

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT PHILOSOPHY*

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This article attempts to specify the meaning of the binary concept of “explicit/ implicit philosophy” and to point to its deeper explanatory meaning within philosophy and in relation to special disciplines. Particularly the term “implicit philosophy” may create an impression of a badly formed concept. The use of its opposition “explicit philosophy” depends on the former concept. We shall try to provide a more precise explanation of the extent of both concepts and to define the relations between them.

Background

The use of the binary concept “explicit/implicit philosophy” is known in both the Slovak and the Czech professional setting. For instance, the Slovak philosopher J. Letz (1992, 257) uses this concept in the characterization of culture. According to him, a certain implicitly or explicitly present philosophy is the basic structure of each culture. The Czech philosopher L. Hejdánek (1990) reports that for centuries Christian thinkers have not directed sufficient attention towards uncovering “the implicit metaphysics”, which is incorporated in the Jewish/early Christian culture. The task of the Christian thinkers is, in his opinion, to explicate this implicit philosophy. The authors do not analyze the given binary concept and its two semantic components in detail. The term “implicit philosophy” is also encountered beyond professional philosophy. For example, it is used by the Czech couple of psychotherapists¹ in their book on integrated psychotherapy (Knobloch, Knoblochová 1993, 123). The authors say that many clients, who ask for psychotherapy, do not

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¹ The Knoblochs are husband and wife and the creators of integrated psychotherapy. They worked in Czechoslovakia as well as in Great Britain, USA, Canada. Their monograph was translated from English into German, Japan, and Czech. Ferdinand Knobloch is the Chairman of the Canadian Society for Integrated Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. Integrated psychotherapy was formed at the time when Achenbach's philosophical counselling began to operate

realize their general positions, their views on the world and life and they are not able to formulate their positions clearly enough. In spite of this, they significantly influence their everyday actions and are the source of incorrect and erroneous procedures. The term “implicit philosophy” was used to name the unconscious general attitudes. Its specific sign is that clients are not able to articulate and reflect it consciously, which would give them an enormous power over their thought, feeling and actions. The Knoblochs came to the conclusion that reflection and the process of transformation of implicit philosophy into explicit philosophy have a liberating effect on humans increasing thus their individual freedom. A psychotherapist helps his clients to realize, formulate, and work it out rationally. His assignment is to bring it to the centre of attention, to speak about it, to expose it to the conscious control and to think it over rationally (*ibid.*). The result of therapy is the transformation of the client’s philosophy from implicit into explicit. The Knoblochs’ psychotherapy thus attempts, in addition to other psychotherapeutic factors applied, to work with the client’s implicit philosophy. This brings it to a close contact with philosophy or philosophical counselling, which becomes, in this context, a sort of “philosophical therapy”.

Semantic contradiction of the term “implicit philosophy”

From the perspective of epistemology, the term “implicit philosophy” can give the impression of a not-well-constructed concept of contradictory meaning. The term “implicit” evokes certain contents which is explicitly not pronounced or insufficiently realized, spontaneous, even unconscious, whereas the term “philosophy” says that it should entail “at least” a view and attitude consciously methodically and intentionally reflected. We underline “at least”, because further more rigid demands can be imposed on philosophy. For instance, F. Novosád (1994b, 617) says that for philosophy and science, the basic form of an approach to reality is conceptual knowledge resulting in the formation of theories about reality. Thus, if certain spontaneous generalizations or intuitive general outlooks on and attitudes to life are called philosophy, we come into conflict with the methodical ideal of “conscious reflection “ of the outlook or attitude. In the process of philosophizing we try to approach it through methodical skepticism aimed at cancelling the original naive- realistic aspect of the implicit attitude, which does not discriminate between (a) “real-

in Germany (Lahav, Tillmanns 1995, XII). The current form of integrated psychotherapy was shaped in the USA in the 1980s. It is also interesting for its aspirations to cope with the split approaches in the field of psychotherapy trying to lay the foundations of a more complex view of humans (*ibid.*). Its endeavour is, to some extent, in accord with the efforts to find a new form of system philosophy, which is interlinked, for instance, with the international association ‘System der Philosophie’ established in Vienna in 1991 (Gloyová 1992). American psychotherapists J. O. Prochaska and J. C. Norcross (cf. 1999, 368) think that integrated psychotherapy has outstripped a number of contemporary approaches and outlined some important psychotherapeutic principles.

ity” and “outlook” on reality, (b) between the resulting “knowledge” and the “method” of its acquisition and (c) between the personal view and the view of the professional or laymen society. From this point of view, also the term “implicit philosophy” is a badly formed concept; in fact, it is rather a non-reflected life attitude or a world view, which becomes theoretical or philosophical only in the process of critical reflection. The term “philosophy” should therefore be applied only to name explicit philosophy. If a general outlook has only an unconscious form and its content consists of stereotype of ideas and spontaneous generalizations, it is not eligible to be named “philosophy”. Also F. Novosád (1996, 17) writes that the process of self-interpretation encompasses explicit, theoretically systemized “images” of humans in science and philosophy on the one hand, and spontaneous, implicit understanding embodied in the life practices, which have become a constitutive characteristic of the human existence on the other hand; he does not call these implicit outlooks and attitudes “philosophy” but “life ideology”. Similarly, A. Naess (1996, 18) employed the term “ecosophy” only to name such a deep-ecological attitude, which has already been philosophically worked out and uttered. To this effect, ecosophy is also explicit philosophy.

In the mentioned examples, “philosophy” is employed in the narrow sense of the term, which is equivalent to “explicit philosophy”. By contrast, the concept of “implicit philosophy” is to a great extent identical with the terms “lived world view”, “life ideology”, etc. Instead of the couple of “explicit philosophy/implicit philosophy”, we ought to employ the opposition “philosophy and world view” (philosophy and ideology). The denial of the term “implicit philosophy” is linked with the presupposition that philosophy is a result of the conscious and critical reflection of an outlook or outlooks. The methodical criterion of “conscious reflection” does not involve the transition of philosophy from the implicit to the explicit form, but concerns its creative essence.

Implicit philosophy as potential philosophy

The refusal of the term “implicit philosophy” and its substitution by the concept of “life view”, “life ideology” or “world view”, etc. is allied with the static topical outlook on philosophy. Implicit philosophy is really not topical philosophy. In the concept of “implicit philosophy” the point at issue is, however, a close interconnection with “non-explicit” forms of thought and placing emphasis on the fact of the possible transformation of a non-philosophical outlook to the attitude philosophically reflected. Implicit philosophy is philosophy from the perspective of its possibility “to become” a philosophy. Such a transformation is possible, when the non-philosophical outlook can be rationally considered and put into a philosophical form. Although its philosophical form is not a topical reality, at least its possibility has to be topically given. It is just from the point of view of the possibility of transformation that we can speak about “implicit philosophy” as about potential philosophy. The rejection or the avoidance of this term is eligibly

linked with an effort to describe adequately the topical situation and the topical status of philosophy. "Implicit philosophy" does not belong to it because it has no philosophical form yet. We can accept it, however, as a term that designates its future form, which means that the given outlook is "philosophy" from the point of view of its possible future and potentiality. This is associated with the assumption that the given non-philosophical attitude can accept the philosophical form. The semantic content and the use of the terms of "explicit" and "implicit" philosophy can be useful from the viewpoint of the transition from the potential to the topical philosophical form. This has, of course, bearing on the understanding of philosophy in a very broad sense, which, in addition to philosophy in the narrow sense of the word, will also include the arbitrary general outlooks or attitudes. Philosophy in the broad sense of the word ceases to be a critical reflection or a methodical argumentation procedure and focuses only on certain comprehensive perceptions of the given object. For example, K. Jaspers (1989, 15) speaks in this sense that "philosophy cannot prove, it can only be shared". In this case, philosophy also encompasses what we have named "ideology", "world view", etc., above. K. Jaspers (*ibid.* 9-10) also speaks about the philosophy of children, of common sense or philosophy of the mentally ill. The designation "implicit" or "explicit" form of philosophy would thus specify whether the subject realized the particular philosophy and thought it critically over or acquired it spontaneously.

The concept of implicit philosophy captures the "cover" of explicit philosophy (i.e. philosophy in the narrow sense of the word) and the process of intuitive and spontaneous generalizations (which can also take place beyond the conscious control of the subject) together with the future prospects to enter the consciousness and to change into explicit philosophy. It is the process of "spontaneous generalizations" that is important in this connection, being understood as the ability of the subject to react to the new stimuli similar to those, which are already known to the subject; this constantly extends the region of the application of the fixed attitude and reaction. This mechanism has the same essence as in the field of the creation of scientific hypotheses. The successful hypothesis is applied also in other areas of scientific investigation until it is falsified in the new domain, when it is either rejected or modified. Psychoanalysis uses the concept of "transition", which means that the client reacts to the psychotherapist as to persons important in his/her past life. In the therapeutic relationship, the past development of the client is transferred to the present and the psychotherapist can "vividly" perceive it, react to it and work with it therapeutically. These general attitudes need not necessarily grow up from personal experience. They can also be unconsciously borrowed from tradition, culture, the social area in-group solving of the problems of everyday life, oral personal narratives and description of past events. In this context, for example the American anthropologist R. Benedict (1934) maintained that nobody's outlook of the world has ever been unbiased. Humans see how they are modified by a particular set of

habits, institutions and ways of thinking, which proceed automatically and cannot be found by introspection, but only by a comparison of the specifically contradictory cultures. According to Benedict, humans cannot get rid of the stereotypes in philosophical contemplations either, that is in contemplations at the level of “explicit philosophy”. Non-philosophical (or pre-philosophical) thought also influences explicit philosophical reflections and creates a united whole with them. This is also why Benedict uses the term philosophy not only in the narrow but also in the broad sense of the word; she speaks about the “Apollonian philosophy” of the Indian tribe of Pueblo and includes into it the overall “spirit” of their culture (*ibid.*). The term “implicit philosophy” does not contradict the hermeneutic conception of pre-understanding either, because each theory always assumes certain non-theoretical background and theoretical determinations always remain dependent on the existential-hermeneutic structures (Novosád 1994a, 71). The rejection of explicit philosophy itself is realized against the background of a certain implicit philosophy, the act of rejection creating thereby space for its explication. In these connections, the term can also be used for explaining the structure and genesis of the “anti-philosophical attitude”.

Implicit philosophy and anti-philosophical attitude

Under anti-philosophical attitude, we understand the view that dealing with philosophy is useless, it is even harmful, the existence of philosophy has no meaning, etc. This attitude aspires for universality because it rejects every philosophy and denies its meaning in any epistemological or life situation. Actually, it is partial because *de facto* it denies only a certain type of philosophy. At the same time, it is based on the contradictory understanding of philosophy and its meaning, which is, however, understood as “non-philosophy”. The anti-philosophical attitude has two levels. The first level—the explicit—expresses a certain negative attitude to philosophy. The second level consists of not yet reflected (not sufficiently reflected) attitudes to and ideas of philosophy, which provide the proponent with the criteria for expressing disagreement with and a negative relationship to existing philosophy. This is the situation that H.-G. Gadamer (1994) also bears in mind when saying that new attitudes and convictions cannot be fully developed unless they know against what and how they should stand. The anti-philosophical attitude wants to be universal (it rejects every philosophy), which makes it internally contradictory. This becomes most evident when its proponent tries to justify or work out a model of the world and humans, which shows that the criticized philosophy has no meaning for the life of humans and society. This gives rise to another explicit philosophical image of the world and humans, within which another type of philosophy has meaning. This model of the world does not show that philosophy as such has no meaning but it indicates that the genuine determination of philosophy was too narrow or inadequate. The justification of the anti-philosophical attitude is thus a sort of paradoxical return to philosophy.

The anti-philosophical attitude can have two forms. So far, we have spoken about a "moderate" anti-philosophical attitude, which is to some extent inconsistent in its anti-philosophical approach because its proponent agreed to begin "philosophizing" about the meaning of philosophy and attempted to justify or better motivate her argument about its nonsensicality. It accepted conditions, which ensure the dialogue form of the existence of philosophy and its continuous self-reproduction. The second alternative is the "radical" anti-philosophical attitude, which regards the invitation to lead dialogue on the part of philosophy as the "communication trap". The radical attitude is based on simple "silence" because, if philosophy has no meaning as a whole, then philosophizing over its meaning does not make any sense either. It does not either explain or motivate its negative view on philosophy and thus it does not develop its implicit philosophical principles either. By contrast, the moderate attitude can be understood as the germ of a new philosophy. However, to be able to develop it, it has to remain in interaction with philosophy and to carry on a dialogue with it. In this connection we remind that, against the background of the narrow understanding of philosophy, which is identical with explicit philosophy, the anti-philosophical attitude can appear not as a (still hidden) new philosophy, but as a purely anti-philosophically oriented "non-philosophical attitude", which apparently has nothing to say to philosophy.

"Primary" and "secondary" implicit philosophy

So far, we have pursued the background of psychotherapy and philosophy, which primarily emphasize the transition from implicit to explicit philosophy. This boosts human self-knowledge, freer thinking, decision-making, and action. This is bound up with the methodical demand of the "attitude consciously reflected". From this perspective, the goal of psychotherapy and philosophy is to help subjects (individuals and societies) when becoming aware of their own implicit philosophy, which can impede their development. Reflection and the process of the transformation of implicit philosophy into explicit philosophy have a liberating effect on humans and society. We do not want to conceive this aspect as absolutely valid, because it only represents the first half of the whole process. This "half" would be a complete process merely from the point of view of the development of Hegelian idea, which is realized by extending the "absolute consciousness" and by reducing the sphere of non-knowledge and unconsciousness. The Hegelian model might be applicable to culture and society if taking into account the written memory of humankind but not the individual consciousness of an individual human being or the active and topical self-actualization of society. The sphere of consciousness of the earthly subject is limited and therefore, to be able to think new problems over, we have to think of the old ones. It means that we should "reflect on them" so as not to have to think about them at least for a time. With regard to the limits of human con-

sciousness, we have to take into account not only the process of explication but also the reverse “re-implication” (secondary implication).

The explicit philosophical attitude, with which its proponent has identified him/herself to such extent that it became her internal life principle, bearing on day-to-day thought, taking axiological and emotional processes tied up with it, guiding the process of attention, memory structures, and becoming a natural part of the subject’s mental structure. It may gradually take on the form of certain practice-oriented and effectively functioning “stereotype of ideas” (the so-called automatic ideas), which the subject ceases to realize; she is able to reflect it consciously only in the dialogue or facing the contradictory attitude. It means that if we name a certain topically unrealized attitude as implicit, we do not yet say whether it has or has not been explicit before. While the “primarily” implicit attitude was shaped spontaneously beyond conscious human control, the “secondarily” implicit attitude was formed through fixation and automatization of the explicit attitude, which might have already been philosophically reflected and evaluated. The term of the “process of secondary implication” simultaneously captures conditions, under which explicit philosophy can generate a certain life style and to bring our habits into life. This “re-implication” of the explicit attitude also leads to the secondary loss of distance and renovation of the naive-realistic attitude. Thanks to re-implication, the subject may deal with new problems and situations. In the end, we might say that we philosophize not to have to philosophize.

The non-acceptance of the “phenomenon” of implicit philosophy and joint cyclical transitions from the primary to secondary implicit form may be the source of inadequate interpretations of the relation between philosophy or philosophizing and mental health. For instance, according to the Czech psychiatrist J. Dobiáš (1984, 95), continuous reflections on vital and essential philosophical problems: what is the meaning of life, what does the universe actually look like, what is good, what is infinity etc., have to be ranked among the pathological mental disorders. We do not deny that certain forms of philosophizing can be an important diagnostic sign of a sort of pathology. In this connection, the Slovak psychiatrist I. Žucha (1999) says that mentally ill people philosophize often passionately and fatefully. In the context of the concept of “implicit philosophy”, we may say that J. Dobiáš does not take into account the fact that if the so-called “healthy” individual does not ask questions of this type, it does not mean that she has not occupied herself with them and has not answered them. The mentally fit individual, who does not pose these questions and does not feel the need to philosophize, often does not do it only because she already has some primarily or secondarily fixed implicit or explicit replies and attitudes. In other words, having philosophy implicitly, she does not need to philosophize any more and this philosophy does not cause any problems in her contact with the world.

Oscillating between the implicit and explicit form of philosophy

The relation between the implicit and explicit philosophical attitude is cyclic. The German philosopher G. B. Achenbach (1997) speaks about practical wisdom as about the aim of philosophy and we should say that this wisdom is also interconnected with the ability of the oscillation of philosophy from implicit to explicit and *vice versa* without barriers. Implicit philosophy changes primarily through philosophizing (philosophical dialogue and reflection) into explicit, which is then fixed in the form of a certain ideological stereotype or “algorithm”, thus dropping out of consciousness and getting secondarily into the position of implicit philosophy. It is philosophy about which we do not think and discuss any more and which is simply lived. We may say that in view of the practical life (psychotherapy, philosophical counseling), the goal of philosophizing is the explication of implicit philosophy, its coming to consciousness, reconstruction and improvement to be able to launch the reverse secondary implication. The point is not only the practical wisdom in the form of explicit philosophy but also the wise action, which also presupposes “secondary” implicit philosophy. From the perspective of philosophical counselling and psychotherapy, the philosophical thought is activated when humans do not thrive and fail to realize their central values. If such problems are caused by the implicit philosophy of human, the aim of her philosophizing is remedy, which can only be achieved when she realizes and critically reflects her implicit attitudes. The explication of the primarily implicit philosophy is thus not academic. Its goal is to remove the defect in the forms of the practical existence of the subject. The meaning of the process of philosophizing (critical reflection, philosophical dialogue) is thus improvement of the implicit philosophy of the client and the life style following from it. If the adaptation and the character of life problems require it, human should have properties and abilities for explaining and reflecting her implicit basic principles and prerequisites. As the authors of integrated psychotherapy point out, some clients’ life problems can be resolved simply by changing their implicit philosophy. The concept of cyclical oscillation between implicit and explicit philosophical attitude is important not only to psychotherapy (in relation to the mental structure of the client). Transitions between the implicit and explicit forms of the “images” of humans and the world can also be registered at the social level. For example, F. Novosád (1996, 18) points to the non-self-sufficiency of explicit and systemized theories of humans, which are always enclaves in human spontaneous conceptions. He underlines that explicit images of humans and the world become the bedrock of the construction of organizations and institutions: this leads to the change into implicit attitudes, which are spontaneously and automatically realized through the everyday functioning and the existence of the particular institution. For instance, the military training is always realized according to general ideas, constructs, theories (quasi-theories) about human beings and their chances; at the same time, however, the existence of the army as institution keeps the original

image of human alive (Novosád 1996, 17). The concept of “implicit philosophy” can be used not only in the explanation of mental and social life, but also in the area of science. The elaboration of a special theory can be understood as secondary implication of its explicit philosophical backgrounds. The end of philosophical discussions, which frequently accompany its formation, actually means only that its body, the world of its cognitive everydayness, “absorbed” philosophical principles, which were gradually institutionalized.

In conclusion, the meaning of the concept of “implicit philosophy” lies in the broader capturing of the motion of ideas, passing from the primarily to the secondarily explicit philosophical attitude. This also shows that the explicitly reflected conscious outlook is not understood as “good” and unconscious implicit attitude as “bad”. Not every unconscious general attitude is unsuitable: only the one that causes our problems. It is therefore necessary to explain it, to make it conscious, to think it over, and then to fix it, so that it becomes again implicit and unconscious. That means that the ultimate aim of the conscious reflection is such a form of secondary implication, which positively affects thought, emotions, and action. The secondary implication, which shifts the philosophical attitude to the unconscious sphere, enables to accelerate and, with respect to the given type of situation, also to make the evaluation, decision making and action more effective. Implicit philosophy should not be hidden from us but rather *vice versa*; we should be in contact with it in case of need to be able to think it over again consciously.

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