

## Grabić's Critique of Bazala's Moral-Cultural Perspectives\*

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### *Summary*

Petar Grabić has on several occasions criticised the philosophical insights and views of Albert Bazala, and present-day researchers have not been indifferent to this critique. In one such article, Barbara Ćuk examines Grabić's critique of Bazala's perspectives on scholastic philosophy and John Duns Scotus. However, this was not the only occasion on which Grabić challenged Bazala's philosophical and cultural positions. In the 1914 issues of the journal *Naša misao*, there appears a three-part text entitled "A New Form of Thought and Faith", in which Grabić criticises both Bazala and Aškerac. In a similar vein, the 1915 issue of *Hrvatska straža* featured Grabić's article "Moral-Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala", which critically examined Bazala's positivist and materialist perspectives, as outlined in the 1907 *Hrvatsko kolo* article "National Culture". The subsequent discussion will concentrate on this latter critique, which pertains to Bazala's moral and cultural views. First, an outline will be provided of Bazala's philosophical and cultural positions. The paper then presents Bazala's philosophical and cultural views, as well as Grabić's objections and critiques, and finally we will evaluate the justification of this critique.

**Keywords:** Albert Bazala, Petar Grabić, positivism, materialism, Christianity, morality

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## Introduction

In philosophy, and indeed in numerous other fields of enquiry, it is imperative to distinguish between polemics and criticism. A polemic is an often heated dispute consisting of a series of texts in which two interlocutors exchange opposing views. A polemic starts as a written argument that is intended to persuade its audience of its author's particular philosophical position or insight. The author of the polemic is typically responding to a critique of their standpoint, and they do so by defending it and refuting the opposing arguments. However, it is important to note that, on occasion, such polemics may devolve into attempts at discrediting one's opponent rather than efforts of dismantling the opponent's argumentation by presenting well-founded reasoning. Consequently, polemics have the potential to engender a sense of discomfort in the reader.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, criticism is defined as a measured evaluation of one or more works by an author, without the author's opportunity to respond. Consequently, in instances where the author who is subject to criticism fails to respond, the critique is unlikely to turn into a polemic. One such pair can be cited as an example that is Albert Bazala and Petar Grabić.

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<sup>1</sup> When it comes to our philosophers, we can highlight the debates of the philosopher Stjepan Zimmermann with Bošković, Bubanović, Vernić, and Lach, as well as the debate of Frane Petrić with Angelucci and others. Cf. Dario Škarica, "Zimmermannova noetička polemika s Hijacintom Boškovićem" ["Zimmermann's Noetic Polemic with Hijacint Bošković"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 29/1–2(57–58) (2003), pp. 193–220.; Ljudevit Hanžek, "Bubanović i Zimmermann o duši i tijelu" ["Bubanović and Zimmermann on the Soul and the Body"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 38/1(75) (2012), pp. 105–121.; Ljudevit Hanžek, "Zimmermannova polemika s Vernićem i Lachom" ["Zimmermann's Polemic with Vernić and Lach"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 39/1(77) (2013), pp. 315–328.; Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, "Polemika između Frane Petrića i Teodora Angelucci" ["The Polemic between Frane Petrić and Teodoro Angelucci"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 30/1–2(59–60) (2004), pp. 103–117.; Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, "Polemika između Petrića i Angelucci u svjetlu Filoponovih 'Komentara Metafizike'" ["The Polemic between Petrić and Angelucci in Light of Philoponus' *Commentary on the Metaphysics*"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 39/2(78) (2013), pp. 433–452. It was not only philosophical ideas and positions that were the subject of heated debates among philosophers. Unfortunately, there were also personal animosities between philosophers, such as those between Bazala and Vuk-Pavlović, as well as many others. Here we refer to the following work: Dušan Dožudić, "Vuk-Pavlović i Bazala: prilog rekonstrukciji odnosa" ["Vuk-Pavlović and Bazala: A Contribution to the Reconstruction of Their Relationship"], *Prolegomena* 22/2 (2023), pp. 141–181. Certain philosophers were persecuted because of their views, for example Vuk-Pavlović and Marijan Cipra. For the latter, we refer to the following text: Bojan Marotti, "In memoriam Marijan Cipra (1940. – 2008.)" ["In Memoriam: Marijan Cipra (1940–2008)"], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 36/1–2(71–72) (2010), pp. 7–22.

Grabić's critique of Bazala's philosophical insights and positions was noted by present-day scholars. In her article "John Duns Scotus and Scotism in Croatian Periodicals of the First Half of the 20th Century," Barbara Ćuk discusses Grabić's criticism of Bazala's views on scholastic philosophy and on John Duns Scotus, among other findings relevant to the topic.<sup>2</sup> However, this was not the only critique Grabić directed at Bazala and his philosophical and cultural positions. In the journal *Naša misao* from 1914, we encounter a three-part text titled "A New Form of Thought and Faith," in which Grabić criticises both Bazala and Aškerac. Furthermore, Grabić's article "Moral-Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala" in the 1915 issues of *Hrvatska straža* critiques Bazala's positivist and materialist views expressed in an article published in *Hrvatsko kolo* in 1907 under the title "National Culture." The present study will direct its attention towards the latter critique, specifically Grabić's examination of Albert Bazala's moral-cultural perspectives.

Prior to addressing the core aspects of the study, it is deemed beneficial to provide a concise overview of the biographies of Grabić and Bazala, along with a discussion of their intellectual contributions and scholarly output.

## *1. A Concise Account of the Life and Principal Works of Petar Grabić and Albert Bazala*

### *1.1. Petar Grabić (1882–1963)*

Petar Grabić was born on 28 November 1882 in the village of Širitovci near Drniš.<sup>3</sup> He attended the first three grades of elementary school in Drinovci from 1889 to 1892, and the fourth grade as a seminary preparatory student at Visovac from 1892 to 1893. In Sinj, he completed the fifth grade from 1893 to 1894 and continued his studies there from 1897 to 1898. On 25 September 1898, he formally initiated his monastic formation into the Franciscan order, thereby

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Barbara Ćuk, "Ivan Duns Skot i skotizam u Hrvatskoj periodici prve polovice 20. Stoljeća" ["John Duns Scotus and Scotism in Croatian Periodicals of the First Half of the 20th Century"], *Bogoslovska smotra* 80/4 (2014), pp. 1112–1115.

<sup>3</sup> The following books about Petar Grabić have been published so far, listed in chronological order: Krsto Kržanić (ur.), *Mn. O. dr. fra Petar Grabić, Životne crtice i glavnija djela. In memoriam 1882–1963* ["Dr. Fr. Petar Grabić: Biographical Sketches and Major Works. In Memoriam 1882–1963"] (Split: Franjevačka provincija Presvetoga Otkupitelja, 1964); Ivan Macut, Petar Macut, *Petar Grabić. Nova revija – Vjeri i nauci* [*Petar Grabić: Nova Revija - To Faith and Doctrine*] (Split: Služba Božja, 2018). In our presentation, we follow the more recent work chronologically.

adopting the monastic habit. On 4 October 1902, Grabić formally committed himself to monastic life in Zaoštrog. After completing his novitiate, he moved to Šibenik to continue his academic pursuits, where he undertook two years of philosophy from 1899 to 1901. He subsequently relocated to Makarska to continue his theological studies, remaining there from 1901 to 1903. The provincial administration later funded his postgraduate studies at the Franciscan Antonianum Institute in Rome, where he pursued a course in dogmatics from 1903 to 1904. He was ordained a priest on 26 March 1905 in Split. In 1913, Grabić obtained a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical University of the Angelicum in Rome. Upon his return to the province, Grabić began teaching dogmatic subjects and, during the administration of Provincial Fra Karlo Eterović, he also taught philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the course of his academic career, he also fulfilled the role of a formator for students. According to Dr Fra Karlo Balić, who studied under him in Makarska from 1920 to 1922, Grabić was a man of keen intellect and great heart, able to present even the most complex theological truths vividly and convincingly. Balić personally regarded him as an exemplary candidate for the role of seminary professor. Grabić demonstrated a close adherence to contemporary theological movements, both domestically in Croatia and internationally. In his capacity as a theology instructor, he engaged in collaborative endeavours with a plethora of journals during this period. Drawing upon his experience, he recognised that publication frequently included delays, resulting in the dissemination of information being somewhat outdated by the time it reached the public. This experience motivated him to give full consideration to the establishment of a Franciscan journal in Croatia. The decision to establish a shared cultural periodical was made during the period of 1910 to 1920, at the instigation of Grabić. In the aftermath of the First World War, this initiative was realised with the establishment of *Nova revija* in 1922, with Grabić assuming the role of editor until 1931. Furthermore, Grabić advocated for the establishment of a provincial printing press. Subsequent to his appointment as provincial, he and the provincial definitorium reached a decision on 28 December 1926 to proceed with the purchase of the Croatian Cooperative Printing House in Šibenik. Grabić served as provincial on six occasions, and during his administration, he is known to have sent several members of the province who were exceptionally gifted to Rome. The most notable of these was Fra Karlo Balić, a theologian of international renown. In the aftermath of the Second World War, on 13 July 1947, Grabić was apprehended by communist

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<sup>4</sup> For Karl Eterović's philosophical work, we refer to the following article: Ivan Macut, "Filozofski rad fra Karla Eterovića" ["The Philosophical Work of Fr. Karlo Eterović"], *Diacovensia: teološki prilozi* 29/1 (2021), pp. 13–26.

authorities and transferred to Zagreb. He was sentenced to fourteen years of imprisonment and deprived of all political and civil rights, pensions, and social security for a period of five years. From 1947 to 1951, he was detained in the penal-correctional facility in Stara Gradiška. From 1951 he resided in Omiš and subsequently in Split, where he passed away on 29 March 1963. Grabić's scholarly oeuvre consists exclusively of academic articles, the majority of which are of a polemical nature, rather than monographs. Notable works include "The Shaky Foundation of Modern Culture (On the Theory of Unlimited Freedom)" (1924),<sup>5</sup> "The Defeat of the Materialist View of the Soul" (1928),<sup>6</sup> and "The Collapse of Materialist Anthropology" (1937),<sup>7</sup> among others.

### 1.2. Albert Bazala (1877–1947)

Albert Bazala was born on 13 July 1877 in Brno, Moravia.<sup>8</sup> His mother Amelija was the sister of Croatian philosopher Đuro Arnold. Bazala attended elementary school in Bjelovar from 1883 to 1887 and completed his secondary education in Bjelovar, Slavonska Požega, and Zagreb, graduating in 1895. He subsequently pursued his academic studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, where he obtained his degree in 1899. Prior to 1906, he was first employed as a teacher at the Gornjogradska Gimnazija high school in Zagreb, and then, until 1909, he took up a position at the Women's Lyceum, also in Zagreb. He was awarded his doctorate in 1900 and completed his habilitation in 1904 with a thesis entitled "Marulić's Moral-Philosophical Work." Following the completion of his habilitation, Bazala assumed the role of private docent at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, concurrently undertaking further studies abroad. In 1909, he was appointed to the position of associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, and was elected full professor in 1912. It was at his initiative that a Public University was established. In 1920, Bazala was appointed Commissioner for Education and Religion of the Royal Croatian-Slavonian Government. In 1922, following Đuro Arnold's recommendation, he became a full member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. In 1927,

<sup>5</sup> Petar Grabić, "Klimav temelj moderne kulture (O teoriji neograničene slobode)", *Nova revija* 3/2 (1924), pp. 113–123.

<sup>6</sup> Petar Grabić, "Poraz materijalističkog nazora o duši", *Nova revija* 7/4 (1928), pp. 358–371.

<sup>7</sup> Petar Grabić, "Slom materijalističke antropologije", *Nova revija* 16/5 (1937), pp. 297–319.

<sup>8</sup> As far as we know, no book about Bazala has been published so far. However, numerous occasional and scholarly articles about him have been published. He has also been included in a philosophical chrestomathy, from which we take the basic information about his life and work: Franjo Zenko, "Albert Bazala", *Novija hrvatska filozofija* ["Modern Croatian Philosophy"], Franjo Zenko (ur.) (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1995), pp. 197–211.

Bazala established the philosophical-psychological journal *Revija za filozofiju i psihologiju* (Philosophical and Psychological Review). In 1932, he assumed the position of Rector at the University of Zagreb. In 1933, he was appointed President of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, a position he held for three terms. During the Second World War, and the period of the Independent State of Croatia, Bazala was retired on two occasions: initially by force, and later at his own request. Consequently, he was expelled from the Academy. After the dissolution of the Independent State of Croatia, Bazala resumed his involvement with the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. However, he passed away on 12 August 1947 in Zagreb. Bazala's philosophical oeuvre includes important books as well as numerous scholarly articles. Among his philosophical books, his *History of Philosophy*, published in three volumes in 1906, 1909, and 1912, is particularly noteworthy. Other notable works include "Materialism or Idealism in History" (1915),<sup>9</sup> "Philosophical Aspiration in the Spiritual Life of Croatia since the Fall of Absolutism" (1935),<sup>10</sup> and "On the Idea of a National Philosophy" (1938),<sup>11</sup> among others.

## 2. *National Culture – Albert Bazala*

In 1907, Bazala published an article titled *National Culture* in the journal *Hrvatsko kolo*. The work does not contain formal subheadings, but it is organised numerically within the text, thereby creating an effective division into sections. It is evident that Bazala's article is structured into seven sections, or thematically interconnected subdivisions, under the overarching title *National Culture*: 1. General Considerations on Culture; 2. The Content of Culture; 3. Material Culture; 4. Influence on Culture; 5. Difficulties of Such an Understanding of Culture; 6. On the Nation; and, finally, 7. The Ideal of National Culture.

In addressing Bazala's reflections on culture, Grabić commences with a Bazala's definition of culture: culture is defined as the aggregate of all human endeavours and resulting creations, which are directed towards the enhancement of human society. Its fundamental characteristic is its objective: to cultivate, shape, and thereby perfect and ennoble the material given by nature.<sup>12</sup> Bazala's

<sup>9</sup> Albert Bazala, *Materijalizam i idealizam u povijesti* (Zagreb: Tisak kr. Zemaljske tiskare, 1915).

<sup>10</sup> Albert Bazala, *Filozofijska težnja u duhovnom životu Hrvatske od pada apsolutizma na ovamo* (Zagreb: Tisak Tipografije, 1936) (reprinted from commemorative book *Obzor*, 1935).

<sup>11</sup> Albert Bazala, *O ideji nacionalne filozofije* (Zagreb: Knjižnica prijatelja Hrvatskog sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1938). (reprinted from *Alma Mater Croatica*, 1938).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Albert Bazala, "Narodna kultura" ["National Culture"], *Hrvatsko kolo* 3 (1907), p. 255.

theoretical framework posits that culture does not exist as an inherent attribute or a pre-defined entity. Instead, it is a social construct that derives its fundamental significance from a juxtaposition with the concept of nature. Bazala's example elucidates this dynamic, illustrating how culture influences the land, thereby regulating its yield. In contrast to the spontaneity observed in the natural world, humans engage in deliberate cultivation, planting and sowing, with the aspiration of securing a substantial harvest.<sup>13</sup> This analogy can also be applied to human beings.

“Even a human being in the natural state is nothing more than unshaped material, a wild creature; and it is culture that softens and refines him, as the home removes his natural harshness and roughness, ennobles his character – in a word, makes him civilised. Humanity (*humanitas*) and refinement (*mores politici*) have always been regarded as signs of human culture.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Bazala, culture transforms causal forces – both in nature and in human life – into purposeful functions. Through culture, humans exercise agency over nature and others by turning causal relations into purposive ones. The “wild” human is dependent on and subject to natural forces; in this sense, the cultured human is more independent. The concept of the wild or natural human posits an individual who does not anticipate future concerns; rather, they are steered by the present moment, unencumbered by concerns, and guided by instinct. This concept positions the wild or natural human as more in tune with nature than the cultivated human. The human being, in his natural state, is subject to the direct influence of nature, and its affective life is a natural phenomenon. In his instinctive life, he is a ‘child of nature,’ never suppressing his impulses, but freely satisfying them whenever and however he desires.<sup>15</sup>

In comparing the wild with the cultured human, Bazala emphasises that the former is akin to a child, predominantly steered by instinctive life and immediate impressions. Just as a clear distinction exists between a child and an adult, so too is there a discernible difference between the wild and the cultured human. However, Bazala's perspective acknowledges the existence of innate, subconscious drives within the human psyche that persist over life and exert a continuous influence on an individual's behaviour. The fundamental distinction, however, lies in the fact that, in the cultured human, these impulses do not manifest with unbridled freedom or unrestricted expression.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bazala, p. 255.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bazala, pp. 256–257.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bazala, pp. 257–258.

In light of these factors, Bazala proceeds to introduce the concept of culture. It has been demonstrated that culture has the capacity to elevate natural life to a higher level by placing human instincts in the background. The suppression of these instincts is not absolute; rather, it is tempered to allow for their indirect influence on life. Bazala further elucidates that culture subordinates instinctual energy to purposeful thought, thereby transforming a disordered collection of nature-given capacities into a system of organised forces. This process liberates humans from the compulsion of nature.

“The essence of cultural life, therefore, necessarily involves the mastery and organisation of instinctual and affective life, and it is thus both unjustified and uncultured to elevate naturalism to the extent that the naturalness of instinctual life prevents the refinement of natural gifts and instincts toward harmonious completeness, failing to recognize that the freedom of the cultured human is built upon subordination, which does not entail the destruction of instinctual life. <...> Culture inevitably gives rise to forms in which the natural spontaneity and contingency of life are stabilized, and which, in relation to the impulsive course of mental and bodily events, confer upon life a certain constancy (stability) and firm structure (Fassung).”<sup>17</sup>

Bazala then discusses the content of culture. According to him, culture encompasses both the material and the intellectual dimensions of life, aiming to improve external living conditions while cultivating the internal capacities and abilities of human beings. Thus, the content of culture has two aspects: material and intellectual. Bazala contests the mythological concept of a period in which humans satisfied all their needs directly in nature, contending that such a period would not have led to the emergence of culture. The material content of culture, according to Bazala, refers to all human inventions created to facilitate everyday life. In his words: “It therefore encompasses everything that humans required in the home and in the field, in hunting and in war, from the first use of fire and weapons, tools, and jewellery, up to the most advanced means of transport and technology in agriculture, crafts, and trade.”<sup>18</sup> Material culture, too, reflects order in life, unfolding in a continuous stream and rhythm, and giving rise to customs, legal relationships, and social and state institutions. Bazala is convinced that all of the aforementioned elements serve as the foundation for the material conditions of human life. It is evident that these conditions have considerable impact on the individual. Specifically, the individual becomes connected to organised wholes, systems, and customs that outlive him and are transmitted from generation to generation. This engenders

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<sup>17</sup> Id., p. 258.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

the perception that external circumstances exert greater influence on him than he is able to exert on them.<sup>19</sup>

“This has imparted to cultural forms a certain supra-individual character, making them appear to the individual as something elevated, to which one must submit, as something that does not depend on one’s own will. Thus, ordinances, laws, and customs became sacrosanct, established by some higher authority, which is in fact nothing other than the recognition of their objective power.”<sup>20</sup>

Bazala observes that social institutions and regulations remain effective only for a certain period; when they lose their relevance to individuals and become empty forms devoid of content, they disappear and are replaced by new, better ones. In the struggle between old and new values, the latter gradually prevail and occupy the entirety of social space. In this context, Bazala concludes: “The peak of culture in a given period is the state in which all individuals are bearers of the social atmosphere: periods of the highest culture are always manifested as unified and coherent in lifestyle, thought, sentiment, and volition.”<sup>21</sup>

In continuing his discussion of material culture in terms of the maintenance of life, or the instinct for self-preservation, Bazala specifically addresses historical (economic) materialism and naturalism.

Karl Marx is the founder of so-called historical (economic) materialism.<sup>22</sup> In interpreting Marx’s philosophical thought, Bazala emphasises that Marx saw egoism as the driving force of history and of cultural development.<sup>23</sup> Bazala disagrees with Marx on several key points. First, he maintains that Marx is mistaken “when he considers humans merely as products of circumstances” and “denies any influence of the spirit, failing to recognize that it is not only circumstances that govern humans, but that humans, through their own intellectual energy,

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Bazala, pp. 258–259.

<sup>20</sup> Id., p. 259.

<sup>21</sup> Id., p. 260.

<sup>22</sup> In another place, Bazala writes the same: “From a philosophical–historical perspective, Marx’s doctrine, known as economic materialism, is materialistic.” Albert Bazala, *Materijalizam ili idealizam u povijesti* [“Materialism or Idealism in History”] (Zagreb: Tisak kr. zemaljske tiskare, 1915), p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> In *Materialism or Idealism in History*, Bazala emphasises the positive aspects of Marx’s reflections on culture: “It is Marx’s merit that he highlighted the unity of cultural life, that is, he emphasised the idea that all forms of culture – from economics to religion, the political and social order, science, art, customs, and morality – form an organic whole and are closely interconnected. It is also his merit that, at a time of excessive idealistic enthusiasm, he drew attention to the importance of economic conditions for successful cultural work.” Bazala, *Materijalizam ili idealizam u povijesti* [“Materialism or Idealism in History”], p. 22.

also govern circumstances.”<sup>24</sup> Second, Bazala contends that Marx is wrong in asserting “that a socialist cultural order will emerge merely through economic evolution, whereas its emergence requires a will that deliberately seeks it as an end.”<sup>25</sup> Bazala clearly distinguishes between nature and human society. While nature operates without purpose, human society progresses because humans do not simply adapt to the circumstances into which they are born; rather, they adapt certain conditions of life to their own abilities. Bazala further explains: “Adapting to circumstances is a property of natural beings; it is a property of humans to employ the means of reason to shape life circumstances according to their goals and aspirations. Hence, culture is not merely a product of natural conditions, as in the case of ant or bee societies, but is largely a product of ideas.”<sup>26</sup>

With regard to naturalism, Bazala advances the argument that this perspective can, to a certain extent, be regarded as expedient, insofar as it demands nothing more of humans than the capacity to adapt to the prevailing tendencies of natural development.<sup>27</sup> However, Bazala contests the notion that naturalism can serve as the foundation for cultural striving. He contends that culture is a struggle for ideals, and such a struggle can be justified only by a theory in which ideas are not merely powerless shadows. Bazala then continues:

“But in cultural development, it is not only a question of what nature demands of us, but of what we demand of nature, and of the goals that ideas set for development. Ideas, even in their formation – when they appear to stand in opposition to the conditions of life, or indeed stand in opposition to the conditions of a part

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<sup>24</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 262.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, In *Materialism or Idealism in History*, Bazala expresses the same critique of Marx and his thought in the context of the emergence of culture within economic factors. Cf. Bazala, *Materijalizam ili idealizam u povijesti* [“Materialism or Idealism in History”], p. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 262.

<sup>27</sup> In one place, Bazala writes about naturalism: “This view can also be called naturalism, since it regards history as an entirely natural process, as a course of phenomena caused by the influence of nature and determined by strict causality. According to it, all mental life, science and art, legal and moral views, including religious thought, are products of natural influences <...> Cultural life is impressed upon these natural conditions and consists in the extent to which a person adapts to them as fully and effectively as possible; the development of the spirit, especially the intellect, is welcome as a means by which the harshness of nature is overcome. The human mind establishes humanity’s power over nature; inventions and technical skill compel it to provide more to humans than it would offer by itself. In this dependence on nature, all cultural life arises from irresistible necessity: nature, though overcome by the intellect, still lies as a heavy burden on humans and shapes their history.” Bazala, *Materijalizam ili idealizam u povijesti* [“Materialism or Idealism in History”], pp. 13–14.

of society – serve as instruments to guide interests, and through them, become guides for society.”<sup>28</sup>

Since ideas influence culture, Bazala maintains that it is appropriate to understand culture as ideational: “It encompasses science and art, it encompasses all ideas with which humans have been inspired in religious, moral, and political life, which, besides their real-economic foundation, also have an ideational basis.”<sup>29</sup> Bazala notes that the set of ideas amounting to spiritual life is not always the same, but changes according to nations and historical periods. While some ideals perish, others emerge, and this applies to religion, morality,<sup>30</sup> politics, science, and, ultimately, art: “At one time, political ideals rise to prominence and attract all attention; at another, a religious movement captures the soul of an entire nation or the spirit of the age; elsewhere, moral and artistic questions prevail, or the entire era becomes absorbed in scientific goals.” In this context, Bazala strongly emphasises the following thought:

“Every era has its own needs and aspirations, which it considers decisive for the value of life, and every era has its own cultural ideal, in which the entire worldview and judgment of humanity’s place within it are reflected, so that each period has its own understanding of what it means to be human and to live a human life. Ideational culture creates the human being.”<sup>31</sup>

In relation to material culture, ideational culture is like an end in relation to a means, for economic progress must serve the development of the spirit. Bazala distinguishes between so-called objective (external) culture, whose very status as culture is questionable, and subjective (internal) culture. For Bazala, it is crucial that culture is rooted in the unique character of a nation, for it is within this culture that the soul of the people is preserved. This issue is particularly pronounced among small nations, which are subject to the overwhelming

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<sup>28</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 263.

<sup>29</sup> Id., p. 264.

<sup>30</sup> Regarding morality, Bazala holds the following: “Morality is such a significant mark of a human being that without it we cannot conceive of a complete person. It constitutes a part of their being, and for this reason it cannot be an obstacle to freedom or free development; on the contrary, there is no free development against it or without it, and in the true sense, a person is free only when they are a significant human being.” Albert Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [‘Modern’ and National Literature] (Zagreb: Tisak Antuna Scholtza, 1904), p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 264.

influence of more powerful cultures.<sup>32</sup> However, even stronger nations<sup>33</sup> are not immune to this influence: “Indeed, humans have demonstrated great skill in being able to live even in a skin that is not their own.”<sup>34</sup> Bazala maintains that only culture which has become a living reality truly deserves to bear the name of culture.<sup>35</sup>

This understanding of culture also presents certain difficulties. It might seem that the impact of human will in the creation of culture is being overestimated. In this context, Bazala rejects the position of ideological historicism, which regards ideas as all-powerful forces. Rejecting the materialist conception, Bazala maintains “that the possibility and guarantee of all progress is founded on the spiritual disciplining of our teleological volitional energies.”<sup>36</sup>

Bazala considers the following to be true: “The justification of national culture is therefore based on the cultural value of the individual.”<sup>37</sup> However, he cautions against interpreting this claim as equivalent to individual diversity, for the latter does not harmonise the gifts and abilities through which true value is attained. Individuality, he argues, does not arise from unrestrained freedom, but through the cultivation of one’s gifts, which produces a complete person.<sup>38</sup> He

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<sup>32</sup> “For a nation to become cultured, it is enough to have adopted a foreign culture; but whether it will exert any influence in cultural development depends on how it has made use of it, and it certainly makes the worst use if it merely adapts to the currents of other cultured nations.” Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [*‘Modern’ and National Literature*], p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> In another place, Bazala writes: “A nation is cultured to the extent that it influences the development of general human culture. This is also the reason why we call only those nations cultured that have once left a mark on the culture of humanity; and even if they have perished, part of their work remains a living element in European culture.” Id., p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 269.

<sup>35</sup> In another place, Bazala writes the following on the topic: “It is precisely for this reason entirely wrong to think that its development consists in adapting to foreign models, because through such adaptation the national spirit is forcibly diverted onto paths contrary to or at least unpleasant for its being. On the contrary: all cultural creations, all more perfect models, must first pass through the national soul and adapt to it; in it they must be reflected in a distinctive way, thus perfecting its character. If this does not happen, the spirit of our nation will gradually lose its distinctiveness, will never exert influence on culture, and our nation will forever remain a satellite of larger and more culturally developed peoples, in whom it will ultimately be entirely lost.” Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [*‘Modern’ and National Literature*], p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 270.

<sup>37</sup> Bazala, p. 271. Ljerka Schiffler, providing a comprehensive commentary on Bazala’s philosophical work, writes in one place: “Bazala is aware that the individualised culture of humanity, as embodied in the culture of a nation, is the only chance for its development <...>.” Ljerka Schiffler, “Filozofskijsko nastojanje Alberta Bazale” [“The Philosophical Striving of Albert Bazala”], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 14/1–2(27–28) (1988), p. 104.

<sup>38</sup> In his polemic with the ‘youth,’ Bazala writes about individuality, among other things: “If this were not the case, they would know that every person is not immediately a clear and



rejects a naturalistic understanding of this concept, stressing that individuality is not a product of nature, but of culture.<sup>39</sup>

“The concept of individuality always points toward some ideal of humanity, which, in each particular case, provides the measure of value, indicating how much human life has been enriched by it. <...> It is thus demanded that a person impress their mark of value upon all institutions, and even upon the inanimate nature that surrounds them – and idealist philosophy, despite all its excesses, nevertheless maintains the right in its conviction that humans are masters of nature, insofar as they assign limits to natural objects through the exercise of their spirit.”<sup>40</sup>

With regard to the national spirit, Bazala emphasises that he does not consider this spirit to be a constant, unchanging entity. He further elaborates that the endeavour to discern and nurture the national spirit is an ongoing process, rather than a finite undertaking. The national spirit is subject to a variety of influences and must undergo a process of refinement if it is to manifest as a pure and enlightened form of life.<sup>41</sup>

Toward the conclusion of his discussion, Bazala turns to the topic of Croatian national culture. He maintains that the state and society have the greatest influence on the formation of cultural life, as they are the product of centuries of experience, circumstances, and adversities in which humans organise interpersonal relations, primarily through customs and tradition. Instead of being the bearer of national life, where individuals could express themselves most freely, where politics meets ethics, and where social authority ought to reflect the will of the people,<sup>42</sup> the state today is largely a lifeless and spiritless mechanism, the

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distinct individual, and that individuality is not the starting point of development but the goal, which every person should strive to attain.” Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [‘Modern’ and National Literature], p. 29. In his work on the aesthetic views of Albert Bazala, Zlatko Posavac clearly emphasises that the young Bazala belonged, within Modernism, to the ‘group of the old’ and continues as follows: “In other words, from the position of the ‘old’, Bazala was one of the few and rare actual theoretical interpreters of the ideas of the ‘young’.” Cf. Zlatko Posavac, “Estetički nazori Alberta Bazale u doba hrvatske Moderne” [“Albert Bazala’s Aesthetic Views in the Era of the Croatian Modern”], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 14/1–2(27–28) (1988), p. 136.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 271.

<sup>40</sup> Id., p. 272.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Bazala, p. 274.

<sup>42</sup> “A nation is a unique whole on one land, with one language and one past, with uniform regulations and interests, with one way of thinking and of remaining silent. Its land and material culture are its body, its language is its psychophysical organism, and its past, present thinking and silence, together with its aspirations for the future, constitute its soul.” Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [‘Modern’ and National Literature], p. 46.

bureaucracy of which stifles all free initiative. This can be countered by education, which alone liberates the people and introduces a living, self-generated spirit into state institutions. In this context, Bazala emphasises the special importance of schools and upbringing.<sup>43</sup> While some argue that education and culture elevate humans above the masses, and others attribute to culture an almost aristocratic value – implying that achieving such a cultural state might not even be desirable – Bazala contends that the goal must be to make education and enlightenment widely accessible, as they guarantee cultural development.<sup>44</sup> Whether this goal can in fact be fully achieved, Bazala questions, but insists that it is a goal worth striving for.<sup>45</sup>

Bazala believes that art<sup>46</sup> can contribute to this process in a particularly significant way, and within the realm of art, music holds a special place. He is convinced that our artistic life is not detached from national life; on the contrary, it is of exceptional importance to life itself, becoming a vital element in the struggle for existence. He continues with the following words:

“Since national life cannot be separated from the ethical, art necessarily falls under the ethical perspective. Only narrow-mindedness could seek to impose limitations on artistic freedom where none exist—primarily because nothing that springs from true freedom, from individuality in our sense, can be immoral, whereas the naturalistic notion of freedom cannot be called such at all. Indeed, the national foundation guarantees that when an artist acts freely in the full exercise of artistic creation, they act morally as well, since they reveal the ethical convictions of their deepest nature, not those of another. More than that: in the interest of art itself, the demand for moral art can be legitimately set. <...> This is precisely the nobility of the artistic vocation, that it serves as an ideal philosopher, bringing to expression our entire – thus also our moral – psyche.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], p. 276.

<sup>44</sup> In another place, Bazala writes the following about the development of culture, among other things: “The development of culture is based on the fact that each individual, striving for the greatest possible advancement, passes on all their abilities to their offspring, thereby promoting the development of the ideal human being. Thus, the development of culture is a struggle for survival, in which only the best will endure <...>”. Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [‘Modern’ and National Literature], p. 19. A little further, Bazala writes: “And this is the culture we strive for, to attain the ideal of the significant human being and the ideal community of such people”. Id., p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], pp. 277–278.

<sup>46</sup> Analysing the moderate irrationalism in Bazala, Restović very aptly notes the close connection between philosophy and art in Bazala: “Moreover, not only do philosophy and art share the same root, but there also exists a bond between them that is difficult to break.” Ivan Restović, “Umjereni iracionalizam Alberta Bazale” [“Albert Bazala’s Moderate Irrationalism”], *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 48/1(95) (2022), p. 199.

<sup>47</sup> Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], pp. 280–281.

Regarding music, Bazala holds that it partially fulfils this ethical and cultural requirement because it is still largely based on the national sentiment and uses folk music as the foundation for the development of higher musical forms. Ultimately, its greatest influence lies in its connection to the national soul.

Towards the end of his work, Bazala makes sure not to neglect science, which he recognises as having international character. He considers thought, action, and suffering as the spheres in which the unique combination of a people's psychological elements manifests itself.<sup>48</sup>

“A worldview is not merely pure thought but also feeling and aspiration, and the highest purpose of science will be to construct, upon this distinctive psychological makeup, a unified and comprehensive picture of the world and of life. Its pinnacle is national philosophy.”<sup>49</sup>

At the conclusion of his discussion, Bazala asserts that there is no sphere of cultural endeavour in which the ideal of national culture cannot be realised. This ideal holds primacy over objective culture because it represents the free manifestation of inner human life and is intimately connected with morality, which – following Kant – is characterized by freedom. According to Bazala, national culture shapes the individual by providing an ideal form of life in which existence becomes meaningful. In this way, the artistic character of national culture is revealed, for it carries within itself the law of its own form. Bazala aligns with Nietzsche and Goethe in regarding cultural life as art,<sup>50</sup> with man as its highest artist: “he is so when he imparts to his life a worthy form, renders it beautiful and good, and realizes in it, with particular harmony, the idea of humanity.” Finally, Bazala emphasises that this ideal is never fully fixed: as the concept of the ideal human evolves, new traits continuously emerge, and individuals perpetually strive to reconcile reality with the ideal in the pursuit of happiness. It is precisely this unending striving, this ever-present tension between reality and ideals, that serves as a constant impetus for humans to improve life. The idealism of culture, Bazala concludes, lies in the fact that in this pursuit human energy never flags.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Bazala, p. 281.

<sup>49</sup> Id., p. 282.

<sup>50</sup> Bazala holds that, despite his numerous delusions, he was nevertheless a great artist. Cf. Bazala, *‘Moderni’ i narodna književnost* [*‘Modern’ and National Literature*], p. 30.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Bazala, “Narodna kultura” [“National Culture”], pp. 282–283.

### 3. *Grabić's Critique of Bazala's Views*

In his study "Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala," Petar Grabić provides a critical analysis of several assertions put forward by Bazala. The following sections will delineate the principal points of Bazala's arguments that Grabić scrutinises and challenges.

Grabić emphasises that the foundation of the entirety of Bazala's philosophical reflection can be summarised under a single denominator: positivism.<sup>52</sup> On this basis, Grabić extracts certain elements of Bazala's thought and focuses his critique accordingly. As elucidated by Grabić, positivism is a doctrine "that does not concern itself with examining the core of life's development, but is content with superficial consideration." Furthermore, it is a perspective "that begins with matter and, extending even to the genius of the great mind, measures everything by the same standard".<sup>53</sup> In addition, Grabić advances the following argument on the topic of morality: in the realm of ethics, the prevailing understanding of the distinction between good and evil has historically been independent of the arbitrary will or development of any individual, even the most modern one. This statement is followed by a brief addition: the prevailing consensus at the time was that all moral truths were considered valid for all individuals. However, moral positivists rejected the notion of universal moral validity, asserting that moral truths were significant only in certain cultural and historical contexts.<sup>54</sup> In summary, Grabić emphasises that, according to Bazala's teaching, "a person may or may not be aware of their full autonomy in moral and legal matters, yet all cultural forms depend on their arbitrary will," and, moreover, that "Dr Bazala does not acknowledge God."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> In one study, Grabić analyzes Bazala's views on positivism, written in the third volume of *History of Philosophy*, and concludes the following: "Even from this brief excerpt, it seems that Dr Bazala hesitates. Positivism supposedly demonstrated that moral views are changeable; yet, on the other hand, it seems to him that this contradicts the demands of absolute morality. He does not know how to reconcile these two." Petar Grabić, "Obnova čovječanstva na bazi novog morala" ["The Renewal of Humanity on the Basis of a New Morality"], *Nova revija* 4 (1922), p. 290. Let us mention here that Grabić, in the first note of this study, wrote that the works of our liberal intelligentsia prompted him to write it, and as the specific work he cites only one of Bazala's works: Albert Bazala, *Etika i narodno gospodarstvo* ["Ethics and the National Economy"] (Zagreb, 1915). Cf. Grabić, "Obnova čovječanstva na bazi novog morala" ["The Renewal of Humanity on the Basis of a New Morality"], p. 290.

<sup>53</sup> Grabić, "Čudoredni-kulturni vidici i dr. A Bazala" ["Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala"], p. 275.

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*, p. 276.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*, p. 277. Grabić is convinced that infidelity has distorted our cultural life in its most refined forms. Cf. Petar Grabić, "Odsjev pračovječne kulture? (Kritičko-antropološke bilješke)"

The conventional understanding of the distinction between good and evil has its origins in ancient Greek thought, and the range of moral and ethical convictions held by individuals is extensive. Bazala's seminal assertion is that these convictions are subject to constant replacement and substitution, whereby old perspectives are superseded by new ones. Grabić challenges this assertion, providing evidence to support his critique. As a proponent of an objective moral perspective, he acknowledged that it is not possible for him to deny the existence of highly diverse opinions in the realm of morality. In this context, he concludes: "As demonstrated in the preceding discourse, it can be concluded that individuals possess a wide array of divergent and even contradictory perspectives on numerous moral truths. However, it should be noted that this does not imply that all moral truths are susceptible to complete modification or that they are contingent upon the arbitrary volition of the human spirit."<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, Grabić contests Bazala's assertion concerning the genesis of the dichotomy between good and evil.<sup>57</sup> Grabić acknowledges that individuals may interpret actions differently, leading to divergent perceptions of what constitutes good or evil. Nevertheless, the fundamental distinction between good and evil is consistent across all cultures. For instance, Grabić draws parallels between the concept of treachery against one's nation and that of self-sacrifice for its benefit.<sup>58</sup> Grabić is convinced that if these truths were rooted in the nature of the individual, or dependent on arbitrary will, they would quickly disappear from the domain of human psychology. The author rejects the claim that the individual is the source of these truths, concluding that the distinction between good and evil is a general and necessary one. In order to be explained, this concept must therefore have a general and necessary cause; this cause can only

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[“Traces of Primal Human Culture? (Critical-Anthropological Notes)”], *Nova revija* 11 (1932), p. 3. In the study entitled *Cultural Crisis and Faith in God*, Grabić links the loss of faith and contemporary relativism to the crisis of the modern human being. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Kulturna kriza i vjera u Boga” [“Cultural Crisis and Faith in God”], *Nova revija* 2 (1932), pp. 97–107.

<sup>56</sup> Grabić, “Čudoredni-kulturni vidici i dr. A Bazala” [“Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala”], p. 278.

<sup>57</sup> In another place, Grabić emphasises that it is mistaken to consider the nation as the source of social and ethical values. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Najveća etička laž našega vremena” [“The Greatest Ethical Lie of Our Time”], *Nova revija* 1 (1926), p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> In one article, Grabić reflects on the justification for someone to sacrifice their life for their homeland within a godless system. It seems to him that the argument – that our individual interests are included in the common good – is insufficient, since it is well known that there are many war profiteers, usurers, and smugglers who enriched themselves precisely because they disregarded the common and social good. According to Grabić, it is evident that the foundation, or justification, must be sought elsewhere. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Socijalna vrijednost kršćanske savjesti” [“The Social Value of the Christian Conscience”], *Nova revija* 2 (1926), p. 126.

be the real distinction between good and evil, between virtue and vice.<sup>59</sup> Grabić also reminds us that Bazala himself maintains that many laws and truths outlast individuals, giving the impression that surviving customs influence individuals more than individuals influence them. He then continues:

“Even this very fact – that moral truths outlast individuals – should have led our author to deeper reflections. The fact of their survival provides clear evidence – particularly the enduring and eloquent survival, as we have demonstrated with fundamental moral truths – that these truths contain an inherent, real force which resists the selfishness and arbitrariness of the individual. This point gains even stronger support when one considers that these truths are imposed upon each individual by some irresistible force. <...> Thus, the moral law does not arise from the nature of individuals, and even less from their arbitrary will. The view held by those who defend the superindividual and extra-individual character of the moral law and social order is far more accurate than that of the Zagreb professor, who, in the name of national culture, sought to bestow upon us a materialistic-positivist trifle borrowed from the shop of German, anti-Christian, and culturally foreign influences.”<sup>60</sup>

In the continuation of his work, Grabić further and more forcefully rejects positivism and moral relativism. He argues that if the concepts of good and evil, or of the moral and the immoral, were contingent upon human arbitrariness, then it would follow that there would be no evil that could not be called good, and vice versa. In this passage, Grabić refines his critique by employing the extreme example of murderers. Grabić’s position is that if the basis of morality were derived exclusively from human nature or arbitrary will, we would be unable to condemn these individuals. Moreover, he maintains that the state, progress, and the reputation of the homeland cannot be regarded as the ultimate criteria for determining what is moral or immoral. Ultimately, Grabić contends that positivists repudiate the genuine distinction between good and evil.<sup>61</sup>

Grabić believes that Bazala’s concept of personal development, that is, his individualistic system, essentially undermines the Christian view of human purpose and the ultimate goal of life in this world.

“In Christian philosophy, the happiness of the future life depends on certain constant, objective rules of moral conduct. If we wish to attain the ultimate goal, we must obey the will of God and carry out His commandments, regardless of whether this promotes the development of our personality or not.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Grabić, “Ćudoredni-kulturni vidici i dr. A Bazala” [“Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala”], p. 278.

<sup>60</sup> Id., p. 280.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Grabić, pp. 281–282.

<sup>62</sup> Id., p. 285.

Grabić contests the notion of absolute autonomy of the individual in the context of cultural achievements. He argues that social relations are contingent upon objective norms, which are either grounded in natural law or prescribed by positive law. The question of whether unrestricted personal development should be permitted, that is, whether each individual should be permitted to act solely in accordance with their inner nature and feelings<sup>63</sup>, would consequently give rise to questions regarding the guarantee of social freedom. Grabić asks whether the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” can be considered as neither moral nor immoral, nor good nor evil, until it is endorsed by an individual’s own nature, thereby ensuring the security of life. He continues by noting that Bazala avoids this conclusion by assuming that a cultured and free person would not commit such transgressions,<sup>64</sup> since it is presumed that all his mental, i.e., psychic, faculties develop harmoniously. Grabić is convinced that the harmonious mental development of rational capacities presupposes certain principles of objective value, by which we judge whether something is harmonious or discordant. It is not tenable to claim that an individual will refrain from acts such as murder, fraud, and the like simply because these acts are harmful to both the individual and society, and do not contribute positively to human development. Grabić contests the validity of such reasoning, stating that it evidences a profound misunderstanding of human society, which, he asserts, is replete with precisely the opposite examples.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> In another study, Grabić reflects on the unlimited freedom of man and the negative consequences of such a stance: “The ideologists of godlessness proclaim the unlimited freedom of man. Man is free to think whatever he wishes and to act as he pleases, even if immediate experience convinces him that this fundamental principle is false. <...> Even here it is written: freedom of thought, freedom of science, freedom of art, freedom of the nation without any limitations; yet it is not considered that these words have no real meaning.” Petar Grabić, “Klimav temelj moderne kulture (O teoriji neograničene slobode)” [“The Unstable Foundation of Modern Culture: On the Theory of Unlimited Freedom”], *Nova revija* 2 (1924), p. 116. In another place, he states that it was precisely the principle of unlimited personal freedom that prompted even the modern state to proclaim itself free and independent. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Prosvjetna politika naše države” [“The Educational Policy of Our State”], *Nova revija* 2 (1925.), p. 164. Finally, Grabić is convinced that talk of absolute freedom is meaningless, because today’s cultural condition points us toward mutual trust, dependence, and gratitude to our ancestors, as well as mutual confidence, without which there can be no progress. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Promatranje današnjice u znaku moderne slobode” [“Observing the Present in Light of Modern Freedom”], *Nova revija* 4 (1933), p. 243.

<sup>64</sup> Grabić believes that a true sign of human freedom is the ability to will and choose either good or evil, that is, truth or, conversely, falsehood. Cf. Petar Grabić, “Sukob dvaju ideologija u našem narodnom životu” [“The Conflict of Two Ideologies in Our National Life”], *Nova revija* 1–2 (1933), p. 78.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Grabić, “Čudoredni–kulturni vidici i dr. A Bazala” [“Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala”], pp. 285–286.

Regarding the relationship between subjective and objective culture, Grabić emphasises that Bazala seeks to subordinate objective culture to the subjective by labelling the objective as pseudo-culture and stripping it of all its meaning. Grabić notes that the opposite view has traditionally prevailed, and he considers Bazala's position doomed to failure. He continues: "The social position of human life demands many sacrifices. If we adopt an individualistic-materialistic standpoint, these sacrifices appear enigmatic. In many cases, society imposes certain duties upon us for the sake of social welfare, which conflict with both our individuality and our personal inclinations."<sup>66</sup>

As an example, Grabić cites the duty of a soldier to be ready to lay down his life for his homeland. Alongside the homeland, the family is another sphere that demands the same approach, he argues, and continues:

"By subordinating objective culture (the enduring principles of morality, sociology, politics, etc.) to the subjective (human inclinations, personal development), one inevitably arrives at a system in which self-interest is everything – that is, materialistic utilitarianism. <...> We know that he does not deny the possibility, and presumably the fact, of self-sacrifice in people, yet this does not justify it. The system is at fault! If it is based – as it is – on egoism, self-sacrifice and rigid self-interest are indistinguishable, because, in the above doctrine, both rest on the individual's inclinations, and there is no objective reason why self-sacrifice and devotion should be elevated above mere self-interest."<sup>67</sup>

In reflecting upon society, Grabić contends that Bazala's analysis provides merely a superficial diagnosis of social maladies. Bazala's theoretical standpoint, he argues, is marked by an individualistic-positivist orientation, leading him to repudiate the conventional elements often encompassed within the rubric of 'objective culture'. According to Bazala, the origins of laws, customs and regulations are not divine, nor do they possess any supra-individual value.<sup>68</sup> Grabić emphasises that humans are social beings and, as such, if they wish to develop harmoniously, they must understand their social position—whether in relation to authorities, to equals, or to those socially inferior to them. This understanding is grounded in supra-individual customs, morally and legally regulated obligations. For Grabić, the logical conclusion is that if the supreme principle is the individual as such, then any development is equally permissible, whether it follows instinctive or ideal directions.<sup>69</sup> He writes: "If certain

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<sup>66</sup> Id., p. 286.

<sup>67</sup> Id., p. 287.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Grabić, p. 291.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Grabić, p. 292.

ideal truths had no objective significance regardless of the subject, then every acting subject could assign the same ethical meaning to truth and falsehood, to good and evil.<sup>70</sup>

In conclusion, Grabić emphasises that it is mistaken to reduce the entirety of culture and its development to individualism, or even to nationality. It is not necessary to reject subjective culture; rather, one must “elevate the proper cultural, moral, intellectual, and social consciousness – whether in the individual, in the family, in the community, or, more broadly, in the life of the state.”<sup>71</sup>

It is noteworthy that even during this period, lifelong marriage was regarded as an unbearable burden, and individuals were inclined to seek separation, a phenomenon that engendered grave repercussions for the nurturing of children, the maintenance of moral principles, and the broader fabric of society.<sup>72</sup> The concept of family virtues, encompassing qualities such as lifelong fidelity, mutual patience, and reciprocal love, through which spouses support each other in life's challenges, can be considered objective goods and elements of objective culture. In addressing social and state life, Grabić posits that the solution lies in the education of the intelligentsia, not in a manner that fosters the pursuit of individuality, personality, and modern personal development to the exclusion of the concept of God, faith, and principles, but rather in a manner that is antithetical to this tendency.<sup>73</sup> In this context, Grabić concludes his work as follows: “The cultural advancement of society is contingent upon its adherence to the principles that are enshrined in the divine, the natural world, and the tenets of Christianity. The pursuit of individual autonomy, which infringes upon the rights of others, will not contribute to societal well-being.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Id., p. 293.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Grabić, p. 293.

<sup>73</sup> In one article, Grabić reflects on the relationship between the national intelligentsia and faith in God, emphasising that the national intelligentsia has betrayed Christianity and does not even feel the need to uphold a theistic standpoint. Cf. Grabić, “Obnova čovječanstva na bazi novog morala” [“The Renewal of Humanity on the Basis of a New Morality”], pp. 289–290. In another place, he emphasises: “One could even accept the principle that the intelligentsia is called to live and work for great ideals and to lead the nation; but how can it do so when it itself has no ideals and does not know where it wanders, finding itself without guidance?! <...> Even if all this were the case, and even if the intelligentsia agreed on what the national ideal actually is, this still would not and could not exhaust the ideals of the intelligentsia: religious, ethical, social, and cultural in general.” Petar Grabić, “Diagonoza naše narodne inteligencije” [“A Diagnosis of Our National Intelligentsia”], *Nova revija* 2 (1930), p. 135.

<sup>74</sup> Grabić, “Čudoredni-kulturni vidici i dr. A Bazala” [“Moral and Cultural Perspectives and Dr. A. Bazala”], p. 294.

### *Conclusion: Justification of Grabić's Critique and Its Philosophical Framework*

In his critique of Albert Bazala's philosophical and cultural views, Grabić characterises Bazala's understanding of culture as positivist and individualistic. Grabić portrays Bazala as a thinker inclined towards naturalism, materialism, and individualism. However, a careful analysis of Bazala's text *National Culture* (1907) shows that such characterisations are philosophically problematic and largely unfounded. From the outset, Bazala's approach to culture explicitly excludes a positivist framework: he does not define culture as a set of empirical facts or as a product of natural or social causal laws, but rather as a conscious and purposeful human endeavour aimed at improving society and humanity. For Bazala, the fundamental characteristic of culture is not causality, but teleology. Culture transforms the causal forces of nature into final functions, and it is precisely in this capacity that humans differ from other living things. Thus, Bazala directly rejects the positivist notion that cultural and social phenomena can be explained solely by causes, without reference to purposes, ideas and values. His distancing from positivism is further emphasised in his critique of naturalism and historical (economic) materialism. Notably, Bazala criticises Marx for reducing humans to 'things of circumstances', while neglecting the action of spirit, will, and ideas. According to Bazala, social and cultural development cannot result from mere economic evolutionism but rather implies a conscious will directed towards certain goals. Ideas are active forces shaping cultural life, not passive reflections of material conditions. This conception of culture as an idea-driven process firmly situates Bazala outside the positivist or materialist tradition, aligning him with an idealistic philosophical perspective.

Similarly problematic is the attribution of the label of 'individualist' to Bazala. Despite his emphasis on the value of individuality, the conception is neither naturalistic nor atomistic. Bazala explicitly warns that individuality is not a natural given, but rather a cultural product. It does not stem from unrestrained instincts; rather, it is the result of cultivating human capacities in accordance with an ideal of humanity. In Bazala's conceptualisation, individuality invariably possesses a normative dimension, serving as a measure of human value on the condition that it contributes to the harmonious wholeness of both the individual and the community. Furthermore, Bazala places significant emphasis on the supra-individual character of culture. Customs, laws, social and state regulations possess objective power that transcends individuals and are imposed upon them as binding. Cultural forms have been shown to endure beyond the

lives of individuals, being transmitted across generations and creating a “social atmosphere” in which individuals are shaped.

This perspective directly contradicts the individualistic thesis, according to which social norms and institutions are merely derivatives of individual will, lacking their own supra-individual value. Bazala's conceptualisation of the relationship between the individual and the community can best be characterised as cultural-personalistic. The individual is not an isolated entity, but rather a bearer of national spirit, history, and tradition. Conversely, national culture does not suppress individuality; rather, it enables it by creating a space in which individuality can be developed and realised. In this sense, Bazala does not posit an opposition between the individual and the community; rather, he conceptualises them as mutually conditioned dimensions of cultural life. In conclusion, an analysis of *National Culture* demonstrates that the attribution of labels such as ‘positivist’ and ‘individualist’ to Albert Bazala is not supported by evidence. The philosophy of culture is founded on an idealistic, teleological, and normative understanding of humans, culture, and society. It is evident that critiques which attribute positivism or individualism to the subject in question neglect the key elements of his thought. These elements include a decisive rejection of naturalism and materialism, an emphasis on ideas and purposiveness, and recognition of the supra-individual value of cultural forms.

Within a broader philosophical framework, Grabić's work is unmistakably anchored in a Christian and traditional ethical perspective, positioning God and supra-individual moral norms as the foundational pillars of human purpose and life goals. The pursuit of human happiness and the attainment of progress are rendered unattainable in the absence of objective moral law. Personal development must be aligned with general moral and cultural values, rather than guided solely by subjective interest or utilitarian calculation. Grabić's philosophical standpoint can be succinctly characterised as a defence of an objective, Christian-based moral and cultural order that is not subject to individual feelings or arbitrary will. The journal in which Grabić published his critical work on Bazala's cultural views, *Hrvatska straža*, was initiated by Bishop Antun Mahnić to promote and defend Christian principles philosophically across all spheres of public life, and naturally also cultural life. Christian philosophy was conceived as a form of apologetics, defending the fundamental tenets of the theistic-Christian worldview, which was facing significant challenges during this period. Alongside Grabić, figures such as Ante Alfrević, Fran Binički, and Karlo Eterović – Grabić's religious brother from the same monastic province – and other authors shared the task of examining and refuting

opposing principles of materialism, positivism, liberalism, communism, and other ideologies from the standpoint of Catholic philosophical and theological principles. Grabić's body of work, including works not published in *Hrvatska straža*, consistently followed this line of thought.

In conclusion, Grabić's critique is justified only to the extent that it defends a Christian, supra-individual moral order. However, his reading of Bazala as a positivist and individualist misrepresents Bazala's teleological and idealistic understanding of culture. Grabić's arguments are indicative of a more general apologetic and ethical-philosophical stance, rather than an accurate depiction of Bazala's cultural philosophy.

## Grabićeva kritika Bazalinih ćudoredno-kulturnih vidika

### *Sažetak*

Petar Grabić u nekoliko je navrata kritizirao filozofske uvide i stavove filozofa Alberta Bazale. Ta njegova kritika nije prošla nezapaženo kod naših istraživača. Tako Barbara Ćuk u svojem članku pod naslovom »Ivan Duns Skot i skotizam u Hrvatskoj periodici prve polovice 20. stoljeća«, između ostaloga, u okviru istraživanja naznačene teme, donosi i Grabićevu kritiku Bazalinih stavova o skolastičkoj filozofiji i o Ivanu Duns Skotu. Međutim, to nije i jedina kritika koju je Grabić imao u odnosu na Bazalu i njegove filozofske i kulturološke stavove. Naime, na stranicama časopisa *Naša misao* iz 1914. godine nailazimo na tekst u tri nastavka pod naslovom »Novi oblik misli i vjere« u kojem Grabić, kritizira Bazalu i Aškerca, te, također, na stranicama *Hrvatske straže* iz 1915. godine nailazimo na Grabićev tekst pod naslovom »Ćudoredno-kulturni vidici i dr. A. Bazala« u kojemu Grabić kritizira Bazaline pozitivističke i materijalističke stavove iznesene u članku objavljen u *Hrvatskom kolu* pod naslovom »Narodna kultura« iz 1907. godine. U našem izlaganju usredotočiti ćemo se upravo na tu zadnju Grabićevu kritiku ćudoredno-kulturnih vidika Alberta Bazale. U ovom radu izložiti ćemo Bazaline filozofske i kulturološke stavove te Grabićeve objeckcije i kritike te ćemo na koncu ocijeniti opravdanost te kritike.

*Ključne riječi:* Albert Bazala, Petar Grabić, pozitivizam, materijalizam, kršćanstvo, moral