

Syncriticism as an invariant of existential philosophy in Slovak philosophical thinking

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Abstract

The present study explores the contribution of the Slovak philosophical school, which uniquely grasped the European and Czechoslovak heritage of phenomenology and existential philosophy. In the text, the authors present a congenial and undeniably up-to-date concept of syncriticism as developed by Jozef Piaček and analyse its contribution to Slovak philosophical discourse and more broadly, in the dialogue of phenomenology and existential philosophy in Slovakia. In the study, the authors also examine the cultural-philosophical starting points and specifics of Slovak modern philosophy and postmodern thinking as phenomena of the Central European intellectual space in the context of thinking about the unique and inspiring project of perichronosophy as a thematic invariant developed at philosophical workplaces in Central Europe (Comenius University Bratislava, Trnava University Trnava, Charles University Prague, Masaryk University Brno). Jozef Piaček has been affiliated with the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University for many years, studied under Jan Patočka and is an expert on Husserl's phenomenology. He has continuously developed a unique philosophical approach involving syncriticism and perichronosophy, which continues to resonate with his students at academic institutions in Slovakia and abroad. Piaček published several monographs and papers on the subject of syncriticism. The platform of living philosophy is his concept of a digital philosophical encyclopaedia, where he archives all publication outputs on the subject of the philosophy of syncriticism. This text will present Piaček's concept of perichronosophy and concordance in Slovak philosophy, more broadly in phenomenology, as well as in the context of Patočka's themes (philosophy as care for the soul in the village) with implications for the philosophy of education and philosophical therapy (dasein-analysis).

Keywords: perichrony, phenomenology, timelessness, process of events, anegoite, philosophy of existence

Introduction

Opening one's mind, authentically grasping the world of one's dwelling, and actively performing good without burdensome violence or conscious evil – these are the ideological cornerstones and philosophical maxims of the life's work of the Slovak philosopher Jozef Piaček. Based on his extensive publications and his socio-academic influence, Piaček's philosophical legacy can be regarded as an authentic invariant of Slovak philosophy, inspired by the philosophical-anthropological currents of European intellectual heritage, particularly phenomenological philosophy, existentialism, and postmodernism. As a contemporary Slovak philosopher, Piaček aligns his thinking with the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Jan Patočka, Martin Heidegger, and the philosophical traditions of the neo-Kantian school and neopositivism. In his scholarly research, Piaček focused on the study of phenomenology, gradually developing his unique philosophical project, his own conception of *syncriticism*. Since the 1980s, he also began exploring the possibilities of applying computer technology to philosophical sciences, cooperating with computer sciences, especially in solving methodological problems. Together with Miloš Kravčík, he co-created the first Slovak philosophical hypertext encyclopaedia, known not only to the philosophical community under the acronym *FILIT*. Its development was widely used in educational practice and remains available online under the title *The philosopher's companion*. In Jozef Piaček's philosophical evolution, two fundamental stages can be observed – the critical stage (from 1970 to 1986) and the syncritical stage (from 1986 up to the present). In both periods, Piaček aligns himself with the tradition of the so-called *Bratislava Philosophical School* (BPS) with its philosophy of pure being developed within the structurology concept by the academic Igor Hrušovský, and with its

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subsequent philosophical development from the positions of Vojtech Filkorn's polymorphic ontology, Václav Černík's categorial theory, and Michal Suchý's ontologism (Piaček, 2013).

The critical stage of Piaček's philosophical thought (1970–1986) saturates questions of phenomenological philosophy and calls for a critical reception of Husserl's philosophy of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), also from the perspectives of Neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt School, which, however, Piaček thematizes as an original epistemological foundation for understanding the world. During this period, he is influenced by Patočka's reception of Husserl's phenomenology and the philosophy of Heidegger and Fink, culminating in the philosophy of the natural world. This stage reached its peak with the publication of the first synthetic monograph on phenomenology in Slovakia, *Marxism and the crisis of phenomenology: Toward a critique of Husserl's philosophy of science* (Piaček, 1984), where he anticipates the foundational idea of his next stage of thought – the syncritical stage. This revolves around the concept of *transhorizon reality*, explored under the title of the open nature of being beyond the horizon. In the context of syncriticism, Piaček refers to this as *elusiveness*.

The thinking of syncriticism as Piaček's *Kehre*

The syncritic phase of Piaček's philosophical thought begins with the establishment of the Permanent Seminar on Integration (hereinafter PSI) in the autumn of 1986. During his work with PSI, Jozef Piaček moves beyond the polemical mannerisms of the critical era and opens up new horizons by embracing an agapistic approach to both Husserl's and Patočka's philosophical legacies. From Marxist criticism, he retains the idea of self-liberation, but gradually transforms it in line with his concept of de-egoization – dissolving the ego.³ In this respect, he is influenced by the Eastern philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti and engages in intensive dialogues with the notable figure of the Bratislava music community, the choirmaster and composer Ján Hanzi Albrecht. Throughout the second half of the 1980s, Jozef Piaček gradually develops his own philosophical school, which he terms syncriticism, with its foundation being perichronosophy, or the philosophy of timelessness (Piaček, 2009). Piaček's programmatic magnum opus, *Syncriticism – The philosophy of concordance* (2014), is an emblematic text of the syncritic phase. The terms from most of the syncritic texts, including perichronosophy, are included in the Slovak National Corpus.

Currently, in the so-called “late period” (Václav Bělohorský), philosophy persistently and continually seeks to define a space for uncovering the truth, striving to create and articulate the conditions for its revelation. Against the backdrop of the vibrant philosophical legacy of the original Slovak philosophical school of syncriticism of Jozef Piaček, numerous relevant themes can be discovered. One significant area of contemporary philosophy that reflects the potential of syncritic philosophy is the philosophy of education (Piaček, 1995, pp. 3–15; Piaček, 1998, pp. 252–260). Education and its functions always refer to a certain pre-understanding of the world, where “this understanding is our horizon and is inscribed in our language and cultural tradition, even though we cannot precisely, once and for all, define the given structures of this horizon” (Pinc, 1999, p. 96). In syncriticism, this horizon becomes an elusive and unmanipulable metaphysical foundation for justifying the need for metaphysics (Karl Jaspers, Rémy Braque). The theme of the natural world (*Lebenswelt*), introduced into the Czechoslovak philosophical discourse during the interwar period by Jan Patočka, was further developed in the early 1970s also within the context of the philosophy of education, in the post-war interest in the works of Comenius (Palouš, 2007). At the same time, we can recognize today that the classical question of the relationship between education and philosophy calls for new reflection (Svobodová, 2005). Media and the possibilities of the information society also contribute to a fundamental change in the understanding of the meaning and significance of the natural world.

³ See *The idea of the common good in the young Marx and nonutilitarian consequentialism* (Gluchman, 2023, pp. 1347–1360).

As the functions and demands of the educational and learning environment change, so does its key participant – the student. As noted, “young people grow up in a world where they must constantly meet certain standards from an early age. Tests are standardized, and so is the form of secondary school assignments” (Liessmann, 2010, p. 34). It seems that within the framework of defining the term *education* in educational institutions in today’s information society, we also encounter a *crisis of the natural world*, a crisis of authority and upbringing, which accompanies our current situation of technologization of information reality. Alongside Liessmann, we contend that the informatization of society is not a self-sufficient solution to the crisis of education today. An economic and, in proclamations, also a political order, places great hopes in investments in the so-called knowledge economy, which includes investments in technical modernization of schools, internet expansion, and equipping educational facilities with multimedia resources, etc. However, the technologization of education can also be perceived as an acute danger. Information (from the Latin *informare*, meaning to shape, educate, or form) is rapidly becoming technological in the 20th century, as evidenced by the progress in cybernetics. Teaching has become predominantly a technological and bureaucratic process, which is no longer a preparation for life (*Lebenslehre*), teaching as such is no longer open to the living (*physis*). Originally, however, *informatio* was related to education, and only subsequently, as an enhancement of the ability to perform a task, did it lead to qualification. Through the technologization of the concept of *information*, qualification itself becomes a technology, thereby technologizing the entire educational process. As a significant example of the technologization of education, Zdeněk Kratochvíl cites the concept of the educational process, which simulates a technological process. The paradigmatic shift in the function of education occurred because “modern education is no longer expected to provide only education..., but primarily the granting of such qualifications that are necessary for the technical and bureaucratic functioning of society – and which can moreover be tested and verified” (Kratochvíl, 1995, p. 155).

In searching for the solution of the utilitarian capitalization of knowledge and the societal hopes invested in building the so-called knowledge economy, along with the resulting “desolate state of mind” (Liessmann, 2008), it is the educational system that must be addressed. If the era has undergone a radical transformation, “it is impossible to overlook that European education is perhaps the main ‘culprit’ of the current state of knowledge” (Palouš, 2008, p. 8). Where Radim Palouš and Jozef Piaček see space for Patočka’s concept of “care for the soul”, another theme emerges – the denaturalization of the natural world (Patočka, 1990). Here, Piaček clearly builds on the legacy of the phenomenological philosophy of late the Husserl from the *Krisis* period, as well as Patočka’s concept of care for the soul. The response to the factual state of denaturalization could be an initiative to rediscover the sense of *φύσις*. Piaček believes that education bears a co-responsibility for whether the capability for living (metabolic in the sense of maintaining unity in the dynamics of change) thinking will continue to develop within culture, or whether it will become merely a utilitarian-based sophistic approach to achieving partial goals (career advancement, technological mastery of professions or social roles, maintaining social status, and performance efficiency). The current plurality of options need not simply be a flood of entertainment products, momentarily creating the illusion of new freedom, only for it to be exercised again in a new choice shortly afterward. Postmodern *diafora* (difference or diversity) can also serve as a challenge for education and the development of civic attitudes. Rationalist, Enlightenment, and technocratic reforms of education forget to *pass on the mystery*, the element that characterizes education the most. They overlook the unspeakable, which cannot be articulated through calculating, technical thinking, yet it is always present in education as the claim of the unconditional. Education is essentially an “event, a miraculous wonder (*thauma*)” (Palouš, 2008, p. 11). Moreover, *scholé* is not primarily an institution, a hatchery of knowledge, an institution of productivity of knowledge but originally

the opposite of busyness (*aschólia*), a release from daily tasks and worries. It is an *occasion*, a festive moment of concentration amidst the routine hustle and obligations of everyday life. This *festive nature* lies at the very core of education. If *paideia* is essentially a celebration or a sacred pause, then to educate means to be “un-divided”, free from busyness and fragmentation (Palouš, 2008, p. 11).

Syncritic pedagogy and phenomenology of temporality

Postmodern education toward life (*Lebenslehre*) primarily shows the possibility of becoming, the *possibility of being*. “The educator, as a teacher of life, teaches not only what he passes on as known and understood, but above all, also what he does not know, what he is unaware of. What he does not know and can never transform into knowledge, he learns primarily from those he teaches” (Michálek, 1996, p. 88). As mentioned above, education is primarily the transmission and reception of the mystery of being. What we do not positively understand, yet it is essential to our being – what we carry within ourselves, pass on to others, and in turn, receive from them – must not be suppressed. It is precisely this exchange that makes education a true “mountain education” (Palouš, 2008) towards an open society. “The path along which the educator walks together with the educated leads, so to speak, through a forest without paths (without prepared paths), so it is necessary to find a path where eventually no paths lead” (Michálek, 1996, p. 88). This, however, opens the individual to the responsibility for every step. Walking the path, we never know all the human possibilities in advance, the possibilities of how to *be*. We grow into these possibilities, learning to be ready to recognize them and to think where they emerge. The secret of education lies in the fact that we, as teachers, are learning something we ourselves do not yet know (Rusnák, 2021, pp. 274–275).

A specific approach to grasping the possibilities of how to educate is represented by Piaček’s *syncritic pedagogy*, which is based on the assumptions of the syncritic philosophy of timelessness, that is perichronosophy (Piaček, 2003). This unique way of philosophical thinking, in many respects influenced by phenomenology and the ideas of Jan Patočka, was introduced and developed by Jozef Piaček as an original contribution to Slovak philosophy, for example, in his study *Problems of Perichronosophy* (2008). The concept of *perichorésis* is a key term used in classical Western theology, or more precisely in the Judeo-Christian tradition, referring to the dynamic relationship between persons, existential relationality, mutual interpenetration, and self-giving. Classical theology uses the term *perichorésis* as a metaphorical description of what is otherwise defined by the Trinitarian model of Christian theology (Piaček, 2004, p. 11). Etymologically, the term *chorea* can be interpreted as singing, however, singing associated with visuality, somatic expression, and dance, while *perichorésis* means interpenetration through dance, co-dancing, and dancing together through the rhythm of life. This is how early Christian theology envisioned the Holy Trinity. Church Fathers described the mystery of faith as a dance, a mutual interweaving of persons who enrich each other, who are close, and who inspire and support one another. They are mutually interpenetrated by an existential unity that arises between them and endures between them. Such alignment or tuning of intimacy can also be perceived in relationships, in marriage, in intellectual and spiritual communities, in education, and in self-giving.

Perichrony is also the penetration through multiple types of time. As we know, the category of time can be perceived from various perspectives: from the physical-mathematical and existential-personal perspective, from the intimate experience of temporality to the mystical experience of timelessness. *Perichrony* would then signify the penetration of various types or versions of time within our consciousness. Perichrony is the resonance of timelessness by time, maintaining time within its occurrence, rhythms, forms, and shapes. Edmund Husserl, in his *Phenomenology of internal time consciousness*, uniquely described the perception of time in our consciousness. Husserl, as is well-known, speaks of retention, protention, and the actuality

of temporality. However, we perceive time as a continuum, as a continuous flow of events within the medium of consciousness. We perceive time as flow, duration, but there are at least three distinct characteristics of temporal perception: the temporality of anticipation, that is, thinking about something that awaits me, an expectation. Then, there is the current presence, which is largely illusory because it is essentially something that is already out of my grasp. At the same time, it is also the past, which is no longer truly time, the time I possess, because it is something that no longer concerns me, that is behind me, and that has irretrievably passed. Thus, even what we perceive as continuous temporal events is not truly a continuum. There is, therefore, something that we can refer to as *timelessness* (Piaček, 2004, p. 12; Petříček, 2018, pp. 212–214).

Timelessness constantly penetrates us and challenges us. We remain forever heirs of the past, which indelibly influences our perception of the present. This timelessness, however, is the condition for any event to occur. Things happen because they have a certain correlate, a relationship to this fundamental timelessness, to the seemingly eternal persistence of the fruits of the human spirit or the reality of God. Both finite and infinite time are products of timelessness. This timelessness resonates through everything, connecting and echoing in the contemplative silence of meditation. It rings like the sound of a bell that we anticipate at noon, gathered around the family table- a bell that has not yet begun to sound, but is already heard in the welcoming atmosphere of home as a familiar invitation. Such timelessness is the foundation of all possible healing effects, relieving both physical and mental suffering. It is a profound invitation to delve into meditation and prayer, a path toward seeking inner harmony – not only mental and intellectual but also psychosomatic balance. Timelessness is the unfolding of peace, serenity, silence, and tranquillity (Piaček, 2014, pp. 124–125).

Perichrony is an authentic understanding of the relationship between our perception of time and the timelessness that serves as the condition for any temporal event. Timelessness is never absent; rather, it is our access to it that we lose. In our everyday lives, filled with obligations and technological overload, overwhelmed by the mechanic methodology of managing everyday life, we become disconnected from this meaningful timelessness. The noise and clutter of thoughts, events, processes, administrative tasks, career expectations, the world of acquisition and duties, as well as our passions, desires, traumas, and injuries, all contribute to distancing us from the possibility of immersing ourselves in timelessness, in this fundamental framework of our lives, which originates in timelessness itself. Timelessness, or perichrony, is what coordinates change, even though it may not always be discernible in that change. It structures every possibility while simultaneously being articulable and, therefore, recognizable within certain limitations.

Perichronosophy as an original invariant of Slovak philosophy

A new teaching of temporality, one that builds on this specific understanding of time, is perichronology. While it could be considered a positive science, it remains closer to philosophy. According to Piaček, becoming a fellow of perichronology, thus, a practitioner of perichronosophy, means cultivating this particular wisdom (*sophia*). Perichronosophy is not *sapientia per se*, theoretical knowledge for the sake of intellectual satisfaction, but rather a wisdom that calls us into the world, the calling of the practical life. It is an invitation to organize our lives. *Praxis* of everyday life. It is a practical teaching about eternity, elucidating how eternity addresses us and penetrates us, how it enters our everyday temporality. Perichronosophy is also, in the best sense of the word, a theory. If *theoria* refers to *bios theoretikos*, then it is life based on knowledge that is also practically lived at the same time.

The perichronic, that is, where the time of eternity penetrates us, is recognisable – often in myths, art, and eschatology. In the philosophy of transcendence, because the perichronic always remains inherently non-objectifiable – something that eludes us, a horizon of all experiences.

We are in the world, but we originate from this eternity, while there are archetypal mental traces in our minds evoking a memory of this, manifesting as a need and desire for eternity. Ancient cultures and civilizations offer specific understandings of perichrony. Their religious cult, rituals, myths and mythical narratives, images (*eikones*), and metaphors allow for an insight into this specific dimension of temporality that permeates us in the way of curiosity and longing, as when we engage with art. This penetration of time is perichronic and, in a way, simulacral, too. The path to truth unfolds as a challenge, an act, a relationship, and an event.

The historical understanding of perichrony is exemplified in various systems of religious mysticism. These convey a profound message about love and generosity in our lives. While mysticism often speaks at the edge of comprehensibility about the elusive states of mind, these states – though necessarily incomplete and allegorical – are always accounts of loving of people, the experience of love and the penetration of love in our lives (Piaček, 2014, pp. 120–121).

Good perichronoscopy, a good teaching of temporal penetration, is fundamentally a practical withdrawal from our ego. It involves *de-egoization* – a lifelong process of working on our selfish needs. Mystics speak of the necessity of self-surrender and the emptying of self-centeredness. *Anegoity* is the only way to open up to perichrony, this permeation in our lives. *Anegoity* allows for the eternal flow of time in life, and it is simultaneously the entry point for otherness, or alterity, into our lives. In this sense, syncritical pedagogy, as perichronoscopy, is education toward mature citizenship, a practical step toward perceiving and accepting otherness in our lives. Above all, it is a step toward otherness of time, which is not entirely available solely for our purposes, but time to which we must adapt and that we can actively invite into our lives. It also includes the otherness of God, the absolute, or otherness of the other, specificities of our life partner, colleagues, friends, or neighbour (Emmanuel Lévinas). Perichronoscopy is simultaneously a message about the end of philosophy and the beginning of thinking, as well as a message about the apocalyptic nature of our times (Martin Heidegger).

Perichronoscopy is a distinctive pedagogy, a *syncritical pedagogy* that teaches us what we have forgotten but children still know: stepping into the void, surrendering to the moment of trust, accepting help when offered, stepping into uncertainty. It is, in the truest sense, the creation of a space of trust, creation of home and generous closeness. Perichronoscopy is a step into the unknown, opening oneself to trust. It becomes a step that is a loving act of surrender and acceptance of a gift, always remaining a leap into the unknown. In perichronoscopy, we are left with no choice but to rise to the challenge of courageously stepping into the unknown: to leap and swim. Perichronoscopy is a call to practise, a call to daily lived reality. It is a challenge to navigate the ocean of being with mindfulness and caution (Piaček, 2004, p. 13).

The problem of timelessness today stems from our problem with time – our struggle with how we perceive our temporality. According to Piaček, we seek the way to timelessness (to perichrony) because we are stuck in time. We are trapped in the daily grind of responsibilities, constantly reproducing time, attempting to catch up and save it for later. Only by abandoning objectifying thought and limiting our desires can we merge with the unfolding of events and thus enter into timelessness (Rusnák & Martinkovič, 2023, pp. 119–120).

Syncriticism – an urgent call for existential ethics and philosophy of intersubjectivity in the thinking of Jan Patočka and Jozef Piaček

A key theme of perichronoscopy, as well as the later Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology that fundamentally influenced Patočka's thinking, Piaček, and existential philosophy in Czechoslovakia – and which became a source of inspiration for ethical thinking in the 20th century – is the concept of the exteriority of the human being. The question of corporeality is also one of the most inherent phenomenological themes in Patočka's

philosophical project of *Lebenswelt*, the project of thematizing the natural world (Piaček, 1991, pp. 131–137).

The absence of elaboration of an original dimension of worldliness concerning being-in-the-world in phenomenological philosophy further points to the absence of the phenomenon of the corporeality of existence (*Dasein*). Jan Patočka, a student of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, and Jozef Piaček, who was a student of Patočka himself (Patočka recommended him to focus on the theme of empiriocriticism in the work of Ernst Mach), thematized this absence in the philosophy of the natural world, which aims to establish a new possibility for a subjective phenomenology (Richir, 1997, pp. 825–844). In a certain sense, Piaček's syncriticism develops Patočka's philosophy in this direction, too. The philosopheme of the corporeality of human existence subsequently became inspirational not only within phenomenology but also in the broader context of modern and contemporary philosophy.

Jan Patočka, who in many respects – like Jozef Piaček in the project of syncriticism – follows Heidegger, leads his critique of fundamental ontology with an emphasis on existence, which is above all corporeality. “Heidegger made his ontology of existence too formal in its analysis; while praxis is indeed the original form of clarity, nowhere does the thought arise that original praxis must fundamentally be the activity of the corporeal subject, that corporeality must therefore have its ontological status” (Patočka, 1992, p. 217). Jan Patočka is convinced that if corporeality has an existential, i.e., precisely ontological (and not merely ontic) character, then existence (*Dasein*) in the project of fundamental ontology should also be concretized in relation to this dimension. Focusing on the experience of the corporeal allows for building a phenomenology of being in space. Dwelling, as the experiencing, as the dynamically present in the world, represents the unity of the dynamic mode of one's corporeal existence. Although the corporeal scheme remains predominantly unthematized for dwelling and is always more enacted, functioning, it is still the original scheme, a kind of *a priori* of all experience we have with the body. Corporeality, which is present before any experience, is captured in *Befindlichkeit* (attunement), in which we thematize our disposition authentically (for example, how we feel or how we are). However, attunement itself is grasped only based on the corporeality of dwelling, that is, the way we are in the world, the way we are through our body. Corporeal existence co-determines the character of the entire dwelling, and at the same time, it is the ontological basis for the possibility of movement. To understand existence as movement, according to Patočka, means that

existence is fundamentally corporeal. The corporeality of existence does not belong only to its situatedness, to the situation in which we always find ourselves, but all our activity and creation is corporeal, corporeal is our feeling and behaviour. ... Lived and life corporeality is essentially something... soulful. Lived corporeality is ensouled... it is the possibility preceding action and opening every actuality and experience of action. Based on corporeality, our action is always a movement from somewhere to somewhere (Patočka, 1992, p. 230).

The possibility of corporeal movement, as the possibility that a person does not choose for themselves but must become, shows the unfinished nature of existence and the essential need for becoming, the need for movement as activity. Piaček's syncriticism elaborates precisely on this moment of *dynamis* of human corporeal existence. The body not only belongs to the framework of human spatiality but also to the domain of one's own possibilities, which we do not choose but become. Becoming, the dynamic moment of existence, is a key theme in both Patočka's phenomenology and Piaček's syncriticism. Patočka's ontological concept of living human corporeality extends the ontology of life to the ontology of the world in syncriticism, where life will be grasped in its original sense, i.e., as movement.

Patočka's fundamental criticism of Heidegger's version of phenomenology primarily points to its excessive formalism, which prevents it from building on the significance of corporeality, as well as to the absence of a developed theory of consciousness in an ontological sense. Although Heidegger thematizes the issue of consciousness, he does not reflect on the fact that consciousness, as knowledge and understanding of possibilities, always refers to acting being. Patočka formulates his correction through the view that

life is the execution of being. It is not that we are and then somehow act; in that acting, our entire being takes place. Our being is always on the way, we have a spatium ahead of us. We exist for something, not just "are" and nothing more; we exist for something. For what? For ourselves, for our being, for our life. Thus, our life relates to itself, not by looking at itself, but by acting. The question of experience is the question of relation to oneself as performing one's being, the question of the structures of this self-performing being (Patočka, 1995, p. 69).

Subsequently, Patočka, who emphasizes acting being, formulates his own concept of three movements of existence: the movement of acceptance into the world (the movement of grounding), the movement of self-extension (the movement of work, struggle, and individuation), and the movement of self-understanding (the movement of truth). Patočka rightly emphasizes that Heidegger entirely lacks the dimension of life, which is the acceptance of existence into the world and its dependence on others. The movement of acceptance, a kind of cotton-like existence without worries in the gentle dwelling with the mother, is a significant phase of life in which the basic layers are constituted, which later significantly co-determine the character of being-in-the-world, the character of the entire human life. Heidegger's fundamental ontology descends to the ontic bases of an always already adult dwelling. Achieving this correction, not only in phenomenological philosophy but also in existential thought and ethics, becomes a challenge for the project of a subjective phenomenology (Jean-Luc Marion) and syncriticism.

Patočka's fundamental correction of Heidegger's existential analytics lies in recognizing three fundamental movements of human life, which "have their original form, their (thematic or a-thematic) meaning, their own temporality, indicated by the prevailing dimension of time: the movement of acceptance, the movement of defence, and the movement of truth" (Patočka, 1990, p. 45). A human being, who is *being-in-the-world*, is the unity of these three basic existential movements of life, with the life movements being distinguished from one another precisely by how one times their original ontological temporality. Jan Patočka further emphasizes that it significantly matters which temporal ecstasy we prefer at which phase of life. In the movement of grounding, it is the past (arrival in the world; passive acceptance of a protecting and loving family world; a feeling of safety); in the movement of reproduction, it is the present (concern for biological survival, reproduction; opening up to the world of services and means of life); and in the movement of self-appropriation, it is the future dimension of time. Only in this movement, which Patočka calls the movement of truth, that is, opening to the possibility of life in self-surrender, does a person uncover the authentic meaning of the world, which reveals itself to be a mystery.

In the third movement, in the phase of self-acceptance, Jan Patočka, in a visionary way, anticipates the ontology of encounter with the Other (Levinas, Marion, Ricoeur). Patočka starts from a critical reflection, according to which "Heidegger's 'being-with' (*Mitsein*) is being 'next to each other', turned towards common concerns and goals, not towards each other as an encounter" (Sokol, 1996, p. 165). Only the conception of the lived world, the natural world as a three-movement of human existence, opens for Patočka the space for a philosophical grasp of existence as genuinely authentic co-dwelling. According to Patočka, it is necessary to reflect phenomenologically on the reality that, in the specific life of a person, the Other is always

present, and the concern (*Sorge*) for existence is, in all its dimensions, a co-concern. In the natural world, a person, through their corporeality, succeeds in uncovering the Other as the Other, and for this reason, Patočka's phenomenology of subjective corporeality aims to be fundamentally intersubjective and thus co-dwelling. Thus, it can be seen that, in all life movements, specific corporeality plays a key role, which is the fundamental postulate of human intersubjectivity. At the same time, originally human, phenomenizing, and intersubjective corporeality is the essential ground for thinking about the natural world. Piaček's concept of syncriticism and the philosophy of concordance can ultimately arise only from this foundation (Rusnák & Martinkovič, 2023, pp. 119–120).

The concept of intersubjectivity in Patočka and Piaček is saturated with the phenomena of self-giving and sacrifice. These are modes of the third basic life movement, the movement of truth. Only the movement of truth realizes the most extreme life possibility of surrendering to others and thereby coming to oneself. Through the third fundamental life movement of self-gain through self-giving, a person enters into an explicit relationship with the world as a whole, which reveals itself in its originality, that is, in its own mystery. Objectifying, laborious efforts to uncover the mystery of the world are out of place here. A human being preserves the mystery of the world as a whole by surrendering to the whole of the world, thus clarifying and deepening without losing and dissipating oneself. A person in the world of intersubjectivity steps out of themselves to ultimately find themselves.

Jan Patočka, together with Piaček's philosophy of syncriticism, proposes to complement phenomenological philosophy with the reflection of the phenomenon of corporeality, and thus the thematization of intersubjectivity, which should be – unlike Heidegger's understanding – the communication of existences, a transcendence “into the chain of beings, connected not by an external bond, beings that are not islands of life in the sea of objective being, but for which the objective objectivity emerges from the ocean of being, in whose service they communicate” (Patočka, 1992, p. 251) himself, to some extent, remains in the position of autonomous existence: he understands the encounter with the Other as the fundamental possibility of human being as such. Only the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, based on a new understanding of temporality (cf. syncritic temporality as *perichorézis* in Piaček's project of perichronosophy), interprets the Other as fundamental transcendence, exteriority, which, with its otherness, always remains outside my possibilities. However, both Levinas's and Piaček's philosophical initiatives, and all future reflections on the significance of corporeality in the natural world of human life, will remain indebted to the thinking of Jan Patočka for inspiration.

Conclusion

One of the motives for developing the philosophical conception of syncriticism was to demonstrate the cohesion of the Bratislava school of philosophy, despite the differing ideological backgrounds of its members (neopositivism, neothomism, Marxism, phenomenology). In the syncritical phase of his thinking, the Slovak philosopher Jozef Piaček and his followers focus particularly on the relationship between culture and civilization, viewing the periodicity of civilizational crises as stemming from the immaturity of man. This immaturity, according to Piaček, extends to woman, who intensifies the imitation of man, and, increasingly, to younger generations. Illustrations of this phenomenon, according to Piaček, are mainly wars (World War I, World War II, as well as regional conflicts during the Cold War and the bipolar world), the support of one's enemies, and also consumerism, various forms of addiction, desensitization toward nature and the needs of others, violation of social norms, increasing violence and vulgarization of relationships, and the inability of helpers to help themselves. According to Piaček, the root cause of this condition lies in the egoization of social relationships, and its resolution is found in the process of conscious de-egoization. In his philosophy, syncriticism ultimately evolves into a philosophy of de-egoization and the

deliberate dissolution of Self, replacing it with lovingness – a radiant emptiness surrounded by the cessation of suffering, a timeless interval (*in-no-time-interval*) that instantly halts the perpetration of evil. A comprehensive understanding of this phase is provided by a collection of studies by the philosophers Richard Šťáhel, Slavomír Gálik, Adrián Slavkovský, and Sabina Gáliková Tolnaiová, published in the chapter *Syncriticism and phenomenology* (*Syncrisis, phenomenon, intentionality*) in the anthology *Sign and phenomenon*.

The philosophical school of syncriticism garnered significant attention in both Slovakia and the Czech Republic, aligning with the post-revolutionary interest in phenomenological philosophy. The translations of Martin Heidegger's works, the publication of Jan Patočka's collected writings, the vibrant philosophical discourse in the Czech-Slovak cultural space, the reception of contemporary themes in philosophy (e.g., Philosophy of Mind), and critical reflections on the philosophies of influential contemporary thinkers (such as Jean-Luc Marion, Peter Singer, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Peter Sloterdijk, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor, Bernhard Casper, etc.) created a fertile ground for the emergence of Jozef Piaček's original concept of syncritical philosophy and his school. The ongoing philosophical discourse surrounding this theme demonstrates not only the vitality of syncriticism and the philosophy of concordance but also its qualitative potential for the further development of philosophy in Slovakia and within the broader Central European context. The philosophical thought of Piaček and his followers continues to evolve within contemporary Slovak philosophical discourse, repeatedly engaging with themes such as the relationship between syncriticism and ecological philosophy and the philosophy of culture (Richard Šťáhel), syncriticism in relation to religious studies and media philosophy (Adrián Slavkovský, Slavomír Gálik), syncritical pedagogy and the philosophy of education (Sabina Gáliková Tolnaiová, Peter Rusnák), syncritical philosophy within the context of Slovak thought (Erika Lalíková), and the relationship between syncriticism and ethics in the context of artificial intelligence (Jan Bartal). Furthermore, the potential of syncritical philosophy in relation to psychology, psychiatry (Eva Kováčová), and philosophical therapy in Dasein-analysis (Peter Rusnák) is also being explored. For this reason, Piaček's original philosophical initiative is visibly expanding, creating a unique philosophical school with the potential to ensure the continued vitality of Slovak philosophical discourse, with inspiring intersections with various fields of science, culture, and the arts.

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