

## Summary

Contemporary man faces a crisis caused by the unlimited progress and uncontrolled development of science and technology, what in consequence has led to deformation and devastation of the natural environment of human life. As long as the idea of progress was connected to the whole of human life and activity, and served the perfecting of human person, it constituted no danger for man. However, when the progress became detached from the striving to achieve perfection and directed towards improving life conditions at all costs, when it aimed at inventions and subordinated scientific research exclusively to practical goals, it has become the source of a crisis leading to the de-humanization of culture. This mode of acting is first of all a consequence of contaminating human thinking with theories and scientific ideologies constructed a priori, and of absolutizing them. Instead of learning to cognize and to understand the world of persons and objects, man manipulates it, subordinating to immediate goals and not to the search for truth.

The road to overcome the crisis is the restoration of the full truth about man and the world through developing philosophical reflection. The fundamental cognition of reality that assures such a restoration is a metaphysical cognition. This cognition allows us to grasp and to disclose multi-aspectual relations between man's cognition and activity, between understanding and acting towards both himself and the world of nature. Only realistic philosophy provides us with such a cognition, the cognition that provides knowledge on what things are, why they are

so, what is the goal of their existence, who is human being. Contemporary philosophies are laden with various apriorisms. Any uncritical acceptance of them results in the fact that philosophy which should guard truth, manipulates truth, thereby entangling itself in absurdities of nihilism. In contemporary culture the realistic metaphysics is to help to retain the legacy of realistic cognition and to secure the possibility of progress and development understood as perfecting oneself.

Looking at the history of philosophy we may indicate various images of the world created in various historical moments which determine various understandings of being, especially of human being. Some of them are still vividly present nowadays and determine the understanding of science and technology as well as man's relation to the world of nature and persons. There are four basic conceptions of the world: monistic, dualistic, pluralistic, and realistic.

Monistic conceptions first appeared among ancient natural philosophers. They were searching for an eternal and indestructible *prae-element* (*archè*) from which the world arises. It was water (Thales), fire (Heraclitus) or a mixture of homogeneous particles (Anaxagoras). In the Ionic philosophy the plurality and variety of beings was reduced to a merely phenomenal appearance, for things are in fact multiplications of one eternal and indestructible element or a combination of such elements. Contemporary, such an interpretation occurred in marxism, empiricism, and outside of philosophy: in physics and biology. One consequence of this view is the absence of any basis for differentiation and individualization in the existing reality. For everything has the same nature.

Dualism makes another attempt at philosophical understanding of the reality. In this conception – whose fathers were Parmenides and Plato – the reality was broken into a true world and a seeming one, a world of being and that of non-being, a world of good and a world of evil. For Plato only the world of ideas makes the world of real beings; and the human being also reflects the dualism of the world. A negative result of such a view of the world was, among other things, some depreciation of the material world, as the whole reality was reduced to the immaterial world; the material world was seen as a second-rate reality. This



division has been deeply entrenched in culture, science, and technology, as well as transferred to such domains as ethics, anthropology and politics.

Quite a different view of the world was developed by Aristotle. He recognized the plurality of existing beings as something true and not only seeming. At the same time he determined that although beings are always composed, the whole of a composed being is something more than just a sum of its parts. The real world consists of individually existing things. The above theses constituted the foundation for his realism. When explaining the nature of things Aristotle appealed to a hyle-morphic structure of being. He suggested not only a new view of the world, but also a proper method for cognizing it, the method that guaranteed discovering the nature of the world and the structure of individual beings. Thanks to Aristotle's interpretation the reality revealed itself as far richer than it was assumed in other views. And even if he did not solve many problems, e.g. the issue of the eternity of the world, he nevertheless opened a road to a realistic interpretation of the reality.

A realistic view of the world was developed by Thomas Aquinas. He pointed to the existence as to the principal factor of being real. This is why his considerations concerned not just movements – as it was in the case of Aristotle – but were concentrated upon the existence of the world and upon its causes. He explained the plurality of beings by appealing to the individuality of each act of existence that individuates a certain essence, and that is expressed by it. Aquinas claimed that man cognizes the world by first cognizing the existence of concrete things, then analyzing the mode of their existence, and finally discovering the ultimate reason of their being. The philosophical idea of the world as created *ex nihilo* occurred for the first time in his thought. According to Aquinas everything what exists is given its existence by the Absolute Being – God. This conception was developed against the legacy of Aquinas' predecessors. Along with the change in the view of the world, also the method of cognition had to be changed, as it had to allow us to reach the truth of the being's existence: in Aquinas' conception abstraction was replaced by separation that enable us to grasp the whole of being and to disclose its constitutive elements.



The realistic interpretation of the whole reality gives as a view of the world of persons, things, plants, and animals as a natural environment in which each being realizes its own proper goal and actualizes potentialities lied in it. Within this interpretation we are able to discover what beings are and why they exist; and we discover certain transcendental properties (transcendentals) thanks to which we are able to see the world as a set of various things to be cognized. Those transcendentals give us knowledge on the whole of the world on the basis of the analogy in existence. The cognition obtained within the framework set by the transcendentals constitutes the basis of any other type of cognition. The most fundamental transcendental is being which indicates the essence and existence as the basic and necessary constituents of real beings. The other transcendentals grasp in various aspects those properties that are virtually contained in the transcendental "being". The transcendental "thing" discloses that any real being is content-determined; "something" – that things are sovereign beings; the transcendental dtruth" reveals that things are the bearers of truth , i.e. they are originated in an intellect and this makes any cognition of them possible; the transcendental "goodness" makes us realize that beings are the bearers of good because they originate in the will of an originator or the Creator. And real beings may be characterized as beauty, for they are the synthesis of goodness and beauty through their existential relation to the intellect of God or of an originator. The content of metaphysical experience grasped in the transcendentals discloses the foundation of a rational order of the world. This order is expressed in the first principles such as: the principle of identity, of non-contradiction, of excluded middle, of sufficient reason, of finality, and of integrity.

The discovery what beings are and what properties they possess, as well as the discovery of the finality and rationality of the world demands adding some further explanation concerning the inner structure of being. Despite the success of the modern and contemporary natural sciences the structure and nature of existing things remains unexplained. A science that is able to provide us with such an explanation is metaphysics. One of the greatest discoveries of metaphysics is the discovery that things exist as composed. Of course, existential compositions are understood



in a different way than they are understood in particular sciences. In metaphysical research one searches for such "constituents" of being without which no being can exist and function. When discovering the inner structure of beings we become thereby aware of the limit of any further changes of compositional elements. It is important to arrive at the existential composition of being not only from the point of view of the history of philosophy but also of the natural sciences in order to break with a reductionist explanation of the reality. When explaining the dynamics of beings we discover that beings are composed of act and potency; taking into account that fact that beings undergo transformations we notice the composition of being with form and matter, and this composition allows us to explain the very fact of transformations as well as their limits. Taking into account in turn the existential identity we arrive at the composition of being with substantial and accidental constituents. And finally, when explaining the contingent mode of existence, we arrive at the composition of being of essence and existence.

Within a complicated process of cognition giving the understanding of the world we also arrive at fundamental causes that allow us to understand the existence and workings of existing things. One indicates the following causes: final, efficient, formal, material. In the history the material cause was first discovered; as the last ones: final (by Aristotle) and creative (by Thomas Aquinas). These last two are called the causes of all causes. However, in the history of philosophy there was a period when causes were reduced or even negated, what resulted in a mechanistic view of the world, seen nowadays as one of the sources of devastation of man's natural environment. Cognition through causes is typical for realistic philosophy. Discovering the plurality of beings and fact that they are composed we at the same time discover their causally bound mode of existence. The denial of the plurality of beings and of the fact of their composition as well as the acceptance of a mechanistic and monistic or dualistic view of the world deform the understanding of the world and prevent us from discovering the full truth about the world.

Along with the causally-bound mode of being's existing we discover also their analogous mode of existing. The discovered analogy of being gives the foundation for the analogy in cognition. Due to this way

of cognizing, the surrounding world of persons, animals, plants, and things appears to be a natural environment of our life and action. The noticed wholeness and unity does not erase the individuality of beings and their natural differences.

The Absolute, the Being that is self-sufficient and whose essence is existence is revealed as the ultimate reason of the existence of all beings . On the basis of analyses of the reality given in experience we discover the necessity of the Absolute's existence, for without it the existence of the contingent world would be absurd. The theory of the Absolute is a natural consequence of the ultimate cognition of the truth about the real world.

This kind of cognition, encompassing the whole of the reality, and disclosing the deepest understanding of the world and man guarantees that creators of culture accept right principles of acting and of creating what results in creating a culture fully humanistic.