

## ON THE EXISTENTIAL SECURITY IN VIEW OF THE CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTIONS ON TRANSIENCE

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**Abstract.** This is the final – fourth article of the series of texts focusing on problems of human transience. Hence, it is the culmination of focus on tribulations considered to be the rudimentary (as basic and commencing) aspects of our sense of security. And is considered to be an essential (fundamental) manifestation of the destruction of human existence. Death – transience of life, as a physical parameter and evolutionary mechanism is defined by the very laws of nature, which does not change and remains an inexhaustible source of human anxiety, and reflective understanding leading to consciousness of very immediate dimension of our mortality. Transience is a sign of ephemerality of existence and, therefore, it makes us realize the irrationality of human existence scattering in the shadow of death and dying. Consequently, the considerations contained in the article relate to the security as projection of being in manifestation of reflective thinking about worldliness, which does not relieve us of a dread of temporariness, when focused on short-lived and temporary life. From this point of view, the authors' direct attention to philosophical statements and views, that belong to the existential rhetoric. For that reason, among the fascinating authors of the philosophy of life there are thinkers who are interested in the thanatological discourse. In the text authors are presenting the views of contemporary thinkers, with reference to the positions of Friedrich Nietzsche, Erasmus Majewski, Wilhelm Dilthey, Miguel de Unamuno, Nikolai Berdyaev, Lev Shestov, Carl Gustav Jung, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Vladimir Jankelevitch, Henryk Elezenberg, Józef Tischner, Jan Szczepański, Józef Bańka, Zygmunt Bauman and others – those who disseminate on the issues of the securitization, in its existential stratum.

**Keywords:** death, existentialism, philosophy of security, transience, security.

This is the last article in a series of four texts devoted to most serious problem of human security – transience and ephemeral human life, that is considered this time as a loss of existence determined by the laws of nature. Those natural determinants constitute the source of fear to most people, defined by temporality. So far – and so it will be in this case – our reflections were embedded

in the description of security having a mental dimension rooted in narrative proper to the existential philosophy. As we already wrote in the invocation to our interpretation of security, or rather on the dangers to permanence of being, in the first of our articles, the “peace of mind, assurance (of consciousness) and ataraxia” is a mechanism to reduce depression resulting from the awareness of the biological life inevitably rushing to its finality<sup>1</sup>. Thus, it is “through *ataraxia*, that the category of security goes back to ancient philosophy, and through reverie over death to existential treatises attempting to combine the will to live with the absurdity of its finitude”<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, upon acceptance of security becoming a fundamental necessity in preservation of subjectively experienced being, yet of universal domain, and notwithstanding the tragedy of necessary loss, we can treat the existential stillness as a camouflage against fears born within consciousness of death. This is how it becomes, for example – as Karl Jaspers understood – a borderline phenomenon for existential fears reduced by the level of trust in life “of here and now”, that is, the ongoing being. Therefore, existential security is a barrier against the injuries born of inability to recognize the mysteries of being, but also from the fear of passing away, and of possible nothingness<sup>3</sup>.

Such a concept appeared in discourse of the XIX century’s last of the greatest philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose legacy is essentially attributed to two censures, for there are scholars who see F. Nietzsche as a thinker belonging to the era preceding modernity, and those who see him, through his idea of the “superman”, a philosopher as modern as it can be. According to Michał Hempoliński and Ryszard Palacz, Nietzsche’s thought represents the philosophy of life, which, along with Kantianism, Hegelianism, positivism and Marxism, has been established as one of the paradigms of modern philosophizing. In this sense, F. Nietzsche is an outstanding representative of philosophy belonging to the nineteenth century<sup>4</sup>, strongly referring to German Romanticism, mainly to the views of Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, and especially to the ideas of Artur Schopenhauer<sup>5</sup>. Józef Bańka judges differently, though, since he dates beginning of contemporary (XX c.) philosophy based on thought of Henri Bergson<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, according to Andrzej Miś, F. Nietzsche is one of those leading contemporary philosophers who by postulating a new order within the realm of man, criticizing dogmas rooted in history, and perceiving reality as a phenomenon determined by chaos, is in consonance with the present state of the world<sup>7</sup>. Perhaps counting Nietzsche’s philosophy

<sup>1</sup> M. Adamkiewicz, A. Warchał, *Essence of insecurity or civilizational portrayal of transience*, „Studia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego” 2016, No 10, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> Vide: K. Jaspers, *Sytuacje graniczne*, przekł. M. Skwieciński, [in:] R. Rudziński, *Jaspers*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1978, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Qtd.: M. Hempoliński, *Filozofia współczesna. Wprowadzenie do zagadnień i kierunków*, PWN, Warszawa 1989, pp. 44 i 45.

<sup>5</sup> Qtd.: R. Palacz, *Klasyki filozofii*, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warszawa 1987, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> Qtd.: J. Bańka, *Być i myśleć*, Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warszawa 1982, p. 229 & next.

<sup>7</sup> Qtd.: A. Miś, *Filozofia współczesna. Główne nurty*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 1995, pp. 9 & 98.

as belonging to contemporary philosophy, progressing in the twentieth century, is somewhat exaggerated, although one must agree that his views – inspired also by Charles Darwin's thought – had a significant impact on the mentality of people in the first decades of the past century. Let us add that in Poland under this influence was, for example, Erazm Majewski, who in the four-part work titled *The Science of Civilization* published in parts between 1908 and 1924, used the concept of "superman" and Nietzschean phraseology (e.g., the division of society into "noblemen" and "slaves"; or "Apollonian attitude" and "Dionysian attitude")<sup>8</sup>. However, the accompanying political events (rise of German Nazism) and their consequences later blunted this fascination.

We will not come across similar controversies when assessing the accomplishments of Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the contemporary hermeneutical philosophy architects<sup>9</sup>. This scientist placed the entire human experience on a contradictory stage of life, whose riddle abolished both, the rational abilities, and the possibilities of discovering the laws guiding human existence in its boundary conditions from the moments of birth until death. In the context of human empiricism, even his arbitrariness is in fact a reflection of cognitive impotence, which is the permanent condition of human self. "A soul tries to gather life threads and experiences based on it holistically – wrote Dilthey – but is unable to fulfill this task"<sup>10</sup>. Here, at the center of everything that is inconceivable is birth itself, and later – until the end – the individual human growth. Death as the antinomy of birth opposes human ontogenesis and denies the logic of the efforts made throughout life. A conscious being knows about transience, yet, cannot figure it out. It is incomprehensible since the very first encounter with it, facing the disappearance of life, and right from this moment it appears to be a very dramatic predicament. Thus, death determines the human position towards the world "as something unusual, indefinite and dreadful"<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the fact of disappearance of existence leads to fanciful imaginations about it, hoping to make it all logical. Such a reflection of the thanatological visions in culture is the belief in immortality, worship given to the ancestors, and the cult of the dead, what in a complex context consist both, of religion, and metaphysics. These forms, however, unsuccessfully justified, given the all-embracing fear of dying, only stress the oddity of life in face of the will to exist. The existential alienation born of this is intensified by a constant and, more importantly, observed struggle in the nature and the world of people in which the continuous annihilation of one creature by the other determines the order prevailing in nature. The increasing awareness of life experience conveys also the extraordinary contradictions, at the same time confirming the inability to solve them. So the universality of transience

<sup>8</sup> Vide: J. Zieleniewski, E. Majewski, *Nauka o cywilizacji*, „Kwartalnik Filozoficzny” 1924, Nr 2, Z. 4; and: A. Kołakowski, *Koncepcja cywilizacji Erazma Majewskiego*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 1985, Nr 4.

<sup>9</sup> Vide: E. Paczkowska-Łagowska, *Wstęp*, [in:] W. Dilthey, *O istocie filozofii i inne pisma*, transl. by E. Paczkowska-Łagowska, PWN, Warszawa 1987, X.

<sup>10</sup> W. Dilthey, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 124.

stands in opposition to the desire for permanence in being. Here, the power of nature is at odds with the autonomy of our will, and the limitedness of everything in time and space, what contrasts with our mental ability to cross all borders<sup>12</sup>. Hence, our cognitive abilities based on reason are subjected to reduction, leading to moods defining emotional attitudes towards the world, continuing with an increasing attempt to solve the mystery of life. As a result the worldviews are born, based not on knowledge but on hope. The reason for it is that the science only analyzes, whereas the metaphysics hypothetically expresses the meaning and sense of the entire existence. In any case, the offer of probabilistic method of explaining the mystery of life and the world is attractive to most people. However, the power of argument is not determined by the statistical factor of approval for an idea, but by the facts. And these are usually indistinctly interpreted<sup>13</sup>, especially when it comes to the mysterious phenomena, i.e. such as the passing of time itself, and especially the death crowning life.

The Spanish existentialist Miguel de Unamuno, considered the human transience as a very important measure of human freedom. He interpreted freedom as the active factor of individual consciousness focused on life. According to this concept, the human subject becomes the center of the universe, as long as the temporal existence fires within. And yet, this experience of the present is suppressed by fear of the end, which makes life and individuality an incomprehensible irony. It evokes a reflex of rebellion against others and against the world, which heightens the absurdity of human life, and in an unreasonable protest does not accept the necessity of transience. Nonetheless, people are not given any choice, nor have a right to a rebellion from which nothing grandiose and useful results. The very care for life should manifest itself also with contemplation on transience, that leads to the eternal existence, so longed for by many. Why?... Because there is only hope of survival in God (immortality). Consequently, as M. De Unamuno proposed, one should learn to live in God, because only in this conjunction the fear of death “disappears, because God is immortal”<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the idea that “one is going to die”, and the unknown of what will happen next, is the pulsation of consciousness itself, and the assurance of human freedom. For only man of all beings is able to formulate death. And this is the subject of his freedom, since in this form other worldly creatures do not have such possibility. Elsewhere, this Iberian philosopher – in line with Benedict Spinoza – made it clear to everyone that “the free man thinks nothing less than of death; but this free man is a dead man, free from the spring of life, devoid of love, he is a slave to his freedom”<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Vide: ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Vide: ibidem, p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> M. de Unamuno, *Diario intimo*, [in:] *Obras completas*, t. 8, Madryt 1970, p. 787. Qtd. [in:] T. Gadacz SP, *Wypisy z ksiąg filozoficznych. O życiu. O śmierci*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1995, p. 118. Convenient lecture on philosophy of Miguel de Unamuno in Polish can be found [in:] E. Górski, *Hiszpańska refleksja egzystencjalna*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Warszawa 1979.

<sup>15</sup> M. de Unamuno, *O poczuciu tragiczności życia wśród ludzi i wśród narodów*, transl. by H. Woźniakowski, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków–Wrocław 1984, p. 47.



Nicolai Berdyaev and Lew Shestov, both representing the so-called religious existentialism, also made an attempt to discern transience (and death itself) as a “teacher” of timid, and, at the same time, the chaste life, by way of mysticism and in reference to irrationalism, as a method of accepting the “absurd content of faith”<sup>16</sup>. According to Berdyaev, who is regarded in the West as the main representative of Russian philosophical thought associated with the Orthodoxy, and who is an apologist of universal freedom, understood as an alternative to the liberty of people, free from both, the “freedom of men” and the “freedom of slaves”, where free will (and consciousness) was to be an instrument to experience existential security in both, temporal and eschatological dimensions. Thus, according to M. Bierdiajew freedom was the main ontological and moral problem, because it is rooted in nothingness, which is the fabric for the world that is solely possessed by God. Based on the law of all existence, the reality itself (the world) has emerged (was created) precisely from the nothingness by God. That is why being comes from freedom, and not freedom from being. Freedom, in such case, has a transcendental dimension, because it is the result of the existence of God, defining the life and image of man. Freedom, when not drawn from God, but as implicated by man, is a source of evil and injustice<sup>17</sup>.

Whereas, according to Shestov, fear of death (i.e. the main existential danger) did not grow just out of the impossibility of knowing the force of the absolute, as to the fate of a man struggling with mortality, but also from the humiliation of his cognitive powers towards the transience, while leaving the world with humility and understanding the way of nature. Thus, he was ashamed of fear and ridiculousness of the last moments of existence, in which the weakness of the spirit of those who cannot leave with dignity, are exposed. Therefore, the escape from infamy, though not from horror, is dying in loneliness. “Death is the best”, said Shestov, “that one, which is regarded as the worst: when there is no one with a man. To die away in exile, in the hospital, as the saying goes – like a dog under a fence. At least in the last moments of your life, you cannot be hypocritical”<sup>18</sup>.

According to the phenomenologist Max Scheler, transience does not happen to man as an accidental experience, but the effect of a “special cause” that marks life itself. Although the certainty of the end is a permanent element of every manifestation of existence, it is only the degree of clarity, and limited clarity of the historical and social ideas about transience. While this idea in its various displays is important for many different people, groups and eras, it does not affect the very content of passing away, which, regardless of philosophical or ideological attachment, always means the end of someone. “Therefore”, wrote M. Scheler, “since the obviousness of death represents an integral element in the experience of life, then the actual lack of it cannot simply be the accidental phenomenon of nonexistence

<sup>16</sup> Qtd.: S. Opara, *Nurty filozofii współczesnej*, Iskry, Warszawa 1994, p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> Vide: M. Bierdiajew, *Głoszę wolność*, transl. by H. Paprocki, Aletheia, Warszawa 1999.

<sup>18</sup> L. Shestov, *Apoteoza nierzeczywistości*, transl. by N. Karsov i N. Szechter, Kontra, Londyn 1983, p. 23.

at the end. If we encounter such an uncertainty, then there must be some positive reason for obfuscation of the certainty. Such reasoning is the suppression of the idea of death, which in turn stems from the inability to control thoughts about it, from the inability to reconcile with death”<sup>19</sup>. The end of any existence is predictable not only by the induction of the observed reality, which the phenomenon of variability of life justifies the death of older forms, for the reason that it is the necessary and obvious component of every process of becoming, growing and disappearing. It is possible thanks to the inner experience of life itself, which we learn by reason and senses.

The Swiss founder of analytical psychology, Carl Gustav Jung, wrote that “Death is known as an end in itself. This is a dot often made before the end of the sentence, beyond which there is only a memory or the effects of our influence on others. But for the interested person, the sand in the clock has already gone; the rolling stone stopped”<sup>20</sup>. For this reason, it is not the dead man as the observer of a dying existence, but the one alive, as the proper addressee of fears and frustrations that accompany passing away. In the face of the inevitable agony of someone close or a known person, witnessing tragedy becomes the process of verifying both, the sense of existence, and the value of life itself. The questions that arise at that time are burdened with pain, but also with anxiety about own place in the world, which is temporary and prosaic. The commonness of life determines the act of death itself, which does not distinguish anyone who is eternally longed for. Therefore, the change in the ordinariness of being can take place by filling the place and time of individual duration with the content noticed after its completion. For those who do not have the possibility of full life, they formulate trivial truths which the unfortunates deign to be. For what is the meaning of wisdoms like “every man must ever die” or “no one lives forever”? Nonetheless that passing away is universal, however not just and necessary. Two contradictory attitudes arise from these beliefs. With one we approach someone who expects consolation, and we explain the legitimacy of passing away as a part of the constant changeability of being, the other is for ourselves, which in silence and with necessity we accept as irreversible, but incomprehensible. Because there is an everyday existence saturated with pursuit of things, fame, love or typical recognition, in the face of death man becomes so stupefied that no longer knows who play with him: time or nature? But there is no other alternative for a human being, because only in the pursuit of the world’s goods and values can he escape from the perception of his own end, which is not yet the end of those he leaves in worldliness. People who are devoted to others and full of love are comforted by this, but for those who selfishly measure life – this is only the suffering. Nevertheless, for both, passing away (old age and death) is a cruel coercion that “will eventually consume everything we love, what we

<sup>19</sup> M. Scheler, *Cierpienie, śmierć, dalsze życie*, transl. by A. Węgrzecki, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994, p. 91.

<sup>20</sup> C.G. Jung, *Rebis, czyli kamień filozofów*, transl. by J. Prokopiuk, PWN, Warszawa 1989, p. 271.

desire, what we have, what we expect and what we strive for, then all life wisdoms are hidden in an indefinable hiding place, and fear falls on the lying sleepless, like a crumbling cover”<sup>21</sup>.

According to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, only “true death, good death is the paroxysm of life”<sup>22</sup>. It can be deserved only by those with an ardent effort of becoming purer in a moral sense, by being open for God, and for people. The end of a good life is when a man testifies in his daily activities his attachment to those ideas that characterize sublimity and sacrifice. And these values are determined by a decent life, measured by respecting the rules established by the God-fearing community, a just and loving peace in interpersonal relations. The property of a man is his pursuit of happiness, that is, the search for a “quiet haven” in which he could find a place to do the other thing that is pleasing to him. The gift of giving is a particularly important apparatus of life, for it is a moving act of God’s grace and proof of the maturity of those who understand the creative meaning of sacrifice, that is inspiring for salvation. After all, it is a manifestation of love, but also of suffering. Sometimes, however, it is the ability to empathize for human misery and surrender to judgments of not always favorable fate. Suffering and love are two pillars of rational eudemonia, not measured by the scale of pleasures or benefits experienced, but by the effort and will to expand the good in the human world. Transience is the criterion for assessing a fulfilled existence according to individual abilities, with giving and engagement in the affairs of others. Those who weigh life with pleasure (richness of artifacts, or fun) are unhappy, because the end of existence means their loss; apart from them, they see nothing joyful. The passing away for these is rather hopeless. On the other hand, those who are guided by benefits (egoism) also do not feel the fulfillment of a fruitful existence, because care only for their own good is fleeting, and the memory of wrongs arising from selfishness can be permanent. Here, the evaluation of a biography depends on those who are still awake, and who are able to determine its quality. After death, no one will be able to change the opinion we leave behind. After all, the chance for fair quotation is given to those who seek a way to expand the common good wherever it is possible, and whenever it is still possible. “The world understands and saves those (...) – wrote de Chardin – only those who nowhere bow their heads. I personally ask God to let me die – at least figuratively – on the edge of the road”<sup>23</sup>.

German Christian-existentialist, Karl Jaspers, saw death in many ways: as a borderline situation of existence, inevitable fact and mystery of being, fear of transience and destiny, and waiting for resurrection (faith in eternal return)<sup>24</sup>. “In birth and death”, wrote the philosopher, “is enclosed every living existence. But only man knows about it (...) Death stands before everyone. Because we do not know when she will

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, s. 272.

<sup>22</sup> P. Teilhard de Chardin, *O szczęściu, cierpieniu, miłości*, transl. by M. Sukiennicka & M. Tazbir, Wydawnictwo Pax, Warszawa 1981, p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Qtd.: K. Jaspers, *Kleine Schule des philosophischen Denkens*, Heller, München 1965, pp. 158-168.

come, we live as if she would never come. As a living person, we do not believe in it, although it is the most certain thing for us”<sup>25</sup>. A man aware of life does not know its end, and does not trust the transitory state of existence. Only the loss of loved ones reveals his temporariness to him. The danger of transience once again creates temporality in our existence. A boundary situation then arises, which separates the time of life from non-being. Observation of transience (especially dying) makes it a reality for us. From this perception the conviction is born, which no one doubts, that even with constantly perfected attempts to artificially prolong life, eventually in any case, the end is inevitable. For death, like sex, belongs to life, and both remain the secret of our existence. However, the existential balance of both puzzles is not the same. While gender does not inspire care in a manifested life, death is already triggering double fear during its lifetime. The first type of concern is related to the process of dying itself, that is, suffering during illness and old age, while the second appears as an expression of uncertainty towards the state following the expiration of one’s own life. Fear of death and dying can be abolished by healing therapies, excluding in the future – as a result of advances in medicine and pharmacology – psychophysical suffering, whereas the fear of the end of life in itself can be mitigated through philosophizing. However, the basic source of human anxiety is fear of nothingness. It is, however, an emptiness of space-time reality, and hence not a promise of any other existence, which we would have to feel fear. The awareness of immortality is futile, as is the consolation of survival in the memories of others, trust in long-lasting memory in the family, or faith in the create but imperfect works, or posthumous fame. Everything in the course of history goes into oblivion, as if there were no individual effort, and activity, or the mood of the subject, at all. It is also vain to announce – for anyone who believes in it – a resurrection.

According to K. Jaspers, this desire to perpetuate the reenactment of resurrection with the power and will of God, however, is not meaningless. After all, there is “something in our consciousness that cannot believe that life destructible. It will help to clarify what it is, and this is the task of philosophy”<sup>26</sup>. Death ending the temporal life, and the resurrection, or nothingness justified in philosophical thinking, does not change the eternal natural order, because in it “everything is temporary, but as time, it is eternal through return”<sup>27</sup>. For this reason, the kinds of fear originating from it (before dying and ultimate end) are groundless, because the certainty of immortality (in works, and in the memory of others, or in faith in rebirth) is possible only in unity with existence. However, it is a human task to live with courage and “in danger” in situations that are given to him. Although these situations are supported by philosophy, the structure of human thinking limits the ability of the subject to grasp the truth, what is life itself and also what is its disappearance. At most, we are aware that we are passing away, but we do not know anything about being

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 158.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 162.

dead. "The inability to experience death – claimed K. Jaspers – is insurmountable; in dying I am dying, but I never experience it (...) dying, I experience my absolute ignorance by the fact that any possibility of returning is forsaken"<sup>28</sup>. What is certain, however, is our loneliness in the ultimate borderline situation of life, which usually appears at no time. This deepens the frustration of everyone who is active, but it mainly concerns the person's agonal environment, which is perceived as the reality and irreversibility of transience, in accord with the feeling of helplessness and consciousness dislocated during the announcement of own end. Here – wrote K. Jaspers – "everyone dies in loneliness; both, the dying person, and the one who remains, loneliness in the face of death seems complete"<sup>29</sup>.

For another Christian existentialist, Gabriel Marcel, death was a silence whose borders we can neither designate nor understand. The interpretation of this silence as a form of non-existence emerging here and there is a "betrayal" and "sophistry" that recognizes the deceased as a non-existence, despite the fact that they are still animated in the memories of other people. Somehow, real life is not just because its functions have disappeared at the cellular level, although it manifests itself in the consciousness of those who are in the present and love the physically absent man. "The world – wrote G. Marcel – seems to assure me cynically that this creature, so beloved, no longer exists in its lists, that it was deleted from the universal statistics – and yet I think that it exists and that it cannot not exist. So I am in the clutches of this tormenting contradiction. Can I break out of them?"<sup>30</sup>. The way to escape the dilemma of permanence is to consider the meaning ("weight") of the past and the future of being, from beyond the cycle of life ("the end of earthly wandering"). While the past is the finished temporal existence, the future of life is possible because it is determined by hope, feelings, and faith in the thriving ("prosperous") present of life. And it is what counts the most, although the source of the relationship showing the superiority of the future of individual life over its limited past in the act of passing away ("death") is a "collusion" for loving people, who do not postpone what defines the person in the present ("during its days"), and replacing it with something that condemns it to oblivion. Here we have the struggle between the will to keep traces of a specific life, and the tendency to keep it in universal anonymity, and this belongs to those, who have remained, and in love to the deceased, what confirms the importance of life measured as the sum of good deeds, and not as the biological determinism of the time of existence. In this view, time becomes only a fissure, "through which you can see – as G. Marcel believed – death; my death, my destruction"<sup>31</sup>. For the collusion of loving people guarding the memory of the already absent, this means a denial of infidelity and negation, usually accompanied by a simplistic perception of life and its transience.

<sup>28</sup> K. Jaspers, *Sytuacje graniczne*, transl. by M. Skwieciński, [in:] R. Rudziński, *Jaspers*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1978, p. 202.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 200.

<sup>30</sup> G. Marcel, *Homo viator*, transl. by P. Lubicz, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1984, p. 153.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, *Być i mieć*, transl. by P. Lubicz, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1986, p. 68.



Such collusion in the memory of a non-existent existence recreates humanity on the higher plane of its development.

Martin Heidegger<sup>32</sup>, of Edmund Husserl's school of phenomenology, and the representative of existentialism set the general question in his philosophy: "Why would there be something rather than nothing?". Especially since, human life is "being towards death". For the human being (*Da-sein*) as a finite and temporary form, the impermanence of being is the most essential property, because it concerns the existence itself, which like its beginning (birth) is an external fact, and a necessity potentially ending the unfinished.<sup>33</sup> This thought, M. Heidegger, in his own specific, or tangled way, summarized in the sentence that "*Da-sein*, as long as it is, it is always already-not"<sup>34</sup>. To put it straight forward, man, through passing away (dying) completes his path, but does not exhaust his specific possibilities, which in the act of decay of life are only interrupted. Apart from this, however, the abandonment of these possibilities is not entirely accomplished through death, because they can be unfinished even when life is still going on, or when it is already worn out, burnt, unconventional or superfluous. While death is the finale of human existence, it does not have to be a manifestation of the completion of life, or the expression of its essence, although it is undoubtedly the end of time given to the human of existence. This, however, is always constant and in every potential of "not-being". In one place, Heidegger wrote: "Death is the possibility of the complete impossibility of *Da-sein*"<sup>35</sup>, and in another place he added: "In fact the *Da-sein* exists for birth and so also dies in the sense of being to death"<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, with our designation of future, and abilities, existence is in fact "being-to-death", and the authentic destiny of it, is the end and disappearance. However, at every moment of life, "we are staying", stretched between birth and death, we also remember that the dark existence of being alone gives nothing to realization (i.e. the loss of life is nothing but what it can be), and thus creates the most authentic opportunity to abandon yourself in an awe of transience. We stand against the objectless fear

<sup>32</sup> Martin Heidegger was an ambiguous character. On the one hand, he appeared as a great thinker whose philosophical views aroused admiration with its originality, on the other, he was a petty, selfish and even vile man (he wrote, for example, denouncements on his university colleagues, accusing them of political disobedience). He owed the high scientific and social position at the University of Heidelberg to his master Edmund Husserl, with whom he finished – faithful to Nazi ideals – friendship and publicly condemned (mainly for his Jewish birth). Heidegger's relationship with Nazism lasted until the end of the last great war, and he never found a remorse. Heidegger – after his five-year denazification – when in the early 1950s, in a "miraculous" way (considering his infamous past) he was reborn as a luminaire of philosophy, he never criticized the Holocaust, concentration camps, gas chambers and all the abominations he brought to history by Nazism. In the few press interviews, at most he mentioned a mistake connected with "flirting" with the ideology of NSDAP, which he was faithful to until the dissolution of that party. See, for example, J. Young, *Heidegger, filozofia, nazizm*, przekł. H. Szłapka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa – Wrocław 2000; and also: C. Wodzicki, *Heidegger i problem zła*, PIW, Warszawa 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Vide: M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, transl. By B. Baran, PWN, Warszawa 1994, p. 343.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, However, shorter and more precise outline of the conception on relativity of being and time, with included commentaries, can be found, in Polish, [in:] M. Heidegger, *Ku rzeczy myślenia*, transl. by K. Michalski, J. Mizera, C. Wodziński, Aletheia, Warszawa 1999, pp. 5-74.

<sup>35</sup> M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, op. cit., p. 352.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 525.

of “nothingness” (*Das Nichts*), which is our own approaching death. However, as long as we exist, our manifestation in the world must be realized through acts of free choice. Only this can give us some guarantee of authenticity. We are “thrown” into the world and for most people it means being described by “others”, e.g. by the average everyday roles that “they” impose on us.

The certainty of passing away in a general understanding is transformed into its banality. “Public interpretation of the being”, said M. Heidegger, “states: dying, because in this way everyone else and I can say: I still have not yet; for this is Nobody. Dying is reduced to a certain case, which is true for the being, but it is not appropriate to anyone”<sup>37</sup>. Death, therefore, becomes the “undeniable fact of experience”<sup>38</sup> not by reality itself (empiricism), but by the time in which it is coming. The absolute certainty of its presence in human life occurs when “approaching” and not when “is”. After all, the passing of “is” is always, but it does not determine its power, but the fact that it “dies” at all. This “Oneself” is a way, a veil for which people hide their fears from the end, telling themselves that even though this is inevitable, dying itself can mean a return to everyday life in favorable circumstances (i.e. the state of “still being”). This is because transience (aging and dying) is a process, and death is an irreversible act. The act cannot be changed, although the process itself can be reversed or stopped. Calming therefore affects equally the dying and comforting, which the horizon “ing” temporarily is strong enough to push away, not so much the event itself, but the thought of passing away (especially the “own end”). Such interpretation also protects the environment against tactless reflection on death, which is always out of time when life persists. And it seems to be inhabited by people in their consciousness forever as a phenomenon perceived empirically. “Mortals live,” wrote M. Heidegger, “if they are obedient to their own being – that is, if they can cope with death as death – and die a good death”<sup>39</sup>.

The French existentialist Albert Camus was amazed to see that “all live” in the absence of death, “as if nobody knew that it exists”<sup>40</sup>. After all, it casts a shadow on every existence without exception, and is noticed not only by intellectuals or people who have frequent contact with it, but also by those who in vain want to escape the thoughts of dying, enduring in mind what is inevitable. Escape from the thoughts about death does not change the status of transience, although it irrationally evokes the conviction that the order of changeability of things in nature concerns the beings of others, not of own live. This illusion takes root in daily experience, in feeling of joy, cares, suffering, love, etc., that is, everything that characterizes the quality of not someone else’s but own life, can be assessed. Through this we see death limiting the time of others. In own perspective our life feels different than external life of other people, since we perceive it through the prism of personal experiences.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 356.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 361.

<sup>39</sup> M. Heidegger, *Budować, mieszkać, myśleć*, transl. by K. Michalski, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1977, p. 322.

<sup>40</sup> Qtd. A. Camus, *Mit Syzyfa i inne eseje*, transl. by J. Guze, Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA, Warszawa 1999, p. 69.

Transience affecting others does not change our own feeling of time duration, as long as we still exist. From this point of view, the feeling of life results from the possibility of observing the dying and aging of others. This ability conversely proves that we are in existence because we can perceive the disappearance of beings, who are at the end of their path. So when we live, death cannot be ours, for it concerns only those who have passed away. Although we are surrounded by death, we are not yet in its claws. The possibility of self-agony is not yet a proof of the disappearance of existence in general, because as long as we live in our lives, its laws do not disappear. The main formula for beings on existence and experiencing it, does not focus on the thoughts of transience. Since the latter still belongs to existence, it therefore remains outside the context of experience and awareness of non-being. "In the proper sense – wrote A. Camus – only what has been experienced and consciously realized, is understood. Here at most, one can speak about the experience of someone else's death. It is a substitute, a view, and we are never convinced of the end. And this pessimistic standard cannot be compelling. Horror comes from a death account. If time scares us, it's because it carries out this evidence; the solution comes later"<sup>41</sup>. Death endures the absurd existence of humans, at the fundament of which lies the usual "care" for the preservation of the appearance of a successful life. It manifests itself daily life, and above all in designing the future. People live for "tomorrow" and for what will happen "later", knowing, but not believing that this "later" does not guarantee the permanence of existence in time, but only describes its possibility, and not its certainty. In itself, this conviction is an absurd and admirable inconsequence given that "after all, it's all about death"<sup>42</sup>. After all, the constant experience of the "tomorrow", that captures both, the continuing capacity of existence, and the potential possibility of its interruption, is an expression of contradiction and lack of rationalism in human thinking, though not in behavior. For the inevitability of transience does not endure the "usual care" for man and the deeds of his time, which he has to overcome. These deeds are the "rebellion of the flesh" against the imposed necessity of an end, which can be overcome by the freedom of action, with choices where reason suggests the absurdity of human efforts weighted according to their meaning in the perspective of transience. "But in addition to this inevitability – wrote A. Camus – what implies death, everything – joy or happiness – is freedom. The world keeps on going, and man is his only master. He is, however, imprisoned, just by the illusion of another world"<sup>43</sup>.

Paul Ricoeur, a representative of philosophical hermeneutics, understood the passing of time as an alarming fixation in the individual sense, but not in reference to general aspects of our species. While the changeability of general existence, as opposed to individual survival in respect to given time, as an alternative, seems to be illogical, it is already rational for higher (not individual) sphere of existence.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 145.

Concerns about the end are only appropriate for “the lowly idea of living”<sup>44</sup>, that is, the subjective, individual being of man. In the social, collective, civilizational, and for human species in general, passing away does not appear as an act full of drama and fear, because it does not exist in the long run, although it actually involves each and every existence. The obvious transience of a generations of species does not mean the end of species or civilization, because in a natural way it is a source of natural evolvement of the human race, but unfortunately also, it does not herald the abolition of the individual worries those wishing for continuity. Death from the standpoint of individual existence does not give life a proper motivation, nor does it stimulate its progress, because it is possible only when it is not limited. And every end is an antinomy of the external endangerment – through the certainty of death – for expansion, which makes sense when it can last in accordance with its logic, and not just disappear. Hence also, “ruthlessly, life could be immortal”<sup>45</sup>. However, empirical experience edifies each man with knowledge on the necessity of transience and reveals, that everything alive dies. “Therefore, every death – said Ricoeur – even the most-expected one enters life like a breach (...) In a sense, the death of the neighbor carries this threat from outside to inside: through the horror of the silence of the absent, without any answer, death of someone penetrates me like a common illness of our common existence”<sup>46</sup>. Thus, only contact with a concrete, non-anonymous and dead person, dramatizes individual life, and ensures that if death is given to another, it will undoubtedly be my participation as well. The obviousness of this is uncomfortable, though persistently obtrusive. The conviction that a community of people based on transient existence justifies in any way the justice of a generally understood life is tragic, considering that the deathblade is directed against every individual existence.

Following this, Christian Chabanis came to the conclusion that among contemporary thinkers, it was Emmanuel Levinas’s view of reality that permeates with the deepest experience of transience, implying breaking all previous ties, and therefore seeking the meaning of life in the face death, stubbornly focusing beyond the world of phenomena available to the senses<sup>47</sup>. Thus, the thanatology of Levinas, rooted in Scriptures and the Talmud, assumes that the mystery of transience is not a derivative of natural or social, but always of the individual experience. For transience is a synthesis of finality, but in no case finitude. The individual loss of existence inscribed in the idea of infinity is decisive, but not as the determinant. In his reflection, eternity prevails over every topic important to man, and in this sense enables us to endure, without the weakness or despair, the “final moment”, towards which every existence is heading to<sup>48</sup>. The philosophy of Levinas, in consideration of a mystery

<sup>44</sup> Qtd., P. Ricoeur, *Podług nadziei*, transl. by S. Cichowicz, Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1991, p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Qtd. Ch. Chabanis, *Śmierć, kres czy początek?*, transl. by A.D. Tuszyńska, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1987, p. 254.

<sup>48</sup> Qtd. ibidem.

(“riddle”) of transience, wants to encompass all kinds of human lives by presenting the common (“ordinary”) “disappearance of someone for others”. At the same time, the enigmatic nature of transience obscures the fixed dilemma between “to be and not to be”, which affects the quality of life on a mundane basis. In fact, the sense of the end of existence is unknowable only to the living, who dream about it, usually shy – under their own ignorant stories. “We’re talking about death,” Levinas said, “not being sure what we’re talking about it. It is undoubtedly something that does not fit into human thinking”<sup>49</sup>. For a conscious being, death – with its strange fate, is a fact that the grim reaper is uncompromising. After all, the disappearance and decay will always come and hit everyone. This event is already causing speculations, which is a reaction to the threat and the derivative of “self” in face of terror. Death is an “empty hole” breaking apart every system and destroying the established order, everything unitary. Transience is not a known human ability, where there is always some preliminary proceedings and a projects. The essence of the end of individual time, is that it can be unpredictable, and thus becomes unbearable. It is an event without a plan, and therefore terrible for a man whose life is ordered, and apparently defined by oneself. In this sense, transience will never be fully defined, because in its face value there is no possibility of describing its destiny at all. Therefore, what is present in the philosophy of transience is a story of uncertain existence, intensified by the danger of unknown, because in the matter of describing the dangers present in life, dying in most cases turns our focus on explaining the final existence by diseases and oldness. The phenomenon of passing away is an important event only from the point of view of the other man’s departure<sup>50</sup>. The view of the end of others is no longer a hypothesis, but empirical facts. And for this reason, the perceived loss of close and other people creates ethical criteria for interpersonal dependencies. According to Levinas, the measure of humanity is not a direct attitude towards the life of another human being, but an openness to its passing away (death), that is, the resolving of concern over someone else’s end<sup>51</sup>. This is because “being becomes human only with the existence of another human being ...which begins with the relationship of one’s neighbor’s dying. (...) And taking responsibility for his own life, while being the same with him his death”<sup>52</sup>. And this empathic attitude is the source of a moral attitude that is not just an expression of the care exercised over departing beings who are loved, valued, or dear, but above all must be directed towards the anonymous people who have to lose their lives.

According to another French philosopher, Vladimir Jankelevitch, transience is an objective phenomenon with the emphasis on the physical, but not on the metaphysical sense. In this way, it appears as a dubious philosophical problem, although always important from the point of view of biology, medicine, demogra-

<sup>49</sup> E. Levinas, *Filozof wobec śmierci*, [in:] Ch. Chabaniś, *Śmierć kres czy początek?*, transl. by A.D. Tuszyńska, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1987, p. 255.

<sup>50</sup> Qtd. ibidem, pp. 257-260.

<sup>51</sup> Qtd. ibidem, pp. 260-263.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, p. 263.



phy, law or sociology.<sup>53</sup> However, the end has its own philosophical specification behind its understatement, which sometimes exposes itself in the form of “meta-empirical tragedy”, and sometimes as the “natural necessity”<sup>54</sup>. Death being on the one hand an unknown gap extending beyond experience, appears as an infinite or very dimensionless phenomenon, on the other it becomes an ordinary event that occurs empirically and takes place before our eyes<sup>55</sup>. The disappearance of life is therefore a real obviousness that causes individual problems, and cannot be considered a banal experience for anyone. This is because the experience of the natural end, and the disappearance of conscious existence is opposed to the idea of immortality rooted in human thinking, derived from the possibility of life suggested by religion in the “after” world that belongs to the omnipresent God. Death on this account is the point of a metaphysical mystery, and a natural phenomenon. Hence, the lethal phenomenon belongs both to the area studied by science, and to the religion that brings the supernatural riddle to the rescue, in face of the approval of its exclusively biological, medical, social or legal character. “Man,” wrote V. Jankelevitch, “takes into account only the law of nature by negating the mystery, or falls on his knees in the face of mystery, negating the phenomenon. However, the opposition of both points of view only facilitates resorting to all kinds of evasions, creating some approximations, conventions, euphemisms that are at our disposal to confirm us in wrong judgments”<sup>56</sup>. Still, these contradictory positions fill the whole of human views on passing away, because there is no mediating possibility between them. The admission of just one of them, however, does not guarantee truth to anybody. Because only in man’s ability to choose the natural or supernatural meaning of death is its interpretation. It is up to individual to grasp the absurdity, joy, happiness, finitude, eternity, temporality, future, punishment, reward, fear, tragic, physicality, property, subjectivity and objectivity of existence, in the dimensions we understand, and with meanings we bestow<sup>57</sup>. In the individual sense, the end of life is always a relationship between a person who, is no longer present, and its environment visibly deciding what happens next to that person. And this will neither confirm, nor deny how this state of non-being truly presents itself. The transience occurs in “three persons”, in three optics of perceiving and understanding the biological end of human life<sup>58</sup>. In the first optics it appears as a subjective, own, for the individual and personally, determination of the tragic nature of human fate. In the second optics, transience is determined by a subjective attitude towards the end of a specific, known and feigned human being. On the other hand, in the third optics, it is the end all together, a “pure” disappearance, an abstract

<sup>53</sup> Qtd. V. Jankelevitch, *Tajemnica śmierci i zjawisko śmierci*, [in:] *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, sel. and transl. by S. Cichowicz, J.M. Godzimirski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1993, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> Qtd. *ibidem*, p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> Qtd. *ibidem*, p. 45.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 48.

<sup>57</sup> Qtd. *ibidem*, pp. 49-74.

<sup>58</sup> Qtd. *ibidem*, pp. 65-69.

as well as an anonymous event, considered by people impersonally and conceptually. Accordingly, each form of transience is the participation of every human being. After all, “final consciousness or posthumous consciousness – as Jankelevitch wrote – is inevitably the domain of the second and third person; due to the lack of indirect communication, one’s death requires the consciousness of the other, and this consciousness comments on this death, as the past comments”<sup>59</sup>.

In Polish philosophical reflection, four positions, namely those of Henryk Elzenberg, Józef Tischner, Jan Szczepański and Józef Bańka, seem to contain different interpretations of transience, although, of course, they do not exhaust the native reflection on its presence. Within this framework, one should also distinguish Zygmunt Bauman’s views, who, although being connected with British philosophical thought, due to the Polish roots of his work, should also be included in our intellectual tradition.

Henryk Elzenberg believed that the passing away can be sometimes proportionally the greater terror, if life was poor and more vegetative<sup>60</sup>. In contrast, spiritual, cultural, rich with intellectual strength and fully developed mind limits, and sometimes tolerates, fear of its own loss. That “what is afraid of death in us” – wrote Elzenberg – “is the organism, the plant; in moments, when life is the most precious, one thinks of death with such weather that almost as a crown of life. Hence the conclusion: the more beautiful your life is, the less you will regret it”<sup>61</sup>. Transience is a phenomenon that undermines the ruthlessness of the all aspirations, not only selfish, but all without exception. After all, it destroys not only intentions, projects, but mainly their implementation. The reality of death is to stop all commitment, striving, gathering, that is, what brings lasting existence. For this reason, the expression of the subjective wisdom of life is the search for its fulfillment in some “less primitive” areas, for example in science, art, education, word in creativity, but also any fully devoted activity, serving others.<sup>62</sup> According to Elzenberg, an individual attitude towards the end of the time given to us depends on the ability of human preparation for the act of dying. However, the appearance of death always takes place in conditions that are unfavorable to the subject. They are heralded by the pain and suffering accompanying a dying man, who, although surrounded by other people trying to relieve him of pain and caring for his last moments, regardless of such treatments does not escape his loneliness. Inability to leave this life in calmness and comfort, with good attitude, is a consequence of people’s resistance to con-

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, p. 75.

<sup>60</sup> In H. Elzenberg’s philosophy death was always an issue, one can make such judgement based on his ethical thought: *Pisma etyczne*. See especially Elzenberg’s: *Personalia stoickie i „ascetyczno-moralizatorskie”*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2001, pp. 116-129, 143-144; and also: *Etyka wyrzeczenia. Czym jest i jak bywa uzasadniana*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 19; *Brutus, czyli przekleństwo cnoty*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 63; *Ahimsa i pacyfizm. Rzec o gandyzmie*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 74, 82; *Cele etyczne*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 210; *Dobro*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., pp. 225-226; *Prawo do kierowania się interesem w polityce*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 249; *Miłość*, [in:] *Pisma etyczne*, op. cit., p. 287.

<sup>61</sup> H. Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem*, wyd. II, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1994, p. 49.

<sup>62</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 101.

template death, without the obvious messengers. Anyway, even if they appear, it still has to be pretended “that you know more than your dying man and his loved ones about death. It is taboo everywhere, from social circles to the hospital. It is not allowed to show in the environment what can put Since it can put “living in trouble, and is an ugly tactlessness”<sup>63</sup>, death is not allowed into the environment of living. People basically prefer to talk about trivial and petty matters rather than about fundamental and painful facts for most. The perception of transience within categories *in abstracto*, as a form of non-being, does not tolerate existential and necessary fears at the end of life. After all, avoiding conversations about it, in no way guarantees any escape from its predicaments, and, on the contrary, it gives people a chance to prepare for leaving, still before experiencing suffering (diseases, poverty, and old age) is not painful and frightening. A man unprepared for his end suffers more than the one who reconciled with it. Man’s life runs simultaneously along two lines of development. One leads “down”, because it marks disappearance, wilting, exhaustion, consent to any imperfection and cynicism of disappointment from existence, and finally the end of everything preceded by the fall of all hopes. The second one leads “up” and determines the effort, the drive to perfection, cleansing, overcoming the limitations that will bring good will to the pedestal, revealing the soul and wisdom, and finally death, but no more than fear of unfulfilled life. Such a departure is only a “volatile” transition of human existence. “Both”, said Elzenberg, “are factual, since there is data; both are happening every day, every hour. It depends on us, however, whether I’m throwing my personal *choice*, my own *self*, on one of these development paths, or on the other”<sup>64</sup>.

X. Józef Tischner noticed that in the process of passing away (especially at the moment of the death of a loved one) a consciousness like an empty space falls into a human being. There is a painful contradiction between the full presence of the human being next to us, and the full presence of phenomena, facts, things and events. It is represented by two states described by the words “there is no one” and “does not exist”. In the first sense, a “subtle” emotional charge is hidden, showing the fullness of the tragedy, which all other words falsify rather than reveal duly or truly. The state “is not” is associated with helplessness, it also brings with it the experience of rapidly passing time, unheard of in other situations of existence. In the sentence “there is no one”, there appears a vacuum, which is the image of the subject’s “living presence of absence”. Meanwhile, the formula contained in words “does not exist” means some nothingness, the “absence of presence” of man in the world perceived by the senses. Vacuum experience is the experience of “emptying” all experiences that are experienced by people losing their loved ones. “And so someone else’s death – wrote Tischner – brings as a consequence the emergence in me of that further devastation, which sometimes goes so far as to demand that

<sup>63</sup> Qtd. *ibidem*, p. 169-170.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 223.

such fate should be shared with a friend”<sup>65</sup>. According to Tischner, transience is an irrational phenomenon, and thus demanding the participation of reason. However, effective meditation can take place through metaphysical decisions, because these recognize the disappearance of life as a manifestation of a universal, and not devoid of a sense of out-of-world order and harmony. The basis for consideration should be to give death the meaning rooted in its relation to human acts. Then, in connection with this dependence, passing away – roughly speaking – can be heroic, martyrdom, or sanctioned “in time”<sup>66</sup>.

The heroic departure from this world is the successive and special act of heroism, a manifestation of a special sacrifice for the community, to which we have sincere feelings of attachment, love and brotherhood. Such death may be borne for humanity as an object of individual estimate, but also for an individual person whom we distinguish by our readiness to heroism in his case. Meanwhile, the martyrdom can also be heroic, however it has “moments” that distinguish it from the heroic figure. The first differentiation is the unveiling of the content of the faith, the second is the guarantee of it, and its display in the face of society, the third is the appeal to stop the crime that accompanies agony, for faith or ideals. The martyr is above all a witness who guarantees something particularly important from the point of view of a nourished worldview. This testimony of martyrdom is carried out when the death sufferers complement, with the faith manifested in the environment, the strengthened ideals that require sacrifice. It is different with passing “in time”, because it is already a simple departure from the world, however expressed in two scenes. In the first case, it simply means the fulfillment of life after the proper process. Such absence usually is the culmination of the successful life. In the second case, the disappearance of life is the end proper, that is, the effect of biological processes leading to the interruption of existence, in individual time for a given person. The specific form of the end is the sanctioned death. It occurs when a departing person treats his fate as an accusation and a burden on the conscience of the survivors, of his relatives. Such “repression” is usually an objection to a lack of concern or lack of love and understanding of behavior (“the quality of the person’s actions”) of a person who is no longer present during his lifetime. According to Tischner, transience in this form is the sum of “guilt and departure”. The passing away of the dying is taken over, and the blame for the passing of time is passed on to the living<sup>67</sup>. This kind of end seems to be a rebellion against the impermanence and fragility of existence expressed in the way of the pretension of the unreasonable and unfortunate. At the same time, sanctioned death threatens human fears of passing away and emphasizes the lack of ability to prepare a man for the ultimate purpose of his existence (meaning “the necessity of his own disappearance”).

<sup>65</sup> J. Tischner, *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*, wyd. II, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1992, p. 275.

<sup>66</sup> Qtd. ibidem, pp. 282-284.

<sup>67</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 284.

The fear of this is less painful when a person submerges in faith, in sacrifice and in work, which at the end of life can be considered useful and remembered<sup>68</sup>.

In the philosophical views on transience, of the sociologist Jan Szczepański, this seems to be the basic and also the first factor of the changeability of societies. Although it is a process leading to a rather gloomy finale of individual existence, it is sometimes a harbinger of the possibility of a creative life that encourages people rather than discourages them from experiencing the time given to them, as one can understand. Essentially, predicament of dying visible in our daily lives, creates a powerful health care institutions, evokes the necessary social practices, creates professions, initiates industries, and generates ideologies and religions. Without the presence of transience, there would be no many components of culture and forms of collective life. Death, to some extent, activates our existence through the exchange of generations, and as a supplement to this character of nature strengthening works and achievements in which individuals can participate, giving social meaning to the common struggle of people with matter. What is available to our existence here and now is to a large extent the effect of the collective effort of absent generations, rather than of our participation. "You live their lives", wrote Szczepański. "You continue their work, destroy what they have created in torment and suffering. Maybe you often realize what you owe to their life, but you are reluctant to think that you are what you are, rather because of their death"<sup>69</sup>. The unitary dimension of transience, however, is different from generational. Although the loss of the human set is statistically tragic and endearing painful exchange of individual lives, painful for the environment, it is only at the moment of a concrete, endless anonymity that the values that once had meaning disappear. Love, hope or illusions remain in the background of passing life, under which everything that is precious or valued by a person is lost forever and everywhere. Everything in death is already shared by others, yet it destroys absolutely all values respected by individuals. A man can only comfort himself, that he dies better than nothing, because his works, grandchildren, traces, and ideas, are preserved somewhere. But with the departure from life, everything becomes independent, detaches from him and becomes the power of others; beyond the person who, in the act of passing away, is incapable of self-determination about what was important in existence. It is only from this moment that the metaphysics of speech have begun. This is "hope," said J. Szczepański – hopelessly overcoming resignation, clinging to images of other worlds, other dimensions, other forms of being in God, in paradise, in nirvana, the wandering of souls"<sup>70</sup>. But can such imaginations, the search for eternity and the sense of existence, change the very necessity of the disappearance of temporal existence? They undoubtedly cannot do it, although they can bring relief and ease

<sup>68</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 285.

<sup>69</sup> J. Szczepański, *Sprawy ludzkie*, wyd. II, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1980, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, p. 247.



the fear of the end, whose limitation in the social and empirical sense may be the generational change of the relay of life.

The creator of the recentivist position – Józef Bańka – accepting that every philosophy is a modern man's concept, is in favor of such a model recognizing the human universe according to which the historical moment assigned to us is always a dimension here and now at any time of existence of the subject. For, "what is becoming," wrote the scholar, "is subject to change, but in the course of this change every new moment transforms into the present and separates the past from the future, thanks to which man as the subject evaluates everything from his own perspective"<sup>71</sup>. For this reason, various understanding by people of the end of life in reference to them, differently expressed in different caesuras became contemporary, although for every other "I-now" it did not have to be that way. At first, man always combined life with danger, and this with death, and that with the other world<sup>72</sup>. The last composition described the nature of human relations to the end, which as an instrument for the liberation of the soul, could either favor the dissolution of the whole existential being<sup>73</sup> and the physics of the pure-minded man freeing us from the fear of passing away<sup>74</sup>, or the belief that our "now" will be transferred just after material, cellular life<sup>75</sup>. The criterion of straightforwardness allows man in every situation to distinguish between the ethical and the unethical. "Simple thoughts determine – J. Bańka wrote – the ability of a man to capture the unique sense of his situation"<sup>76</sup>. Therefore, the plot of transience, rooted in a commonplace, containing both fear of death, fear of punishment and waiting for the better, and hope for survival, is a breeding ground, though, for mythology.<sup>77</sup> As well as a it is a source of difficulties – from the point of view of the criteria of logical truth – a debate on the eternity or temporariness of our *thymos* (consciousness)<sup>78</sup>. Death, which is one of the instruments of liberation for some (also through the slaughter of enemies), for others may be just a bridge to escape from the "I-now" into transcendence<sup>79</sup>. However, the attitude to temporariness should be determined by the art of passing away, which, like the art of life, serves to exist more than uncertain atheisms.

Zygmunt Bauman is credited with a postmodern vision of transience that illustrates our current reality in a passage.<sup>80</sup> In post-modern culture which is a necessary product of historical processes, unprecedented technological progress is marked in relatively short time, disrupting the traditional world of values and criteria of moral responsibility for development, which is replaced by the uncon-

<sup>71</sup> J. Bańka, *Ja teraz. U źródeł filozofii człowieka współczesnego*, Wydawnictwo „Śląsk”, Katowice 1983, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 61.

<sup>75</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 78.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, s. 12.

<sup>77</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 111.

<sup>78</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 114.

<sup>79</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 224.

<sup>80</sup> According to, e.g., Paweł Bortkiewicz from the University of Adam Mickiewicz. Vide: P. Bortkiewicz, *Tanatology. Zarys problematyki moralnej*, Uniwersytet im. A. Mickiewicza. Studia i Materiały, Poznań 2000, p. 69.

ditional affirmation of man and his civilization<sup>81</sup>. Transience in this environment is a media announcement (for show) and authentic (lived) phenomenon, which shows the character of the loss of people in the surrounding reality. The gap between what is shown and what is the real experience in the face of death is shaped by its different image and various models of transience<sup>82</sup>. Bauman distinguished four basic strategies against the latter. The first takes root in the fear of death and has its sources in religions, which accentuate the non-biological sphere of human existence, already *a priori* guaranteed in another existential dimension<sup>83</sup>. The second is the expression of secular worldviews seeking comfort and wisdom in terminal events, with meditations on life but not on its end. The third strategy is the extreme “medical” approach to life, which makes the reason (knowledge) the main center of control over life and death. This already evokes the “postmodern deconstruction of immortality” according to which the end of existence can be a temporary disappearance of life, though revocable and reversible, because it is suggested by medical progress<sup>84</sup>. The fourth complementary to the above strategy is the “algorithm of ethical attitudes towards passing”, based on responsibility for “the death of the Other” and “death for the Other”, which recognizes (even promotes) sacrifice for values worthy of the highest respect<sup>85</sup>. In the last case, however, a moral person is one who rescues people, not values, since the act of sacrifice for people characterizes heroism, which and does not allows people to be destroyed in the name of someone’s and somewhere explicated axiology. From the ethical point of view, a moral act is directed towards human life, which accepts it as the most important goal of mutual concern.

The above-mentioned views and positions on death included in the reporting convention only touches upon reflections that appeared in the tradition of European philosophical thought. After all, it is not possible to discuss them all, and there is more of those. An example of existing positions, though not described, for example philosophical considerations contained in the psychoanalytical vision of Viktor E. Frankl, recognizing the necessity of transience both in natural and social development. In this composition, the rotation of the existence of one form of life appears as an expression of the sense of a diverse being<sup>86</sup>. Also in the views of the Nobel laureate Henri Bergson, transience becomes an instrument of intelligent nature that perfects everything that lives, through the variability of existence and its movement. The oscillation of being and its circulation in the aggregation describe the force

<sup>81</sup> Vide: T. Miczka, *Postmodernistyczny obraz śmierci w kinie współczesnym i nowych mediach*, [in:] *Problemy współczesnej tanatologii*, ed. by J. Kolbuszewski, Wrocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe „Sudety”, Wrocław 1997.

<sup>82</sup> Vide: Z. Bauman, *Śmierć i nieśmiertelność. O wielości strategii życia*, transl. by N. Leśniewski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Qtd. ibidem, pp. 34-35.

<sup>84</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 209.

<sup>85</sup> Qtd. ibidem, p. 247.

<sup>86</sup> Vide: V.E. Frankl, *Homo patiens*, transl. by R. Czarnecki i Z.J. Jaroszewski, Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1998, p. 87.

that determines the diversity in nature and human society. Thus, it consolidates the creations of life existing in the time “given” by biology or civilization<sup>87</sup>.

It may seem that the considerations of the philosophizing theologians Karl Rahner and Romano Guardini may also deserve attention. For the first, death was the fulfillment of a unique human life<sup>88</sup>, for another, a terrible but not depressing expression of an inexplicable and usually incomprehensible existence<sup>89</sup>. Guardini even wrote that: “Death is the more terrible, the stronger, purer, and more delicate the life of the dying”<sup>90</sup>. In addition to this, the positions on transience, as considered from the point of view of different sciences accepting various ontological, epistemological or axiological assumptions in the conducted research, include those that define the so-called French anthropology of death<sup>91</sup>. From among the scholars representing it, we can list at the beginning the representative of historic thanatology Philippe Aries<sup>92</sup>, historian Edgar Morin<sup>93</sup>, sociologist Louis-Vincent Thomas<sup>94</sup> and philosopher Jules Vuillemin. The latter, moreover, undertook the so-called “rare” problems in philosophical literature. death conscious among animals (mainly from the primate family)<sup>95</sup>.

Finally, at the end, it is necessary to recall the omitted, but represented in Polish literature, British (mainly Oxfordian) analytical philosophy dealing with the problem of passing away. This, however, already finds its extensive presentation in the book by Ireneusz Ziemiński. The issue of death in analytic philosophy the author presented through two general trends of research on death. One concerned the analytic ontology, the other concerned existential issues with the interpretation of the concepts and categories of life present in the medical sciences. The first trend is represented by F. Feldman, R.W. Perret, J. van Evr and J.F. Rosenberg, while the second one is in particular: M.B. Green, D. Wikler, D. Lamb, J. McMahan, K.G. Gervais and P. Singer<sup>96</sup>. Considering this, and taking into account the fact that analytic philosophy is only one of the current trends in contemporary philosophy that includes a fragment of its tradition, we limit ourselves only to indicating the presence of this book, but without mentioning its content. Anyway, including the problems of this work in this material would immensely extend its scope, let alone substantive usefulness in accordance with the convention adopted here. These are, however,

<sup>87</sup> Vide: H. Bergson, *Pamięć i życie*, transl. by A. Szczepańska, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1988, p. 97.

<sup>88</sup> Vide: K. Rahner, *Śmierć jako spełnienie*, „Znak” 1991, Nr 429. Qtd. [in:] Ks. T. Gadacz, *O życiu i śmierci*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1995, p. 135.

<sup>89</sup> Vide: R. Guardini, *Bóg daleki. Bóg bliski*, transl. by J. Koźbiał, W Drodze, Poznań 1991, p. 202.

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>91</sup> The list of its members and their works is given in: *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, selct. and trans. by S. Cichowicz & J.M. Godzimirski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1993, pp. 305-306.

<sup>92</sup> Vide: Ph. Aries, *Śmierć odwrócona*, [in:] *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> Vide: E. Morin, *Antropologia śmierci*, [in:] *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, op. cit.

<sup>94</sup> Vide: Zob. L.-V. Thomas, *Doświadczenie śmierci: jego granice i rzeczywistość*, [in:] *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, op. cit.

<sup>95</sup> Qtd.: J. Vuillemin, *Śmierć w oczach zwierzęcia*, [in:] *Antropologia śmierci. Myśl francuska*, op. cit., pp. 35-42.

<sup>96</sup> Vide: I. Ziemiński, *Zagadnienie śmierci w filozofii analitycznej*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1999.

distinguished views on passing away not on the basis of identifiable philosophical trends, but according to the expressed opinions included in the chronological order. Besides, the order of the place on the "list" of philosophers presented in this article determined – paradoxically to the problem of interest – not the unhistoric moment of their death, but their birth. After all, the birth initiating the life of a person capable of proclaiming original views, characterizes their perceived existence. Death does not announce it in any way.

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## WOKÓŁ BEZPIECZEŃSTWA EGZYSTENCJALNEGO, CZYLI WSPÓŁCZESNE POGLĄDY FILOZOFICZNE NA PRZEMIJANIE

**Streszczenie.** Artykuł jest zwięźleniem serii czterech tekstów, które poświęcone zostały przemijaniu traktowanemu jako rudymet (podstawa i początek) utraty poczucia bezpieczeństwa traktowanego jako istotny (fundamentalny) przejaw destrukcji człowieczej egzystencji. Przemijanie jako parametr fizyczny i mechanizm ewolucyjny określone jest przez same prawa natury, co nie zmienia tego, że pozostaje niewyczerpanym źródłem ludzkiej trwogi, uzmysławiając zupełnie doraźny wymiar naszej doczesności. Przemijanie znamionuje nietrwałość egzystencji i w związku z tym uświadamia niedorzeczność ludzkiego bytu rozpościerającego się w cieniu śmierci i umierania. Dlatego też rozważania zawarte w artykule dotyczą projekcji bezpieczeństwa będącego przejawem refleksyjnego myślenia o doczesności, która nie uwalnia nas od trwogi tymczasowości, krótkotrwałości i doraźności życia. Z tego punktu widzenia w materiale przytacza się filozoficzne wypowiedzi i poglądy należące do retoryki egzystencjalnej i dlatego pośród frapujących autorów reprezentantów filozofii życia znaleźli się myśliciele niestroniący od wątków tanatologicznych. Dlatego też w tekście sięgnięto po stanowiska Fryderyka Nietzschego, Erazma Majewskiego, Wilhelma Diltheya, Miguela de Unamuny, Mikołaja Bierdiajewa, Lwa Szestowa, Carla Gustawa Junga, Pierre’a Teilharda de Chardina, Karla Jaspersa, Gabriela Marcela, Martina Heideggera, Alberta Camusa, Paula Ricoeura, Emmanuela Levinasa, Władimira Jankelevitcha, Henryka Elezenberga, Józefa Tischnera, Jana Szczepańskiego, Józefa Bańki, Zygmunta Baumana i innych, które nawiązują do problematyki sekuralnej w jej warstwie egzystencjalnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** bezpieczeństwo, egzystencjalizm, filozofia bezpieczeństwa, przemijanie.