

Bojan Žalec

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology, Poljanska 4, SI-1000 Ljubljana
bojan.zalec@guest.arnes.si

On Not Knowing Who We Are: The Ethical Importance of Transcendent Anthropology

Abstract

The article is dealing with the ethical importance of the acceptance of the transcendence of every person. The author argues in favor of the following thesis: Transcendent anthropology is a positive factor of personalism; Violation of solidarity is fundamental evil; Apophatic anthropology is a realistic view; We should avoid the extreme positions regarding identities: nihilist or neutralist at one hand and non-critical acceptance and their ossification at the other. The proper approach to identities is critical realism and dialogic universalism; The principle of deeper identity is spirit; Transcendent anthropology is a positive factor of a solitary attitude. The author concludes that the attitude of transcendent anthropology provides a good background for the openness toward the other, for relational and solitary attitude and for the living traditions. Further, it provides a good ground for cultural and intellectual exchange, for responsible tolerance of the radically other and for the feeling of the need for being exposed to the influence of the other.

Key words

transcendent (apophatic) anthropology, personalism, nihilism, instrumentalism, solidarity, (cultural) identity

“I recognize you means that I cannot know you in thought or in flesh.”

Luce Irigaray

Transcendent anthropology is a positive factor of personalism

In order to make my following paper more understandable, let me at the beginning shortly explain the meaning of the terms *nihilism*, *instrumentalism* and *personalism*. Nihilism is a condition of an individual, of a group, of a society, of culture in which experiential and intellectual horizons everything is levelled.¹ Nihilistic subject cannot honestly experience one thing or being as more valuable than the other. As nihilism is practically impossible, it usually transforms into some kind of instrumentalism. Instrumentalism is an attitude

1

Kierkegaard described his age as nihilistic. He didn't use that term but the phenomenon of nihilism is detected. Our age, claimed Kierkegaard, is the age that levels all things (cf.

Kierkegaard, 2009, 84). The context or the background of the age is such that things cannot appear as better or worse.

that doesn't regard a particular person as a goal, but at best just as a mean. To the contrary, for a personalist, every person is always the goal. The main aim of a personalist is the flourishing of every person. The essential moment of every true personalism is acceptance of the transcendence of every person.

An important factor for a human to live as a human is that the background of our life is pervaded with the consciousness of the fact that in principle we know neither ourselves nor the others, in other words, that persons are transcendent. They are transcendent in epistemological respect and, according to religious views, also metaphysically. Factual acceptance of the transcendence of persons is an important corner stone of morally acceptable treatment of persons. For instance, it is incompatible with the taking of positions of being a judge, for how can you judge about somebody if you do not know who he or she is. The transcendence of a person is further a condition for a proper dialogue which includes also criticism: only if we distinguish between person and his or her acts, deeds, we can lead a critical dialogue with others for I can say to the other person: "What you have done it is not good but that doesn't imply that you yourself, you as such are bad, that your person is bad." Accepting the transcendence of a person is further a necessary condition for the respect of human conscience, of person's spontaneity and creativity. In her *Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt showed that in the Nazi concentration camps persons were destroyed at three levels: 1. legal and political; 2. moral, and 3. at the level of individual identity. The main aim of totalitarian systems has been to transform the human nature and to destroy spontaneity and creativity of persons, which implies the possibility of persons to start something totally (a) new, something unpredictable and possibly uncontrollable. The spontaneity and creativity have been considered by totalitarianisms as a threat. They have tried to transform human nature into beings without spontaneity, but that only led to suppression of persons as persons and creation of society characterized by lethargy, apathy, loneliness, feeling of powerlessness and irresponsibility. Also today we may say that following of one's own consciousness is the best defence against manipulation and instrumentalism. The real freedom is not exemplified in situations where everything is allowed but, rather, it is exemplified by persons who are really capable to follow what they consider best according to their conscience and their reason. Or, to put it in other words, in the circumstances in which their dignity is respected by others and by themselves.

Instrumentalists always tend toward two goals: 1) elimination of transcendence (of the person); 2) levelling and identifying otherwise different beings. So they do not respect individuality, difference, the other as the other. An example of such a levelling is provided by some considerations of women. Women and men are different in all possible aspects: from physiological to their subjectivity. The real acceptance of women does not consist in a kind of neutral view which abstracts all the important differences between men and women but rather in stressing of those differences, which also implies unavoidable transcendence between male and female subjectivity. Only acceptance of that transcendence can enable real empathy, dialogue, solidarity and mutual enrichment between men and women.²

Solidarity – participation in the life of the other – can however only be partial. The belief that we can reach total participation is dangerous and destroys approaching of other as the other, elimination of treating her or him as a person, and provides context for instrumentalization and manipulation. Accepting of the transcendence of others and of my own person is a necessary bulwark

against instrumentalism and manipulation. The consciousness about the importance of accepting and respecting the transcendence of persons must lead also scientists, physicians, lawyers, teachers, clerics, managers and others who deal with human beings in their work and in life in general, for instance (last but not least) parents. The respect of the transcendence of a person represents the ethical limit of their competence.

A universally applicable forgiveness is possible only in the horizon of transcendent view on persons. To make forgiveness possible, it is necessary to distinguish between persons, between a person at one hand and by any set of his or her acts, personal traits, habits, vices etc., that might exhaustingly describe her, totalize or rationalize her, to which (s)he might be possibly reduced, in short to any sets of his or her elements, attributes, moments that might renounce his or her transcendence at the other. For universal forgiveness (such that gives chance to any wrongdoer, no matter how bad his or her wrongs might be) to be possible we should consider the one who committed something bad as a moral agent who has done something wrong but at the same time also as a person who cannot be exhausted by any description or interpretation. We should “hate” person’s wrongs or bad circumstances or the context that contributed to her bad deeds, but never a person as such. However, the culture of forgiveness is a crucial factor in order to cultivate solidarity (inclusion), peace, non-violence etc. (Cf. Govier, 2002)

The recognition of the other as the other implies the recognition that (s)he is transcendent to me. As Luce Irigaray has put it:

“I recognize you means that I cannot know you in thought or in flesh. The power of a negative remains between us. I recognize you go hand in hand with: you are irreducible to me, just as I am to you. We may not be substituted for one another. You are transcendent to me, inaccessible in a way, not only as ontic being but also as ontological being (which entails, in my view, fidelity to life rather than submission to death.) Between us a transcendence always subsists, not as an abstraction or a construct, a fabrication of the same to ground its origin or to measure its development, but as the resistance of a concrete and ideational reality: I will never be you, either in body or in thought.

Recognizing you means or implies respecting you as other, accepting that I stop before you as other before something insurmountable, a mystery, a freedom that will never be mine, a subjectivity that will never be mine, a mine that will never be mine.” (Irigaray, 2004, 8)

Violation of solidarity is a fundamental evil

All the cultural, spiritual, religious and philosophical wisdom of the past, the findings of psychoanalysis and the growing evidence provided by (modern) science (neurology, cognitive science, psycho-history of crimes) point to the one single point: the media, foundation and origin of healthy persons and society, of good life and happiness, of peace and stability, is solidarity.

Tolerance and the culture appropriate for a modern pluralistic and value heterogeneous society are seriously endangered by violence. The measure of a good society is the presence of violence in it. Following Gandhi and Sen, we may say that the reduction of violence as much as possible is a reasonable value that every healthy society should strive for (Sen, 1999). Accordingly,

2

According to Irigaray the difference between men’s and women’s subjectivity is the most important because it is the most universal and most basic (cf. Irigaray, 2010, 5–6). Hence

the cultivation of gender neutralism ruins the basis itself of any proper recognition of the other, (intellectual) solidarity and true coexistence.

we should ask ourselves about the nature of the society that hinders or stimulates violence and hence about the criteria for a good society. We think the following characteristics are crucial: personalism, inclusion and solidarity.

The opposite of inclusion is marginalization. In a good society nobody should be marginalized, not politically, economically or educationally (Juhant, 2008: 165–176). Those should be the ideals of a good society. A measure of their realization is a measure of its goodness. Marginalization causes violence which as a consequence threatens stability and democracy in a society. Inclusion means solidarity, material, intellectual and other, that means our sharing of intellectual life and of other goods in society, participation in the common good of a society. The extreme case of exclusion is, for instance, a violation of human rights (like in concentration camps) and for that reason Hollenbach (2003) understands human rights as an institutionalization of human solidarity. A personalist society is a society where the dignity of human beings as persons is respected. The development of the capabilities of persons to freely use their reason (the capacity to know) and their conscience is supported and cultivated in personalist societies.

Our thesis is that a good society, in the sense of hindering violence in that society, is a society of personalist solidarity. The reasons for it can be found at several levels: from neurological through psychoanalytical to psycho-history of crime. Neurological evidence is provided by modern cognitive science. Joachim Bauer reports about it in his book *Principle of Humanity: Why Humans are Cooperative by Their Nature* (Bauer, 2006). He for instance reports about a special substance called dopamine which our body secretes when we are in good relations with other beings, when we are included in a human group and similar. The secretion of dopamine brings good mood and it is a kind of natural drug we are addicted to. In the case of being excluded, we experience some sort of abstinent crisis and it is possible to search for a dopamine surrogate in inappropriate ways, for instance by using synthetic drugs, going to a prostitute etc. This supports the flourishing of criminal business which in turn brings violence into society and generally endangers the whole of society. Margot Sunderland in her book *The Science of Parenting* (2008) directs us to the importance of a proper loving relationship with our children in order to avoid the very damaging bio-chemical state of baby's brain which can be permanent. The systems of vital importance, connected with the chemical substances that have effects on emotions, like opioids, nor-adrenaline, dopamine and serotonin – these systems are still developing in undeveloped brains – might be seriously damaged and might cause a chemical non-equilibrium in brain. Sunderland, for example, claims that a low level of serotonin is one of the key factors of depression and also of violent behaviour (*op. cit.*, 43). Serotonin, a chemical substance in brains is a very important factor for social and emotional intelligence. An optimal level of serotonin might stabilize one's mood, diminish aggressiveness and for that reason it has an important role in the strengthening of good relations. Researchers have shown that monkeys that were very respected in their society and at the top of the social hierarchy had the optimal level of serotonin. The level of serotonin is strongly influenced by human relations, either positively or negatively. Researchers have proven that stress in early life might influence in a damaging way the system of serotonin in the developing brain of a little child. Contrary to that, the loving moments you share with your child positively influence the level of serotonin in the ventromedial cortex. If a child shares many beautiful moments with you, he will get used to the optimal level of serotonin in his brain and that then will become a part of his true personality. A low level of

serotonin in animals and humans is connected with their impulsive behaviour. Serotonin, a chemical substance which equilibrates one's mood, in that case cannot calm the emotional reactions of a man or animal down. When such a person or animal gets angry, we are not just dealing with a mild form of irritation or reluctance but with a mad, horrible fury. It is well known that monkeys with a low level of serotonin are impulsive and aggressive (*op. cit.*, 223). That should be enough about the neurological reasons. We think the message is clear enough.

The findings of psychoanalysis point in the same direction. The phenomena that psychoanalysis describes as identification with the aggressor, the protective mechanism of projection and projective identification, and the protective mechanism of splitting (see Bohak, 2008, 35–48) should be mentioned here. In the first case, collectives that are themselves victims of violence consequentially carry out similar violence on other collectives. With the last phenomenon, we deal with people whose parents did not respond to their needs and offered them their attentiveness, care and love in their childhood. Such an attitude causes the development of a negative self-image in their children. The complex in which the negative self-image is interwoven with a twofold relationship with the parents (such people usually speak about a kind-hearted daddy and mummy on one hand but, on the other, they perceive them as monsters, they hate them) results in violence towards other people. Psychotherapists are familiar with the fact that violent patterns of behaviour are transmitted from one generation to another (many victims of violence in their later life themselves search for a violent environment) if proper treatment does not break the circle of transmission. The last but not the least, the aggression someone directs towards himself should also be considered, namely suicide.

Antoon A. Leenaars (2005) in his essay about trauma and suicide among aborigines at the North Pole and in Australia hypothesizes that a similar phenomenon as in Australia and at the North Pole also took place in Lithuania under the Soviet occupation. The characteristic of aboriginal societies is that before the colonial occupation the suicide rate among the population was not high. The same is true of Lithuania. Today, all these societies are burdened by suicides as if there was an epidemic. In the case of aboriginal societies the rate of suicide is five times higher than among the white population. Canadian researchers think that the causes of such suicides among Inuits are poverty, divorce, and loss of children, accessibility of firearms, alcoholism, personal and family health problems, past sexual and bodily abuses. But Leenaars thinks those phenomena are the effects of genocide (Dežman, 2008, 372 and next).

If we add to the above evidence the numerous examples showing, almost as a rule, that violent persons and collectives were themselves subjected to violence, we may conclude that the fundamental source of violence in a society is the violation of personalist solidarity ethics (which for Christians might also simply be called the ethics of love – in the sense of lat. *caritas*, gr. *agape*).

The opposite of solidarity is exclusion. Arendt named the Nazi concentration camps as places of the radical evil. They were places of extreme exclusion intended to destroy any solidarity, where everything was directed to one main goal – the torture of people. The proper aim of human rights is to prevent such exclusion and instrumentalization of persons. Hence they may be rightly characterized as the institutionalization of human solidarity (Hollenbach, 2003).

Apophatic anthropology is a realistic view

The aim of this chapter is to convince the reader that the apophatic anthropology is not only a wish or a desirable ethical view but also the view that best suits the facts.

We can express a lot of identifications and say: this is me – male, Slovene, father, son, husband, brother, Catholic, philosopher... But all those are in a sense observable things and also accidental. It is possible for me to remain the same me and cease to be husband, Catholic... My I, my deep self, my identity is mysterious and connected to my deeds and actions: what is clear in the first place is what I have done, what my attitudes are, but much less clear is why I have done particular things, and why I cultivate the attitudes that I do. In that sense we do not know totally who we are in depth, we do not know the source of our deeds and attitudes.³ This deeper self more or less strongly bears influence upon our attitudes and actions.

Thought can be uncertain, action not: it is what it is. For instance, even if there is no theoretic certainty about Christianity I may live and act (in the Christian way) and always cannot answer why I act and live as I do. My way of living originates in the stratum of my personality that is not (only) cognitive and even less theoretical, though cognition and theory may affect it.

Just because there is no certainty, we are believers. Christian faith is there where there is no certainty and still we live and act in the Christian way. To close reflection it is in a sense easy and un-ascetical. To “torture” oneself with reflection, to be aware of uncertainty and still live in the Christian way is actually a proof of deep faith.⁴ It means really to subject oneself to the delight of being Christian. It is easier to be Christian if you are not aware of incomprehensibility of the foundation or justifiability of Christianity. In that sense Christianity is a practical doctrine, for the resolution of Christian knots may be only practical. I decide by myself for Christianity; this is a leap of faith or better said a constant leaping in faith because there is no certainty. Wittgenstein was right in a sense: all truths of Christianity may be in certain sense false, and that still may not undermine my Christianity, that means undermine my thinking, my feeling, my experiencing, my acting, in short my living in the Christian way (cf. Wittgenstein, 1994).⁵ My “torture” and asceticism as Christian consist also in exposing myself to critical reflection or to philosophy that might be destabilizing. When I am defeating or overcoming the fire of that destabilization and I still remain or even become a Christian, I am in a sense providing the anchoring point for the interpretation that the Holy Spirit is present in me. Thus it is not true that a faithful Christian does not need philosophy. On the contrary: precisely a Christian needs philosophy, for life of his spiritual asceticism, while on the other hand, for instance for hedonistic naturalist, “self-torturing” with philosophy and undermining of the certainty maybe really does not make sense. Perhaps we cannot say that philosophy is the best path to Christianity, but non-fundamentalist openness of mind that adequately recognizes the power or even value of challenging ideas certainly is. And to live philosophically means to live in such openness, we may even say vulnerability. For that reason, for a Christian it is not only philosophy which stabilizes, which is fortifying, but also philosophy which undermines. In the fire of the opposing views or doctrines, we test, fortify and often enrich our own Christianity. Christian attitude is ex-centric.⁶

Reflection and philosophy have similar value also for other views, identities, horizons, attitudes etc. insofar they are proper and deep, even for the atheistic

one: it is a constant test of genuine and proper liberalism, atheism etc., in short, of every true identity.

Cultural identities, dialogical universalism and critical realism

Until now I have stressed mainly somehow more individual sides of the personalist attitude: accepting of the transcendence of every person, respecting of personal dignity including the voice of conscience and similar. Yet this should not mislead one to think that I regard the cultural identity or tradition (let's call their aspects that are relevant for our discussion moral identity) as unimportant. To the contrary. For instance, I think that the respect for local cultures is – in a sense – a counterpart (at the collective or cultural level) of conscience at the individual level and as such a bulwark against commercial and instrumentalist (global) society and against manipulation. Further, I think that we are infused with (cultural) identities, whether we recognize this or not. So every total refusal of identities would actually mean the refusal of some concrete persons. There are many other good reasons for attachment to this or other (cultural) identity. I do not have space to deal with them in this paper, but I listed and considered them in some of mine other texts (cf. Žalec, 2006, 38–47). Yet, the above outlined transcendental and solitary personalism should serve as a basis also for our attitude toward (cultural) identities: ours and of others. In the light of it we should decide what is good and what is bad in traditions, what we should foster and cultivate and what we should discard in them.

So there is a kind of universalism in this personalist stance, but this universalism is dialogical, solitary and properly tolerant. It is not commanding, authoritative, imperious, excluding, imperialistic, domineering and neutralist. It is a kind of cosmopolitanism if noble cosmopolitanism includes efforts in direction of empathy, looking through the eyes of the others, or in other words, an experiential and intellectual solidarity. Personalism should also serve as a criterion for the questions about proper morality, proper religion and about deviation from them. A reliable sign of deviation is violation of personalism.

3

It is not irrelevant for our discussion to point out also to the Zygmunt Bauman's view on identity (in the world of liquid modernity) (cf. Bauman, 2008). Strahovnik (2010, 96) has presented it as follows: "In liquid modernity identity is flexible and in a state of permanent transformation, in which one perpetually re-defines oneself through becoming someone other than one has been so far."

4

"On the other hand, if such faith does not continually expose itself to the possibility of unfaith, it is not faith but a convenience. It becomes an agreement with oneself to adhere in the future to a doctrine as something that has somehow been handed down. This is neither having faith nor questioning, but indifference – which can then, perhaps even with keen interest, busy itself with everything, with faith as well as with questioning." (Heidegger, 2000, 8)

5

In 1947 Wittgenstein wrote that religious faith might be at most something like a passionate decision for a particular system of reference (in German original he used the word *das Bezugssystem*). Hence, though faith is a faith, it is a kind of life or a kind of judging the life (cf. Wittgenstein, 1994).

6

On the Christianity as an ex-centric attitude in the context of social ethics and political theory, situation of religion in modern society, discussion about the proper role of religious arguments in political discourse, about ex-centric perspective as avoiding relativism and fundamentalism, as mediating between particularity and universality, *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, religion and politics, faith and reason, see Laux, 2007.

Just think about Spanish inquisition, Islam practiced under Taliban regimes, Nazism, communist regimes or ideological uses of ideal of economic prosperity.

The best attitude towards identities might be called – using epistemological terms – critical realism. Neither the attitude that takes the identities as untouchable or overestimates their importance or superiority, nor the stance that diminishes their importance or even considers them as something that should be destroyed or eliminated because they are only used for some bad aims, to instrumentalize people’s attachments, affections, emotions for certain goals (political, economical...) are proper. Neither a subordination of some individual concrete persons to some (collective) identity nor the “nihilistic” attitude to identity, are acceptable. Collective or moral identities are necessary for the flourishing of persons, they have their irreplaceable value that should be respected yet they should be also developed and transformed. The good and acceptable should be accepted and some other elements should be discarded or modified.

We should cultivate and develop moral traditions that are the media of transcendent personalists. Such persons are capable of developing the virtues necessary in the modern world: empathy, dialogue and universal (non-excluding) solidarity. We should not forget also the hospitality. The true hospitality consists of accepting of the other as the other, of a stranger. Only a person with the transcendent attitude toward herself, capable of recognizing stranger and unknown in herself, is capable of hospitality toward a stranger in some other persons.⁷

Spirit as a principle of identity; transcendent anthropology as a positive factor of a solidary attitude

Nihilist and instrumentalist views often go hand in hand with the negative stance against (deep or cultural) identities. Those identities are actually the source of meaning and deontology. In the nihilist and instrumentalist view any deontological concept and also the concept of (deeper) meaning are meaningless. At best in those two kinds of horizons they can be treated as instruments or means for something else and they should be unmasked as such or – in some cases – used. This can sound incredible because exactly many instrumentalist views have strongly stressed the identity, for instance racial (Nazism), class (communism)... According to my view, those instrumentalisms only apparently valued the proclaimed identity but actually they were identity nihilists. To put it very directly, deeper identity is a matter of spirit.⁸ To recognize human beings as spiritual creatures already implies that we consider them as transcendent creatures. And to treat transcendent creatures as pure means is incoherent position. What happened in cases of communism or Nazism was that they *de facto* eliminated the spiritual dimension and degraded identities to some economical or even (quasi)biological level. In any case, what happened was the naturalization of identities what *de facto* means the elimination of identities. *Deeper identity* is something that can be ascribed only to spiritual beings. The principle of such identity is spirit. In a non-transcendent horizon we may recognize that people are attached to identities but that fact alone does not suggest that we should attach any intrinsic value to them. At best we respect them as values because people are attached to them; we respect people’s attachments as such no matter what their quality or origin. But such a foundation is often not a sufficient background for the

respecting of identities because it does not provide the understanding of why they are important. So *de facto* the door is open for not accepting or respecting people's identities, of what they really deeply are, and – in consequence – for the attitude that does not accept the self or the other, that is not truly solidary. In that sense the transcendent attitude toward human beings is a positive factor for cultivation of the attitude that truly accepts the integral person (mine or other) and that is truly solidary.

Conclusion

The attitude of transcendent anthropology provides a good background for the openness toward the other, for relational and solidary attitude, and for the living traditions, or with other words, against the fossilization of traditions or cultural identities. Further, it provides a good ground for cultural and intellectual exchange, for responsible tolerance of the radically other and for the feeling of the need for being exposed to the influence of the other. Transcendent personalism provides good reasons to tolerate many other and different views. It is a stance that stimulates searching and experimentation, yet within the limits that prevent us from falling in disastrous experiments known from the history, grounded exactly on the violation of personalism. It implies that individuals and societies take themselves as a constant and unfinished task and as subjects of a narrative which originates and ends in transcendence.

References

- Arendt, H. (1962) *Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: G. Allen & Unwin.
- Bauer, J. (2006) *Prinzip Menschlichkeit: Warum wir von Natur aus kooperieren*. Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe.
- Berdyayev, N. (1962) *Spirit and Reality*. Trans. by G. Reavey. San Francisco: Semantron Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2008) *The Art of Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bohak, J. (2008) "Religija in nasilje – psihoanalitski pristop". In *Znamenja*, no. 3–4, pp. 35–48.
- Dežman, J. (2008) »Tranzicijska pravičnost«. In *Poročilo Komisije Republike Slovenije za reševanje vprašanj prikritih grobišč 2005–2008*. Ljubljana: Družina, pp. 251–404.
- Govier, T. (2002) *Forgiveness and Revenge*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Heidegger, M. (2000) *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hollenbach, D., S. J. (2003 /2002/) *The Common Good & Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (2004) *Key Writings*. London–New York: Continuum.
- Irigaray, L. (2010) "Ethical Gestures toward the Other". In *Poligraf*, vol. 15, no. 57, pp. 3–23.

7

Cf. Kristeva, 1991.

8

For the understanding of the word *spirit* as I use it here see Berdyayev, 1962. For the the-

sis that the principle of the nation is spirit and about relation between nationalism and Christianity see Veber, 1927 and 1938, and Žalec, 2002.

Juhant, J. (2008) *Im Feuer der europäischen Ideenzüge: Slowenien*, (Europa 2020, Bd. 24). Wien–Zürich–Berlin: Münster–Lit Verlag.

Kierkegaard, S. (2009) *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age*. Trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kristeva, J. (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.

Laux, B. (2007) *Excentrische Sozialethik. Zur Präsenz und Wirksamkeit christlichen Glaubens in der modernen Gesellschaft*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Leenaars, A. A. (2005) “Trauma and Suicide among Aboriginal People: Stories from the Arctic and Australia (with Particular Reference to the Situation in Lithuania)”. In D. Gailienė (ed.), *The Psychology of Extreme Traumatisation: The Aftermath of Political Repression*. Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre in Lithuania.

Sen, A. (1999) “Global Justice: Beyond International Equity”. In I. Kaul, I. Grunberg, M. A. Stern (eds.), *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 116–125.

Strahovnik, V. (2010) “The Art of Life: Kekes and Bauman on Attaining the Good Life”. In J. Juhant & B. Žalec (eds.) *Art of Life: Origins, Foundations and Perspectives*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, pp. 91–98.

Sunderland, M. (2008) *Znanost o vzgoji*. Slov. trans. by S. Jesenovec Petrović and B. Petrović Jesenovec (orig. *The Science of Parenting*, London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006). Radovljica: Didakta.

Veber, F. (1927) *Idejni temelji slovanskega agrarizma*. Ljubljana: Kmetijska tiskovna zadruga.

Veber, F. (1938) *Nacionalizem in krščanstvo*. Ljubljana: I. Peršuh.

Wittgenstein, L. (1994 /1984/) *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, Werkausgabe, Band 8. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Žalec, B. (2002) *Spisi o Vebru*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba.

Žalec, B. (2006) “Good Life and Morality: For Virtuous Particularism, against Generalism”. In J. Juhant & B. Žalec (eds.), *Person and Good: Man and His Ethics in the Postmodern World*, Berlin: Lit Verlag, pp. 37–64.

Bojan Žalec

O nepoznavanju samoga sebe: etički značaj transcendentne antropologije

Sažetak

Članak se bavi etičkim značajem prihvatanja transcendentije svake osobe. Autor zagovara sljedeće teze: transcendentna antropologija je pozitivan čimbenik personalizma; povreda solidarnosti je fundamentalno zlo; apofatička antropologija je realistički nazor; trebamo izbjeđavati ekstremne pozicije po pitanju identiteta: nihilističke ili neutralističke s jedne, te nekritičko prihvatanje i njihovo okoštavanje s druge strane; ispravan pristup identitetima je kritički realizam i dijaloški univerzalizam; princip dubljeg identiteta je duh; transcendentna antropologija je pozitivan čimbenik solidarnog stava. Autor zaključuje da stav transcendentne antropologije nudi dobru pozadinu za otvorenost prema drugome, za odnosni i solidarni stav, kao i za živuće tradicije. Nadalje, nudi također i dobre temelje za kulturnu i intelektualnu razmjenu, za odgovornu toleranciju radikalno drukčijeg i za osjećaj potrebe za bivanjem izloženim utjecaju drugih.

Ključne riječi

transcendentna (apofatička) antropologija, personalizam, nihilizam, instrumentalizam, solidarnost, (kulturni) identitet

Bojan Žalec

**Zur Unkenntnis von sich selbst:
Ethischer Belang der transzendenten Anthropologie**

Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel nimmt die ethische Bedeutsamkeit der Transzendenzannahme eines jeglichen Individuums auf. Der Autor ergreift das Wort zugunsten folgender Thesen: Die transzendente Anthropologie ist ein positiver Faktor des Personalismus; die Solidaritätsverletzung bedeutet ein fundamentales Unheil; die apophatische Anthropologie ist ein wirklichkeitsnaher Gesichtspunkt; krasse Standpunkte bezüglich der Identität sind zu meiden: nihilistische bzw. neutralistische einesteils und unkritische Akzeptanz bzw. ihre Verknöcherung andernteils. Die angemessene Herangehensweise an die Identitäten wären der kritische Realismus und dialogische Universalismus; der Grundsatz einer tieferen Identität ist der Geist; die transzendente Anthropologie erweist sich als ein positiver Faktor der solidarischen Einstellung. Der Autor schlussfolgert, der Blickwinkel der transzendenten Anthropologie erwerbe eine feste Grundlage zur Empfänglichkeit gegenüber anderen, zur relationalen und solidarischen Einstellung sowie zu den fortdauernden Traditionen. Des Weiteren sichere er eine gute Basis zum kulturellen und intellektuellen Austausch, zu einer verantwortungsvollen Toleranz des radikal Andersartigen sowie zum Drang nach Ausgesetztheit der äußeren Beeinflussung.

Schlüsselwörter

transzendente (apophatische) Anthropologie, Personalismus, Nihilismus, Instrumentalismus, Solidarität, (kulturelle) Identität

Bojan Žalec

**De la méconnaissance de soi-même :
l'importance éthique de l'anthropologie transcendante**

Résumé

L'article traite de l'importance éthique de l'acceptation de la transcendance de chaque personne. L'auteur soutient les thèses suivantes : l'anthropologie transcendante est un facteur positif du personnalisme ; la violation de la solidarité est un mal fondamental ; l'anthropologie apophatique est un point de vue réaliste ; nous devons éviter les positions extrêmes concernant l'identité : nihilistes et neutralistes d'une part, leur acceptation non critique et leur ossification d'autre part ; l'approche correcte des identités est le réalisme critique et l'universalisme dialogique ; le principe de l'identité profonde est l'esprit ; l'anthropologie transcendante est un facteur positif de l'attitude solidaire. L'auteur conclut que la position de l'anthropologie transcendante offre un bon contexte pour l'ouverture envers l'autre, pour une attitude relationnelle et solidaire, ainsi que pour les traditions vivantes. De plus, elle offre un bon terrain pour l'échange culturel et intellectuel, pour une tolérance responsable du radicalement autre ainsi que pour le sentiment du besoin d'être exposé à l'influence de l'autre.

Mots-clés

anthropologie transcendante (apophatique), personnalisme, nihilisme, instrumentalisme, solidarité, identité (culturelle)