

PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

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Abstract: *The new form and object of philosophy in the age of postmodernism. The creation of the positive philosophy of life as the result of philosophical counselling. Philosophizing as a way to satisfaction and happiness. The basic typology of personalities and the spiritual development of man. The utilization of philosophical thought for therapy.*

Key words: *health, medicine, healthy lifestyle, philosophy of health.*

Motto:

Philosophy is nobody's land situated between science and theology and facing attacks from both of them. (Bertrand **Russell**)

The new form and object of philosophy in the age of postmodernism

The word „philosophy“ originally meant „love for wisdom“, but contemporary professional philosophers would probably be ashamed to subscribe to such a naive conception of their subject, as they have become narrow specialists in various fields of the theory and history of the modern form of philosophy. Amateur (lay) philosophers, unlike professionals from academic communities, need not worry so much about various historical nuances, contradictory tendencies of philosophical schools and their representatives or about professional groups' interests and individual scholars' personal rivalries. And so they can concentrate on the basic problems of philosophy and philosophizing.

When laymen, by means of reading and discussions, get clear in their minds what their likings for philosophy concern, can also form ideas on the contemporary state of development in their particular fields and can even feel an urge to specialize. This is because in philosophy, just as in other subjects, a time will come when everybody is prepared to change from a passive consumer to an active producer. If lay philosophers

feel a need to respond to their inner philosophical urge, are able to record their ideas in a cultivated way and step by step find sense in their experience, they as well can gradually learn to derive pleasure from the most difficult and the most valuable tasks of human life. /1/

In accordance with a number of other thinkers, a lay philosopher can thus get to know that the traditional translation and meaning of the word „philosophy“ as love for wisdom is not correct. The correct reading should be: **philosophy is the wisdom of love**. This is because love does not only mean some uncontrollable effusions of emotion, as a number of too rational people understand it, but the very state of a person's soul. The ability to experience love and a loving relation to oneself, to other people and to the world in general make the starting point of the genuine philosophy and philosophizing. This was sometimes forgotten in the period of modernism, but „**discovered**“ **again in postmodernism**. This conception also opened a lot of scope for the so-called laymen, as far as they approached the subjects and problems of philosophy with pure experience and consciousness of love, or with the effort not to do harm to anybody and anything and to be open to all generally useful possibilities.

The pleasure of a layman (ie an uneducated philosopher) consists in the fact that he or she realizes the essential conflict between the laymen's spontaneity and the „dull“ professionalism. /9/ In connection with this, also **the relation of science and pseudoscience** is often discussed. Laymen philosophers (in the good sense of the expression) have realized in the period of postmodernism that the so-called **scientific medicine** lags behind in the psychological approach to the problems of health as well as to people as patients. Therefore one of the most important conflicts of the present, according to some contemporary sociologists as well, is the conflict between dilettantes, laymen and amateurs on the one hand, and experts, specialists and professionals on the other.

The interpretation of and **the relation to** particular spheres of **scientific disciplines may play an important role** here, since there are subjects that are more or less accessible to common thinking. For example, the so-called **humanities and social sciences** are more accessible to lay thinking than **natural and technical sciences**. The character of social sciences (including philosophy) can explain the reason: they are mostly based on narrative and metaphorical foundations and on the use of analogy, while the sign and abstract metalanguage of the particular discipline is used much less frequently. However, this does not exclude the possibility that some thinkers, on the basis of their personal natures, can be inclined to take even philosophy as a strictly exact science or canonized theory, a certain catechism close to some kind of theology.

It follows from what was said above that **even professionals must remain genuine laymen**, keep their spontaneity, enthusiasm and free imagination, thus getting rid of the professional blindness which prevents them from seeing things outside the given system and its algorithm. It is **the postmodern ethos** that brings new alternative initiatives in the form of crossing the usual barriers and facilitates new views of problems. In the case of philosophy the change concerns its paradigm: from philosophy as a rigorous academic science to philosophy as a reflection of people's everyday lives. /6/

The tendency of philosophy towards man's concrete life situation and its problems is the determining element of postmodern thinking. The theme of life self-reflection and the quest for the image of the contemporary man connects **postmodern philo-**

sophy closely with the field of **modern psychology**. For instance, the theme called **the psychology of the human I** is as unorthodox as the change of the paradigm in philosophy and science, ie the effort to cross the borders of the „closed system“ and to look for the answers to topical questions in the preserves of other disciplines, in the synthesis of the so-called third culture, or in a fruitful interconnection of the humanities and natural sciences in one meaningful whole.

The creation of the positive philosophy of life as the result of philosophical counselling

The idea of philosophical counselling came into being in the period of post-modernism as a response to the situation in modern philosophy when play on words as an end in itself began to prevail in philosophical discourses. Gradually an opinion appeared that there was not only the school and academic philosophy for specialists but also such philosophy that could have the form of practical activity with immediate results. The new **starting point** was **the opinion** that philosophy was not really a sort of secondary form of science but „the art“ **to know one’s way even in the sphere of what we cannot account for by the present methods** and also **an attempt at the integrity of a person’s personality and his or her life.** /11/

To be engaged in philosophy then means to learn the art of living, understanding oneself and other people. A change also appears in the interpretation of the content of wisdom. Wisdom is no more an exclusive knowledge of a certain sphere of problems but the realization of one’s life experience, using not only reason but also intuition and empathy. The human life in this conception becomes a story asking for dramatization and subsequent many-sided interpretation. The philosopher asks here simultaneous questions concerning philosophy, ethics and aesthetics: How to live? What lifestyle to choose? Consequently there appears **the idea of philosophy as an elaborated life practice** that solves everyday life matters and is thus in diametrical opposition to the so-called professional philosophy.

The result of philosophical counselling is the creation of **the positive philosophy of life**, based both on the ability of philosophical imagination and speculation, and on the concrete empirical (life) information and data. All the ways of **practising philosophy** can be manifold, from classes and research to counselling and therapy. The idea of using philosophy for therapy is very old. As early as in the ancient world, especially in the philosophical practice of Socrates, the Stoics and the Epicureans, such practice existed and is documented. A philosopher was taken then as an expert in profound questions of human practice and life. The philosopher operated **as a social worker directly involved in the public life.**

For its interest in the quality of life and man, philosophy also inevitably borders on psychology, sociology and anthropology. Philosophy becomes psychology when it is interested in the spiritual aspect of man, and the other way round, psychology becomes philosophy when it investigates the problem of the meaning of man’s life. Joined together, the two parts give rise to **psycho-philosophy** or **philo-therapy**. Which of the two forms of this cross discipline will be preferred depends on the choice of people invol-

ved. The principle of synenergy, as the co-operation of several fields of knowledge, will be applied here; synenergy is the driving force of the postmodern age.

Working as a philosophical counsellor, the philosopher carries on a dialogue with people of various professional ranks, ideological convictions or religious denominations, from ordinary citizens to top managers. On the basis of **the application of speculative thinking, conceptual analysis, philosophical logic and personal experience** on each concrete case, the philosopher tries to tackle the problems resulting from everyday situations, various personal difficulties and crises, quest for the meaning of anything. The philosopher's language in this personal and intimate dialogue must be simple, clear and generally understandable; just this forms his or her **new competence of a philosopher** as a therapist.

The following **question** presents itself here: **What is in fact the difference between a philosopher as a therapist, and a psychotherapist?** The philosopher, unlike the psychotherapist, does not meet a person as a patient or client, but plays the role of a more or less accidental partner in the dialogue on anything, complements with the partner mutually and helps casually as a kind of adviser to find a solution of the chosen problem. Doing this, the philosopher also shows indirectly the importance of philosophy as a discipline that should help people in their life troubles and make their fates easier.

The philosophical counselling can, eg, devote itself to the following questions: What does a good life consist in?, What is valuable?, Does freedom exist and what does it consist in?, How to be happy?, What relation should one have to one's own work?, Is there anything like destiny?, What comes after death?, etc. While consulting these and other questions, philosophers can draw inspiration from all the rich history of European and East Asian philosophy. In solving the partner's concrete life situation and concrete problems during the dialogue, the philosopher takes for granted that all the people-partners have their specific life situations, specific lifestyles and even specific life philosophies.

The philo-therapist realizes all the facts given above and leads an open, humanistic dialogue, trying to change his or her partner's views and attitudes towards a certain problem. The result of this meeting is not only a change in the partner's existing shallow life situation, but also attaining a vision and formulation of the partner's further function in life. The described philosophical therapy includes not only reading chosen philosophical texts but also writing and inventing one's own texts and improvisation on the given topic. In no case does the philo-therapist behave like a wise man who knows everything, like an omniscient specialist in all problems of man and in „the art of living“.

The philo-therapist should soothe other people's agitated thoughts, help them to better understand their life motivations and to orientate themselves better in their own worlds. It is necessary to show the partners that the quest for the meaning of anything is a life challenge and a way full of personal search and hardship. The philosopher should never try to gain the other person for any ideology or religion; the only object is to offer the partner a wide range of possibilities to consider as a free space for philosophical questions and for seeking answers to various personal problems and secrets of life.

The basic method is the so-called Socratic dialogue, ie an open dialogue on the life of a concrete person in a concrete situation, during which the philo-therapist helps to recognize the direction and content of the journey through life and further aims

generally. But the central question is still the following: How to live? A guide to life is in fact the most important question of the human situation in the world and the answer to it can be found in the whole of the human cultural history, in the rich tradition of philosophical thought.

It can be said that **philosophy of life** is an intimate human need and a life task. It can only be found and practised in life itself and therefore there is no way people could master it in the formal educational system only. The concept of philosophy of life coincides to a high degree with the concept of world view, but it differs from it by being much wider and more personal. Every **normal and healthy person** has a strong desire for the integrity of his or her personality, for a holistic image and perception of the world and oneself. It is the very philosophy of life that helps with this effort. On the other hand, there is no universal philosophy of life that would apply to all people without exception. It is necessary to work one's own way up to it, using the co-operation of theory (knowledge of philosophy) and practice (investigation into the individual's concrete situation). The result and product of philosophy of life is knowledge on life that has no scholarly character any more but is rather a natural result of a person's individual journey through life.

Anybody interested in philosophy, or its teacher, should be aware of a certain ethic obligation: the competence in his or her conduct and responsibility for holding the dialogue with the partner. An inner determination to help people and to propagate one's conviction does not do here. Some thinkers suppose that being a philosophy teacher or practise philosophy is the most magnificent and happiest mission in life one can get. This is another reason why everybody who spreads philosophical ideas should have the necessary ethos. The philosopher should be more interested in weak and common people's lives than in the lives of the privileged and celebrated. This is because **the true mission of philosophy** consists in the celebration of life itself, in the commitment to it, in the effort to help others to live through their lives in the highest and best possible degree of their personal makings and possibilities.

Philosophizing as a way to satisfaction and happiness

Philosophy has always had a specific position in human culture: it has either been extolled to the top of human striving as the queen of all sciences, or, on the contrary, considered an unnecessary luxury in man's life, or „talking on nothing“. For this reason it has had to defend itself more often than other fields of human interest and activity. As to **philosophizing** itself, the general consciousness mostly takes it as a special intellectual activity, very distant from everyday life. However, practising philosophy (philosophizing) is a human phenomenon following from our thinking and feeling. In spite of this it looks as if the meaning and object of philosophy were somehow hidden. This is because we have to create them ourselves according to everybody's personal interest and nature. In any case, good philosophizing should bring pleasure, inspiration and stimuli to the harmonization of our lives.

The fundamental tendency of philosophy is that **to self-reflection**, which is in fact a way to **practical wisdom**. **The positive lay approach to philosophy**, mentioned above, consists in the effort to draw philosophy as close as possible to „an ordinary“ human life, to a concrete life experience. /2/

Philosophical counselling is that kind of **applied philosophy** which aims at the closest contact with the way people experience their life situations. It uses philosophy as the reflection of everyday life, the result of which is forming life itself and improving its quality. **The traditional form of philosophy**, on the other hand, tends towards a high degree of abstraction, idealization and universalization. Its impact is reduced exclusively to the sphere of academic discourses on concepts and categories and their mutual relations. **The meaning of teaching philosophy at schools lies in its reflexive critical role.** On the other hand, practising philosophy (philosophizing) has lately resulted naturally in the need of philosophy as the reflection of life and its problems in contradiction to the existing conception of philosophy as a strict and objectivistic science. In this connection **philosophy abandons its uncritical and naive trust in mathematics and physics** which caught it in the clutches of the formalization of the philosophical language and quantification of philosophical outputs. **The way out of the crisis** proved to be leaving the world of „pure“ science and turning to topical life themes, back to life itself. Philosophy is thus no more an impersonal and impartial contemplation, intellectual gymnastics or even exhibitionism, but an active and purposeful reflection of concrete problems and conditions. It aims at a live knowledge as a complex of empathy and rational, emotional, logical and intuitive processes. On the whole, rationality is restored now as sensibleness, not as intellectualism.

Philosophizing directly **supports critical reassessment and transformation** of the personality **of an individual.** A new horizon of philosophy is thus created, consisting in what is at all imaginable theoretically. The object is to bring people, by means of Socratic dialectics, to better self-knowledge and practical life wisdom which can help them in experiencing everyday reality. **The therapeutic force** also **consists in curing the soul by beautiful and wise words** stimulating the addressee to contemplation. In this way philosophizing becomes a suitable utilization of free time, general relaxation as well as an uplift to higher life motives and to the nobility of spirit.

Today's utilitarian people show a lowered care of the soul and its health, because they accent the consumer approach to life; the soul therefore lacks any sense and moves in a value vacuum. Nobody can expect that a spiritual revival of contemporary people can be supported by the fragmentary and superficial way in which they experience their lives. **The social meaning of philosophizing** consists in the justification of one's own life conception and in asking general philosophical questions. Consequently, **the philo-therapist is in fact a special kind of „priest“.**

Philosophical counselling in the West has obtained the experience that those who feel the strongest need to turn to philosophy for advice and help are people in socially prestigious jobs, ie seemingly trouble-free top workers. Under pressure of competition and the requirement of the maximum effectiveness, they ask for the possibility of relief and spiritual relaxation, absorption in themselves, doing something for their spiritual health.

The philo-therapist's intention in this situation is definitely neither teaching philosophy in the sense of spreading some knowledge, nor giving guaranteed directions for life, but listening carefully to the other person, understanding his or her topical problems and showing him or her, besides their subjective views of life facts, also some other, alternative opinions, stimulating them to a dialogue and independent thoughts on

their problems and chances. The very **unveiling of a broader spectrum of chances and approaches is the main task of the philo-therapist. It is necessary to mobilize the inner powers and to identify the real values for the life to appear interesting and worth living. Every philosophical dialogue should lead to the art of creative thinking.**

The philo-therapist should first of all let the other person tell his or her life story, carry out its reconstruction, survey and re-evaluation, and form further projects. He should clarify the stream of life events, experiences and feelings, and at the same time look at them from a new point of view; bring a new judgement into the life story, express doubts on everything taken for granted, on the only „right“ way accepted, ie break all partialities, prejudices and barriers. And the other way round, he should support in the other persons the capability of critical thinking and reflection, as well as the courage to take their own stand on everything. They should get rid of their own illusions, which, after all, were gained from the outside on the basis of their education and the cultural background where they grew up. The point is that everybody should be able to boldly form a new conception of their lives in a critical situation. **Philosophizing should help people to find the basic motives of their lives.** However, this is connected with the cultivation of the powers of critical thinking and cultural reflection and the ability to surpass the traditional barriers between the world of the lived reality and the world of theoretical reflection and analysis. Therefore the philosophical questions and answers should not have an academic character either.

The goals of the general philosophical conception can be seen in the strengthening of the trust in one's own dignity as well as in the dignity of humankind as a whole, in leading people's activities away from the exclusive orientation towards profit maximization and in motivating them to be more sensitive to the overall situation in the world. People should try to change positively the world's social life, to unite everything and everybody, though not to make them uniform. General life conditions should be improved with the aim to reach a higher quality of the individual life experience of anybody and anywhere.

These philosophical goals are also in agreement with the so-called **positive psychology**. Its **intention is to find a way to everybody's contentment and happiness**. There even exist national indexes of happiness, showing which layers of inhabitants are the least happy, and the other way round, whose happiness lacks nothing. **The existing opinion polls** on this subject show that in spite of the increasing standard of living a typical American, eg, is not at all happier than fifty years ago. These findings are important, because happier people feel better subjectively, are healthier, live longer and are also more productive. /3/

It is the United States where **the positive psychology** has its base, and its **representatives** try to form a real feeling of happiness in people, not only proclaimed happiness, which is common in America, after all. Just as there are fitness centres for the body, there should be fitness centres for the soul. It is as important to be fit mentally as to be fit physically. This therapy is said to be worked out in detail now and to have proved successful. However, it also needs a pleasant environment, since it definitely enhances everybody's contentment.

According to the positive psychology and its main representative Mark Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, the ability to be happy is given by several factors, the most important of them being genes. The ability to be happy is allegedly built right in somebody's genetic equipment. But such a valuable thing cannot be left to „naturally“ happy people only.

In 2000 the positive psychologists even created a kind of happiness equation. It looks approximately as follows: **happiness = the genetic equipment + the life circumstances + the will**. One's genetic equipment cannot be influenced by anybody, of course, but **life circumstances** could. They are, eg, the following: the state of financial affairs, education, family situation, social contacts, personal background, and a number of others. These factors, according to the psychologists' calculations, could influence from 8 to 15 per cent of the feeling of happiness. **The most important factor**, with 40% at least, is **one's own will**, activity and approach to life. Unlike the circumstances, this factor can be changed at once, very quickly influencing the circumstances at the same time. Instructions can be found in **the therapeutic exercises**. **They are to support and strengthen the following three types of happiness feelings: sensory** – taking pleasure in eating and sex; **pursuing some interesting work or hobby; enjoying the fullness and value of one's life**.

It follows from **the results of the positive psychology**, as a very young discipline with overlaps into other fields of science and philosophy, that we can evaluate every event or thing from various standpoints, giving them various degrees of importance. An essential requirement here is, however, **to learn how to notice only the positive and happy aspects of life**. Another important rule is to systematically and purposefully create a feeling of satisfaction, success or happiness in recapitulating one's life up to the present (a feeling, eg, that „somebody up there“ wishes me well). A positive approach to life and people then inevitably leads to success and happiness in the future as well.

Philosophy, with its positive performing but critically sceptical thinking, **considers** the theory mentioned above as too simple and uncritically optimistic, unable to lead to a guaranteed real feeling of happiness. On the other hand, its partial elements, if given a deeper philosophical sense, can contribute to the quest for a progressive road to happiness and a contented life.

The basic typology and the spiritual development of man

The philosophy of culture, created in the German philosophical thinking as early as in the middle of the 19th century, has always observed certain mentally constitutional orientations or construction plans of personalities. And that concerns both the creator and the receiver of a work of culture. A part of philosophy began gradually to concentrate on the problem of the correspondence between the type of the author and his or her artefact, as if they were imaginary communicating vessels. It started to examine various creators to establish a certain classification of authors. In this way various forms of the so-called **cultural typology** came into existence. One of the best known and simplest typologies is the plain **division of people into the so-called romantics (dreamers) and realists (practitioners)**. /10/

A realistic person is a great observer of the surroundings, profiting above all from his or her experience and is interested in everything objective and material in the world around. This feature is of course transposed into the person's own work, which mostly has a concrete and developmental character. **The romantic type**, on the other hand, seems to listen to his or her inner voice, hardly showing any interest in the immediate surroundings. Romantic authors make their works in various extreme ways, mostly creating at one sitting in a sudden inspiration, and have a sense of abstract and ideal things. Although these two types look contradictory at first sight, they in fact supplement each other and are equally important. Each of us, if some simplification is used, can be ranked as the former or the latter human type.

Another, somewhat more elaborate **typology** was worked out by the German professor Eduard Spranger (1882 – 1963). **On the basis** of six primary cultural orientations and values he created analogously **six human types with different cultural orientations**. They are as follows: **a person** who is **theoretical (a scientist); economic (a financial manager); aesthetic (an artist); social (a nurse); power-seeking (a politician); religious (a mystic)**, with three subcategories: an immanent, transcendental or dualistic mystic. All of these types have their individual distinctive qualities, ways of thinking and views of the world. However, a completely pure type does not exist in reality, of course: the orientation of a person is always only approximate. /5/

The meaning of the typologies given above consists in the fact that they can be used in work with people. They in fact tell us that not all people are the same and that it is necessary to approach everybody on the basis of the insight into their general orientation. This suits us, whether we approach a person as philo-therapists or psycho-therapists.

A different **approach** is **from the spiritual position**. This conception shows man as a continuous dispute between the body and the soul; between the lower and the higher, the unconscious and the conscious. **The general spiritual development of man** can be viewed in phases that differ qualitatively. **In the first stage** a very young child still has **an immature mind** which is very primitive and animal-like, but also innocent and charming. The child loses its natural character between the third and the fourth years of age and becomes a part of the civilized world. Its intelligence is still more instinctive than rational. The child is a sort of prehistoric man, since he or she lives exclusively in the present, has no past or future and therefore no responsibility. /4/

The second phase of development is already **characterized by sociability and a collective mind**. Children gradually understand that they belong to a whole, to the society, nation, church, etc. But these wholes make a person only a part of the crowd, and so the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche labels this **state** as the state **of a draught animal**, eg a camel. In this state man only feels a collective responsibility and follows the rules of the community, where the patriarchal circumstances prevail.

The third phase of man's spiritual development introduces **the state of individual mind** with its own identity. Nietzsche calls this state „a lion“. A kind of inner centre arises in man, which obeys no authority any more. A man in this phase of development learns to say „no“. **This phase of development** is said to be **the state in which**

the contemporary Western civilization occurs. Man's ego reaches its height and therefore it is endangered by various temptations which can prevent man from further development. It is also a stage of revolting intellectuals, who are, however, sometimes egoistic and overweening.

The fourth stage is a universal mind. Our ego is maturing and therefore **falls away** from us. People between forty and forty-five years of age always face a religious crisis and therefore set out on the way to this state of mind. We must be ready to put aside our personality in it. The German poet Friedrich Schiller calls this moment „a cosmic kiss“. **Three universal values begin to flourish** with the universal mind: **truth – good – beauty**, which make the basis of philosophy and philosophizing. Man gets on a higher degree of religion, where the **matriarchal model** prevails.

The fifth and last phase represents a royal mind. A person becomes an independent existence and consciousness, is fully awake, in a constant **state of bliss**, without any darkness or anxiety. Man is not an ordinary mortal any more in the fifth phase, becomes the very Buddha or Christ, somebody that knows psychotronics and biotronics, so that there are only few people who can reach this state.

To sum up the gradual development: **the first phase** is just the beginning, not the goal; **in the second phase** one feels comfortable but does not create anything great; **the third phase** is the opposite: it is creative, but very uncomfortable, with too much tension and anxiety; **the fourth phase** replaces this tension with a new, higher state, which is the dissolution of man in the whole of the universe; **in the fifth phase**, metaphorically speaking, man has come home, returned to the original nature, has become the existence itself.

The passage given above shows us the multiformity and changeability of the human existence in connection with the suggestion of a possible spiritual development and an anticipation of the life project, which is necessary for a glimpse behind the routine horizon of life and has also its meaning for philosophical counselling or therapy.

The utilization of philosophical thought for therapy

General consciousness takes a **philosophizing person** as somebody who has a very broad outlook, a possible detached point of view and also a high degree of foresight. **A philosopher in the past**, in the classical and medieval writings, was mostly **characterized as „a doctor of the soul“**. This was because philosophy and medicine co-existed in the past (from the ancient world through all the Middle Ages up to the Renaissance) and sometimes were even seen as rivals. However, according to the famous Greek orator Democritus, eg, medicine and philosophy are sisters, because one (medicine) takes away diseases from the body, while the other (philosophy) removes anguish from the soul. /8/

Nowadays we have regrettably got used to considering philosophy as a purely theoretical discipline, and medicine, on the other hand, as something utterly practical, but this opposite characteristics should, due to new findings and newly obtained experience, be abandoned. **A philosopher**, mostly taken as a scholar who tries to understand and explain the fundamentals of the universe, has more in common with a physician than is generally thought. Even **a doctor**, in seeking the causes of an illness, when he or

she tries to understand everybody as a whole, including their connection with the essence of the surrounding world, **must ask similar cardinal questions** as a philosopher.

Both the philosopher and the doctor must try **to understand the human nature** and to grasp what constitutes man, ie what elements man is made of. Both of them ask: **What are the fundamentals of the world? What is the order of the macrocosm and how does it project into the laws of the microcosm?** Their views are interconnected because both of them use rational thinking based on the same theoretical fundamentals, where physical and chemical elements on the one hand and psychic and spiritual elements on the other are interconnected into one united whole. This **mutual interconnection of philosophy and medicine** was taken for granted entirely up to the period of the high Middle Ages. The commencement of the Modern Age brought with it the gradually prevailing mechanistic and exclusively materialistic view of the world and man, having its historical roots in Descartes and Newton's methodology of science.

New inspiration was given to European science with the beginning of post-modernism, with the rediscovery of the traditional Asian medicine, new knowledge on the quantum physics, cultural anthropology and human ecology, as well as the appearance of alternative methods in medicine. Here can be seen the start of the idea, rediscovered at present, of the sisterhood of philosophy and medicine. Philosophers in particular, but also doctors, can get inspiration from the long forgotten knowledge, promoted, eg, by Alcmaeon of Crotona, Hippocrates, Polybius, Galen, Paracelsus, Lao-tse, Confucius and others, which fits logically into the new knowledge brought by the postmodern spirit and its new paradigm.

An ancient work by Hippolytus mentions, eg, **Pythagoras meeting Zarathustra**, who already described our reality as **a world of dualisms**, where negative and positive elements in the widest sense of the words create a unity of the world perceived. And his pupil Alcmaeon added that health is a result of the balance of the opposite forces, a result of the dynamic unity of the whole organism. Every violation of this balance or a one-sided predominance of a certain element is then a source of illness. Illness originates from a surplus or, in contrast to it, from a lack of certain elements.

The polarized world environment is a powerful energetic potential and source of a number of dual phenomena. If people realize this fact, they can reach a wiser view of the world and a more balanced life in it, provided they apply the Aristotelian principle of „the happy medium“, ie avoiding unhealthy extremes and drawing near the stability of the centre, which of course need not be the mathematical average or geometric mean.
/7/

Our consciousness represents a focus in which various influences are concentrated, and people sometimes waste their energy uselessly in their fight against contrasts, unable to realize their necessary existence. The polarized environment also means an opportunity for people to make decisions freely. Every event, every manifestation thus has two sides and our success in life is above all dependent on our attitude to everything that affects us.

The idea of two contradictory pairs was also developed in philosophy by **Aristotle**. /8/ In his work *De Generatione et Corruptione* and *Meteorologica* he described **the four primary qualities of the world** (warmness, coldness, dryness, wetness), which are divided into others (thin, thick, hard, soft). **By means of mutual penetration of**

the primary qualities the main elements originate, like earth, water, air and fire. As a matter of course, we cannot take this description of reality in its literal form, but only on a symbolic and metaphorical level.

According to Aristotle **the origin of every element is determined by the mingling of contradictories**, namely as follows: the element of earth is characterized by qualities like cold and dry; water as cold and wet; air as wet and warm; fire as warm and dry. **A change of each element is caused by a loss of one quality and its substitution by the contradictory quality. A simple change** is realized if one element of the pair substitutes for the other; **a more complicated change** consists in the substitution of both the elements in the pair via the so-called medium element. The contradictories mingle and change after they have reached the medium, ie balanced values. Every element can thus change into any other. Consequently, **the whole organism and each of its parts can be characterized** by all the four primary qualities, and everywhere all the four elements and all the four qualities are present.

This philosophical scheme is also developed by physicians in the so-called theory of four human liquids (Hippocrates) and then **the theory of human natures** (Polybos) following from it. The human „humors“, permanently present in the organism, are in a certain relation to the two cardinal qualities (warmness/coldness and wetness/dryness). Each of these „humors“ should occur in the body in an adequate amount. Individual people then differ from each other by the inborn relation of these liquids. Illnesses develop as a consequence of an imbalance: increase or decrease in some of the liquids due to the season of the year or also on the basis of the inborn dispositions. The source of these liquids is the received food, which is partly changed into the body and partly remains in the organism as the so-called black gall. It is this black gall, when mingled with other liquids, that causes sharp changes of temperature as well as of human behaviour. The better and more balanced the food, the better is the circulation of the liquids in the organism and the healthier the person. This confirms the well-known yogic saying: **We are what we eat ...**

In his work *Problem XXX* Aristotle also comes with the idea of **the causal relation of physical and mental diseases**. In the course of time **an opinion** thus appears **that the four primary qualities, the four body liquids and the four cardinal psychic states of man** (a sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholic type of man) **are interdependent. The theory of four cardinal elements thus resulted in a direct connection between the physical constitution of man and the human nature.** The bodily and mental health consist in symmetry and proportionateness. Every disease always develops as a consequence of a surplus or lack of some physical impact, a surplus or lack of some food or physical exercise. Man's soul as well will become ill as a consequence of a surplus or lack of positive or negative emotions. The sentences given above prove that **in the ancient and even mediaeval world the perception of health and illness was fundamentally „philosophical“.**

Philosophers were therefore charged with the task to prescribe a right regimen for people so that everybody could know what was the best for them at the given moment. But **this regimen** did not only concern material things, eg food, it **mainly concerned people's general way of life, especially its ethic and aesthetic values. Philosophers had to be interested in anything that affected the human soul. They had**

to understand Nature and the human character, physics and metaphysics. Every treatment had to be an individual matter, since achieving harmony and balance is also everybody's individual task.

The above-given application of philosophical thinking to medical practice should be taken as an abstract scheme, showing us how everything around us is interconnected with a delicate tissue of energy and information nodes and has its philosophical (speculatively theoretical) background.

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FILOZOFIE JAKO TERAPIE A ALTERNATIVNÍ MEDICÍNA

Souhrn: Nová podoba a cíl filozofie ve věku postmoderny. Utváření pozitivní životní filozofie jako výsledek filozofického poradenství. Filozofování jako cesta ke spokojenosti a za štěstím. Základní typologie osobností a duchovní vývoj člověka. Využití filozofického myšlení k terapii.

Klíčová slova: zdraví, medicína, zdravý životní styl, filozofie zdraví