A question arises: How to achieve balance in the paradigm suggested by Gadamer? Levinas looks at the same problem from a different perspective. In Levinas's opinion, there is an ethical solution strongly marked in the *personification of the Other*. It goes beyond the education of the senses, but we will come back to this issue later. Gadamer argued that there is no conflict, and there should be no conflict, between the senses and the intellect. The creating hand is an intellectual organ, and our senses are spiritualized and cultivated to the extent that they are 'inspired' by the human 'hand', which has absolute freedom. It can touch, embrace, specify, and create. The senses have their own intellect. According to Gadamer, this intellect protects us from wild instincts and deep prejudices. 'Cultural senses' are the result of the development of the human capacity for choice and judgement. In Gadamer's opinion, the 'common' reappears here in a different form, unlike the one described by Levinas, and is understood as the 'intellect': 'We need to see how the hand can coexist with calculation. What about a balance, then? Both sides must obviously be cultivated. Losing a hand means a loss in cultivated senses, but we saw that it is the person himself that needs to be cultivated – his understanding as well as his senses' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 197).

At the same time, Levinas is deliberately trying to get away from the 'common'. His views are largely based on the personalized identity of the Other. Nevertheless, Gadamer does not limit himself to the naïve 'instrumentalized' paradigm of the intellect – *Verstand* (*Understanding*). In his opinion, intellect means 'intelligence' or *Vernunft* (*Reason*), to be exact. By cultivation, he does not mean calculation, arithmetic, the art of contractual relations, or technical art. So, what does he mean?

There is an amazing mental analogy with the definition of *specifica homo humanus'*. Gadamer describes it as follows: 'Someone has cultivated senses only if he can see with the sensibility of the whole of his nature, to be observant, notice other things and enter into them' (Gadamer H. G., 1978, p. 198).

It means that the need for the Other is implied in these other things, but they still remain 'things', which, in some cases, may be characteristics of the living. Gadamer means the eventual return to basics. According to Levinas, however, it is not the other things, nor the person looking at himself/herself or at something else that matter. In essence, Levinas speaks of transcendence, *the Other's personality*. His views lack the qualitative characteristics of things, it means he is not speaking about things, but about personality. And further, he speaks of a person, my neighbour, the Other. Gadamer says that the process of cultivation (German: *Bildung – education, formation*) includes learning how to look at the world through the eyes of the Other. *'Bildung'*, or cultivation, is not only demanding, but also gives us an opportunity, which indicates the importance of perception of the Other for the philosopher.

However, this perception is somewhat assimilated by man – his senses are cultivated; this is his opportunity to see the world through the eyes of the Other. It is not the Other who looks. It is my ability to take the place of the Other and look at the world through his eyes. But it does not deny the existence of the Other and the 'otherness'. Gadamer places the subject at the centre. His paradigm is still the paradigm of modernity, but his interpretation with the admission of the Other is more liberal. However, the Other is assimilated by me, and eventually I come back to myself. This theory of assimilation of the Other

is criticized, in particular, by Levinas: 'Knowledge would thus be the relation of man to exteriority, the relation of the same to the Other, in which the Other finally finds himself stripped of his alterity, in which it becomes interior to my knowledge, in which transcendence makes itself immanence' (Levinas E., 1983, p. 180).

This culture is subsequently transformed into a culture of immanence: 'Metaphors to take seriously: A culture in which nothing can remain the Other is, from the beginning, turned toward practice' (Levinas E., 1983, p. 180). Such is the destiny of this paradigm, which is becoming a common practice, that is, the primacy of the subject, subject-centrism. According to Levinas, this approach inevitably leads to the 'instrumentalization' of man, where the culture of immanence becomes a schematic representation of the embodied practices, appropriation, and satisfaction. However, the use of the 'creating hand', according to Levinas, is the expression of thought in the flesh. In this respect, his views are similar to those expressed by Gadamer about the hand of the man-creator. Cultural development cannot be a repetition of the already existing: 'Culture in the etymological sense of the term – a dwelling in a world which is not a simple spatial inherence, but a creation of perceptible expressive forms in being by a non-thematizing wisdom of the flesh, which is art or poetry" (Levinas E., 1983, p. 183).

One is expressed through the Other, and, according to Levinas, this expression is the source for all forms of art. Internalization, which consists in obtaining knowledge of the Other, is no longer present; there is no domination of one over the other; the culture is presented to us from Levinas's point of view, in accordance with his famous definition. His culture the-

ory demonstrates that free human nature is formed by following one's vocation, through perception and expressive forms of existence, such as art and poetry. Levinas notes that metaphysical ontology has a limited number of forms of meaning for thinking. However, the question arises: Are there more relevant forms? Levinas introduces the concept of intentionality, as presented in the phenomenology of Husserl, calling it one of the key points of Western philosophy.

Manifestations of the Other are much like the initial manifestation of rationality. The closeness to one another is inherent to human beings. The Other may be my neighbour who is in front of me, and his proximity makes him a reminder of my responsibility and raises one question after another with regard to my responsibility for his life. Responsibility for a fellow human being in the eternal, pre-reflexive past, which has nothing to do with the present, is much older than consciousness. This may be a measure, or a method, or a system of eternal freedom, which is even older than decisions or actions. My responsibility for the Other is inevitable.

The return of man to the depths of pre-reflective, interested consciousness, makes him fight against injustice without any fear of death. Therefore, a conscientious person would rather suffer than commit injustice. To be human is to make yourself understand the meaning of being. According to Heidegger, man does not enter the world, but the question. Questioning is the existence of an interested consciousness, a free inquiry followed by answers. The cognitive process is as old as humanity itself; therefore, a hermeneutic approach to *a symbolic structural unit* is extremely important. Ideology requires critical hermeneutics; hermeneutics should reveal a hidden, distorted,

obscure meaning lying motionless under the general, superficial truths of life. Philosophical criticism of the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth associated with the formation of hermeneutics is divided into three branches: "epistemologism" of philosophy with a smaller branch of positivism, analytic philosophy, represented by phenomenology and existentialism, and hermeneutics. What could replace the Absolute spirit, the abstract idea? Many proponents of the analytic and hermeneutic approaches drew attention to the language, to this ideal substance, which is neither immanent, nor a pure abstraction, since it is connected with human nature. Gadamer's hermeneutics focuses on the word, namely on its enlightening quality. According to Gadamer, we are a unified history of mankind, a 'conversation': 'Because we are a conversation, we are the one story of mankind. In constantly discovering more early cultures and pre-cultures, we come to know more and more of this story' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 155).

Gadamer believes that we are a 'conversation'. Communication is what distinguishes us from the animal kingdom. So, what does the 'word' mean? Obviously, you cannot find it in a dictionary; it is not a frozen signification or denotation of things; this word is 'logos' or 'conversation'. All that is meaningful can be articulated. How does this 'logos' form a culture? Most importantly, one should note that logos in Gadamer's interpretation is not our intellect, not an abstraction, and certainly not a mathematical mindset. Logos is a conversation. These are the words addressed by one person to the Other. The Other, therefore, is present in conversation, but in contrast to Levinas's theory, there is no asymmetric relationship with the Other. According to Levinas, the Other, his/her identity, calls

out to me. In conversation, the situation is different. In Levinas's view, a conversation initially has ethical overtones. Levinas claims that it is all about the identity of the Other and his/her ethical calling, 'Thou shalt not kill'.

In Gadamer's opinion, a word appears not as a command and not as an order, but in response to the question: 'Ultimately, don't the words first come to exist in the answer? Isn't it, then, that they first become the words that were said to someone and to which someone has had to answer?' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 164). Gadamer believes that a word is spoken to someone, and the Other must reply. He highlights the very act of questioning and not the ethical calling. Although in Gadamer's theory the understanding of conversation and that of Logos has a certain ethical overtone (it is worth noting that it is not an abstract issue of being or language), any conversation or Logos exists a priori to distinguish between good and evil, helpful and harmful by going beyond the existing immanence of things. This ethical process of distinguishing through Logos and language is *specifico homo humanus*, that is, a specific quality distinguishing man from all other beings. However, Logos, according to Gadamer, is symmetrical, and its highest manifestation is in the unity achieved through it. Logos describes things that are absent here and now in a transcendent speech, as well as through communication: 'It manages to make manifest what is helpful and what is harmful. That means pointing out things that we want to recommend or warn against, even when they do not immediately recommend themselves, perhaps because they are not very pleasant' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 182).

Hence, culture – according to Gadamer – originates from everything that grows and increases through transcendence.

Similarly, Gadamer perceives Logos as 'communication', which is not immanent, and not through an immanent contract. *One of the most important tasks of this transcendent non-contractual 'communication' is to prevent aggression.* This 'communication' is symbolic and is expressed through language and other symbolic means of the symbolic universe. In this universe, the word – according to Gadamer – gives us two opportunities: 1) recognizing oneself in the Other, and; 2) recognizing oneself together with others, which is achieved through cooperation. (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 185).

Hence, it brings us to the world of freedom, namely freedom of human speech and joint participation, where people determine their own destiny and where the mystery of cultural human traditions rests on the word – on 'Logos'–within three spheres: words-questions, consisting in constant *questioning of the nature and purpose of being by the human spirit*, which requires a new answer every single time, and words of *legends* and *poetry* with a certain degree of self-sufficiency. The philosopher believes that the word-logos with its ethical overtone is the most important one (for instance, *the word of forgiveness and the word of reconciliation*). Is this pathos of forgiveness and reconciliation in any way similar to Levinas's 'Thou shalt not kill', uttered as a call of the personalized Other, spoken by the Other? In our opinion, it is. After all, neither forgiveness nor reconciliation are for the sake of some abstract idea or phenomenon; we always forgive or make peace with the other person, who is present in that moment, whose suffering we witness, that is, the Other, a specific person.

At the same time, Levinas criticizes or at least questions the possibility of achieving the 'clarity' of one's mind, which is

understood as the elimination of differences between the Same and the Other. The Other is said to be reduced to (or transformed into) the Same. Such a transformation, according to Levinas, is characteristic of the culture of rational knowledge, and similarly – of the artistic expression of culture, where the unity of the whole is confirmed by the unity of body and soul. All this is an expression of the neo-Platonic ideal of 'oneness', to which the world is oriented in its variety, while a state has a meaning of a form of unity.

Levinas suggests an alternative: the 'Other' is inescapable, and the 'otherness', which is present a priori, cannot be synthesized. We meet the Other. He/She can neither be created, nor dialectically removed. The only possible relationship between me and the Other is an unintended 'otherness' of strangers, which is independent of all previous definitions and fundamental ethical attitudes. It is a cultural project preceding political principles – the Other appeals to me and I am responsible for the Other, but the Other does not care about me and I cannot avoid confrontation with the Other (his/her identity or views), as he/she represents a completely different cultural image, the 'culture of transcendence'. 'Otherness', at its highest manifestation, shows the face of the Other, 'the epiphany of the face'. For instance, in the case of the death of the Other, I am responsible for it. It concerns me, and I cannot leave the Other dying alone. What is responsibility? What does responsibility mean in this context? How is it manifested? What is the difference with Gadamer's theory comprising a notion of reconciliation? Responsibility here is not postfactum, as is the case with reconciliation. Responsibility is not a formal legal term; on the contrary, it is associated with love. Hence, such responsibility can be related to existential guilt,

which is essentially irrecoverable. In this case, the neutralization of transcendence is excluded.

How is it possible to live ethically without getting drawn into barbarism, bloody conflicts, avoiding scenarios that might have fatal consequences for the human soul and heart? It is clear that scientific and technological progress has not been followed by the progress in morals, nor has it defused the conflicts, which may pose even greater threats than those experienced by humanity in the twentieth century. In criticizing the industrial dehumanized era, both Levinas and Gadamer share similar views, but their solutions are different. Gadamer tends to the modernist paradigm with the assimilation of 'otherness' by man through logos, conversation, and reconciliation. Gadamer believes that the word of reconciliation should be the first and the last word – the alpha and omega that can prevent humanity's slide into barbarism.

At the same time, the concept of culture, offered by Levinas, is related to the inevitable concept of transcendence, which is manifested in the face of the Other. The inevitable and eternal are expressed in the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill', in the form of a calling to me. I am responsible for preventing the premature death of others. Are these concepts opposed to one another? Do we have to make a choice in favour of one of them? In our opinion, this is not the case. Both concepts remain relevant while expressing the 'otherness', preconditioning the Other. Discourses can reveal the limits of our responsibility in certain historical conditions, helping one find an answer to the question: 'In what way am I responsible?' At the same time, ethics (and I fully support Levinas on this) precedes any concept of knowledge.

The Other is unavoidable – the one you meet, but do not create. The Other does not appear as a consequence. Thus, ethics is primordial and becomes First Philosophy. Language is the main mode of activity of our Being-in-the-world, a form of the world's structure: the mystery of man lies in the mystery of language. For Heidegger, it is the call of Being; for Levinas, the call of the Other. The metaphysical difference consists in the following: according to Heidegger, man without a language is inconceivable. Not only do we speak a language, but also live in it: 'Man would not be man, if his ability to speak was taken away from him – man speaks incessantly, comprehensively, on all subjects, diversely, which is mostly expressed in the unspoken 'this is that' < … > we live first of all in a language' (Heidegger M., 1993, p. 259). One can even speak while remaining silent, which means that there is no opposition between rational and irrational.

Moreover, for Heidegger, a relationship formation through speech is not reduced to human activity. Not only do we speak a language, but we also speak because of it (Heidegger M., 1993, p. 266). Speaking in itself is pointless unless it presupposes listening carefully to the language. But what do we hear when we listen to it? And how does it manage to say something to us? Does language itself speak? (This means language on its own). This question is the point of dispute between Levinas and Heidegger.

Heidegger (Heidegger M., 1993, p. 266) insists that it is language that speaks. And we can listen to its monologue. The process of listening to language enables people to understand, to be, and disappear. And the world thereby reveals itself. Levinas agrees that historical epochs and historically constituted

languages may indicate that being reveals itself, that is, understanding a language may reveal the truth. But Levinas emphasizes that Being becomes an object of discussion and understanding, as well as truth and non-truth through signification. It is very important to note that without meaning created through communication, Being would be unable to establish itself, that is, reveal itself to us. In this respect, it is necessary to overcome alienation on the way to understanding and interpretation of meaning through hermeneutics.

Gadamer distinguishes two forms of alienation that we encounter in our real existence. They consist in the following: experience of alienated aesthetic consciousness and alienated historical consciousness. 'What we reject has nothing to say to us – or we reject it because it has nothing to say to us' (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 20). Historical consciousness is another mode of the alienation experience. The task of historical consciousness is to understand past events arising from the spirit of the past. The purpose is to control our prejudices that come from the present. We must control these prejudices in order to gain a proper understanding of past events. But it is quite possible that such control will not fully accomplish the task, failing to ensure a correct understanding of the past and to pass down its legacy. History reflects only a part of our real experience, our direct contact with historical tradition. Hermeneutic consciousness is not enough to match these two forms of alienation.

According to Gadamer, the task of hermeneutics is to achieve understanding, overcoming prejudices. Historical consciousness and hermeneutic consciousness act as methods of preventing misunderstanding. Another purpose is to overcome all disorders of the soul contained in these types

of consciousness (Gadamer H. G., 1980, p. 22). These are not only our judgments, but also forms of consciousness, including our prejudices, which may form part of the human soul – this is a rather provocative statement about prejudices, but Gadamer uses it in a positive context. Prejudice is not necessarily groundless and erroneous, inevitably destroying the truth. Bias, prejudice, in relation to our openness to the world is just a state, due to which we can get something, experience something we have encountered– however, it can only give us a limited or one-sided view of reality. Consequently, the question arises as to how to integrate this hermeneutic dependence of our being into the modern scientific discourse, which is based on the principle of equal treatment without prejudice, when we have to try and overcome our prejudices and, instead, put into practice the principle mentioned.

The scientific ideal is motivated by a pure and simple craving for knowledge. This craving for knowledge and science in general has become the basis of the modern and postmodern civilization. This raises the question: *Is knowledge obtained in semi-darkness destructive?* This problem is, in fact, universal. Methodology and knowledge of methodology are very important for science, but one should take into account the existence of 'sterile methodology'. Using some techniques, we can solve completely trivial problems, and these methods and solutions will never lead to the creation of something new. In this respect, imagination is the most important function of the scientist.

Imagination and fantasy also have a hermeneutic function and serve to overcome challenges. Imagination enables us to ask real, productive questions, and the power of hermeneutic knowledge is the ability to understand that such questions

can be asked. Endless dialogue in search of truth is possible only thanks to finiteness – the peculiar characteristic of our being found in different languages and cultures. Language is repeatedly materialized in vocabulary and grammar – as ever, through the inner infinity of dialogue between interlocutors. That is why the hermeneutic circle is infinite. This fundamental aspect of hermeneutics – a natural speaker who wants to express himself – nevertheless does not produce well-organized signals at once, but searches for words to convey messages to another person. This is a common human task, as well as the task of hermeneutics, which has an opportunity to say a new word and save it in writing.

While analytic philosophy seeks to understand intellect only through the analytical perception of the work of language, both Heidegger and Sartre in their later works shifted attention from the logic of language to its essence, as well as to the silent, not-yet-expressed, which is about to be included in the uncovered-ness of being. Philosophical analysis is aimed at understanding the various ways of Being-in-the-world, created by language and covering all areas of our presence in the world. Moreover, Heidegger did not consider propositional truths to be essential; on the contrary, they did not reflect the original essence of being. According to Heidegger, it is much more important to listen to language itself, to what it expresses, to its performative acts: 'Instead of speaking of consciousness, he speaks of Erschlossenheit (openness) and of lumen naturale (light). He subordinates theoretical knowledge to a more original understanding from which it derives. This original understanding is indiscernible from existence as openness. To the extent that this openness entails a certain degree of comprehension,

Heidegger identifies the human being with speech. This is not a representative kind of speech, but one that embraces the diverse modalities of consciousness. It is practical because it refers to being oriented; it is reflexive because it echoes in the subject and its capacities' (Wrathall M., 2006, p. 68). Hence, we observe a clear change in the subject of analysis: a transition to understanding of being as evidence, which can be learned not so much by analysing the structures of consciousness or *Dasein*, but because understanding itself becomes fundamental and is revealed exclusively through language, which contains a pre-understanding of being.

Sartre draws attention to the performative act of language and art, not reducing the propositional function of language to being: 'Similarly, the signification of a melody if one can still speak of signification is nothing outside of the melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered in several ways. Call it joyous or sombre. It will always be over and above anything you can say about it' (Sartre J.-P., 1949, p. 10). Thus, we can grasp the living truth through the greatest work of art, where a word can become part of evidence.

According to Donald Verene, an image is interpreted in the process of recollection – *Erinnerung* (German – *memory, reminiscence*). In his writings, most notably in 'Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit', Verene concludes that a propositional statement, which consists in the transition from subject to predicate (in speculative knowledge), is preceded by a 'recollection', '*Erinnerung*', which, in essence, makes such a predicative propositional statement possible.

'What does it mean to claim that the key to Hegel's Phenomenology is Erinnerung? Simply put, it claims that specu-

lative knowing, *spekulatives Wissen*, presupposes recollection. The *spekulative Satz* – the speculative proposition that Hegel discusses in the Preface, in which the substance of the judgment passes from subject to predicate – requires powers of mind that are not in themselves logical, nor can they assume a logical form. These powers are not antilogical or illogical or irrational. They are the constant companions of speculative knowing, but, by their very nature, cannot take the form of the speculative proposition. Recollection proceeds through metaphors, ingenuities, and images; it gives us access to the whole gallery of images through which consciousness brings forth its starting points and restarting points in the course of its being' (Verene D. P., 1985, p. 3). Erinnerung comes through metaphors, intuitions, and images.

In Verene's interpretation, the process of Erinnerung is also largely based on metaphors, intuition, and images (Verene D. P., 1985, p. 54). Such a position is credible, because due to reminiscence, we gain access to the entire gallery of images, used by consciousness to generate all the turning points in the process of life. To recall means to form not a proposition, but images. An image is not a proposition or an indirect offer that we accept. In Verene's interpretation, in addition to representation of an image, memories also refer to the process of its internalization. Thus, Hegel uses a hyphen in the term *Er-Innerung* (German – *recollection*) to refer to these concepts. Recalling is *Innerung*, that is, the process of 'internal formation' of an image. This internal formation is the basis for its form. The next point is the statement that the power of reminiscence and its ability to internalize an image pave the way to Absolute Knowledge – *Wissen* (in Hegel's terminology), which is its main way. Meta-

phors are used to create real images, through which Absolute Knowledge can be achieved. Hence, we come to understand that *Erinnerungs* can both generate images and be aware of them, and systematize such images into the meaningful history of the Spirit.

The first language of infinity is a metaphorical image: infinity can be recreated later as a concept. When it comes to language, we believe that this is its form of action; it is dialectical, since it provides for the immediate internal functioning of the predicative process, the simultaneous use of metaphor and the hermeneutic circle, and, consequently, an opportunity to gain access to the image. Such a movement, which is essentially the dialectic of the invisible, is opposed to the visible, or, in Verene's interpretation, to our movement through the visible. Our consciousness constantly deals with the problems of its own limitations and the creation of the invisible. Discourse is a volitional embodiment of the moment, which is necessary to get out of character to give a theoretical meaning to the invisible. Discourse initially takes place at the moment when an image is transformed into a name. The power of naming (denotation) is the first hint of Absolute knowledge, and such a power arises at the very beginning of 'phenomenology', in real-time mode, in an attempt to create such denotations.

In a deductive proposition, the subject and the predicate remain separate. The form is separated from the content. A mental proposition and a mental form characteristic of dialectical thinking contradict this statement, since, in this context, the subject expands to become the predicate, and the meaning of the latter must be sought on the way back to the subject, that is, to itself. Man, therefore, represents a proscenium, where all

things in existence can appear and fulfil their potential through words and images.

Ricœur contrasts the speech activity of an utterance with a net of signs thrown over the lifeworld – this is the first link between semantics (meaning of a phrase/speech) and semiotics (structuralism, a net of signs). The subject should be considered in the area of language, not separately. In the discourse, a contradiction between semiotics and semantics should be revealed (Ricoeur, P., 1974, p. 18). Once again, we observe a shift in the meaning of metaphor, allegory. Our ability to transform the signs of the Universe, where 'I am' is primary to 'I think', comes to the fore. We are in the world, then we begin to comprehend and interpret it, and only after that, to talk about the world around us. In addition, the process of speaking itself refers to being and has an influence on it.

The basic questions, according to Ricoeur, arise at the junction of the semantic theory of metaphors and the theory of imagination. The semantic theory of metaphors is aimed at studying the ability of metaphors to transfer non-transferable information; therefore, their study claims to get a true and deep insight into reality (Ricoeur P., 1978, p. 143). The question, however, is whether an action, which has a metaphorical meaning, is compatible with the dichotomy of propositional meaning and image. Or is it able to cancel and dialectically remove the dichotomy between the meaning expressed in a phrase and imagination, where meaning is the objective content of the expression and representation is a mental process, which makes use of images and sensations? With this formulation in mind, those who seek the correct assessment of the *semantic role of imagination* should not underestimate the importance of moving in the right direction (Ricoeur P., 1978, p. 143).

The purpose of the semantic transfer is to fill the lexical gap, while adhering to the principle of economy, controlling the denotation of new objects. In this sense, it is better to think of metaphors as predications 'with deviations' than as extensions of denomination by means of deviations from the meaning (Ricoeur P., 1978, p. 145). How does such a fluctuation appear? A metaphorical statement functions as a means to *mitigate the syntagmatic deviation from the norm*, which is achieved *through the establishment of a new semantic significance*. Hence, semantic innovation can be expressed as the first step in the creation of new knowledge within the social context.

The first step is to understand how resemblance functions to create a new meaning. The next step is to find a connection with the figurative 'aspect of imagination' within resemblance. For metaphors, not only semantic conflict matters, but also a new predicative meaning, regenerated from the remaining literal meaning. In other words, the renewed meaning is based only on the general ordinary meaning of our words. Metaphor is not a mystery, but rather an answer to it. When such changes take place, the features of semantic innovation are typical; they perform their functions of resemblance, imagination, and syntagmatic mitigation.

One of Ricoeur's main questions is whether the focus of attention on the concepts of imagination and semantic innovation can shift and go beyond the original discourse, that is, beyond the theory of metaphor and the philosophical discourse as a whole. In this case, according to Ricoeur, we will be dealing with the transition from theory to *practice*. Does the term 'imagination' refer to a homogeneous, holistic phenomenon, or is it a collection of distant impressions? Such was Ricoeur's

question in relation to imagination. Ricoeur introduced four practical interpretations of the term 'imagination' (Ricoeur P., 1994, pp. 109–110).

Firstly, this term defines any arbitrary evocation of things that are currently absent but existent elsewhere. The second interpretation is similar to the first one. The same term refers to portraits, paintings, drawings, sketches, etc. – everything that has its own physical existence, whose function is to replace the things they represent. The third interpretation of this term – artistic images describing absent and non-existent things. Such artistic images are divided into dreams and fantasies, described in literary works (dramas and novels). And finally, the term 'imagination' is used in the field of illusions, that is, in relation to the representation by an independent observer or as a consistent reflection of absent or non-existent things, which makes the subject believe in their reality during conversation.

On the one hand, imagination refers to a preliminary idea of an object – all theories of reproductive imagination confirm the fact. On the other hand, imagination refers to something that is far from reality, namely, to various key types of creative imagination. What is the new approach to the phenomenon of imagination, proposed by the theory of metaphor? Ricoeur sees the problem differently: instead of asking questions about perception and its transition to imagination, Ricoeur, in his theory of metaphor, suggests linking imagination to a particular type of language. More precisely, he focuses on an aspect of innovative semantic features of language, when used metaphorically (Ricoeur P., 1994, p. 109).

Among the types of language use, a poet engaged in the poetic process resorts to a particularly important one, depending

on the circumstances and procedures. At the same time, it is important to understand the process of reverberation. However, to understand this process, one should keep in mind that reverberation is generated by what was heard, not seen. In an attempt to find synthesis, Ricoeur turns to structuralism. The tasks of psychoanalysis and structuralism are similar: We observe a movement from the directly given to the hidden, as well as from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to the study of their subconscious structures. However, according to Ricoeur, the weak spot of structuralism is that it chose the existing culture as a subject of its analysis. At the same time, structuralism ignores the ongoing cultural process. Once again, we are confronted with the need to understand metaphor and double meaning, however, structuralism, which uses both material and a style of philosophizing, which are historically bound, is closer to the classical era than modernity.

The language vocabulary accessible to the participants of the discourse should give them the opportunity to choose the necessary meanings and produce new ones. Alternatively, here is an example of Verene's interpretation of philosophy: 'Philosophia is a different activity of mind than philologia, the latter being the love of history, literature, and language. If this were not so, issues of philosophical thought would be resolved by the productions of intellectual historians' (Verene D. P., 1985, p. 51). It seems that we are again confronted with the need for imagination and a new meaning. In this respect, a distinctive feature of human being is speech, or even existence through speech (Ricoeur P., 1978, p. 143). ***Based on this, we encounter semantics in Chomsky's 'generative grammar' and Heidegger's 'ontology of language'. Language crosses two bound-***

aries in its development: a boundary of meaning (something is said) and on the other side of this meaning – a boundary of correlation (boundary of reference).

Language intends to speak, to influence the surrounding reality, while demonstrating the influence of reality on the mental process. The most radical critics of Hegel's philosophy, relying on their anti-metaphysical spirit, reduced the concept of spirit to the concept of consciousness. From this point of view, the world of signs becomes part of the inner world. There are two main ways for such regression (return to immanent consciousness)–the revival of Hegel's metaphysics or the recognition of the existence of two worlds, namely the world of natural science and the world of culture. But there is a third way – intentionality of consciousness. The intention of language to speak, as well as its metaphorical and poetic use can be viewed as a consequence of such intentionality.

Language, therefore, ceases to be an absolute phenomenon and becomes our mediator. *It goes beyond the moment when time stops or, in other words, beyond the notion of the end of history.* Mediation is a function of language, which is just as important as its structure. A phrase (not a word or a phoneme) is its basic component. Man is present in a phrase, his being is the being of a phrase. All that is human emerges before an affirmative answer is given to the question of man's existence. It emerges simultaneously with the first act of interrogation. *Ego* is identical to inquiry; its existence is a question about being. Questions are asked to find out more on the subject. In this case, everything comes into existence *together* with *Dasein,* and the Cartesian metaphysical component – thinking opposed to being – disappears. This is characteristic of all epistemological

fundamentalist approaches, separation into subject and object, as well as their subsequent hypostatization.

An analysis of Ricœur's works demonstrates that epistemological issues are bound to experience a shift towards semantics. This process is both inevitable and hermeneutically productive. However, if it seems necessary to decode consciousness for self-reflection, since its content may be false, then one should understand the patterns of double meaning. Speaking of interpretation, its version may be different from the one proposed. ***In fact, self-reflection is a kind of corrective criticism. This kind of work creates a meaning.*** The final function of an image is not only to convey meaning to various sensory fields, but also to contain meaning in a neutral atmosphere with elements of fiction. This is a kind of free play of possibilities in conditions of not being drawn into the world of perception or action. The new analogy and agreement are special for a meaningful metaphorical statement. They follow from a kind of semantic convergence that occurs suddenly between denotations, despite the gap between them. Things that used to be distant now seem close. The final resemblance is essentially a convergence that hides in itself the general similarity of two different ideas.

The explanation at the level of a mytheme is also very important: myths have always been attributed to past events before the creation of the world or immediately after it; all such events are timeless and, therefore, can effectively eliminate contradictions during structural transitions. Myths explain the past, present, and future. The dual structure of myths, both historical and anti-historical, explains how they correlate with speech and, as such, are analysed using the language, in which

they are reproduced. Myths are major structures of a language, functioning at the highest level.

In this respect, meaning can separate itself from the linguistic basis, where it is built, where imagination is the ability to create new types of generalizations. In terms of conceptual representation, such generalizations are not based on differences, but exist in spite of them. Imagination is the stage of creating symbols, where interconnections have not yet reached the necessary level of conceptual order and balance. In our opinion, this lack of order and balance is also the moment when Heraclitus's fire flares up and dialectic emerges followed by the meaning of phrase and language itself in the form of a lively metaphorical speech. The issue of metaphorical statements is essentially the problem of the language of poetry and its *truth* claims. At first glance, the language of poetry has nothing to do with anything other than itself. Nevertheless, it is this language that we use to provide realistic descriptions of the world around us.

Conclusion and recommendations

The concept of 'knowledge' was reinterpreted amid the large-scale historical catastrophes of the twentieth century, affecting a broad range of ethical and epistemological issues. In today's cultural contexts, there are numerous approaches to knowledge production: systemic, metanarrative, formal, procedural, discursive, hermeneutic, intuitive, and metaphorical. The same is true about various interpretations of the attitude of the Self (human being) towards guilt, justice, and the Other. Freedom, human corporeality, and knowledge of oneself and the Other are closely intertwined in a contemporary philosophical discourse – namely, in a deontological one. Important issues are considered in codes of ethics, including the limits of knowledge and principles of the relevant solutions regarding human corporeality, for example in medical codes of ethics where in some cases not medical knowledge, but the decision of the patient, about his or her body, plays the most significant role.

Contextualism may give a definite but incomplete answer to the question of the foundations of knowledge and ethics, taking into account the current crisis of epistemological and ethical foundations, the fact that the era of metanarratives has come to an end, the failure of the methodology of analytical philosophy to solve the problem of scepticism and find reliable foundations of knowledge. In addition to the hermeneutic tradition of continental philosophy, the developments of phenomenological ontology can be an effective tool in clarifying the above issues.

The Gettier issue can be described as a deep philosophical problem. All the attacks of sceptics are aimed at knowledge justification. This sceptical problem may be solved, on the one hand, by studying the initial premises of the subjects' interest, and, on the other hand, by a hermeneutic interpretation of the context.

When it comes to ethical issues, contextualism is strictly limited from a methodological point of view. Universals, in turn, are important for the very reason of being universals, that is, they are ideal tools. We would like to emphasize the role and importance of the proper use of contextualism: in spite of everything, contextualism can be essential for solving deontological problems. It may counterbalance dogmatic deduction and act as a dialectical opposite to abstract universal values, provided that such universal values are not rejected by contextualism as completely unnecessary. In the event of forgetting the universal, there is a risk of context hypostasis, which may lead to complete moral relativism.

For philosophers such as Hans Georg Gadamer, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paul Ricoeur, the cultural concept of the Age of the Enlightenment was largely based on technology and computational reason, while they paid a great deal of attention to ethics and the cultural heritage. The cultural concept of the Enlightenment as seen by the above-mentioned philosophers was dominant in bourgeois and industrial societies. Nevertheless, the aforementioned philosophers considered different ways of overcoming the crisis of dehumanization, which broke out in the modern era. With regard to culture, there has always been a note of pessimism, and the debate on the concept of culture continues to this day. As Gadamer noted, 'We all understand

that there is culture, both instinctively and intuitively, but defining this concept still remains a rather complex task.' Both Gadamer and Levinas analysed the understanding of culture as a process of conceptual inheritance of traditions of the Enlightenment, namely, a culture of rational, computational, and deductive knowledge.

The hermeneutic approach to *a symbolic structural unit* is extremely important. Hermeneutics should reveal a hidden, distorted, obscure meaning lying motionless under general, superficial truths of life. Representatives of analytical philosophy and hermeneutics, using the corresponding approaches, focused on language as an ideal substance that is both immanent and transcendent. It is a living speech in and of itself, where consciousness is revealed. A metaphor always gives us a hint, stimulating our consciousness to look for clues and trying to understand what it sees. Therefore, everything that exists now manifests itself and can fulfil its potential through words and images. The human being, therefore, represents a proscenium of being, where the meaning and specific content of real-life situations and the metaphorical proliferation of meaning, which are irreducible to it, create the need for reinterpretations, *constituting knowledge-generating processes, for example interpretation of constitutional texts, human rights, myths, historical events etc.* in the field of humanitarian discourse.

With regard to recommendations, I would suggest that, in order to acquire knowledge, it is less important to have a store of knowledge at a particular time, than to maintain the search for knowledge using all the methods of knowing which the human spirit has discovered: scientific, discursive, deductive, intuitive, like the way of thinking of geniuses, who can guess the real state of things, when

some hypothesis can be true only on the base of prediction and intuition, hermeneutical, when judges interpret successfully a constitution, and this interpretation has a positive impact on further social development, metaphorical, when in ancient tribes people use myth and metaphors in order to transfer social knowledge to children or further generations, and others. In my opinion, this is the best way to avoid dogmatism and refute scepticism.

I would therefore recommend refuting scepticism, but not without arguments and not with the help of dogmas of particular epochs, we should rather refute scepticism by taking into account not only the scientific concept of knowledge, but cultural and hermeneutical concepts as well, by concentrating not on a factum of knowledge, but rather on the life world of humans and on the process (life way) of obtaining knowledge and developing Spirit throughout all epochs of Its emanation. It means we can say that we know something only when we are well aware of all historical epochs of philosophy as supreme thinking of the Truth, Ethics and Knowledge.

Further research could consider the following:

a) Investigating the causes of the present crisis of values referred to above as the current crisis of epistemological and ethical foundations;

b) suggesting possible solutions, with respect to the crisis of values, as well as the current ecological, economic and political situations;

c) and also trying to resolve the problem of, on the one hand, trying to respect every culture, while also attempting to arrive at a world-wide acceptance, which I consider the most important, of universal human rights.

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