

10-1987

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Recommended Citation

Gorniak, Krystyna (1987) "Some Russians about Philosophical Arguments for the Necessity of Dialogue as a Condition for Human Existence," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 7: Iss. 5, Article 1.

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SOME REMARKS ABOUT PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS FOR
THE NECESSITY OF DIALOGUE AS A CONDITION FOR
HUMAN EXISTENCE

by Krystyna Gorniak

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Czesław Miłosz, the Nobel-prize winner, said in an interview: "In my book The Land of Urlo I compared what happened in the eighteenth century with taking the wrong subway train in New York. You can go in a wrong direction somewhere. You go very far and can't get off. Maybe we've been on the wrong train" (Miłosz/Gardeles, 1986).

The feeling of a need to find "the right train"¹ characterizes, among others, twentieth-century phenomenologists and philosophers of related orientations, such as existentialists. This was evident in their attempt to find the basic philosophical question which would permit a return to the sources of philosophizing. For Edmund Husserl the problem of "the possibility to take a genuinely first step" (Husserl, 1982, 19) is one of the fundamental problems. This problem involves "the question as the problem of the point of departure about first cognitions which would have to and which could make the foundation for the entire hierarchical structure of universal cognition" (Husserl, 1982, 20). The essence of the problem was formulated by Karl Jaspers in this way: "Philosophy began with a question: What is there? Hence, first of all, there are various beings, things in the world, inanimate and animate beings, infinitely numerous, everything appearing and disappearing. However, what is true being, that is, being which bonds all which lies at the foundation of all and from which all that exists results?" (Jaspers, 1971, 24).

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, one of the better known contemporary Polish phenomenologists, takes a position which also deals with one of the absolutely fundamental philosophical questions and relates not only to the character of reality in which we exist, while being at the same time a part of it,² but also to the way we cognize this reality. In her opinion, the human being is the most characteristic case of a real individual among all existences. Having all the features common for him/her and all other beings, the human being is not only exceptional in that she/he is an observer suggesting under reflection a world surrounding him/her, but also that she/he is its co-creator.

Hence, the human being is involved in a dynamic of accidents and can never be in the position of "an ideal observer," that is only an observer. (See: Tymieniecka, 1972, 204f.)

Tymieniecka asks then how and if our mind is capable of grasping and describing dynamic, transient reality. Are we not creating artificial, static constructions which are not an adequate counterpart of the real world when we build images of the world, when we describe it through an analysis of individual structures?

Reality has a dynamic character and yet at the same time, as Tymieniecka points out, it has duration. "When we are astonished at real existence, neither the variability, mobility, nor becoming and vanishing of a being which is static in its nature are the object of our astonishment, but, conversely, the subsistence of a real thing among the waves of variability is what seems to puzzle us" (Tymieniecka, 1972, 203). Hence, in her perspective it is not a problem of the "either-or" character but that of "as well as."

The fact that being is both dynamic and static, that the plentitude of reality is determined by reciprocal relations and the interaction of those two features which constitute it, imposes on philosophy a task which, in Tymieniecka's opinion, classical phenomenology could not handle. "From fundamental rationality we have to move to investigations of accidental existence. The nature of unpredictability which eidetic structures were to consolidate now becomes a matter for attention. . . . The advantages and restrictions of both the structural and genetic methods require an addendum by means of a presumptive procedure" (Tymieniecka, 1972, 203). The most spectacular example of accidental existence is the human being.

Tymieniecka means that the real individual as such constitutes not only the foundation which shapes the center, but also a purposeful directing of the real world which also emerges from the universal play of powers. Only through a real object as a reference point can the human being grasp the world. Thus, a real object does not have in itself a complete existential foundation: it does not originate from the convergence of powers whose operation it does not bring about. These powers act in accordance with a formal determined pattern, from reasons which are not internal reasons of the originating object. "It seems that in order to explain the process of the origin of a real individual, in order to present its final reasons, we must postulate the existence of a universal order of being, within which the individual originates and developes" (Tymieniecka, 1972, 207).

The separation of unpredictable links from the real causal nexus which binds each relatively isolated structure (e.g., a human being) with other(s) or object(s) in the world is a procedure which permits, according to the outstanding Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden,

further investigation of the world, e.g., by the natural sciences (cf. Ingarden, 1981, 422f.). Philosophy, however, unlike science, doesn't describe the world univocally and uniplenary. Hence, Karl Jaspers, among others, wrote: "For a man who believes in science, the worst is this, that philosophy does not have any common important results, something that one could know and by the same could possess. . . . Looking for the truth while not possessing it is the heart of philosophy. . . . Philosophy means: to be on the way" (Jaspers, 1971, 9-13).

For Jaspers, philosophy is the search for this what one knows that it is, but does not know what it is, that is. When what it is, is known, it is no longer a matter of concern for philosophy--it becomes a matter of scientific research. Tymieniecka writes: "If we consider the lack of individual structures which become apparent through phenomenological analysis, we come across questions which surpass the explanatory power of analysis alone. These questions, aiming at the objectives and final reasons of individual beings, are arranged into a particular pattern. . . . The actual order of the world is undoubtedly a matter for science" (Tymieniecka, 1972, 208). Later on Tymieniecka states that this research results in the claim that the order of the world has an unpredictable and transitory character and that it does not explain the origin or objectives of beings. In her opinion, this results in a necessity to undertake further research on the Architectonic Design of the Cosmos, which is possible given the application of the conjectural procedures Tymieniecka postulates. "Now the real individual being, man and the world are seen in the new perspective of cosmic constitution, in which all former dimensions of phenomenological research converge, finding their proper scale as well as new ways of attempting answers to questions which have so far remained unanswered" (Tymieniecka, 1972, 208).

According to Tymieniecka, a number of factors have caused the necessity to enter a new phase of philosophy as pursued from the standpoint of phenomenology. Among the most important are changes in the approach to many philosophical problems which have taken place since World War II, changes which, in a sense, were the result of the War (mainly the problem of the situation of the human being in the world).

Classic phenomenology, the phenomenology of Husserl and Ingarden, appeared to be too onesided to take on the burden of investigating the complex multiaspectual problems of the contemporary human being and the contemporary world. ". . . this classic phenomenological framework is rooted in epistemological assumptions determining the formulation of the method. In fact, the opening of new approaches to man which have appeared within the phenomenological field recently, as

well as the most recent trends of ideas, are a radical reaction to these epistemological assumptions (Tymieniecka, 1976, 383). However, according to Tymieniecka, the reaction against phenomenology in its classic form results not only from the internal development of this philosophical trend, but also from the overall situation in contemporary spiritual culture which, as is becoming more and more apparent, involves growing opposition to the total domination of reason over all other human features.

The end of the nineteenth century was marked by despair in the omnipotence of human wisdom. This despair is seen today as a strong antirationalist stream in the social sciences, as well as in everyday life, and even in the natural sciences. Even if the crisis of Western culture is seen as a result of the creation of a consumer society in which people are given their individuality, their will, and their happiness, this problem remains intact. The consumer society is a result of the development of technology, based on rationalist philosophy and on the natural sciences. In this case as well, rationalism may be regarded as "guilty" of leading humanity down a blind alley.

The world of technology in which we now live was created by people themselves. The human being is the creator of this world, even though he no longer understands it. He also no longer comprehends nature, i.e., the world apart from people.³ Even action can no longer be talked about: "The possibility of producing something, which is contained in technology, has developed--not least as a result of its success--into a crucial form of action: even in human relationships, production replaces action" (Kampits, 1981, 329f.). This is also one of the fundamental problems of contemporary humanity.

In Tymieniecka's opinion all these elements have caused all the fundamental claims of phenomenology, its "cornerstones," both those of Husserl and those of Ingarden, to "seem outlived." Tymieniecka proposes:

Replacing the abstract ideal essences with the notion of the "irreducible," the combinatorial system of intentionality with the insight into various orchestrations of man's functions, and more importantly, approaching man as the real autonomous individual not in separation from but within the concrete concatenation of the actual context of the real world, we have the contextual framework of reference appropriate to do justice to this new dimension, without in any way giving up the acquisitions of the classic ones (Tymieniecka, 1976, 387).

Tymieniecka pays a lot of attention to the possibility of crossing barriers between different elements of reality, different levels of human existence, and also the question of changeability as a foun-

dation for these problems. Determination of the kind of interaction between the categories mentioned above (and others which I do not mention here) can bring us closer to the solution of one of the focal problems of the existence of contemporary human being, i.e., the problem of freedom.

Roman Ingarden strictly connected the problem of freedom with the question of responsibility and this, in turn, is connected with human acting. The relation follows from how Ingarden understands the idea of "action." Action is not for him an "experience," in any case not such an "action" which the human being is responsible for. It must be "a real acting in a real world; it must also be fulfilled by a real man with a determined character" (Ingarden, 1987, 120). The connection of the problem of responsibility (and guilt) and action fulfilled not only in the act of consciousness but also in the physical sense matters very much for Ingarden's whole philosophical view. An action is for him an expression of human freedom. The undertaking of an action and its fulfillment give evidence of a person's determined impact upon the environment, of her/his being "different": an acting person is in some senses opposed to her/his surroundings. Simultaneously, however, his/her action is usually turned towards any element of the surroundings, which causes the creation of new ties between the human being and the surrounding world. It also causes the strengthening or weakening of bonds which had been present before.

At this point the problem of the possibility of realization on the level of empirical being of freedom which concerns absolute values appears again. Acts, of which the measure are absolute values, must transcend the existing, "given" life-world. Andrzej Poltawski perceives in this statement first of all the possibility of treating the human being as "the searched bond between the psychic-biological-physical visible world and the world of highest values; a bond which makes of these two regions one reality" (Poltawski, 1986, 55f.; my translation from German). In such interpretation the idea expressed by Ingarden coincides in great part with Buber's' view on the position of the human being towards Finality and Non-finality.

Nevertheless, in this attitude there is nothing that gives human actions a different, exceptional character in comparison with the actions which are possible for other beings. It is the creative character of human actions which makes them different from all other forms of activity. "To be human means to be creative" (Tymieniecka, 1979, 14).

Human creative activity is not, though, action in a vacuum nor the breaking of bonds connecting the individual with the real world (similarly, human freedom is not the breaking of these bonds). Human creative activity goes beyond the world as a physical phenomenon into

a possible world, and his/her choice is a choice among possible worlds.

A really free action which is in fact creation must be related, as Tymieniecka points out, to one more important notion. This is a telos. In introducing the analysis of telos with its triple reference to the human being⁴ Tymieniecka at the same time deals with bonds of slightly different types than those Poltawski has talked about. First of all, the human being plays here the role of creative agent: "These bonds, at the one extreme, have their roots in Elementary Nature, and at the other extreme, tend toward Transcendence, the radical Other, as their ultimate reference point. The emphasis upon his telos, then, places the human being within the total expanse of his condition" (Tymieniecka, 1979, 28).

Then the next problem appears, the problem which is connected with "the Other," i.e., the problem of dialogue. Fruitful self-interpretation in existence postulated by Tymieniecka may be creative and also comprise transempirical destiny⁵ if, as Tymieniecka says, it is a "search shared by two persons" (Tymieniecka, 1979, 20). A dialogue of two persons, however, is possible only when it makes a path for realizing human creativity. In our creative search the telos, which is our own and, at the same time, results from the Universal Architecture of the Cosmos (Tymieniecka), leads us to turn to the other person, who is our partner in the dialogue, our witness and judge--and who becomes our second self.

The human being as partner, the human being asking for the aim and sense of existence, but the human being who, owing to her/his activity, is able to choose and accomplish goals, sees relations between himself/herself and the world as well as those between herself/himself and other people in a different way. This active attitude towards the world, towards Nature, can be also called an attitude of dialogue.

People and the world share a relation of oneness. That people are regarded as something different from the world is an arbitrary act of human beings themselves. We have made ourselves different from the world. We have placed ourselves in a position different from the world, and have tried to be superior in it. The new task of people is to feel and to be conscious of the oneness of the world. "Nature must change from an object which we can manage into something opposite from us, but in which we participate. This does not mean a romantic return to nature in which nature is again seen as an object for aesthetic purposes. . . . Nature should again be the home of human beings, and not just the source of energy, food, and materials" (Kampits, 1981, 330). "Man participates in both Finality and Nonfinality." This statement of Martin Buber at the same time indicates that the fulfill-

ment of man's/woman's being can be seen neither from a single-sided orientation of Nonfinality understood as the aim of oneness with God⁶ nor as a onesided identification with Finality. Both of these, when taken separately, lead to the degradation of one or the other of these relations, i.e., the relation between the human being and Nonfinality or the relation between the human being and Finality into a mere subject-object relation. The result is that the human being becomes an object.

The human being, who participates in Finality and Nonfinality, has a position, so to speak, at the center of the universe, but not in the sense of classical anthropocentrism. At the same time we should consider Kant's view that the role of the human being in his/her relation to the external world is to "order" that world. If we are united with the world, our situation is much more complicated than philosophers previously thought it to be. We are no longer spectators looking at the world as if it were a mere picture. We are also no longer the creators of order in the world who change the world without themselves being changed by the world. Nor are we architects who rebuilt the world according to their own design. We are partners of all other elements of the world. We change the world and are changed by it. At the same time, our role in this world is, or rather should be, mediation. Mediation is also a kind of dialogue. The mediator should be able to dialogue with both sides. If then "man participates in both Finality and Nonfinality" his nature should be dialogical. As a result, the dialogical principle should be the principle of human existence at all its levels. This is how Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka sees the task of phenomenology today:

The phenomenological philosophy is an unprejudiced study of experience in its entire range: experience being understood as yielding objects. Experience, moreover, is approached in a specific way, such a way that it legitimatizes itself naturally in immediate evidence. As such it offers a unique ground for philosophical inquiry. Its basic condition, however, is to legitimize its validity. In this way it allows a dialogue to unfold among various philosophies of different methodologies and persuasions, so that their basic assumptions and conceptions may be investigated in an objective fashion. That is, instead of comparing concepts, we may go below their differences to seek together what they are meant to grasp. We may in this way come to the things themselves, which are the common objective of all philosophy . . . (Tymieniecka, 1984, ix).

To come to things themselves does not mean necessarily that we should find the one and only truth about them, nor that we will find the very truth, the truth as such. To come to things themselves can

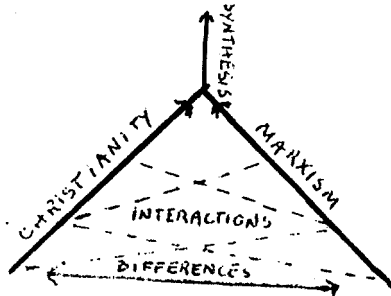
mean to see these things from different positions and to share one's own knowledge of them with partners whose position towards the same things is different. In this context, the following remark made by the contemporary German philosopher, Josef Simon, may be significant: "To the culture of dialogue belongs some degree of skepticism from both sides in knowing that their own conviction is 'greater' because it is noninterchangeable, although this does not mean it is truer. To this culture belongs the acceptance of the other's conviction as also someone's 'own.' This reciprocal acceptance is at the same time a practical truth. Not truth, but the opposition between faith in authority and one's own conviction will be relativized in such a way that to the other will also be given the right to possess a conviction, and thereby authority" (Simon, 1985, 57).

The knowledge that no one can possess the "only" truth is in my opinion a very good premise for dialogue, a premise which results from one of the basic philosophical questions about the possibility of true knowledge of the world and of human beings, as being both a part of Finality and a part of Nonfinality. If such a single definitive truth is impossible, then the traditional way of thinking, according to which to find a synthesis is the highest goal if differences in our knowledge of the world appear, should also be regarded as that "wrong train" which--according to Czeslaw Milosz--humankind took.

Faith in the possibility of a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism was present in the philosophies of many outstanding thinkers at the end of the 19th and in the early 20th centuries, especially in Russia and Eastern Europe. One need only consider Vladimir Solovyev, Nicholas Berdayev, or, to some degree, Stanislaw Brzozowski and even Czeslaw Milosz. All such attempts have been found wanting and their initiators became deeply disappointed, and as a result took a position of "either-or" thereby excluding the possibility of dialogue. This rejection was rooted in their philosophical attitude, i.e., in their faith in the existence of an "only" truth. One must add that this also implies a faith in the static character of reality and a faith in the unique position of human beings in this reality, i.e., a faith that the freedom of the human being resides in the capacity for manipulation of the reality exterior to her/him and which is treated by him/her as a set of objects, not as a partner for cooperation and co-creation. Contemporary philosophy in its phenomenological stream has, as this paper shows, revised this position to some degree.

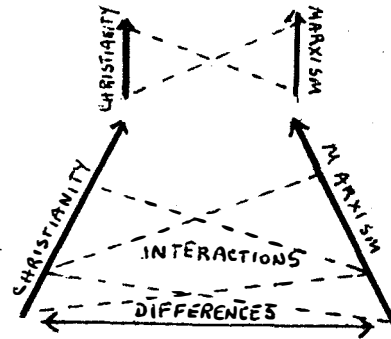
From the new point of view, the statement of Paul Mojzes about the relationship between Christianity and Marxism seems to be much more realistic than the former views mentioned above. Mojzes writes: "No synthesis is to be expected. While some differences may be reconciled and while the partners may reach agreement, even unanimity, on

some issues, the goal is not to create Christian Marxists or Marxist Christians as a hybrid of the future" (Mojzes, 1981, 214). Mojzes presents a model of how he sees the process of coexistence and cooperation of Christians and Marxists:



Wrong Model

(Mojzes, 1981, 215)



Right Model

To recapitulate, the crisis of Western culture, including philosophy, which has been evident since the end of the 19th century has changed the thinking about many basic philosophical problems, as, for example, the problem of the relationship between human beings and the world, the problem of truth and of freedom. All this has placed the problem of the dialogical character of the relation between individuals, communities, the human and non-human world, etc., in a very important place on the scale of philosophical reflection. From the standpoint of this new philosophical task the problem of dialogue between Christians and Marxists also attains new significance and new dimensions. Moreover, the problem of dialogue between Christians and Marxists should be seen as connected with the problem of dialogue in the whole contemporary world, dialogue between different groups of people, an example of which is the difficult problem of dialogue between intellectuals and politics (see: Kampits, 1984). Christian-Marxist dialogue first moves from the position of utopia to that of necessity. This doesn't mean, however, that many difficulties do not remain on a practical level, which might even make this dialogue impossible. In my opinion, the removal of these difficulties should be one of the most important tasks for intellectuals from both sides, as well as for others.

Endnotes

¹I have written elsewhere more about this problem. See bibliography.

²In the philosophical language of Martin Buber, the problem is presented as follows: "This means that we are at the same time and in one with the finiteness of human beings obliged to know man's participation in Nonfinality, not as two separate features, but as the doubling of processes in which human existence can finally be cognized. Both Finality and Nonfinality influence him; he participates in both Finality and Nonfinality" (Buber, 1971, 14).

³One should think, for example, of Durkheim's considerations.

⁴"We may conclude this discussion of the telos which presides over the enactment of the creative function by stating its crucial role in three major points:

(1) It allows the human agent to break with his imposed survival-oriented patterns and advance toward the orchestration of Imaginatio Creatrix. Thus it opens up the exit from the closed horizon of Nature (and of the transcendental circle, for that matter) for specifically human freedom.

(2) Leaving behind the preestablished regulative principles of the intentional system (subservient to Nature) the creative telos guides the origin of new forms as fruits of human invention. Thus it leads man from natural determination to creative possibility.

(3) Finally, the creative vision offers us the much sought system of reference for thematising the preintentional dimension of the human functioning as its "subliminal" resources: they appear as a specific endowment of the real human individual basic to his human condition" (Tymieniecka, 1979, 17).

⁵"This quest, which we recognize as the road to the experience of the sacred, does not progress without any aim. It reveals an inner element of direction, its very own telos. . . . We can, in parallel as much as in contrast, call this telos of the expression of the sacred, THE SOUL'S TRANSEMPIRICAL DESTINY" (Tymieniecka, 1979, 19).

⁶"In the great religions, the universe is not the partner of religious communication but at the most a means of communication, the partner being inside or beyond the universe" (Keller, 1985, 121).

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