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NECESSITY AS A HUMAN AFFAIR

Miroslav MARCELLI, Bratislava

In his Strasbourg rector's speech entitled *History and Natural Science,* philosopher Wilhelm Windelband said: "Modern science has taught us to define existence by the permanent necessity of the action based on it: it replaced the Platonic idea with natural law." Natural science has gone through substantial changes since Windelband took office as rector of Strasbourg University. However, as far as the essential determination of what is real, lessons we infer from natural science (whether directly or indirectly) are largely still the same: the real is that which is necessary and necessary means that which is determined by the laws of nature. The true reality, the reality linked with necessity, is thus embedded in the world of natural phenomena; the limitation of the real lies within the competence of natural science.

In this connection necessity is banned from the sphere where we meet the human mind and its products such as fine arts, law, philosophy, religion, science and history which are made up of individual actions and events. As if by disqualifying fate on the part of scientific knowledge – through which necessity has been announced over the centuries in the life of man and society – the opportunity of finding necessity beyond the limits of natural phenomena would be muffed. Of course, these boundaries are movable: psychology can serve as an example, showing that it can also encompass some laws of man's spiritual activities. Such an extension is only possible to the degree that what the spiritual nature of these phenomena will fade away and become natural. Windelband said that psychology had to acquiesce in occasionally being labelled "natural science of inner sense" or even "spiritual natural science".

To my knowledge psychology has today no such attributes and I doubt that it would comply with such a label. What is more important, however, is that tendency toward naturalism has not disappeared from psychology or from other social sciences. The expression "naturalistic account" loses its pejorative meaning and the demand for a naturalistic approach to epistemology becomes a very appealing policy for the development of cognitive sciences.

It is exactly the prospect of this novel naturalism that leads us to doubt whether Windelband's conception of spiritual sciences is justified. As is known, Windelband (along with some neo-Kantians) tried to defend the epistemological status of social sciences by the peculiarity of their methodological orientation.

Instead of the traditional categorization of sciences about reality into the natural sciences and the humanities, he proposes classifying the whole area of empirical sciences according to whether they explore the universal in the form of natural law or the individual in a historically definite form. Natural science will then be separate from historical disciplines, or as expressed in his neologisms: nomothetic sciences versus idiographic sciences. The former try to find universal laws, along with universality and necessity, while the latter concentrate on individual historical events in their nonrepeatable historical form. Because of their methodological character, idiographic scientific disciplines are predetermined to reproduce and to understand unique manifestations of human life and it is thus clear that the results of these sciences cannot be judged according to how far have they mastered necessity in the subject-matter of their research.

If Windelband's demarcation of the methodological antithesis between the two types of scientific knowledge were taken as an attempt to legalize sciences which do not achieve a formulation of the necessary relationships and general laws, then enough reasons for doubting the success of this experiment will be found. The relationship between historical disciplines and belles-lettres, which Windelband points out as a symptom of their peculiarity still arouses the suspicion that they are not a special branch of scientific knowledge, but that they are completely different genealogies: those where the histories of arts are spun. Although we can say that modern science increasingly directs its attention towards singularities, deviations, mutations and perturbations, i.e. towards phenomena whose uniqueness is irreducible, this shift still takes place in a sphere of scientific knowledge and its necessity, now already differently understood in this connection. Idiographic sciences, if something like that exists at all, can be praised that during the dominion of classical natural history they maintained a spark of light where singular nonrepeatable events of the life of man used to emerge.

However, Windelband's pondering of sciences can be understood in other connections also. In addition to defending the scientific status of "spiritual sciences", there is an intention of making of both natural and social sciences an objective of contemplations of spiritual culture. Questions raised by Windelband are uniform in principle; he asks, for instance, what the aim of a certain type of cognition is or what its benefits are. Thus, the same necessity of the laws of natural history, which occurred in view of methodology (in contradistinction to the procedures and outcomes of historical sciences), immediately returns to the creations of human mind. We can ask what the inner value of the knowledge of necessity is, how this knowledge contributes to the development of the intellectual capabilities of man, what its practical functions are and how it integrates into the whole of cultural activities. The knowledge of necessity is also one of the products of human life.

In addition to this approach which focuses on functions and values, there is another approach connecting necessity with the activities of human mind even

more tightly. For the first approximation it would probably be most appropriate to recall Kant's statement that we recognize in things *a priori* only what we have inserted into them. If we understand *a priori* only in pre-empirical terms, independent of every experience, not originating from experience, etc., then we come to an uninteresting, and under certain circumstances, an almost self-evident assertion. Kant's opinion becomes interesting when we realize that *a priori* is characterized by necessity and universality. Experience, he argues, teaches us what *is*, but not that it must necessarily be as it is and not otherwise. If a sentence that has been thought is found to be necessary, it is an *a priori* judgement, Kant concludes. What is most interesting is that such judgements, at least according to Kant, exist indisputably. They can be found in mathematics and in natural history, metaphysics also struggles to find them or with them. At the level of common experience, the principle that every change must have its cause is also employed, whereby we do not suppose that once something might appear in the world that would not be causally conditioned.

Necessity has thus entered the area of human mind. Wherever we recognize that things are bound by necessary relations, we have to presuppose spontaneous activity by which our mind links contents. The necessity usually attributed to things and independent nature confirms quite the reverse: preceding human activity. Investigation into necessity is an investigation into the mind. It was probably not overstated when Kant compared his turnabout to Copernicus's changed explanation of the movements of stars. After all unsuccessful attempts of classical philosophy to speak from the standpoint of necessity superior to man, Kant accepts the attitude of man with resoluteness and he does not intend to give up necessity at all. Thanks to him, necessity has become a human affair. It is difficult to appreciate the contribution of the ideas as a whole.

After he had taken up this new attitude, Kant set himself in front of a task, which he characterized as *transcendental knowledge*. His concept of transcendental knowledge and transcendental philosophy needs an explanation and for this purpose the much quoted part of the introduction to *The Critique of Pure Reason* is usually presented: "I call all knowledge *transcendental* which is occupied not so much with objects, as with our manner of knowing objects, so far as this is meant to be possible *a priori*. A system of such concepts might be called *Transcendental Philosophy*." (B, VII, 25). It is probably not quite clear why Kant speaks of *such concepts* in the second sentence when he does not mention them in the first sentence. We have to realize that in the first edition there was "as with our *a priori* concepts of objects". Now we can understand that Kant is not so much concerned with the understanding of objects but with the understanding of our mode of knowledge; more precisely, he is interested in that understanding which deals with objects; and that he finds necessity in this knowledge of objects and that he wants to explain the origin of necessity by applying *a priori* concepts and principles.

On the one hand there are *a priori* concepts and principles, which determine necessary properties and relations. On the other, there are concepts given by experience. Transcendental knowledge teaches us how *a priori* piece of knowledge is applied to the empirical domain. Kant conceives this application as a formulation of an empirical matter; *a priori* is always a form, for which experience provides a matter. By uniting both components we have objective knowledge.

It should be said that the identification of necessity itself with the way of thinking, which draws its particular contents from elsewhere through experience, cannot be taken as Kant's invention. Logic, traditionally perceived as a science of thinking, since Aristotle went in the direction of being confined to the form in which necessary judgement schemes could be found and which could accept any contents from the particular universe. Thus an idea that thinking consists in incorporating contents into forms of judgement has intruded. It is, however, easy to show that such forms are no guarantee of the truth of the achieved conclusions; a logically correct way of thinking can lead to a false conclusion. Formal logic is of course aware of this and dictates that we distinguish between correctness and truth, taking into its competence only the correctness of thinking. Kant accepts this, he declares the principles of formal logic to be a necessary negative condition of knowledge, but he also adds that in thinking there is also positive necessity and that in addition to formal logic we should also consider another kind of logic, which he calls transcendental.

Let us have a look at the dualistic character of transcendental logic. In relation to empirical contents this logic presents a form of their categorization into necessary relations. But with respect to the schemes of formal logic, which are indifferent to contents, it should be emphasized that transcendental logic does not abstract from the contents of knowledge and its concepts relate to objects. Kant is convinced of the justification of formalism, which maintains much closer relations with empirical objects than formal logic. He tries to find a space between experience (which itself does not provide support for the assessment of necessary relations) and formal logical necessity (not interested in the objective aspect) for such a necessity, which would be objective (i.e. that would refer to objects) while being linked with human thinking and its principles. In other words, Kant places the project of transcendental logic against empirical attempts to eliminate necessity from knowing the objects, against efforts at reducing a faculty of thinking to an application of the principle of formal logic, as well as against tendencies to look for necessity by advancing from phenomena to substances. This project will appeal to anyone for whom necessity will not merge either with the relations of formal logic or with the objectivity of the world, which is independent of man. It will be a project of necessity being looked upon as human affair.

We cannot reproduce Kant's construction of transcendental logic here even in outline form, but when speaking about human affairs and about the attitude of

man, a higher degree of precision, in indicating problematic points in Kant's work would be required.

We already know that transcendental logic looks for and finds certain *a priori* conditions of knowledge dealing with objects. We also know that these *a priori* conditions are certain concepts, which are formal components of objective knowledge. Now it is important to say that Kant sees the formation of empirical material as syntheses through which thinking introduces unity, coherence, regularity and legitimacy. *A priori* concepts are *de facto* functions which secure the unity of action of organizing individual ideas. It concerns in fact the implementation of a rule, due to which order is introduced into the game of ideas. For instance, causality functions as a rule which determines that a change must always have a cause. Kant asserts that such a rule is a basis which forces us to follow this order of perceptions rather than any other, which renders the idea of a sequence in an object.

It is obvious that if a rule should be applied to perceptions, it must be given *a priori*. The essence of transcendental knowledge would then consist in that how we apply this *a priori* form. Thinking, which applies rules would thus show its nature and Kant indeed speaks in this connection about the spontaneity of concepts. But which concepts can fulfil this function and which rules can organize the game of ideas, to create coherent and objective knowledge? There is no direct access to the process through which an *a priori* form conquers contents, nor is there any possibility of investigating how the syntactic schemes of language are applied during one's own speech.

Kant solved the problem by deriving *a priori* conditions of cognition from the given results. Led by a criterion of necessity, he searched beyond the limits of the knowledge of science of that time for appropriate ways out, which he then declared to be universally valid for objective knowledge. In such a procedure, the danger emerges that what we consider to be necessary and universally valid, will in the following step appear to be a temporary and partial form of cognition. We know that the further evolution of mathematics and natural history proved that Kant's presentation of the part as a whole was unjustified. The game of cognition whose rules he tried to reconstruct on the basis of the available outcomes did not proceed according to his ideas.

This negative outcome has not, however, cast doubt on the project of transcendental justification of necessity. It can even be stated that it paradoxically has acted as a stimulus to create new variants of transcendentalism. Let us have a look at two of them (intentionally putting others aside, e.g. Husserl's conception of transcendentalism).

The first, instead of having any ambition to express universally valid preconditions of necessity in knowledge, isolates individual historical periods in order to attribute to each of them its own mode of arrangement. This is Foucault's historical *a priori*. While Kant's field of knowledge has been limited by possibil-

ities of referring concepts to empirically given subjects and beyond these limits transcendental logic does not continue to provide true knowledge and changes into the logic of appearance, Foucault's fields are located in the area of the history of knowing and one cannot speak of crossing the boundaries whether justified or not: individual modes of arrangement are separated by radical discontinuities. Foucault, however, extends his fields in a different direction. Not only sciences are located there but also works of art, medical diagnoses, legal verdicts, confessions, avowals, decisions, in short, the entire cultural production of the given period preserved in archives. Foucault wants to penetrate into the positive essence, into an invariant of knowledge of a particular period.

Another perspective of transcendentalism opens vertically to this historical level of categorization. Now the exit from the differentiation of the domain will be determined by the forms of spiritual production. For Cassirer, such essential forms are language, myth, and science; each of them has its own structure, its own characteristic conceptual form. A little later and with somewhat different goals and results, a French ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss will also appear on this level of differentiation of cultural spheres.

In his analyses of "primitive cultures", Lévi-Strauss centres on three fundamental areas: namely family connections, systems of classifications and myths. According to him, the role of humanities is to attack that which seems to be overbearing and illogical. In every place where a simple description had pointed out only random, incoherent and anarchical phenomena, which later were ascribed to insufficient intellectual outfit of the "primitives" by philosophizing interpretations, Lévi-Strauss tries to uncover the unity, order and coherence supporting logical thinking. He does not hesitate to speak of a logic of totemic classifications, although their components seem to be selected at random. He entitled his monumental work of four volumes dedicated to Indian myths of the both parts of America *Mythologiques*.

In the first volume, *Le cru et le cuit* we find his agreement with the denotation "Kantianism without transcendental subject", as the philosopher Paul Ricoeur qualified his approach. Lévi-Strauss does not see any liability in the absence of a subject; quite the reverse. He confirms his intention of looking for objective preconditions independent of a subject. He adds that his aim is not to show how people think in myths, but how myths think in people even without their knowledge of it. And as if this were not enough, he thinks about whether in abstracting from the subject one could not advance further.

If we add Foucault's announcement of the death of man connected with the annunciation of the rule of language, it is a rather powerful stimulus for us to think over the evolution of transcendentalism. It seems that nothing remained of the original intention to explain necessity by the activity of human spirit. Quite the reverse, this transcendentalism succeeds in "dissolving" man (it is the expression used by Lévi-Strauss, borrowed by Foucault). With Lévi-Strauss, it is myths

that think. In Foucault the language speaks for itself and subject is only a term used in grammar. Is this still transcendentalism? Is not an institution lacking here, which applies *a priori* to the empirical and thus creates a coherent experience?

If we understand transcendentalism as a search for the conditions of a possible experience, then there is no reason to presume an image of a creative subject in the focus of these conditions. These conditions can be entirely objective mechanisms independent of human consciousness. We probably will not be able to characterize the complete character of methods that Lévi-Strauss and Foucault applied via transcendentalism (in Lévi-Strauss' case structuralism, and in Foucault's case archaeological and genealogical orientations should be mentioned). In any case, however, both tried to find the conditions for the possibility of a certain type of experience. There is a different question – whether the removal of the subject from the view of transcendental analyses can be considered definite.

Foucault's opinions appearing in the last period of his development persuade us that this question should be regarded at least as open: he realized it a necessity to deal with the issue of subject.

He had directed his theoretical concern towards power and its mechanisms in society earlier on. He set about studying what he called the microphysics of power.

Microphysics of power examines mechanisms, which make a relation of subordination of our relations to another one, control and dependence, relations. This dictates our behaviour towards our surroundings, prescribe our gestures and even determine our relation to our own bodies. Here Foucault comes to a point where power relations penetrate an individual to bind him with himself and expose him to self-control. In other words, a question of subject is raised before him. The subject is the individual who confirms one's self-identity through self-knowledge and self-control.

Foucault's problems of power have thus been extended by the forms which make subjects of individuals: they subordinate an individual to himself by subjectivation. An individual and his relation to his self is an objective of these analyses.

This individual, who has become a subject, is incorporated into the field of power. This does not mean, however, that he would only be a passive product of mechanisms independent of him. Foucault warns against unidirectional deterministic explanation and encourages perception of these relations as strategic: each action arouses response, resistance, adaptation, attempts at escape, etc.

The search for preconditions thus leads to an idea of the field of force, where the subject is not only a direct effect but it also develops a strategy of own reactions.

In the last stage of Foucault's development the subject advances directly to the forefront as a result of studies of the ethics of sexual relations. Foucault wants to study "games of truth" in the relationship of an individual with himself and the

creation of one's self as a subject. With respect to this, he alters his original project on the history of sexuality. He himself describes the circumstances of his decision as follows: "I had to choose: either I would hold to my plan and add a brief historical analysis of the topic of desire or reorganize the whole study and direct it to the long-term formation of hermeneutics of the self in antiquity. I decided for the latter possibility, contemplating that the goal which I hold to – which I have intended to follow for many years – is then a disclosure of several elements suitable for the history of truth. History, which would not have been the history of what might be true in knowledge but an analysis of the 'games of truth'. The games of truth and untruth through which the being is historically created as experience, i.e. as what can and must be thought. By means of which of these games does man become absorbed in thinking about one's own being: when he perceives himself as a fool, as ill, when he reflects that he is alive, a speaking and working being, when he is sentenced and punished as a criminal? By means of which of these games of truth does a human being become acquainted with itself as a man of desire?" (*Histoire de la sexualité*, II, pp .12–13).

In this representation of the "games of truth" a perspective is perhaps being formed for the re-incorporation of a subject into the project of a study of the conditions of possible experience. Of course, it is not a return to Kantian transcendental subject. In this case it only concerns concrete historical forms of the establishment of the relation to one's self. And the object of investigation is not the rigid necessity of assertions, stated about nature. On the other hand, it should be stressed that the intention of studying the "games of truth" itself need not be evidence of disparagement of the value of truth, its reduction to a product of arbitrary manipulations. He who speaks about a game, speaks of the rules.

Where the implementation of a rule is a precondition of experience, transcendentalism arises.

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