

THE LIFE OF INWARDNESS ASUBJECTIVITY IN PATOČKA'S WAR MANUSCRIPTS

MARTIN RITTER

Abstract

The paper identifies asubjective elements in manuscripts written by Patočka in the first half of the 1940s. After explicating the key concept of inwardness, with which Patočka substitutes Husserl's notion of the ego, I elucidate the world-disclosing performance of inwardness as irreducible to world-constituting activity. After this explication, the paper inspects Patočka's method: his attempt to capture the life of inwardness subjectively. The appearing of the world, however, cannot be reduced to subjectivity, which is also revealed by Patočka's reflection on the relation between inwardness and the things in the world. Although the war manuscripts factually point to and call for the desubjectification of phenomenology, Patočka's adherence to transcendental phenomenology, his emphasis on life notwithstanding, does not allow for it.

In this paper,¹ I would like to point to the importance of the manuscripts Patočka wrote during World War II, which are still rather overlooked.² These manuscripts deal extensively with topics relating to the philosophy of history,³ but I will

¹ This paper was written as a part of a Standard grant project supported by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) "Beyond the Phenomenology of Sociality" (GA16–23046S).

² Both the complete list of manuscripts and their general interpretation is presented by Karfík Filip, "Jan Patočka's Strahov-Nachlass und sein unvollendetes opus grande", in Hagedorn Ludger (ed.), *Jan Patočka – Andere Wege in die Moderne: Studien zur europäischen Ideengeschichte von der Renaissance bis zur Romantik*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2006, pp. 31–63.

³ The essential part of these reflections has been published in German in Hagedorn Ludger (ed.), *Jan Patočka – Andere Wege in die Moderne...*, *op. cit.*

focus here on a different aspect of them, namely on Patočka's ontological and phenomenological studies.⁴ I seek to indicate correspondences between Patočka's early transcendental phenomenology, as presented in the manuscripts, and his late asubjective phenomenology. Although Patočka's point of departure was, in the first half of the 1940s, the notion of inwardness (in Czech: *nitro*), he explicitly sought to overcome some of Husserl's subjectivist shortcomings⁵ through this concept and through a specific form of transcendental phenomenology. By placing emphasis on life and seeking to give the subject back its liveliness, Patočka's concept both called for and simultaneously made it impossible to desubjectify phenomenology.

Inward Existing

Let me begin by accentuating that Patočka, when speaking of the possibility or even requirement of *asubjective* phenomenology in the 1970s, does not mean that such phenomenology has no place for a subject. On the contrary, since appearances appear to *someone*, appearing necessarily includes *something like* a subject. To put it more concretely, abandoning Husserl's concept of absolute consciousness constituting the phenomenological field, one still must conceive this field as "a project of every possible encounter with being";⁶ and, as such, this field is linked to a being who *lives in possibilities*, who exists as a possibility (of its own being).

The field of appearing is surely not constituted by the being who lives in possibilities. Rather, each "subject" who lives in possibilities, i.e. each existing *sum*, comes to itself, realises itself through the field of appearing. In fact, "not we, but phenomenological being indicates the possibilities of our being."⁷ According to Patočka, existence is "not a stepping out of itself (...) but a fundamental 'being out

⁴ Patočka's shorter essays on these topics have been translated into German and published in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatik Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage*, Bucharest, Humanitas, Studia Phaenomenologica VII, 2007. The more extended and most systematic studies, however, are only available in Czech. As far as I know, this part of the manuscripts has been discussed (in print) only in the Czech Republic. See Puc Jan, "O životě a smrti: Patočková koncepce člověka a jeho životního úkolu ve válečných rukopisech", in *Reflexe*, 36, 2009, pp. 25–34; Ritter Martin, "Odcizené nitro. Polemická reakce na článek Jana Puce", in *Reflexe*, 38, 2010, pp. 99–107; Frei Jan, "Odcizené nitro, nebo zúžené vědomí", in *Reflexe*, 39, 2010, pp. 105–114; Ritter Martin, "Nitro a jeho základ. Pokus o shrnutí diskuse k Patočkovým válečným rukopisům", in *Reflexe*, 40, 2011, pp. 99–104.

⁵ Let me emphasise that I cannot critically evaluate here the (in)correctness of Patočka's interpretation of Husserl.

⁶ Patočka Jan, "Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Möglichkeit einer 'asubjektiven' Phänomenologie", in Patočka J., *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, Ausgewählte Schriften IV: Phänomenologische Schriften II, 1991, p. 282.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

of itself' and 'self-receiving'"⁸ Hence, although my existence, my movement of existence, can be called "subjective" insofar as it is, as Heidegger would put it, always *mine*, I am – or rather become – myself through the asubjective field of appearing.

After this preliminary remark, let us turn to the war manuscripts themselves. They were in many respects inspired both by Heidegger and the philosophy of life,⁹ yet from a methodological point of view they present an original and intricate version of the transcendental phenomenology¹⁰ inspired by Husserl. This phenomenology, however, also modifies Husserl's concept in many respects.¹¹

Above all, the concept of consciousness is replaced by that of non-objective and unobjectifiable *inwardness*. Secondly, Patočka does not conceive its fundamental activity as a *constitutive* activity. The third change, which should hardly be interpreted as merely a change in emphasis, consists in Patočka's concept becoming much more existentialist or *personal*: it focuses on how the individual human being personally performs its own existence.

Moreover, Patočka's concept is quite radical not only regarding subjects but also regarding "objects" in the world. Not only can human inward existence not be objectified, but nature too – and this must be explicitly identified as the fourth important modification of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology – cannot be conceived as the outcome of intentional activity constituting objects *as* objects. Analogously to inwardness, *nature* in its essence is irreducible to objectivity.

Due to both "subjective" and "objective" non-objectivity, i.e. the non-objectivity of both inwardness and nature, Patočka must deal with a difficult methodological problem: how to describe, by means of transcendental phenomenology, something objectively inaccessible? Inwardness seems to be more easily approachable

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁹ Cf. Karfík Filip, *Unedlichwerden durch die Endlichkeit*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, Orbis Phaenomenologicus: Studien 8, 2008, pp. 41–43. The importance of the notion of life in Patočka's early philosophy has already been emphasised by Novotný Karel, "Dějinnost a svoboda. Heidegger a Patočkova raná filosofie dějin", in *Reflexe*, 14, 1995, pp. 2.1–2.36, and, more recently, by Hagedorn Ludger, "Quicquid Cogitat': On the Uses and Disadvantages of Subjectivity", in Učník Lubica, Chvatík Ivan, Williams Anita (eds.), *The Phenomenological Critique of Mathematisation and the Question of Responsibility: Formalisation and the Life-World*, Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/London/ New York, Springer, 2015, pp. 89–104.

¹⁰ Cf. the beginning of the fifth part of the study "World and Objectness": Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy III/1*, Praha, OIKOYMENH, Sebrané spisy Jana Patočky 8/1, 2014, p. 61; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatík Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage*, *op. cit.*, p. 46. (In the following, I will refer primarily to the Czech edition, and secondarily to German translations when available. If not stated otherwise, all translations are my own.)

¹¹ Hence it is too risky, I think, to say that Patočka "follows Heideggerian motifs with Husserlian means". Karfík Filip, *Unedlichwerden durch die Endlichkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

than nature since any “subject” should have, one would presume, an immediate, inner access to it. Insofar as inwardness is non-objective, however, it is unreachable by introspection. In what way, then, is transcendental phenomenology supposed to grasp it?

Patočka explicitly differentiates his concept from that of psychology. Psychology conceives of inwardness as an object, a psychic object. It analyses various kinds of experiences through introspection. In doing so, however, the psychologist inevitably misses, according to Patočka, what is essential. For inner life is life “interested in something, and this going after this something (...) is a source of involuntary and invincible interest; we are interested, captured in this tension of life.”¹² But this tension is *lost* in experiences as described by psychology: “lifeless, indifferent are all these occurrences even though they are the experiences of tension, passion, emotion, and avidity”.¹³

The main weakness of *any* psychological approach is this indifference. In introspecting on our experiences, “what constitutes our own interest in life” is not captured, and hence the essence of inner life, or of inward living, is passed by. Interest and similar phenomena, such as seriousness, tension, or preoccupation, characterise us (as inward existences) in our *specificity*, not only in our objectively graspable properties. As Patočka puts it, interest cannot be *principally* “objectified by [psychological] self-mirroring, although it is an essential part of our inner life”.¹⁴

Interest conveys one essential feature of any inward existence: its “lack of distance”, since an inward existence necessarily means “putting the content of one’s own life into a certain sphere, an as it were self-identification with a certain thing or with a certain field of things in which only one feels one is really living”.¹⁵

Being interested, inwardness is essentially in *unrest*. Also in this unrest it differs from anything merely objective: in contrast to movement as conceived, and objectified, by physics, i.e. as a transition from one state or place to another, the movement of inwardness is *not* a motion measured in relation to something but movement “by itself and in itself”.¹⁶ Patočka emphasises that a “true *relationship*,

¹² Patočka Jan, “Nitro a duch”, in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy III/1*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere und der Geist”, in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatík Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Patočka Jan, “Nitro a duch”, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere und der Geist”, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁶ Already here, Patočka explicitly connects this idea of movement with Plato’s definition of the soul as self-movement.

i.e. the relationship (...) as not only an accidental description of things”,¹⁷ can arise only if there is something which is principally and fundamentally in unrest.

Meaning-Performing and World-Disclosing Understanding

As explicated above, psychology is unable to understand the dynamic of inwardness¹⁸ which must be apprehended, if one seeks to explicate it, as the “residuum of natural non-objective self-understanding”.¹⁹ What is this exactly?

Characteristically, Patočka does *not* associate this self-understanding with Heidegger’s concept of understanding but with Husserl’s notion of intentionality, emphasising that this intentional “performance” (in Czech: *výkon*) cannot be reduced to the successive experiencing of particularities.²⁰ He adds that the most fundamental performativity/intentionality of inward life is *hidden*, but it is possible to shed some light on its peculiarity (1) by reflecting on the relationship between this performance and the ego, and (2) by elucidating what the most fundamental “effect” of this performance is, i.e. what this performance performs.

Ad (1). Reflection on the relationship between the just mentioned “non-objective self-understanding” performance of meaning and the ego demonstrates that, and how, Patočka seeks to maintain the method of transcendental phenomenology centred on the concept of the ego. He “broadens” the scope of the ego, i.e. of inwardness, to literally incorporate into it phenomena usually considered as not being *performed* by it: he conceives the performance of inwardness as also “that about which the ego does not even know but which still ‘unconsciously’ codetermines it (...) and which, personified, appears almost as another, alien life inside the life of one’s own”.²¹

¹⁷ Patočka Jan, “Nitro a duch”, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere und der Geist”, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Let me add that Patočka emphasises the very same idea in his study on space from 1960.

¹⁸ Patočka concedes that poetic, moral, and religious depictions of inwardness can be not only inspiring but also quite apt. For the same reason, psychoanalysis is attractive in its offering a much more “active and dramatic” image than older psychology. However, according to Patočka, there is still one essential weakness of psychoanalysis: the dynamics of inwardness are depicted there as “a drama of mighty forces which (...) does not differ fundamentally from a drama offered by natural catastrophes.” Patočka Jan., “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy, III/1*, *op. cit.*, p. 38). The problem is, fundamentally, that psychoanalysis attempts to capture the non-objective through objective principles.

¹⁹ Patočka Jan, “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁰ Rather, “[t]he intentionality of singular objective ‘acts’ is an outcome of simplifying the function performed by the original non-topicality, by the hiddenness of the proper performative nature of intentional life”. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Accordingly, not only the doings of a self-aware, self-centred ego are the performances of inwardness: paradoxically, even “a sort of passivity” which is “a necessary background to every explicitly active grasping and realizing of one’s own possibilities” is, according to Patočka, a kind of performance.²² In other words, everything “which internally determines my choice, possibility, and impossibility” is to be regarded as performance that “decides about the formation and consequently about the meaning of particular phases of our life”;²³ i.e. of the meaningful dynamic of ourselves.

Ad (2). A similar overlapping of, or an impossibility to clearly distinguish between, active constituting (or conditioning) and passive being constituted (or conditioned) is also discernible regarding the most fundamental “outcome” of the performance of inwardness. Inwardness is fundamentally correlated to the *world*, it *discloses* the world; but, again, it would be wrong to conceive the world as constituted by inwardness. One may recall here Heidegger’s idea of the world from *Being and Time*: the world is certainly not constituted by *Dasein*, yet it is *here* only through it. Analogically, the world is here only through inwardness, yet it is not constituted by it.

Ana Santos captures the relation between the “subject” and the world thus: “The world (...) cannot be separated from us, yet we need not conceive it as identical to our subjectivity. The world is neither inside nor outside the subject; the world is (...) a primordial (...) ‘light of life’ (...) illuminating the way of the human being.”²⁴ Most importantly, insofar as the world is that in which inwardness finds itself, or insofar as the world is, as Santos quotes, “the light of life”, it surely cannot be conceived of as constituted by inwardness – inwardness is rather, as it were, enlightened by it.

Patočka’s description of the relation between meaning-disclosing performance and the ego indicates that this performance of the self is, paradoxically, non-transparent to the self itself, and his description of the relation between the world and inwardness even indicates the priority of the world and its irreducibility to the self. Both descriptions suggest that inwardness finds itself as a living being *in* the world rather than being the principle of world-constitution.

To Capture Life Subjectively?

Patočka’s thesis that it is *life* which “discloses the ‘meaning’ of objectivity in the whole and in the particular (...) life in its basic characteristic that makes it perfor-

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Santos Ana, “Das Fragment *Nitro a Svět* (Das Innere und die Welt). Einführung”, in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatik Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage*, op. cit., p. 19.

mance”²⁵ seems to be in accordance with what was said above. Or, to express it again in Patočka’s own words, “life is that which gives meaning to the existent as such [*co jsoucímu vůbec dává smysl*], to which ‘being’ [*bytí*] means anything at all, [and hence] it is only from there where one can set out to the very central philosophical problem”.²⁶ To put it in a simplified manner, it is rather on the concept of life than on the concept of a conscious ego that we should base phenomenology.

This emphasis on life as the principle of world-disclosure leads, from the methodological point of view, to a tricky situation: Patočka attempts to capture life by analysing living experiences, methodologically “sticking to” Husserl’s *subjectivist* phenomenology, and thus effectively “subjectifying” life by attempting to grasp it *in* the subject, while he simultaneously emphasises that life is beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Although his concept is often reminiscent of Heidegger’s overcoming of the subject-object dichotomy through the concept of “being-in-the-world”, “the very central philosophical problem” in the war manuscripts is not so much the (Heideggerian) problem of Being but exactly the problem of the meaning-performing *subjectivity* which should be identifiable with meaning-performing *life*. Yet, Patočka himself concedes that Husserl was *unable* to solve the key problem of subjective being and concludes his considerations of Husserl’s phenomenology by declaring that “Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit was an attempt to solve this problem”.²⁷

Unfortunately, Patočka neither describes this Hegelian solution in any detail nor declares whether, or in what form, he would accept it. Putting this question aside, the methodological problem of Patočka’s approach can be expressed in the following way: is it possible to describe the life of inward beings through analysing subjectivity?

Similarities with the Concept of the Movement of Existence

As indicated above, at least some of the meaning-constituting performances of the self do *not* come, strictly speaking, from inwardness *itself*. Rather, inwardness finds itself as being conditioned by them instead. Through this, for lack of a better word, “dispossessing” of the performances of the self, the concept of performance, i.e. the concept through which Patočka develops the fundamental phenomenolog-

²⁵ Patočka Jan, “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

ical concept of intentionality, anticipates what will later, in the 1960s, be conceptualised as the movement of existence.

To put it in a simplified way, both the early concept of performance and the later concept of the movement of existence describe a performance/movement that is “always mine”, but both these concepts reveal this inward or personal movement as asubjectively conditioned. In the terminology of Patočka’s mature asubjective phenomenology, both these concepts imply, although the war manuscripts do *not* duly appreciate it, that “not we, but phenomenological being indicates the possibilities of our being”.²⁸

Moreover, both concepts indicate that an inward existence, or *sum*, is neither constituted, nor constitutes itself. It rather, *by performing* its way of existence, *finds* itself as a living being in the world, and thus as being conditioned by it.²⁹ Accordingly, Patočka quite accurately captures human inward existing through the collocation “the way of our life”.³⁰ Firstly, the term *way* emphasises the processual nature of inwardness in both its temporal and spatial dimensions: ontologically speaking, inwardness is not an entity but rather a kind of self-forming practice with the world as its field. Secondly, in performing this practice one goes the way of *life* wherein this singular life is a part of all living beings.³¹ Thirdly, this way of life is *my own* way of life: it is by living and performing it that I singularise, *ontologically*, my own being.

One can say, paradoxically indeed, that Patočka’s transcendental phenomenology articulated in the war manuscripts has *no* transcendental subject to analyse, i.e. no fundamental subject as conditioning (the experience of) the world. Rather, this phenomenology must read the “essence” of inwardness, i.e. its way of life, *in* the world. Accordingly, Patočka says that the only possible *positive* concepts capturing inwardness (besides the already mentioned negative ones, namely the concepts of interest and inner unrest)³² do not describe it directly, but rather elucidate how

²⁸ Patočka Jan, “Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Forderung einer asubjektiven Phänomenologie”, in Patočka J., *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

²⁹ Here, I can neither explicate in more details nor justify my reading of Patočka’s late concept of the movement of existence.

³⁰ Patočka Jan, “Nitro, čas, svět”, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere, die Zeit, die Welt”, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

³¹ As will be explicated below, it is primarily through the concept of life that Patočka accounts for the possibility of inwardness to understand other beings not only as objects, but also as subjects. Santos justifiably considers “Phänomenologie der Lebendigkeit” as the most original feature of Patočka’s war manuscripts. Santos Ana, “Das Fragment *Nitro a Svět* (Das Innere und die Welt). Einführung”, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

³² Both these concepts are negative ones also insofar as they point to a “non-being in itself, a non-resting of oneself in oneself” essential to inwardness; accordingly, inwardness is “a kind of rising out of

inwardness “understands its own meaning through the meaning of the world in which it finds itself”.³³

These meaningful structures, of course, may be considered as correlative to inwardness but they are not its constituted products. They are rather, as Patočka puts it, its “orienting signs”: “everything that is not this pilgrimage [of inwardness] obtains its meaning of being (...) an orienting sign”, and the very content of inwardness is to be identified with the non-objective movement itself proceeding within this framework: “the *moments* of the way, its *peripeteia* (...) naturally creates the genuine ‘content’ of inner life”.³⁴ It is only through these signs and moments that one can capture the meaning of the life of inwardness.

Nature

Insufficiency of the concept reducing the appearing of both the world and the things in the world to subjectivity is also revealed by Patočka’s reflection on the relation, or encounter, between the subject and object, or more precisely between inwardness and the world “contents”.

As mentioned above, things in the world are not constituted by (transcendental) subjectivity. Ontologically, natural beings must be conceived of, similarly to inwardness, as forms of the “undifferentiation” [*nerozlišenost*] of the subject and object”.³⁵ Describing the encounter between “subject” and “object”, or rather between inwardness and nature, Patočka considers it necessary to presuppose two undifferentiations, i.e. both the undifferentiation of inwardness and the undifferentiation of nature, to account for the possibility of an understanding *contact* between inwardness and beings of the world. It is thanks to this common undifferentiation that “concrete contact with concrete beings [is possible]; all of life is based on this sympathy, and there is no sympathy without this essential, deep identity”.³⁶

Patočka supports this speculative concept by, positively, (1) describing our (natural) perceiving of things in the world and, negatively, by (2) criticising Hus-

oneself together with being bound to oneself: an unrest and interest, and the tension arising from it.” Patočka Jan, “Nitro a duch”, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere und der Geist”, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³³ Patočka Jan, “Nitro a duch”, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere und der Geist”, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³⁴ Patočka Jan, “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³⁵ Patočka Jan, “Svět a předmětnost”, in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy, III/1, op. cit.*, p. 64; Patočka Jan, “Welt und Gegenständlichkeit”, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

³⁶ Patočka Jan, “Nitro, čas, svět”, in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy, III/1, op. cit.*, p. 68; Patočka Jan, “Das Innere, die Zeit, die Welt“, in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatik Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage, op. cit.*, p. 69.

serl's idea that things in the world are constituted by intentional activity "animating" impressions or "hyletic data".

Ad (1). Considering our (natural) perceiving of "objects" in the world, Patočka emphasises that there is no *mere* datum in our perceiving of the world: "An aesthesis is never a 'pure presentation,' there is always an 'expression' in it; an aesthesis is possible only as an expression."³⁷ Reading Patočka's formulation that "face to face with another inwardness, this other inwardness makes its appearance as an *exhibition, an expression*,"³⁸ one might even ask to what degree Patočka anticipates here Lévinas' concept of face. Patočka, however, is not describing "something" which breaks any form, but rather an elementary perception: any perception is "more than only subjective"; there is "an undifferentiation of subject and object" contained therein.³⁹

Ad (2). In accordance with the aforesaid, things in the world cannot be conceived of as constituted by intentional activity "animating" impressions. As Patočka puts it, his transcendental phenomenology "glimpses at the borderline of human understanding for things, pure nature, pure undifferentiation of subject and object, undifferentiation enclosed in itself".⁴⁰ Ontologically admitting this sphere, one must conceive our contact with the given as "a harmonic resonance of nature with 'inwardness' and inwardness with nature thanks to the original undifferentiation of subject and object".⁴¹

Dissimilarities: Life vs. World

The concept of nature, and especially that of life, points to the crucial ontological dimension of Patočka's war manuscripts that, in my reading, calls for and simultaneously makes it impossible to desubjectify Patočka's early concept. Through this emphasis on transcendently conceived life, Patočka's war manuscripts also fundamentally differ from his late phenomenology.

³⁷ Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", *op. cit.*, p. 61; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³⁸ Patočka Jan, "Studie k pojmu světa", in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy III/1*, *op. cit.*, p. 101. According to Patočka, "inwardness perceptible from the outside" is a "universal pre-signifying" of "a synthetic process of perception". *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³⁹ Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", *op. cit.*, p. 62; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴⁰ Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", *op. cit.*, p. 64; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴¹ Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", *op. cit.*, p. 66; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Inwardness, just like natural beings, is a *living* “subject” and as such, namely as participating in life, is beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Due to this being beyond, and in this being beyond, inwardness in its experiencing cannot be conceived as, or reduced to, an objectively accessible entity. As explicated above, Patočka avoids its objectification, besides other things, by conceiving the world in its appearing to inwardness as an outcome of performances while these performances include, let me reiterate, also “that about which the ego does not even know but which still ‘unconsciously’ codetermines it (...) and which, personified, appears almost as another, alien life inside the life of one’s own”.⁴²

By saying this, however, Patočka himself seems to indicate as unnecessary and artificial to identify life in its performance with unconscious co-determinations performed *by the ego*. Perhaps life does not belong to any ego but exactly to something “else”, to something *beyond* the ego as the subject of experience. Due to it, and in this sense, one can say, paradoxically, of an implicit desubjectification of Patočka’s transcendental phenomenology based in Patočka’s emphasis on *life*. As a matter of fact, already in his habilitation Patočka conceives life, and *not* consciousness, as *the principle of being*.⁴³

Yet, whereas Patočka surely does not detach inwardness, or the subject, from *life*, he detaches it, I believe, from the *world*. To be more precise: by recurring to life, Patočka is quite able to offer a livelier, or more natural, concept of the appearing of the world, but he does not conceive the possibilities of a living being as indicated by “phenomenological being” but as performed by life itself. To use a spatial metaphor, although Patočka conceives the world as that in which “the content of inner life” appears, it is life itself, life *inside* us, and not the world *outside*, let me quote again, which “discloses the ‘meaning’ of objectivity in the whole and in the particular (...) [it is] life in its basic characteristic that makes it performance”.⁴⁴

Allow me to summarise a little here: Patočka points towards the desubjectification of phenomenology through emphasising life as *beyond* the difference of subject and object. Simultaneously, however, from the perspective of his transcendental phenomenology, this beyond lies at the *bottom of the self*. From a methodological point of view, then, the lesson Patočka might have taken from his war manuscripts is that it is impossible for phenomenology to proceed analytically by

⁴² Patočka Jan, “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴³ The war manuscripts, then, can be interpreted as seeking to fulfil the task laid out in the final part of Patočka’s book on the natural world: “the task of interpreting all existence from the inner sources of life itself.” Patočka Jan, *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*, Evanston (Illinois), Northwestern University Press, 2016, p. 114.

⁴⁴ Patočka Jan, “Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro”, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

reflecting on the ego; on the contrary, phenomenology can decipher any living self only by reflecting on its way through the field of its appearing. By abandoning transcendentalism, even the transcendentalism of life, Patočka's late concept of existence then allows for explicating "the way of inwardness" without reducing it to the principle of life.⁴⁵

Appendix: (In)Personality

One last point must be mentioned here: there remains a very important difference between natural beings and *human* selves. In the case of *human* inwardness, we cannot get by with the concept of life only. Life is certainly not indifferent, yet the difference of humans, i.e. the interest and unrest of *human* inwardness, implies a different kind of ontological *singularity* than non-human, natural entities. Human inwardness, to put it little bit idiomatically, makes a difference in the world, in the world of (mere) life,⁴⁶ and it is this specificity of human inwardness which is of utmost importance for Patočka.⁴⁷

At this juncture, I cannot elaborate on Patočka's notion of (human) transcendence, which is formulated most famously in his *Negative Platonism*. Let me only mention that, in the war manuscripts, this topic is implicit in Patočka's emphasis on the singular, even personal performance of *philosophy*. Patočka differentiates two kinds of philosophy, one disinterested and objective, the other subjective, obviously preferring subjective, i.e. a "personal, intimate", philosophy with its subject "nothing other than a human being, yet not the human being as such but every one individually struggling and penetrating itself in thought".⁴⁸ Such an intimate philosopher, according to Patočka, "has no 'conceptions,' no 'thoughts,' or if he

⁴⁵ In fact, Patočka's late concept does not reduce existence to the world either, but this topic is to be analysed separately.

⁴⁶ One might suspect here, reading "of a pure nature, of a pure indifference of subject and object, of an indifference enclosed in itself" (Patočka Jan, "Svět a předmětnost", *op. cit.*, p. 64; Patočka Jan, "Welt und Gegenständlichkeit", *op. cit.*, p. 46), two different kinds of appearing as an anticipation of Patočka's later proposal of renewing the concept of *physis* as different from the concept of inwardness as humanly singulariaing performance.

⁴⁷ Accordingly, Patočka emphasises that the phenomenologist must be specifically, and rather un-theoretically, well-equipped: "The meaning, and hence the content of the inner life can be clear only to one who, at the utmost risk of oneself, alone seizes meaning [in Czech: *dobývá smyslu*] in the end." Patočka J., "Nepředmětné a zpředmětnělé nitro", *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴⁸ Patočka Jan, "Úvod. O dvojitým způsobu filosofování", in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy III/1*, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Patočka Jan, "Über die zwei Weisen zu philosophieren", in Ciocan Cristian, Chvatík Ivan (eds.), *Jan Patočka and the European Heritage*, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

has any, then only *en passant* as findings he irresistibly encounters on his way into his own inwardness, as instruments without which he cannot break into what is essentially and only his own [*nástroje, bez nichž se nejvládnějšího nedolomí*].⁴⁹

However, despite these somewhat grandiloquent expressions suggesting the absolute singularity of the inward human movement, even Patočka's phenomenology of *human*⁵⁰ inwardness is not as individualist as one might conclude. His own thoughts are not presented as instruments founded *en passant* but rather, analogically to Heidegger's analyses in *Being and Time*, as universally valid structures, i.e. as valid exactly for *each* human being individually penetrating itself. However, these general structures, which do not seem to have been found at random, are not to be used, and interpreted, as "indifferent" concepts, but rather as expressions of an un-resting, interested, performing self. Indeed, Patočka's war manuscripts clearly demonstrate this personal earnestness and interested-ness.

Martin Ritter is Lecturer at Charles University, Faculty of Arts and Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague. His main areas of teaching and research are phenomenology, critical theories, and European philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries.

E-mail: mritter@seznam.cz

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ One must not forget that the articulation of inwardness shall include also an understanding of nature, not only of human beings: "the task of special metaphysics is to determine the place of particular districts of being in relation to its most fundamental layer of meaningful inwardness." Patočka Jan, "[Fenomenologická teorie subjektivity]", in Patočka J., *Fenomenologické spisy III/1*, op. cit., p. 289. Cf. Kárfik Filip, *Unedlichwerden durch die Endlichkeit*, op. cit., p. 39.