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Mariahilfer Straße 1d/e, Stock/Tür 13, A-1060 Vienna, Austria

E-mail: eap.admin@europsyche.org

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The International Journal of Psychotherapy is a leading professional and academic publication, which aims to inform, to stimulate debate, and to assist the profession of psychotherapy to develop throughout Europe and also internationally.

The Journal raises important issues in the field of European and international psychotherapy practice, professional development, and theory and research for psychotherapy practitioners, related professionals, academics & students. The Journal is published by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP), three times per annum. It has been published for 24 years.

The focus of the Journal includes:

- Contributions from, and debates between, the different European methods and modalities in psychotherapy, and their respective traditions of theory, practice and research;
- Contemporary issues and new developments for individual, group and psychotherapy in specialist fields and settings;
- Matters related to the work of European professional psychotherapists in public, private and voluntary settings;
- Broad-ranging theoretical perspectives providing informed discussion and debate on a wide range of subjects in this fast expanding field;
- Professional, administrative, training and educational issues that arise from developments in the provision of psychotherapy and related services in European health care settings;
- Contributing to the wider debate about the future of psychotherapy and reflecting the

internal dialogue within European psychotherapy and its wider relations with the rest of the world;

- Current research and practice developments – ensuring that new information is brought to the attention of professionals in an informed and clear way;
- Interactions between the psychological and the physical, the philosophical and the political, the theoretical and the practical, the traditional and the developing status of the profession;
- Connections, communications, relationships and association between the related professions of psychotherapy, psychology, psychiatry, counselling and health care;
- Exploration and affirmation of the similarities, uniqueness and differences of psychotherapy in the different European regions and in different areas of the profession;
- Reviews of new publications: highlighting and reviewing books & films of particular importance in this field;
- Comment and discussion on all aspects and important issues related to the clinical practice and provision of services in this profession;
- A dedication to publishing in European ‘mother-tongue’ languages, as well as in English.

This journal is therefore essential reading for informed psychological and psychotherapeutic academics, trainers, students and practitioners across these disciplines and geographic boundaries, who wish to develop a greater understanding of developments in psychotherapy in Europe and world-wide.

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The IJP Website: www.ijp.org.uk

The IJP website is very comprehensive, with many different pages. It is fairly easy to negotiate using the tabs across the top of the website pages.

You are also able to subscribe to the Journal through the website – and we have several different ‘categories’ of subscriptions. However, the Journal is now more of an “open-access” journal, so subscriptions are less relevant.

You can also purchase single articles and whole issues as directly downloaded PDF files by using the Catalogue on the IJP website. Payment is by PayPal. We still have some printed copies of most of the Back Issues available for sale.

Furthermore, we believe that ‘Book Reviews’ form an essential component to the ‘web of science’. We currently have about 60 books available to be reviewed: please consult the relevant pages of the IJP website and ask for the books that you would enjoy reviewing; and – as a reviewer – you would get to keep the book. All previously published Book Reviews are available as free PDF files.

There is also a whole cornucopia of material that is currently freely available on-line (see the top left-hand corner of the website). Firstly: there are several “Open Access”

books on Psychotherapy available, free-of-charge; next there are an increasing number of free “Open Access” articles; then there are often a couple of articles available from the forthcoming issue, in advance of publication.

There is also an on-going, online ‘Special Issue’ on “Psychotherapy vs. Spirituality”. This ‘Special Issue’ is being built up from a number of already published articles and these are available freely on-line, soon after publication.

Finally, there are a number of previously published Briefing Papers. There is one on: “What can Psychotherapy do for Refugees and Migrants in Europe?”; and one on an important new direction: “Mapping the ECP into ECTS to gain EQF-7: A Briefing Paper for a new ‘forward strategy for the EAP.” Because of a particular interest that we have in what is called by “Intellectual Property”, we have included a recent briefing paper: “Can Psychotherapeutic Methods, Procedures and Techniques” be patented, and/or copyrighted, and/or trademarked? – A Position Paper.” Lastly, as part of the initiative to promote psychotherapy as an independent profession in Europe, we have: “EAP Statement on the Legal Position of Psychotherapy in Europe”, which we published in a recent issue.

Editorial

Marzena Rusanowska

Editor, International Journal of Psychotherapy

This issue has its origins in conflict. Patricia Hunt, former President of the European Association for Psychotherapy, opens with an account of how the full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022 forced the EAP into an unprecedented institutional reckoning: whether to expel the Russian Psychotherapy Organisation from an association that includes both Ukraine and Russia among its members. Her account of the debate that followed – difficult, at times bitter, ultimately conducted with care and constitutional rigour – provides the historical and human context from which the Ukrainian Symposiums emerged, and from which this issue itself has grown.

Lutz Goetzmann then offers a wide-ranging theoretical contribution, tracing Hegel's Absolute Idea through a psychoanalytic lens to ask how our discipline might position itself in the face of contemporary socio-ecological polycrises. Expanding Lacan's registers to include the dimensions of atmosphere and the phenomenal, he arrives at a searching ethical question: what does *le bien-dire* – the good speaking – mean in a time of climate catastrophe and resurgent fascism?

Roman Kechur proposes a conceptual model of psychotherapeutic transformation that brings together Bayesian epistemology, psychoanalytic understandings of transference, and intersubjective theory. His central argument – that trauma shapes the a priori expectations from which identity itself is formed – is developed into a tripartite structural model distinguishing unprocessed trauma, symbolised trauma as identity, and a trauma-free zone of creativity. It is a theoretically ambitious contribution that remains, throughout, in close contact with clinical reality.

Zvenyslava Kechur's reflective clinical essay brings us into the consulting room. She explores how a therapeutic relationship conducted against the backdrop of war and collective historical trauma became, for both patient and analyst, a journey toward restored presence and subjecthood. Her honesty

about the mutual transformation that took place gives the essay its particular depth.

The issue closes by Myroslav Marynovych, a founding member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and a former political prisoner, Marynovych writes on dignity and liberty in a turbulent world, examining global tendencies toward imperialism and dehumanisation and proposing, in response, a consolidation of society around morality and the irreducible worth of the person. His contribution is a reminder that psychotherapy does not exist outside history.

This issue is published in two parts: the English texts gathered here, and a second part offering Ukrainian translations of selected articles – a recognition that the psychotherapy community in Ukraine is not only a recipient of international dialogue, but one of its most important voices.

As you read through this issue, I hope you find not only ideas that inform your thinking, but also questions that stay with you – about what it means to speak well in difficult times, and what our discipline owes to the world it is part of.

Hope Emerging From Conflict

Patricia Hunt FRSA

Chair of the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance

Former President of the European Association for Psychotherapy

Acknowledgements

With my sincere gratitude to the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance for our rich colleagueship and collaboration. Through the superb teamwork of the Alliance these Symposiums have been developed, sustained and successful. My grateful thanks to all the speakers and Patrons of the Symposiums for your expertise, wisdom and generosity. Finally my heartfelt thanks to all the participants of the Ukrainian Symposiums for your presence and commitment. Somehow we have become a community with remarkable sense of closeness.

Abstract

From October 2022 until the present online Symposiums, organised and funded by the European Association for Psychotherapy and the Ukrainian Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy, have been conducted with the aim of supporting Ukrainian Psychotherapists in their work and lives during the full-scale war in Ukraine. The narrative of the development of the Symposiums under the leadership of Patricia Hunt FRSA, President of the European Association for Psychotherapy, in collaboration with the expert team the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance is told. Each Symposium has attracted more than 1000 registrations from Ukraine, Europe and the World, and the incredibly positive feedback speaks of their visionary quality and success. Through the Symposiums Hope emerges from Conflict.

Key words

Hope; avoidance of victimhood; collaboration; colleagueship; inspiration.

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The Beginning

The Ukrainian Symposiums arose out of conflict. At the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022 there was political turbulence and a ripple effect which extended all the way across Europe. International organisations put sanctions on Russia and withdrew from the country; political organisations pulled out of Russia; Governments placed sanctions on Russia and diplomacy with Russia ceased. The pressure was on to block Russia out of everything.

The impact of this turbulence on the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) was profound, because both Ukraine and Russia are member countries of EAP. The question in EAP became – should the Russian Psychotherapy Organisation be expelled from EAP? Over a series of full Board Meetings with delegates from all 43 member European countries able to be present, and through bitter disagreements at times, we finally managed to come to a well-conducted, thoughtful and considered debate in which all views were expressed on whether the Russian Psychotherapy Organisation should be expelled. The full spectrum of impressively articulated arguments was expressed. Two votes were taken over the course of two full Board Meetings. In accordance with the constitution of EAP the outcome of both votes was that the Russian organisation was not expelled, however all their voting rights were removed for the duration of the war.

I was President of the European Association for Psychotherapy at this time, and conducted the debates. I was very aware of being at the centre and absorbing significant impact, as the conflict percolated from the full scale war into the heart of

EAP. I felt very keenly the feelings of the Ukrainians during these debates, and especially their disappointment as the result of the votes was announced. Therefore, as soon as the outcome of the final vote was announced I immediately invited the President and EAP Delegate from the Ukrainian Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy (UUAP) to meet with me and senior EAP colleagues, to discuss with them the ways in which EAP could support them, support UUAP, and support Ukrainian Psychotherapists during the war. Their response was really positive and affirming of how much their membership of EAP meant to them. They organised a group of about ten senior members of UUAP to meet with myself and three senior EAP colleagues. The first of those meetings took place online in October 2022.

Hope Emerging Out of Conflict

I was unsure what would come out of these meetings, but felt that it was important to offer support, collegiality and dialogue. A vital element of who we are as a profession of Psychotherapists is that we hold the pre-eminent value of talking through issues of conflict, talking through difficulty, listening to each other, acknowledging unconscious process elements, and finding ways through to resolution. In the first meeting I asked the question: “What can EAP do to support you and support Ukrainian Psychotherapists during the full-scale war in Ukraine?” They already had their answer in place. The UUAP colleagues had already discussed it. They said “Please will you help us to put on a joint Symposium between EAP and UUAP, on the first anniversary of the full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2023?” We replied “Yes, we can help you with that.”

We agreed that the Symposium would be online and open to Ukrainian Psychotherapists, UUAP and non UUAP, both those still working in Ukraine and also those who had already left the country due to the war and were working in other countries. We also agreed that it will be open to European Psychotherapists, creating the opportunity for contact and dialogue. Our Ukrainian colleagues expressed how important this was to them – opening up dialogue and thinking between Ukrainian and European Psychotherapists fulfilling the hope that both the Psychotherapy profession and the country of Ukraine will become more European, and more fully part of Europe, in the future. We agreed that it could be open to all Psychotherapists globally who wish to join us and support Ukrainian Psychotherapists.

We decided that this would be a free Symposium; that funding would be needed; that we would need technological expertise to put on an effective online Symposium; that we would need good simultaneous translation between English and Ukrainian; and that we would need good media and advertising to let everyone know about it. And so we began our work together to put on the first joint UUAP and EAP Symposium.

The composition of our organising group is really important. This group is called the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance. Our meetings are conducted in both Ukrainian and English with superb translation being given by Alexander Mironenko, one the UUAP senior colleagues. Alexander's translations are very clear, allow time for thinking, and humour is really beautifully conveyed through his translations. From the beginning we have been a group where there is a lot of humour. This is not black humour or hysterical humour,

but warm-hearted humour congruent with the close relationships we have built with each other. Initially the humour was a great surprise to me. I had not anticipated any humour in such a tense and difficult situation. Alexander's translations are very diplomatic, and create a channel of effective communication and understanding between us, so that we have been from the beginning a very cohesive and effective working group. Listening to each other well; responding to each other's ideas; taking on the insight and inspiration of different members of the group; working creatively; bouncing good ideas around between us, always through Alexander as he translates back and forth. The flow of each meeting is that something is said in English, and Alexander translates it into Ukrainian, and there is a response in Ukrainian which is translated into English. This gives a rhythm to the meeting, and a dynamic that becomes a real important part of our dialogue. It has become a remarkably close group – we have become friends as well as close colleagues.

We have been meeting for three and a half years now, mostly meeting every three or four weeks and sometimes every two weeks as we get close to the time of the next Symposium. Everyone makes the meetings a priority. Everyone is there. The founding group from October 2022 are all still part of the Alliance. It is clear to me that the work of the Alliance, and its strong characteristics and deep humanity, have created a model for the Symposiums. Through parallel process the Symposiums also have a deep humanity and a remarkably strong connectedness.

A Series of Symposiums

It was on the first meeting of the Alliance that several ideas about possible themes for our first Symposium that would be important

for Ukrainian Psychotherapists emerged. Even in the first meeting it was even said there might be a series of Symposiums, but that seemed like a joke at that time!

A key principle in UUAP from its founding in the 1990s and through to the present day is the centrality of research, giving an evidence base at the heart of the profession and at the heart of it being an innovative profession moving forwards. This has become central to the Symposiums, and we have invited speakers with a good research profile who would speak from their own academic background and research. We invited those with a strong clinical experience to share their professional insight and research work. The first Symposium focussed on Professional Ethics, which was important to the Ukrainians because of ensuring that their own ethical conduct and professional protocols were eurocentric, and grounded in what was important for the profession in Europe.

I am writing at the time just following the Tenth Symposium! It is extraordinary and wonderful that we have conducted ten UUAP and EAP Symposiums, all organised by the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance. The idea of these Symposiums has proved to be visionary and highly successful. The feedback has been incredibly positive, and it seems that the Symposiums are helping empower Ukrainian Psychotherapist's resilience during the war. The flow of our Symposium themes has a dynamic to it. We began with professionally and clinically focussed themes: "The Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma and Recovery from Trauma" (Third Symposium) "The Tragedy of Childhood in the Time of War" (Fourth Symposium). The themes have evolved to more humanitarian aspects of what empowers us in response

to the impact of war: "In Search of Truth and Humanity in our Time" (Eighth Symposium), "Anger, Humour, Connection and Love" (Ninth Symposium) "Freedom, Dignity and Meaning" (Tenth Symposium). This dynamic in the themes reflects both the response of the Alliance to feedback we receive from participants about what would be of most value to them, and also reflects the extraordinary capacity of the Ukrainians in the Alliance to hold hope in the face of despair, and avoid victimhood in the face of war.

The avoidance of victimhood is a key component of Ukrainians response to the war, and it will be the subject of a future paper devoted to this important topic. Avoiding a victim mindset involves shifting from a state of externally imposed helplessness, to an empowered and active holding of self. It requires taking responsibility for actions and reactions, especially in the acutely challenging circumstances of the Ukraine war which was an unprovoked attack on a country and on national sovereignty. It involves breaking free from powerlessness and taking on the mantle of survivor status. Within the context of the Ukraine and European Psychotherapy Alliance there are many ways in which the avoidance of victimhood has been expressed by the Ukrainian colleagues. For example, if there has been a Russian bombing raid in the days before a meeting of the Alliance it can feel quite natural for the Europeans to express compassion about this. But when compassion is expressed in the Alliance group, the response of the Ukrainians is: "Please do not give us too much compassion. It easily makes us feel like victims, and it is vital for us not to be victims in this war. If we allow ourselves to become victims, then Putin has won." In this way Ukrainians are remarkably and impressively holding the

position of resistance, of strength, and of resilience both internally and individually, and as a community. They are avoiding victimhood, and this is a strength both now and for the future.

Symposium Content

Evolution is the key word and concept which underpins the way in which the content of the Symposiums has developed. Both the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) and the Ukrainian Umbrella Association (UUAP) have undertaken this work to support Ukrainian Psychotherapists, and each Symposium begins with opening addresses from representatives of the two organisations. As Chair of the Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance I give the opening address, and I chair and moderate the whole day of each Symposium. This is a huge challenge, and can leave me with some vicarious trauma at the end of the day, however being the face and persona of the Symposiums gives integrity, heart and presence which becomes known by the participants. It parallels the importance of the constancy of the Psychotherapist for their patients. I feel that it is a vital part of the Symposium content that I have the courage to continue to be this known and trusted presence for as long as the war lasts.

We wanted the Symposiums to be professionally rich and nourishing, and distinguished speakers are a fundamental component. We usually have four speakers for each Symposium. Two of these are from Ukraine, and two from Europe or other parts of the world. We have asked each of the speakers to share their expertise and wisdom, and not to receive a fee. This is their gift to support Ukrainians. It enables us to offer the Symposiums free of charge – so very important. Questions from the participants to all the speakers are

saved until the final part of the Symposiums, where there is a Round Table of questions to all the speakers. This is one hour, and it has evolved into an astonishingly moving and meaningful part of the day. Profound concepts and aspects of deep humanity are shared and opened up for discussion. It is a rich end to the day.

From the very beginning it was vital for our Ukrainian colleagues in the Alliance that there would be a time set aside at each Symposium for dialogue between Ukrainian and European participants. Ukraine sees its future in Europe, and this opportunity for dialogue embeds new connections and relationships. Groups of 20 are formed in online discussion rooms, with a translator present to facilitate the conversation.

The final element of Symposium content is either a large therapy group or a sociodrama. The large therapy group idea was initiated by our Ukrainian colleagues who had experience of conducting these, and it is for all the participants of the Symposium. With such enormous numbers attending it needs to be carefully structured – each person who wishes to speak is given a time limit, and the Psychotherapists conducting and holding this work are Professor Roman Kechur and Professor Eugenijus Laurinaitis. Those who speak are listened to and seen; powerful and emotive themes emerge; participants speak of their healing through hearing others say what they themselves think; reciprocal speaking and listening helps to heal trauma; these moments are the heart of the Symposiums. Of course not everyone is able to speak, but frequently those who do speak are articulating truths for others. Showers of emojis flood the laptop screen as someone expresses emotions and truths which resonate for many participants.

Sociodrama

It is an inspiration from the war-time context to involve all participants in Sociodrama, and fulfils our endeavour to continually offer something meaningful to all the Psychotherapists in Ukraine who are part of the Symposium. The Sociodramas last for two hours, and are carefully structured with an introduction, a development, and then opening out to all participants to be involved if they wish to.

Our Ukrainian colleague in the Alliance Olena Stupak has initiated the Sociodramas, and conducted them herself with other colleagues, to incredible effect. To give one example, during the Ninth Symposium we conducted a Sociodrama in the form of a Thematic Group to reflect the theme “Anger, Humour, Connection and Love.” Participants from across Ukraine and beyond offered their reflections on the importance of humour for them during the war. Several spoke of the way in which humour provided a vital communication link. Stirred by this one woman spoke of the difficulties of remaining in touch with her husband who is at the front line. She spoke through her tears of the immense difficulty of maintaining communication with him, and said that the one thing which made a difference and connected them was shared humour. She said that to laugh together was miraculous, and made them both feel close to each other despite the distance and the life experience separating them. Several other people shared similar reflections and experiences, and suddenly the sociodrama was taking everyone to the heart of the impact of the war, and offering a gift to everyone from the insight of those who had shared their experiences so openly.

Patronage

We have invited prominent public figures to become a Patron of one of the Symposiums. This has been surprisingly successful, and our Patrons seem to welcome the opportunity to be connected to vital work for Ukrainians. Each of them has given a short opening address in the first section of the Symposium content. Our Patrons include: Petr Pavel, President of the Czech Republic; Senator Pavel Fisher, Czech Republic; Oleksandr Korniyenko, First Deputy Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament; Christian Bushoi, MEP; Villy Sovndal, MEP, and Lukasz Muldner-Nieckowski, Polish Psychotherapy Consultant. Our Patrons have extended the reach of the Symposiums beyond the world of Psychotherapy, and given them a wider positive impact. This is very powerful.

Registrations, Funding and Translation

It is rather overwhelming to report that more than 1000 people have registered for each of the Ten Symposiums that we have held so far. For the first Symposium 1045 registered, and for the Tenth 1505 registered! These are extraordinary numbers. We know that many people have attended all ten Symposiums. There is a marked difference between the number of people registering and the number participating in the Symposiums. This is explained by the fact that in Ukraine during the war both electricity supply and internet access are very variable and not reliable. On the days of the Symposiums many Ukrainians are simply unable to connect with us due to a lack of electricity or internet, or both.

The Ukrainian Symposium website, which is a dedicated website created and developed

by our technical manager Martynas Viktus, has proved absolutely vital for Symposium registrants who are not able to attend on the day of the Symposium. Our website contains archives and video recordings of all of the ten Symposiums, and we will continue with this for future Symposiums.

The proportion of Registrants who are Ukrainian is on average approximately 70%. It is of significance that the Symposiums are attended not only by members of UUAP, but also by a wider group of Ukrainian participants beyond the Umbrella Association. This broad engagement reflects the relevance and reach of the Symposium initiative within the professional community of Ukraine. The remaining 30% are registrants from Europe and the 43 EAP countries, from the US, Canada, South Africa, Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and Turkey. It is crucial for Ukrainian Psychotherapists to be heard and supported in solidarity with their wider European colleagues and indeed global colleagues, and to be recognised as active agents navigating and shaping their lives and their professional work under extremely challenging circumstances.

The Symposiums create and sustain a space for relocated Psychotherapists, particularly those living abroad or otherwise disconnected from Ukraine. Through the Symposiums they are able to remain in contact with both Ukrainian and wider European professionals. This is essential for preserving professional identity and maintaining a sense of belonging.

The funding for six of the Symposiums has come from the European Association for Psychotherapy. The remaining four Symposiums have been funded by the

national Psychotherapy organisations of the Czech Republic, Romania, Denmark and Poland.

The Ukrainian – English translation for the Symposiums has been conducted throughout by one Ukrainian translator! Her name is Anastasia Fegir, and she does simultaneous translation for the whole day of the Symposium lasting seven hours each time. Anastasia has become very committed to the work of the Symposiums and she says – “It is truly an honour and joy to be part of the Symposiums. Working with you and supporting such meaningful, thoughtful dialogue is always deeply inspiring for me. I am sincerely grateful to contribute to a space that carries such intellectual depth, emotional resonance and human warmth.”

Empowering Ukrainian Psychotherapist's resilience during the war

As Psychotherapists we know and understand that difficult experiences when shared and processed within a supportive environment are less likely to develop into trauma or PTSD. In this sense the Symposiums are offering an important preventative and supportive function to Ukrainian Psychotherapists. As their comments confirm this empowers them in their life, their work and their being.

Throughout my work on the Symposiums, I have time and again been so impressed by the character of the Ukrainian people and their reactions to the war raging around them. Uppermost has been my respect for their resilience, and for the way in which this resilience has grown over the last four years. It has grown through the Symposiums which is wonderful to witness.

It has grown through their collegueship and support for each other. It has grown because their dignity is founded on a position of knowing that they are in the right, and that their dignity is their own. Their dignity belongs to them and they hold that dignity, and it is not destroyed by Russian bombardments. Their resilience has grown through Ukrainian's perception that in response to the Russian attack, Ukraine has lifted herself to a higher level of dignity and won her own freedom.

Their level of resilience is such that in the Tenth Symposium one Ukrainian participant offered the comment that perhaps in future wars Ukrainians and Ukraine will be able to be of help to countries which have been invaded, because of what they have learned during the full-scale war on Ukraine. Remarkable!

All of this offers hope for the future. Hope emerging out of conflict. Hope strengthened by finding ways to not be overwhelmed by conflict. They know they can hold their own dignity even in the face of war, and this brings freedom of spirit, of heart and of mind. Their hope is built on a sense that together we can do so much. Together in the Symposiums. Together in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian and European Psychotherapy Alliance will continue to hold Symposiums. Our aim is to continue the Symposiums for as long as the war lasts. We will stand beside Ukrainians so that they are not alone during the war.

"I would like to tell my great gratitude for the opportunity to participate in these Symposiums. Thanks to you, and to all speakers, for your hard work and

help for us. I received valuable knowledge and information that I can use in my psychotherapeutic practice, and help other people coping with injuries during this difficult time. Thank you so much."

Ukrainian Psychotherapist

"I find it an incredibly enriching experience for both Ukrainian and European colleagues to share and exchange professional perspectives during wartime through the Symposiums. This is true both from within and beyond the immediate context of the conflict of war. In a world increasingly characterised by rapid change and instability this form of shared knowledge – or perhaps more precisely shared knowing – may prove invaluable in adapting to shifting life and work circumstances. "

Ukrainian Psychotherapist

"I greatly appreciate EAP's and UUAP's work to spread the knowledge of the effects of the war, and give help to colleagues in their professional growth and development. It is admirable how well these Symposiums are organised and administered.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

European Psychotherapist

"It is so valuable to belong to a vast group of Psychotherapists across Europe through the Symposiums. It empowers me in my work, in my life and in my being. It means so much to me."

Ukrainian Psychotherapist

“I want to thank you and all the participants of the Symposium for such an important intervention in my life at this time. For me, it was like a sip of spring water in the heat, like fresh, clean, unadulterated air, like a healing, gentle, like butterfly wings, touching the soul.

I am left with the beginning of my spiritual healing from the war, because I finally heard that so many people think like me. Thank you very much!”

Ukrainian Psychotherapist

Author



PATRICIA HUNT FRSA is a Psychotherapist, Consultant and Advisor. She trained as a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist following her work with families tragically affected by the Hillsborough Disaster in 1989, and has 35 years of clinical experience. She was Head of Department at the University of Nottingham, directing the provision of Psychotherapy and Counselling to the 50,000+ strong community of students and staff in the UK and in Malaysia and China. She established a new Psychotherapy and Counselling service at the University's International Campus in Ningbo, China.

Patricia was honoured to be awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Society for the Arts (FRSA) in 2022 in recognition of her mental health work in the Public and University Sectors, and of her leadership as President of the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP).

Patricia was President of the European Association for Psychotherapy at the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022. From 2022 to the present she has given leadership to the series of Joint UUAP (Ukrainian Umbrella Association of Psychotherapists) and EAP Symposiums to support Ukrainian Psychotherapists during the war. (uasymposium.online)

Patricia conducts Consultancy and Advisory work including to the Anglican Church through being Advisor to the Bishop of Sheffield, and leading Pastoral Supervision Schemes for Clergy and, nationally, for Bishops.

“Надія, що народжується з конфлікту”

ІСТОРІЯ СИМПОЗІУМІВ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ТА ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО ПСИХОТЕРАПЕВТИЧНОГО АЛЬЯНСУ

Патрісія Гант

членкиня Королівського товариства мистецтв (FRSA)

Очільниця Українського та Європейського психотерапевтичного альянсу

Колишня президентка Європейської асоціації психотерапії

patricia.hunt@europsyche.org

Початок

Українські симпозиуми постали в умовах конфлікту. На момент початку повномасштабної війни в Україні у лютому 2022 року, окрім самого конфлікту в Україні, існували також політична нестабільність і хвиля наслідків, що прокотилася всією Європою. Міжнародні організації запровадили санкції проти Росії та залишили країну; політичні організації вийшли з Росії; уряди ввели санкції проти Росії, а дипломатичні відносини з нею припинилися. Посилювався тиск із вимогою повністю відсторонити Росію від світової спільноти.

Ця турбулентність серйозно позначилася на Європейській Асоціації Психотерапії (EAP), адже і Україна, і Росія є країнами-членами EAP. У межах EAP постало питання: чи слід відсторонити від членства Російську психотерапевтичну організацію з EAP? Упродовж серії повних засідань Правління, в яких могли брати участь делегати всіх 43 європейських країн-членів, і подекуди через запеклі дебати, але нам зрештою вдалося провести виважену, змістовну та добре організовану дискусію, під час якої були висловлені всі погляди щодо можливого виключення Російської

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психотерапевтичної організації. Було представлено весь спектр переконливо й ґрунтовно сформульованих аргументів. Протягом двох повних засідань Правління відбулися два голосування. Відповідно до статуту ЕАР, результатом обох голосувань стало те, що російську організацію не виключили, однак на весь період війни її голосування було призупинене.

У той час я була президенткою Європейської Асоціації Психотерапії і модерувала ці дискусії. Я дуже гостро усвідомлювала, що перебуваю у самому центрі подій і опинилася під сильним емоційним впливом, оскільки конфлікт, породжений повномасштабною війною, увірвався у саму суть діяльності ЕАР. Під час цих дебатів я дуже глибоко співпереживала українцям, а надто – їхньому розчаруванню після оголошення результатів голосування. Тому, щойно було оголошено результат остаточного голосування, я одразу запросила президента та делегата ЕАР від Української спілки психотерапевтів (UUAP) зустрітися зі мною та старшими колегами з ЕАР, щоб обговорити, яким чином ЕАР може підтримати їх, підтримати UUAP та українських психотерапевтів під час війни. Їхня реакція була надзвичайно позитивною і стала свідченням важливості ЕАР для українських колег. Вони організували групу приблизно з десяти провідних членів UUAP для зустрічі зі мною та трьома досвідченими колегами з ЕАР. Перша така онлайн-зустріч відбулася у жовтні 2022 року.

Надія, що народжується з конфлікту

Я не була певна, що саме дадуть ці зустрічі, але відчувала, що важливо запропонувати

підтримку, професійну солідарність і діалог. Однією з основоположних цінностей нашої професії психотерапевтів є переконання у першочерговій важливості діалогу – проговорення конфліктів, обговорення труднощів, уміння слухати одне одного, визнавати несвідомі процеси та знаходити шляхи до вирішення. Під час першої зустрічі я поставила запитання: “Що ЕАР може зробити, аби підтримати вас та українських психотерапевтів під час повномасштабної війни в Україні?” Вони вже мали готову відповідь. Колеги з UUAP обговорили це заздалегідь. Вони сказали: “Чи могли би ви допомогти нам організувати спільний симпозіум ЕАР та UUAP до першої річниці повномасштабної війни в Україні у лютому 2023 року?” Ми відповіли: “Так, ми можемо вам у цьому допомогти”.

Ми домовилися, що симпозіум проходитиме онлайн і матиме відкритий формат для українських психотерапевтів – як членів UUAP, так і тих, хто не входить до асоціації; як для тих, хто продовжує працювати в Україні, так і для тих, хто через війну вже залишив країну та працює в інших державах. Ми також погодилися, що симпозіум буде відкритий і для європейських психотерапевтів, створюючи простір для спілкування та діалогу. Наші українські колеги підкреслювали, наскільки це важливо для них – відкривати середовище для діалогу та спільного осмислення між українськими й європейськими психотерапевтами, підтримуючи надію на те, що і психотерапевтична професія, і сама Україна в майбутньому стануть більш європейськими та повністю інтегрованою частиною Європи. Ми також домовилися, що до симпозіуму зможуть долучитися всі психотерапевти світу, які бажають приєднатися до нас і підтримати українських психотерапевтів.

Ми вирішили, що цей симпозіум буде безкоштовним; що для його проведення знадобиться фінансування; що нам буде потрібна технічна підтримка для організації успішного онлайн-симпозіуму; що необхідно забезпечити професійний синхронний переклад англійською та українською мовами; а також належну медієву підтримку й інформаційне поширення, щоби якомога більше людей дізналися про цю подію. Так почалася наша співпраця над першим спільним симпозіумом UUAP та EAP.

Склад нашої організаційної групи є надзвичайно важливим. Ця група називається Українсько-Європейський психотерапевтичний альянс. Наші зустрічі проводяться українською та англійською мовами, а майстерний переклад забезпечує Олександр Мироненко, один із провідних колег UUAP. Переклади Олександра дуже чіткі, забезпечують паузу для роздумів, а гумор він передає особливо тонко й красиво.

Від самого початку ми були групою, у якій багато гумору. Це не чорний чи істеричний гумор, а теплий і доброзичливий гумор, що відповідає близьким стосункам, які ми вибудовували між собою. Спочатку для мене це було великим здивуванням – я не очікувала жодного гумору в такій напруженій і складній ситуації.

Переклади Олександра є дуже виваженими і створюють канал ефективної комунікації та взаєморозуміння між нами, завдяки чому з самого початку ми стали дуже злагодженою та продуктивною робочою групою. Ми уважно слухаємо одне одного, реагуємо на ідеї інших, приймаємо інсайти та натхнення різних учасників, працюємо творчо, обмінюємося ідеями – завжди через Олександра, який перекладає для обидвох сторін.

Ритм наших зустрічей такий: щось сказано англійською, Олександр перекладає це українською, потім звучить відповідь українською, яку він перекладає англійською. Це надає зустрічам особливого ритму і динаміки, яка стала важливою частиною нашого діалогу. З часом ми стали дуже згуртованою групою – ми стали друзями, а також близькими колегами.

Ми зустрічаємося вже три з половиною роки, здебільшого кожні три-чотири тижні, а іноді й кожні два тижні, коли наближається час чергового симпозіуму. Усі учасники надають зустрічам першочергового значення. Усі присутні. Вся група засновників з жовтня 2022 року досі є частиною Альянсу.

Мені очевидно, що робота Альянсу, його сильні характеристики та глибока людяність створили модель для симпозіумів. У паралельному процесі взаємодії самі симпозіуми також набули глибокої людяності та дуже сильного відчуття єдності.

Серія симпозіумів

Під час першої зустрічі Альянсу почали окреслюватися кілька ідей щодо можливих тем для нашого першого симпозіуму – тем, які були би значущими для українських психотерапевтів. Уже на тій першій зустрічі навіть було припущення, що може розвинутилася ціла серія симпозіумів, але тоді це здавалося радше жартом!

Основоположним принципом UUAP від часу її заснування у 1990-х роках і до сьогодні є визначальна роль досліджень, що забезпечують доказову основу в самому серці професії та підтримують її як динамічну та прогресивну. Це стало також одним із головних принципів симпозіумів, і ми запрошували спікерів із ґрунтовним

дослідницьким профілем, які могли би виступати, спираючись на власний академічний досвід і наукові напрацювання. Ми також запрошували фахівців із сильним клінічним досвідом, щоби вони ділилися своїми професійними спостереженнями та результатами дослідницької роботи. Перший симпозіум був присвячений професійній етиці, що було особливо важливо для українських колег, оскільки стосувалося забезпечення того, щоби їхні власні етичні норми та професійні протоколи були євроцентричними та базувалися на основних цінностях для психотерапевтичної професії у Європі.

Я пишу це одразу після Десятого симпозіуму! Надзвичайним і радісним фактом є те, що ми провели вже десять симпозіумів UUAP та EAP, усі організовані Українсько-Європейським альянсом психотерапії. Ідея цих симпозіумів виявилася справді далекоглядною та надзвичайно успішною. Відгуки були вкрай позитивними, і здається, що симпозіуми допомагають посилювати стійкість українських психотерапевтів у час війни.

Динаміка тем наших симпозіумів має внутрішню логіку розвитку. Ми починали з професійно та клінічно сфокусованих тем: “Трансгенераційна передача травми та відновлення після травми” (третій симпозіум), “Трагедія дитинства у час війни” (четвертий симпозіум). Згодом теми поступово змістилися до більш гуманістичних аспектів того, що підтримує нас у відповідь на вплив війни: “У пошуках правди та людяності у наш час” (восьмий симпозіум), “Гнів, гумор, зв’язок і любов” (дев’ятий симпозіум), “Свобода, гідність і сенс” (десятий симпозіум).

Ця динаміка тем відображає як відповідь Альянсу на зворотний зв’язок учасників

щодо того, що є для них найбільш цінним, так і унікальну здатність українських колег в Альянсі плекати надію перед обличчям відчаю та не переходити у позицію жертви у контексті війни.

Уникання позиції жертви є важливою складовою реакції українців на війну, і згодом ця тема стане предметом окремої наукової статті, присвяченої цьому важливому питанню. Уникання позиції жертви передбачає перехід від стану нав’язаної ззовні безпорадності до внутрішньо активної та відповідальної позиції щодо себе. Це вимагає прийняття відповідальності за свої дії та реакції, особливо в умовах надзвичайно складної ситуації війни в Україні, яка є неспровокованим нападом на країну та її національний суверенітет. Це також означає подолання стану безсилля та прийняття позиції того, хто вижив.

У контексті Українсько-Європейського альянсу психотерапії існує багато способів, у які українські колеги виражають це уникання позиції жертви. Наприклад, якщо за кілька днів до зустрічі Альянсу відбувся російський ракетний обстріл, для європейських колег може бути природним висловити співчуття. Але коли у групі Альянсу звучить співчуття, українські колеги відповідають: “Будь ласка, не висловлюйте нам занадто багато співчуття. Воно легко змушує нас почуватися жертвами, а для нас життєво важливо не бути жертвами у цій війні. Якщо ми дозволимо собі стати жертвами, тоді Путін переміг”.

Таким чином українські колеги надзвичайно сильно й переконливо утримують позицію опору, сили та стійкості – як внутрішньо, на індивідуальному рівні, так і як спільнота. Вони уникають

позиції жертви, і це є їхньою силою як у теперішньому, так і у майбутньому.

Змістовне наповнення симпозиумів

Еволюція є ключовим словом і концептом, який лежить в основі того, як розвивалося наповнення симпозиумів. Як Європейська асоціація психотерапії (ЕАР), так і Українська спілка психотерапевтів (UUAP) здійснюють цю роботу для підтримки українських психотерапевтів, і кожен симпозиум розпочинається з вітальних промов представників обох організацій. Як очільниця Українсько-Європейського альянсу психотерапії я виголошую вступне слово, а також головую та модерую весь день кожного симпозиуму.

Це є надзвичайно складним завданням і наприкінці дня може залишати певний рівень вторинної травматизації. Водночас те, що я є репрезентативною фігурою симпозиумів, надає їм цілісності, людяності та присутності, яку відчують учасники. Це перегукується з важливістю стабільної, постійної присутності психотерапевта для його пацієнтів. Я відчуваю, що є життєво важливою частиною змісту симпозиумів – мати сміливість залишатися цією постійною та надійною фігурою стільки, скільки триватиме війна.

Ми прагнули, щоби симпозиуми були глибокими та професійно збагачувальними, і почесні запрошені спікери є їхнім основоположним елементом. Зазвичай у кожному симпозиумі беруть участь чотири доповідачі: двоє з України та двоє з Європи або інших частин світу. Ми просили кожного зі спікерів поділитися своїм досвідом та професійною мудрістю без гонорару. Це їхній внесок у підтримку українців. Завдяки

цьому ми можемо проводити симпозиуми безкоштовно – і це є надзвичайно важливим.

Питання від учасників до всіх спікерів ми залишаємо до фінальної частини симпозиуму, де відбувається “круглий стіл” запитань до всіх доповідачів. Це одна година, яка з часом перетворилася на дуже емоційну та змістовно глибоку частину дня. У ній відкриваються і обговорюються глибокі концепції та аспекти людяності. Це справді насичене й багате за змістом завершення симпозиуму.

Від самого початку для наших українських колег в Альянсі було критично важливо, щоби на кожному симпозиумі був спеціально відведений час для діалогу між українськими та європейськими учасниками. Україна бачить своє майбутнє у Європі, і така можливість для діалогу сприяє формуванню нових відносин та взаємин. Формуються групи приблизно з 20 учасників в онлайн-кімнатах для обговорень, де присутній перекладач, який підтримує перебіг розмови.

Останній елемент змісту симпозиуму – це або велика терапевтична група, або соціодрама. Ідея великої терапевтичної групи була започаткована нашими українськими колегами, які мали досвід проведення цих заходів, і вона призначена для всіх учасників симпозиуму. З огляду на таку величезну кількість учасників, це потрібно ретельно структурувати – кожен, хто бажає виступити, отримує часовий ліміт, а психотерапевтами, які проводять і проводять цю роботу, є професор Роман Кечур і професор Євгеній Лаурнайтіс. Тих, хто виступає, слухають і бачать; виникають потужні та емоційні теми; учасники говорять про своє зцілення, чуючи, як інші говорять те, що думають самі; взаємне

мовлення та слухання допомагають зцілювати травму; ці моменти є серцем симпозіумів. Звісно, не всі можуть говорити, але часто ті, хто говорить, висловлюють істини для інших. Доц емоції заповнює екран ноутбука, коли хтось висловлює емоції та правду, які відгукуються багатом учасникам.

Соціодрама

Це є натхненним результатом воєнного контексту – залучати всіх учасників до соціодрами, і водночас відповідає нашому прагненню забезпечувати постійну змістовність для всіх психотерапевтів в Україні, які беруть участь у симпозіумі. Соціодрами тривають дві години і чітко структуровані: вони мають вступ, розвиток, а потім стають відкритими для залучення усіх присутніх, якщо вони цього бажають.

Наша українська колега в Альянсі, Олена Ступак, ініціювала проведення соціодрам і сама проводила їх разом з іншими колегами з вражаючим ефектом.

Як один із прикладів: під час дев'ятого симпозіуму ми провели соціодраму у формі тематичної групи, присвяченої темі “Гнів, гумор, зв’язок і любов”. Учасники з усієї України та з-за її меж ділилися своїми роздумами про значення гумору для них під час війни. Декілька людей говорили про те, як гумор ставав для них важливим каналом зв’язку.

Зворушена почутим, одна жінка розповіла про труднощі підтримання контакту зі своїм чоловіком, який перебуває на передовій. Вона крізь сльози описувала, наскільки складно їм залишатися на зв’язку, і сказала, що єдине, що справді має значення і що їх поєднує, – це спільний гумор.

Вона зазначила, що сміятися разом – це щось майже дивовижне, і це дозволяє їм відчувати близькість попри відстань і різний життєвий досвід, який їх розділяє.

Кілька інших учасників поділилися подібними роздумами та досвідом, і раптово соціодрама привела всіх у саму суть переживання війни, водночас подарувавши кожному цінний досвід завдяки відвертості і глибині тих, хто поділився своєю історією.

Патронат

Ми запрошуємо відомих публічних діячів стати патронами симпозіумів. Це виявилось несподівано успішним, і наші патрони, здається, охоче прийняли можливість бути пов’язаними з цією надзвичайно важливою роботою для українців. Кожен із них виголошував коротке вступне слово у першій частині програми симпозіуму.

Серед наших патронів: Петр Павел, Президент Чеської Республіки; сенатор Павел Фішер (Чеська Республіка); Олександр Корнієнко, Перший заступник Голови Верховної Ради України; Крістіан Бусой, депутат Європейського парламенту; Віллі Совндаль, депутат Європейського парламенту; та Лукаш Мульднер-Нецковський, польський консультант з психотерапії.

Наші патрони розширили сферу впливу симпозіумів за межі світу психотерапії та розширили позитивний ефект. Це є дуже потужним фактором.

Реєстрація, фінансування та переклад

Це важко досягнути, але на кожен із десяти симпозіумів, які ми провели до цього часу, зареєструвалося понад 1000 людей.

На перший симпозиум було зареєстровано 1045 учасників, а на десятий – 1505! Це вражаючі показники. Ми знаємо, що багато людей відвідали всі десять симпозиумів.

Існує суттєва різниця між кількістю зареєстрованих і кількістю тих, хто реально бере участь у симпозиумах. Це пояснюється тим, що в Україні під час війни як електропостачання, так і доступ до інтернету є дуже нестабільними та ненадійними. У дні проведення симпозиумів багато українців часто не можуть під'єднатися до нас через відсутність електроенергії, інтернету або обох чинників одразу.

Український сайт симпозиумів, який є спеціально створеним і розробленим нашим технічним менеджером Мартінасом Віктусом, є критично важливим для тих учасників симпозиумів, які не можуть долучитися у день його проведення. На нашому вебсайті зберігаються архівні матеріали та відеозаписи всіх десяти симпозиумів, і ми маємо намір продовжувати цю практику і надалі.

Частка зареєстрованих учасників, які є українцями, у середньому становить приблизно 70%. Важливо зазначити, що симпозиуми відвідують не лише члени UUAP, але й ширше коло українських учасників поза межами цієї асоціації. Такий високий рівень залучення демонструє актуальність і широту впливу ініціативи симпозиумів у професійній спільноті України.

Решта 30% – це учасники з Європи та 43 країн ЕАР, а також зі США, Канади, Південної Африки, Австралії, Японії, В'єтнаму, Індонезії та Туреччини. Для українських психотерапевтів має ключове значення бути почутими та отримувати підтримку

у солідарності зі своїми європейськими колегами, а також із глобальною професійною спільнотою, і бути визнаними як активні учасники процесів, які не лише переживають, але й осмислюють і формують своє життя та професійну практику у вкрай складних обставинах.

Симпозиуми створюють і підтримують простір для психотерапевтів, які вимушено виїхали, особливо для тих, хто проживає за кордоном або з інших причин має обмежений зв'язок з Україною. Завдяки симпозиумам вони можуть підтримувати контакт як з українською, так і з ширшою європейською професійною спільнотою. Це є принципово важливим для збереження професійної ідентичності та підтримання відчуття приналежності.

Фінансування шести симпозиумів забезпечувалося Європейською асоціацією психотерапії. Решта чотири симпозиуми були профінансовані національними психотерапевтичними організаціями Чехії, Румунії, Данії та Польщі.

Українсько-англійський переклад для симпозиумів від початку і донині здійснюється однією українською перекладачкою. Її звати Анастасія Фегір, і вона виконує синхронний переклад протягом усього дня симпозиуму, який щоразу триває сім годин.

Анастасія стала щиро залученою до роботи симпозиумів і говорить: “Для мене це справді честь і радість бути частиною симпозиумів. Робота з вами та підтримка такого змістовного й глибокого діалогу завжди є для мене джерелом натхнення. Я щиро вдячна за можливість долучатися до простору, який несе таку інтелектуальну глибину, емоційний резонанс і людське тепло”.

Зміцнення стійкості українських психотерапевтів в умовах війни

Як психотерапевти ми добре усвідомлюємо, що складні переживання, коли вони розділяються з іншими та опрацьовуються у підтримувальному середовищі, з меншою ймовірністю переростають у травму або ПТСР. У цьому сенсі симпозиуми виконують важливу профілактичну та підтримувальну роль для українських психотерапевтів. Як підтверджують їхні коментарі, це надає їм більше сил і ресурсів у житті, у професійній діяльності та в особистісному бутті.

Протягом моєї роботи над симпозиумами я знову і знову була глибоко зворушена характером українського народу та їхніми реакціями на війну, що триває навколо них. Найбільше у мене викликає повагу їхня стійкість і те, як ця стійкість посилювалася протягом останніх чотирьох років. Вона зростала завдяки симпозиумам, і це надзвичайно цінно спостерігати.

Вона також зростала завдяки професійній солідарності та взаємній підтримці між ними. Вона зростала тому, що їхня гідність ґрунтується на усвідомленні своєї правоти, і на тому, що ця гідність є їхньою власною. Їхня гідність належить їм, вони її зберігають – і вона не знищується російськими бомбардуваннями.

Їхня стійкість зростала також завдяки сприйняттю українців, що у відповідь на російський напад Україна піднеслася до вищого рівня гідності та відстояла власну свободу.

Рівень їхньої стійкості є таким, що під час Десятого симпозиуму одна українська учасниця озвучила ідею: можливо,

у майбутніх війнах українці та Україна зможуть надавати підтримку країнам, які зазнали вторгнення, завдяки набутому досвіду під час повномасштабної війни в Україні. Дивовижно!

Усе це дає надію на майбутнє. Надію, що народжується з конфлікту. Надію, яка зміцнюється через пошук способів не дозволити конфлікту поглинути себе. Вони знають, що можуть зберігати власну гідність навіть перед обличчям війни, і це приносить свободу духу, серця та розуму.

Їхня надія ґрунтується на відчутті, що разом ми можемо досягти значно більшого. Разом – у симпозиумах. Разом – в Україні.

Українсько-Європейський альянс психотерапії буде й надалі проводити симпозиуми. Наш намір – продовжувати ці симпозиуми допоки триває війна. Ми будемо поруч з українцями, щоби вони не залишалися наодинці під час війни.

“Я хотів(ла) би висловити глибоку вдячність за можливість долучатися до цих симпозиумів. Дякую вам і всім спікерам за наполегливу працю та допомогу нам. Я отримав(ла) цінні знання та інформацію, які можу використовувати у своїй психотерапевтичній практиці та бути корисним іншим людям, які справляються з травматичними переживаннями у цей важкий період. Щиро дякую”.

Український(а) психотерапевт(ка)

“Я вважаю, що для українських і європейських колег це є надзвичайно цінним досвідом – ділитися та обмінюватися професійними точками зору під час війни через симпозиуми.

Це є актуальним як у межах безпосереднього контексту воєнного конфлікту, так і поза ним. У світі, який дедалі більше характеризується швидкими змінами та нестабільністю, така форма спільного знання – або, точніше, спільного розуміння – може виявитися незамінною для адаптації до мінливих життєвих і професійних умов”.

Український(а) психотерапевт(ка)

“Я високо ціную роботу ЕАР та UUAP з розповсюдження знань про наслідки війни та надання допомоги колегам у їхньому професійному зростанні й розвитку. Вражає, наскільки добре організовані ці симпозиуми. Дякую. Дякую. Дякую”.

Європейський(а) психотерапевт(ка)

“Надзвичайно цінно належати до великої спільноти психотерапевтів по всій Європі завдяки симпозиумам. Це надає мені сил у моїй роботі, у моєму житті та у моєму бутті. Це має для мене дуже глибоке значення”.

Український(а) психотерапевт(ка)

“Я хочу подякувати вам і всім учасникам Симпозиуму за таке важливе втручання в моє життя в цей час. Для мене це було як ковток джерельної води в спеку, як свіже, чисте, незаплямоване повітря, як зцілення, ніжне, як крила метелика, що торкається душі. Я залишився з початком свого духовного зцілення після війни, бо нарешті почув, що так багато людей мислять так само, як я. Щиро дякую!»

Український психотерапевт

Автор



ПАТРІСІЯ ГАНТ, членкиня Королівського товариства мистецтв (FRSA)

Очільниця Українського та Європейського психотерапевтичного альянсу

Колишня президентка Європейської асоціації психотерапії

patricia.hunt@europsyche.org

Hegel's Absolute Idea in Times of Socio-ecological Polycrises – a Psychoanalytical Perspective

Lutz Goetzmann^{1,2}

¹ Institute of Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies, Berlin, Germany

² Clinic of Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine, University of Luebeck, Germany

Abstract

The 21st century is characterized by a multitude of crises. The question is how psychoanalysis could position itself conceptually in the face of these crises and impending catastrophes. With this background, the gradual completion of the Absolute Idea will be traced. I assume, with Hegel, that the ideal is the ideal side of matter, and that matter is the material side of the ideal. There is a dialectical interweaving of matter and spirit, from which further differentiations of the ideal and the material arise. On the side of the ideal, the Lacanian registers of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic unfold, which we expand to include the dimension of the atmosphere (i.e., the feelings that are projected into space) and the quality of the phenomenal (i.e., the non-linguistic). It is a dialectical process that continues in the Symbolic until the development of absolute knowledge and then returns – in a Borromean Circle, as Absolute Idea – to the Real and the matter. Hegel argued that the practical implementation of the Absolute Idea consists of action oriented towards the highest good. For Lacan, the highest good is the good speaking (“le bien-dire”) as aim of the psychoanalytical desire. So, I discuss the question: What is the “good speaking” in time of the socio-ecological catastrophes of climate change, war and uprising fascism, i.e., with regard to the ethics of psychoanalysis.

Keywords:

Absolute Idea; Borromean Circle; highest good; good speaking; ethics of psychoanalysis.

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Introduction

The 21st century is characterized by a multitude of crises we can understand as a system of high-risk, parallel, overlapping, and interconnected situations around the globe. Only one example is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The question we could position ourselves in the face of these crises and catastrophes. We know that climate catastrophe is not only coming our way, but that the catastrophe—or, as some say, climate collapse—is already taking place. Social upheaval can be observed everywhere—from the flood of refugees to the deterioration of big cities to fascist regimes that still claim to be democratic. From North America to Europe, the Middle East, and China, we see open dictatorships or those that are dressed-up under a democratic guise. To satisfy greed, every law is broken, every red line is crossed. What practical implications does this have for us – especially for people working in the humanities? In the following, I would like to connect Lacan's ideas on the psychic world with Hegel's philosophy of the Absolute Idea. With this idea, Hegel will say (in a development of Kant's ethics) that there is a "Highest Good" as content of the Absolute Idea, which consists of freedom in the context of an ethical life ("Sittlichkeit"). This idealistic view may be something like a hope that the world consists not only of nature's cruelty or the horror of Baby Yarn or Bucha, both of which are situated in the Ukraine (Yad Vashem, 2019; Andreikovets, 2022). That there is the human potentiality – the idea of the Highest Good that all thought ultimately leads to. However, should these considerations not sooner or later prompt an end to the war in Ukraine that the Russian people would leave behind – not only because of the rising cost of living due to inflation, but rather because they would follow Hegel's idea of freedom and an ethical

life? Will the people of Russia not sooner or later be faced with the decision to conceive of the Highest Good, and to take the step toward its realization—even though this step is certainly less risky in a democratic state? I think, however, the realization of the Highest Good also plays a crucial role in the actions of climate activists in Western countries. From this perspective, isn't Greta Thunberg's commitment to both the climate and the people suffering in Gaza an attempt to put this Hegelian idea into practice? To address these questions, I would like to present a model that combines Hegelian philosophy with Lacan's reflections on the structure of the psyche. I will begin by discussing Lacan's Borromean knots and then relate them to Hegelian dialectics and the concept of the Absolute Idea which is only complete when theoretical knowledge is put into practice. It is precisely in this demand that the (political) explosive power of his concept lies. In a first step, **Figure 1** shows the model of the Borromean Knot, which forms the analytical basis for our considerations (Lacan, 2021). It displays the biological matter (M) and the three registers of the ideal: the Real R (the unrepresented), the Imaginary I (the sensual, e.g., in the form of images) and the Symbolic S (language,

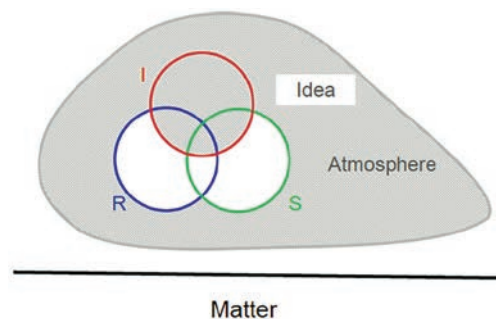


Figure 1. Matter (M) and Lacan's three registers of the ideal: the Real R, the Imaginary I and the Symbolic S (Lacan, 2012), which is expanded by the Phenomenal and the emotional Atmosphere.

words, signifiers), which is expanded by the phenomenal (non-linguistic) and atmospheric (i.e., the feelings, being projected in the external space).

Above all, however, I will refer here to two core ideas in Hegel’s philosophical system which may be particularly interesting for Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Firstly, Hegel had a dual-aspect monism in mind, when he described the ideal as the ideal side of matter and matter as the material side of the ideal (Wolff, 1992, p. 156). He came of course from Spinoza’s dual-aspect monism – namely, a monism with a single substance and a multitude of attributes of which we only know two, i.e., matter and mind. However, in Hegel’s dialectic, there is no substance, but only two opposites, whereby one side contains the other, i.e., the opposite, within itself. This logical line between two opposites, based on the phenomenon of contradiction, is referred to Hegel’s view on negativity: “Two relationships X and Y are negative to each other precisely when X is identical with *non-Y* and Y is identical with *non-X*.” (Wolff, 2017, p. 148). The Hegelian monism expresses therefore itself in the identity of opposites, and these opposites, being divided by negativity, represent the dual aspects of identity. The opposition between matter and spirit, i.e., between body and mind, is therefore both: identity and difference. Matter is therefore the exclusion of the idea, but it contains the idea, and the idea is the exclusion of matter – containing however the matter.

Secondly, Hegel describes a dialectical development of the mind, which starts from simple unconscious sensations and leads to the absolute knowledge that is detached from perceptions. This absolute (theoretical)

knowledge leads to the Absolute Idea in the case that it completed by practice. The emergence of the Absolute Idea is only possible, when theoretical and practical knowledge, i.e., idea and action come together (Hegel, 2010a, p. 299, § 236 Z).

Figure 2 shows the emergence of the Absolute Idea.

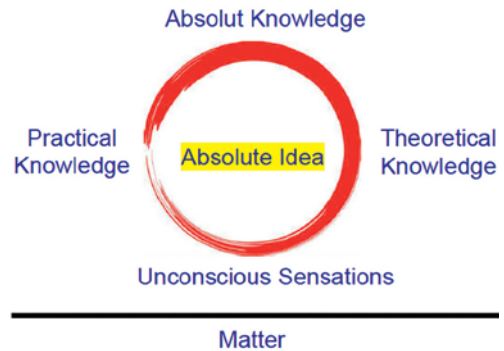


Figure 2: *The Emergence of the Absolute Idea*

This process however is a circular one. It progresses from matter to idea and returns to matter. Thus, we will outline a trajectory that leads from Real sensations via the Imaginary of sensory perceptions to the absolute knowledge (based on conceptual judgement) that I will place in Lacan’s symbolic register. The absolute (or theoretical) knowledge is then completed by practice, which leads back to the matter. By this way, the Absolute Idea will be established. – One can now connect the emergence of the Absolute Idea with Lacan’s Borromean Knot; in this sense, I propose to speak of the “Borromean Circle” that makes the emergence of the Absolute Idea possible. Of course, the connection between absolute and practical knowledge is particularly interesting – namely, from the perspective of freedom and action. But first, I will describe the Borromean Circle in the light of the Absolute Idea.

The Borromean Circle

The Matter

In contrast to Descartes, Spinoza had developed a monistic view of reality, describing mind (thought) and matter (extendedness) as attributes of the one, primarily uncreated substance (Spinoza, 1994, D3–5, p. 85). In this vein, we take up Hegel's idea, which distinguishes between idea (spirit) and matter (nature); we see these attributes as two manifestations of a single identity that stand in a dialectical relationship to each other. Žižek explains Hegel's conception of identity:

“Identity, the unity of the One, is for him (i.e., Hegel) a form of self-differentiation. Identity is difference taken to the extreme of self-reference. The unity of the One is not permanently threatened by cracks and inconsistencies; it is the crack as such.” (Žižek, 2020, p. 19)

Spinoza's model, on the one hand, impresses as a static and monistic-triadic in one: there is one substance and at least two attributes that are recognisable in their modes or modalities. Hegel's model however is dynamic and monistic-dualistic, i.e., Hegel refrains from a third element in the sense of Spinoza's substance.^[1] Dual-aspect monism should be viewed against this background. Both sides are identical but are nevertheless different manifestations, whereby in the act of negativity one side arises from the other.

Negativity serves therefore as the mediating third. In this respect, Hegel's statement should be read dialectically, in terms of negativity and relationship:

“The soul is no separate immaterial entity. Wherever there is Nature, the soul is its universal immaterialism, its simple ‘ideal’ life”) (Hegel, 2012, p. 12, § 389).

Let us first turn to matter: Matter is nature – from mechanics and physics to the living organic nature of our bodies.^[2] This organic nature also encompasses the human body, including its excitation currents caused by hormones, minerals or neuropeptides. From the perspective of the ideal, nature and the body are the external and the other. Matter – including nature and the body – is the idea “in the form of otherness”:

“Nature has presented itself as the Idea in the form of *otherness*. Since therefore the Idea is the negative of itself, or is *external to itself*, Nature is not merely external in relation to this Idea (and to its subjective existence Spirit); the truth is rather that *externality* constitutes the specific character in which Nature, as Nature, exists.” (Hegel, 2004, p. 14, § 247).

The Hegelian matter is therefore only conceivable as ideality. Matter is abstract, pure, predicate-free and without further, e.g., sensory determinations. As an abstract

1. Spinoza's model leads, via a dialectical dynamisation, not only to Hegel's work, but also to Schelling's philosophy of identity, in which the philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of nature are the two mutually constitutive sides of a single identity. Fundamentally, both Hegel's and Schelling's philosophy of identity interpret spirit and matter as identical, but different in their opposite appearances. For Schelling, however, there is initially no interaction between spirit and matter. Such an interaction takes only place at the so-called “end and origin points”, where each side “tips over” into the other (Kirchner, 1907).
2. Matter (from *materia* = substance, originally *materies* = timber) is, in the broadest sense, everything that occupies space and is the owner of mass (Kirchner, 1907). From the perspective of modern physics, matter is composed of partly stable, partly unstable particles, i.e., quarks and leptons, with electrical interactions among themselves (Scheibe, 2012).

thought, it is empty and devoid of any content (Orman, 2015, p. 523). It is therefore not matter itself but rather the idea of matter that conveys its reality. Thus, it is something constructed in the imaginary register and determined by language. Only the ideal shows the reality of matter. In this respect, the Real is the ideal, not-represented and unconscious side of matter. In contrast, reality is the also the ideal, but now the conscious and the represented side of matter. We should therefore keep mind, that matter – as the object of modern science – can only be perceived in a mediated way, as its ideal side.

The Real: Unknown, Impossible, Irreducible

The Real was introduced into psychoanalysis by Lacan (among other writings, 2021). It is a mental, i.e., an ideal dimension; it is the unrepresented and indeterminate, it is the unconscious (Soler, 2016, p. 57), which bears a certain resemblance to Freud’s “primal repression” (Freud, 1915, p. 180). Although it does exist, it is for us not existent, precisely because it is unrepresented. We also have some concepts that could describe the Real, but such symbolic concepts only serve to think something that cannot be thought: whether the hole, the void, pure multiplicity, the contradiction, the impossible, the remainder or the surplus (i.e., the surplus of the unthinkable). Leclaire (1976, p. 11) answered the question, “What is the Real?” with this statement: “That which resists, which stubbornly persists, which exists irreducibly, and which, by eluding us, presents itself as pleasure, fear, death, or castration.” Death and sex participate in the Real, in “this place of the irreconcilable, between lack and word” (Leclaire, 1976, p. 24). One needs various strategies to approach the Real: “First, to recognize it and not confuse its presence with reality; then, to name it, for it eludes names, and even illusion must be

employed to seemingly trap it; finally, one must use considerable cunning not to remain trapped and satisfied by the means one has employed.” The Real is the unconscious experience of the material outside – also of the material outside within the body. It is the experience of the good breast that gives milk, as well as the evil breast that withdraws as the absent. The trauma is the excessiveness of the Real. In this respect, it encompasses the entire spectrum from the “excessiveness of trauma” to “exquisite pleasure” (Soler, 2016, p. 109). Hegel (2012, p. 21 ff., § 400 and § 401 Z) speaks of unconscious sensations (“Empfindungen”) in connection with the “physical soul” (“natürliche Seele”), which refers to the deeper layers of the subjective mind. Based on this terminology, real experiences could be denoted as “sensations” and should be distinguished from “thoughts” in the other register. In this respect, the Real refers to everything ideal that is not a thought. – Some real sensations can be translated into the Imaginary and determined symbolically, i.e., by words. According to the Bionian terminology, they are alpha-sensations, being translatable into alpha-thoughts. Those sensations that are not translatable are beta-sensations, which are evacuated into the body, into actions or, via projective identification, into the inner space of the other (Bion, 1962). In any case, real sensations are a response to the influences that the subject receives from outside. Laplanche (2011; 2017, pp. 109–114) speaks here of (enigmatic) messages from the other, which are implanted in the (real) unconscious of the subject. Thus, an angry face or a seductive voice is first perceived materially, at the level of the sensory cells, and this perception is then transmitted to areas of the brain where the ideal side of the matter imposes as a real sensation. When the sensation triggered by the message seems to be untranslatable, Laplanche speaks of an

intromission (Laplanche, 2017, pp. 109–114). Bion (1962, p. 83) refers to such beta elements as “accretions of stimuli,” which are stored for a certain time on the deposit of a beta-screen before the system evacuates them to the outside as described above.

By introducing an epistemological division between the unconscious Real and the conscious Imaginary and Symbolic, the status of the subject changes radically. Now, this status is “established through a structure that takes into account the state of splitting”, that of course arises from the “recognition of the unconscious” (Lacan 2015, p. 402, dt). From that moment on, the subject is seized by a “constitutive division” between the Real (unconscious) and the Imaginary-Symbolic (conscious) (Lacan, 2015, p. 403, dt.). This division will also have an impact on the concept of the subject, which is based on Hegelian idealism—right down to the question of theoretical and practical knowledge as part of the Absolute Idea, which will forever be riddled with the irritating traces of the Real.

The Imaginary: Simulation, Prediction, Semblance

Within the Borromean Knot, the Real is complemented by the rings of the Imaginary and Symbolic (Lacan, 2021). The Imaginary is closely related to Freud’s concept of “thing-representations” (Freud, 1915, p. 201). In contrast to Freud’s “thing-representations”, which Freud saw as primarily located in the unconscious and which first become conscious when they connect with “word-representations” in the preconscious, we agree along with Lacan that the Imaginary is primarily conscious. However, it can be removed into the “repressed unconscious”, if the respective contents are incompatible with the superego. As “thoughts” with a sensory base, imaginary contents are firstly visual images (this is Lacan’s position), but

in my view, they are also sound, taste, smell and the sense of internal and external touch (Goetzmann, 2023; Goetzmann, Ruettnier & Siegel, 2024). Last not least the feelings belong to this register. Today, it is possible to put in touch Lacan’s Imaginary with the “Theory of Predictive Coding”. This piece of theory assumes that we constantly form assumptions about the world outside that is largely hidden from us (e.g., Friston, 2013; Solms & Friston, 2018). Our knowledge is based on a handful signals that are currently perceived and on previous experiences we made and remember now. In this sense, the expectations or assumptions predict the outer world. Thus, the Imaginary is nothing other than a prediction, based on current signals from outside and on memories of previous experiences. We do not see, hear, taste, smell or feel the world as it is, but as we expect it to be – and as we experienced it in former times. Lacan (1998, p. 83 ff.) denotes the Imaginary as a “semblance”; we could also say, it is a simulation. It is a simulated prediction of how the world could be.

In Friston’s model, we find a kind of shell that separates the respective system (e.g., the psychic apparatus) from the outer world. It is like the skin of a cell, in any case a border or a boundary. From a probabilistic view, it is denoted as a “Markov Blanket” (Friston, 2013). On this shell or blanket, only a few of the signals come from outside and are selected, primarily for reasons of brain capacity. This selective approach saves a lot of energy, as the external world is simulated on the basis of less data where as few signals as possible are used in order to correct the prior simulation. If, for example, a face is perceived, only a few signals – relating to the eyes or forehead of the other person – are selected. We could interpret the Markov Blanket as the unconscious Real that is described here using the means of math.

Based on the selection of these signals and drawing on the battery of memories, a face is then constructed (cf. Friston, 2013; Friston, Adams, Perrinet & Breakspear, 2012). Moreover, the prediction of the face can trigger a surprise effect, which leads to an increase in entropy in the form of free energy (Friston, 2013; Solms & Friston, 2018). The goal of any self-organising system is to reduce the increased entropy to such an extent that the equilibrium (homeostasis) can be restored. In this model of self-organising systems, Friston (2013) introduces four states:

1. “external states” (Ψ), i.e., the outside of the material world, which is completely hidden from us; this also includes “control states” that have arisen as a result of our corrective actions in the outside world (Friston, 2017, p. 77);
2. “internal states” (R) in the form of (predictive) assumptions about the external world in the sense of preconceptions that can be understood as simulations, as well as in the sense of subsequent assumptions or simulations that arise after the prediction errors have been corrected;
3. “sensory states” (S), which mediate between the external and internal worlds, and
4. “action states” or “motor activities” (A), which result from the assumption or from the prediction error of the respective assumption.

Thus, Friston’s model can be linked to the RSI paradigm: if the sensory states in the Markov Blanket, which are unrepresented, i.e., unconscious, are assigned to the real, these states or signals can be interpreted as real sensations. The Markov Blanket is then

the real that can be symbolised in the form of mathematical calculation. The inner states – in the form of simulations, i.e., of preliminary and subsequent assumptions – can then be assigned to the imaginary register. In this respect, the Imaginary is an ideal simulation, i.e., a preconception or assumption about the external world, which encompasses the sensory dimensions of images, sounds, smell and taste, and the sensations of internal or external touch. The world outside is hidden from us because, on the one hand, the signals in the Markov Blanket are real; on the other hand, however the Imaginary is merely a constructed simulation based on these signals and other primarily mnemonic information. Hegel’s view is very similar, as Žižek says:

“Hegel postulated that there is no reality in itself beyond appearances, which of course does not mean that there is nothing more than the play of appearances. The phenomenal world is marked by the barrier of impossibility, but behind this barrier there is nothing, no other world, no positive reality.” (Žižek, 2020, p. 9)

As I already mentioned, are inner states evaluated through feelings. It is well worth taking a closer look at this aspect of the Imaginary: the simplest, most physical forms of feelings are hunger, thirst, sleepiness, etc. – these feelings relate directly to the processes in the body. More complex feelings include envy, guilt, shame, as well as happiness, love and hate (Solms, 2021, p. 96 and p. 114). Feelings are conscious: Their function is to evaluate internal and external experiences, regardless of whether they are pleasant or not. Feelings are evaluative judgements 1.) about a predictive internal state, i.e., about an imaginary assumption, 2.) about the corrected assumption, and 3.) about the surprise effect caused by a prediction error.

Thus, we have two orders of the Imaginary: firstly, the sensory simulation as prediction, and secondly the feelings that evaluate these simulations.

Prior to being defined by words, the Imaginary takes on a “phenomenal” quality. Phenomenality refers to pre-linguistic but already conscious experience – exactly in the sense of the Greek *fainomenai*: something appears or comes into being. It is the phenomenon that appears as an image, sound, smell, taste, tactile touch or an emotional feeling (Demmerling, 2021, pp. 294–308). Basically, the register of the Phenomenal-Imaginary, i.e., also of the simulated and imaginatively constructed, already exists in the prenatal period, and here above all as an interplay of the imaginary sense of touch, depth perception and the sense of balance (Goetzmann & Janus, 2026). As ultrasound images show, children play with the umbilical cord or use the placenta as a kind of pillow (Piontelli, 1992, p. 93). One could say therefore that phenomenal thinking begins with touching and feeling the mother’s inner world and one’s own body. The following ultrasound image (**Figure 2**) shows an unborn child playing with the umbilical cord – as if the beginning of human thinking could be observed here:



Figure 2. *Touching the umbilical cord as an early form of phenomenal thinking (Frenken, 2025)*

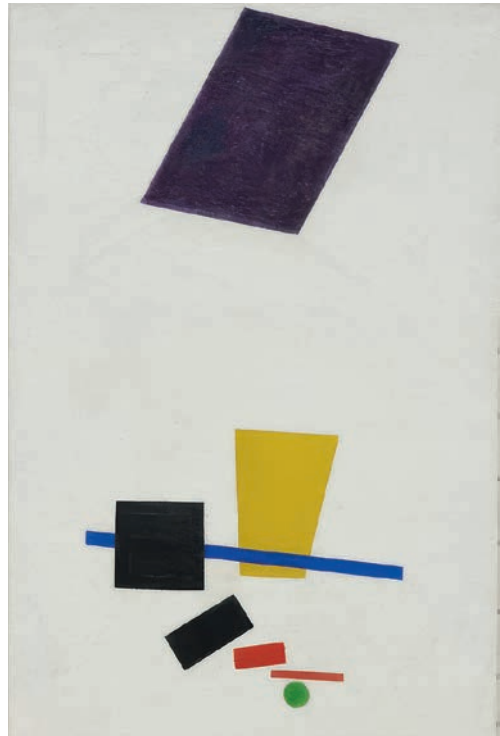


Figure 3. *Kasimir Malevich: Painterly Realism of a Football Player – Color Masses in the 4th Dimension (1915). Art Institute of Chicago, public domain.*

Such phenomenal experiences are already structured in that individual elements –e.g., in a picture or a piece of music– establish the imaginary structure, being in a defined relationship to one another. **Figure 3** shows a painting by Kazimir Malevich that is highly structured on a phenomenal level:

However, they lose their phenomenality when they are determined by the Symbolic, i.e., by language. – But the fundamental question is how the Real is connected with the Phenomenal-Imaginary ring of the Borromean Knot. On a logical level, the Real is negated. It is an indeterminate negation, i.e., the opposite of the Real (R) is the non-Real (non-R). This is a pure logical operation, because we cannot conceive neither the Real nor the non-Real. One can only think of this operation in the

terms of negativity. In a further step, however, the double negation, i.e., the moment of the determinate negation, leads to the Phenomenal-Imaginary: The Real (R) and the non-Real (non-R) are both negated and sublated in the register of the (phenomenal) Imaginary. Here we see how the Borromean Knot works dialectically. – From the perspective of neuroscience, however, the Imaginary is a simulation of external reality (see, among others, Feldmann-Barrett, 2017, p. 8 f; Friston, 2013). As mentioned above, it originates from two sources. 1.) It uses selective sensory signals that originate from the Markov Blanket or the real unconscious; 2.) The second source is the memory, i.e., the mnemonic contents being activated by the working memory. This information is used to construct phenomenal imaginary simulations, as the following experiment shows. The participants of this study were presented with the face of Nefertiti: the image of the face was constructed only from a few sensory points, namely the eyes, forehead, mouth and ears (Friston, 2013; Friston, Adams, Perrinet & Breakspear, 2012). These sensory points were then linked to information from memory. **Figure 4** illustrates the results of the experiment:

The effect of these selected “sensory points” on the visual-phenomenal in our example

can be described as the “phenoreal” or – in Lacanian terms – as “object a” (Lindell, 2001). This means the following: the eyes of the other person can look lovingly or threateningly; the mouth can show a smile or be pursed. The imaginary construction of the face is then made based on these real signals, and the phenoreal (object a) is precisely the effect that the Real, i.e., the signals on the Markov Blanket, has on the phenomenal. Thus, the phenomenal is set by phenoreal effects. The phenoreal is therefore the core of our thinking. As far as the sense of touch is concerned, the phenoreal effects when an unborn child plays with the umbilical cord form the core of thinking – as the first phenomenal attempts at thinking (cf. **Figure 3**). We could therefore say that the initial core of thinking – already of the unborn baby – is dialectically organized: the Real is doubly negated, giving rise to a phenomenal sensation. Both object a and the phenomenal effects are therefore nothing other than the negative operation negating the Real and sublating it, in the nameless sphere of the phenomenal.

The Symbolic: Language, Structure, Law

In the RSI paradigm, the third ring refers to the Symbolic. Here we are mainly discussing the Symbolic in terms of language which may

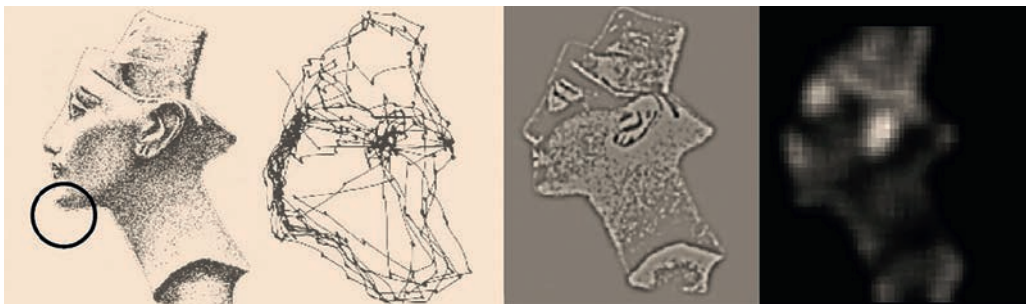


Figure 4. Eye saccades during the perception and construction of a face. The two left panels show a stimulus (the face of Nefertiti) and the eye movements of the individual triggered by this stimulus. The two right panels show the visual input after the first scan of the image. The size of the resulting field of view in relation to the visual scene is indicated by the circle on the left-hand image (Friston, Adams, Perrinet & Breakspear, 2012, p. 11).

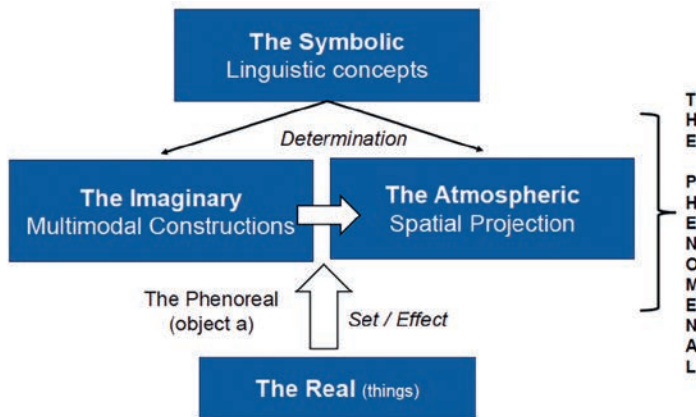


Figure 5. Phenoreal setting and symbolic determination of the Phenomenal

however be a form of simplification. In any case, the Symbolic encompasses phenomena that arise from the ability to speak or think linguistically: culture, law, and structures based on the interaction of linguistic signifiers. The Symbolic is therefore discursive. It is both linguistic and intersubjective. It gives the phenomenal a conceptual meaning (cf. Evans, 2004, p. 78). Language – and thus also the law, culture, ideology – originates from the Other, e.g., from the adult whose words or phrases the child hears. In this way, the Phenomenal-Imaginary can now be determined by the Symbolic: by the words that the child has heard from the other (Feldman-Barrett, 2020, p. 94). Thus, the symbolic register primarily consists of word-representations, which are used to define thing-representations (Freud, 1915,

p. 180).^[3] In **Figure 5**, we see both, the phenoreal set and the Symbolic determination of the Phenomenal-Imaginary:

Thus, the child learns that, for example, the appearance of certain people can be associated with the signifier “mummy” or “daddy”, or that a certain feeling can be described as “joy” or “sadness”, a taste as “sweet” or “sour”, a smell as “pleasant” or “disgusting”. This is a form of “statistical learning” in which the child learns the probability with which signifiers belong to an object, a person or a state (Feldman-Barrett, 2020, p. 95 f.). In this way, the child can connect the Real, which is realized in the Imaginary, with words and use these words to communicate with the others.^[4] Thus, linguistic concepts anchor,

3. Kristeva thus regards language itself as “a process of the emergence of meaning” (“procès de la signifiante”). Although the treasure of signifiers certainly originates from the Other, the subject uses this treasure for their own language creation. Kristeva distinguishes between the Symbolic as “manifest linguistic-social articulation” and “semiotic modality”, which includes “infralinguistic musicality” (Kristeva, 1984, p. 19 f.; Schmitz, 2015). The “infralinguistic” components of the semiosis correspond exactly to the imaginary aspects of language, while the Symbolic refers to the linguistic articulations including the unconscious connotations. “Enigmatic messages” (Laplanche, 2011) contain both, symbolic and semiotic-imaginary components.
4. Now, not only the real, but also the phenomenal is negated, and both are sublated in the spoken word, in the speaking of words. The tension between the Real and language is that the latter’s principal function is the “clothing”, i.e., the “veiling” of absence, as Leclaire says. Language therefore makes “visible something similar to lack” (Leclaire, 1976, p. 22). Every poem is something like a wonderful outfit, like a summer dress, and there is nothing naked, i.e., only the Nothing is naked. In this moment, the word does not define

stabilise and bundle imaginary states and enable these states to be communicated in the form of speech acts. Such a complex of imaginary and symbolic alpha thoughts however can also be repressed, i.e., become unconscious again, as soon as these thoughts become incompatible with other ideas (e.g., those of the superego). This then gives rise to a repressed unconscious with all neurotic implications, but also with the option of dreams and hysterical symptoms (Laplanche, 2011).

But now, I do not want to follow this path, which opens the fields of neurosis. I will rather turn to the logic of the symbolic register which takes place in consciousness. The Symbolic, insofar as it is language, can be organised within the framework of certain logics, including the logic of judgement (Urteilslogik) and the logic of inference (Schlußlogik).⁵ In the logic of judgement, we distinguish between judgements that make statements about perceptions (“perceptual” or “synthetic” judgements) and judgements that do not refer to perceptions at all, but rather exclusively to other concepts (“conceptual” or “analytical” judgements). Perceptual judgements are based on a contrast between perception and judgement, whereas conceptual judgments do not require any reference to perception (Rödl,

2019, p. 144). The key point is that the latter, i.e., the conceptual judgment leads to the something that Hegel called the “absolute” knowledge. It is a knowledge that is completely detached from perception and that, in this sense, has emancipated itself from all dependencies outside the system of pure concepts (Rödl, 2019, p. 180). To speak with Lacan: Within the chain of signifiers, the being or character of one signifier results from interpretation of the next signifier. So, on the one hand, we have judgements that refer to the Phenomenal-Imaginary (“perceptual judgements”), and on the other hand, we have judgements that function exclusively within the symbolic register (“conceptual judgements”). The latter can now be organised within the frame of the logical conclusions denoted as “induction”, “deduction” and “abduction”, or, as Hegel says, within the framework of the “analytical process” (which corresponds to the “induction”) or “synthetic cognition” (being comparable to the “deduction”). – Absolute Knowledge is therefore the Hegelian crown of Lacan’s symbolic thinking.⁶ It thinks “nothing but itself, it is – in contrast to the appearance of the Imaginary – “objective” (Rödl, 2019, p. 34). Here, in the area of the human mind, a special type of “I” is established, as Hegel says. It is the “pure self-consciousness”. Because it determines

imaginary states, but rather it takes place where the imaginary has disappeared. Thus, “unmasking the Real” means: The lack is made evident by pointing it out (Leclaire, 1976, p. 26). Realising the Real means therefore: To know something about the Real (in the sense of conjectural reason, see e.g., Vassalli, 2021) and sublate it in absolute knowledge.

5. This definition has been criticised, most notably by Quine (1951) who problematized in his essay “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” the distinction between judgemental and conceptual logic. In this respect, the Symbolic can certainly be structured according to other logics. For example, fuzzy logic is a methodology that was developed for the “precise recording of the imprecise” (Zadeh, 1965). It is based on perceptual judgements that do not refer to a yes/no decision, but to gradual, i.e., fuzzy differences.
6. I do not mean to suggest that the symbolic should occupy a definitively dominant position over the imaginary or the real. These realms are all equal because they are necessary stages in the dialectic (especially when one considers that art operates primarily within the realm of the imaginary and can thus be equally engaged there). But the advantage of the symbolic register is that it allows us to use abstract concepts and ideas (e.g., regarding freedom, morality, humanity) that could be put into practice. In this respect, according to Hegel, everything converges toward the Highest Good, without the stages or passages of the dialectical circle being devalued. This is precisely the idea of the circle, which implies non-linearity.

itself, it opens up “the kingdom of freedom” (Hegel 2010b, p. 513). However, to be the cause of itself means that a special type of “I” is established. It is the “pure self-consciousness” – being objective, free and wholly imbued with certainty:

“The concept, when it has progressed to a concrete existence which is itself free, is none other than the ‘I’ or pure self-consciousness. True, I have concepts, that is, determinate concepts; but the ‘I’ is the pure concept itself, the concept that has come into determinate existence.” (Hegel, 2010b, p. 514)

Thus, Lacan’s “Subject of the Unconscious” is negated as well as sublated in the pure self-consciousness of the ego, and one can say that this ego of the pure self-consciousness is the Lacanian “Subject of Idealism” (Lacan, 2002, p. 129) or, as I propose: as the “Subject of pure Consciousness”. In this sense, we could differentiate between the “Subject of the Unconscious” (being real), the “Subject of Consciousness” (being imaginary, determined by words) and the “Subject of pure Consciousness” (being symbolic, without reference to the Imaginary). – Now that we have dealt with the logical structure of the Symbolic – or one reading of the logical structure (see footnote 5) – we move on to explain how the emergence of Hegel’s Absolute Idea could be understood as method (form), content (theoretical or absolute knowledge) and action (practice, practical knowledge). I will then emphasize on the practice in the age of polycrises against the background of absolute knowledge, i.e., the crown of the symbolic register.⁷⁾

The Absolute Idea

The Absolute Idea as Method

According to Arndt (2012, p. 23), Hegel’s philosophy “thrives on the assertion that reason is capable of recognising the absolute”. From this perspective, the conceptual spirit, as Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences*, may “withdraw itself from everything external and from its own externality, its very existence” (Hegel, 2010a, p. 6, § 382). It is this withdrawal of the Symbolic that opens up the way to the final realisation of the Absolute Idea. The Absolute Idea, however, is first and foremost a method or form. Hegel says: „For method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic.“ (Hegel, 2010b, p. 33). However, the Absolute Idea only arises when the world outside and absolute concepts come together, as Werckmeister says:

“The Absolute Idea is therefore the form that has reached its completion. Absolute means unconditional; it needs no conditions, and no external factors for its development and completion, i.e., for the achievement of its teleological destiny. It can accomplish this destiny from itself, because its elements always mediate each other” (Werckmeister, 2011, p. 15, translation by authors).

Only through this connection, the “absolute and entire truth” will arise (Hegel, 2010a, p. 299, § 236): “The Absolute Idea is first the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea and, by this means, at the same time the unity of the idea of life and the idea of knowing.” (Hegel, 2010a, p. 299, § 236 Z). Thus, the

7. We could of course detect an allusion to the Kabbalah where the highest Sephira is referred to the “crown” (“Kether”). It is understood as the pure divine being, which completely eludes human comprehension. Of course, this elusion constitutes a significant difference from Hegel’s pure self-consciousness.

practical idea, namely the action, activity or the act – being realized in the materiality – is definitively needed to complete the absolute knowledge (Werckmeister, 2011, p. 8).

The Absolute Idea as Content

The Absolute Idea can therefore be considered in terms of its form, i.e., as method, but also in terms of its content. Firstly, we can say that this content must be a truth that is certain of itself. For Hegel, it is the “Highest Good” (το ἀγαθόν): It is freedom in the context of ethical life. On the one hand, Hegel refers to Plato, for whom the goodness is the highest idea we are able to think. On the other hand, he believes that the world was created with the teleological goal that the good must be realized in it. To be clear: Our world was created in order to realize the good (Hegel, 2010a, p. 298, § 234 Z). In this respect, the good is the highest concept or idea of our thinking (Hegel, 2010 b, p. 731; Höslé, 1998, p. 251), i.e., the Absolute Idea is formed in the realisation of freedom, ethical life or also Kant’s categorical imperative. Hegel says however that the idea of the good cannot be conceived without something that is like the evil. Christian authors (such as Augustine) claim, as we know, that the world, as created by God, is originally good, and that the actually bad state of our world only arises because we humans abuse fundamentally the divine gift of freedom. For Hegel, on the other hand, the nature is evil because it is completely self-centred and brutally ruled by drives, instincts and irrational impulses (which is the definition of evil). From this view, our history does not have a paradisiacal, positive beginning. Rather, it starts within a “state of wild crudeness” and “chaotic instinctuality” (Hermanni, 1995, p. 34). Its beginning is shrouded in blood and smoke – full of injustice and violence (Hegel, 2012, p. 112, § 502).

Therefore, Hegel understands the Fall as a division between nature and spirit. With the spiritual, we will be able to emerge step by step from our primordial state. Unfortunately, nobody can fail to notice that most of the people remain determined by nature, i.e., by their instincts and drives. Thus, their will remains “natural”, and in this respect: “evil”. From this perspective, we are evil when we follow our natural will, i.e., when we kill or exploit peaceful others, accepting their misfortune or even their death. Surprisingly, the evil must happen, as Hegel says, because only then, in this case, it can be overcome (Hermanni, 1995, p. 38). The goal of creation is therefore the fulfilment and completion of the Absolute Idea, and our dialectical path must lead from evil to good, from drive to idea to action, from the natural to the free will. This system therefore requires the instinctual state of nature, of sin and fall, and it requires the Absolute Idea of the good, towards which we move with varying degrees of success.

The Absolute Idea as Borromean Circle

Seen from a psychoanalytical standpoint, the Absolute Idea encompasses the whole Borromean Circle of Thought and Transformation: from the unconscious Real to the absolute knowledge, and from the absolute knowledge to practice and action. If mind is designed to be circular, then there is a dialectical progress, driven by negativity and sublation, from the Real to the Phenomenal-Imaginary and its symbolic determination to theoretical knowledge, i.e., the absolute knowledge. In this circle, two dialectical processes are linked: the process that leads from a real sensation to the symbolic idea, and at each stage of this process, the dialectic of mind and matter is repeated. At each stage, the ideal is the ideal side of matter, as well as the matter is the material side of the idea

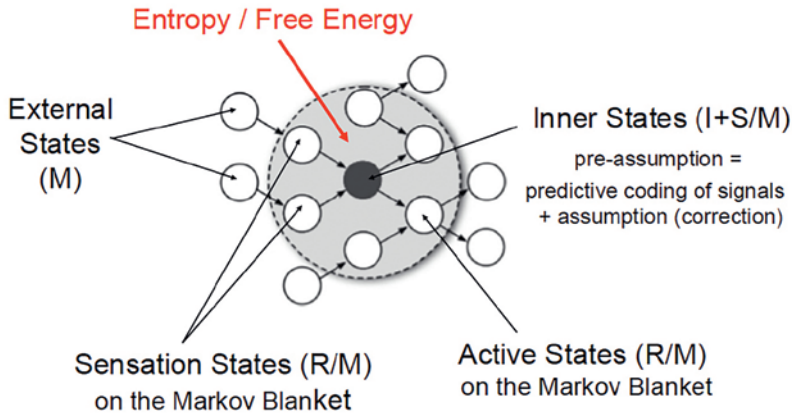


Figure 6. Friston's Cybernetic Model of Mind (Friston, 2013)

– from the real until the absolute knowledge. I would like to refer once again to Friston's (2013) cybernetic model (see **Figure 6**):

In the case where an excess of entropy must be reduced, we see that the internal / imaginary state that contains an action plan causes an active state on the Markov Blanket. This action plan may be linguistically determined, or it may consist solely of language. In the moment of action, this plan will be implemented motorically, i.e., in matter, via states that we describe as real – even if, as e.g. in ADHS-syndromes, it takes only the form of motoric restlessness. In this way, the mind once again becomes a bone or – at least – a muscular movement. Thus, the dance of

the three rings – always on the ground of matter – forms the Borromean Circle which, in its becoming, as Hegel would say, is the “true” and “absolute” idea. **Figure 7** shows the Absolute Idea as Borromean Circle.

Towards an Ethics of Psychoanalysis

As a first approach: An event at Wasa-Square, on 8 May 1942

I would like to refer to an example from German history that shows how absolute knowledge and action could be combined. In order to redeem food ration cards, the German-Jewish romanist Viktor Klemperer had to walk to downtown Dresden due to the prohibition of Jewish inhabitants using public transport. On Friday, 8 May 1942, he noted the following experience in his diary:

“But yesterday, this too. On the Wasa Square, two grey-haired ladies, teachers in their sixties, whom I often met in my lectures and presentations. They stop, one of them approaches me with her hand outstretched, and I think: an old listener, and I lift my hat. But I don't know her, and she doesn't introduce

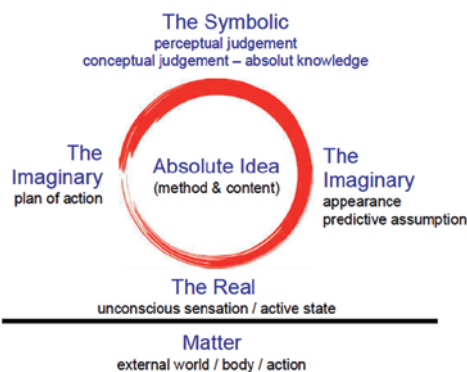


Figure 7. The Absolute Idea as Borromean Circle

herself either. She just shakes my hand with a smile and says: ‘You know why!’ and walks away before I can say a word. Such demonstrations (dangerous for both parties!) are said to occur frequently. The counterpart to the recent: ‘Why are you still alive, you scoundrel?!’ And both of these in Germany, in the middle of the 20th century.” (Klemperer 1995, p. 79, translation by LG)

I would like to describe this spontaneous and intuitive, yet highly risky, life-threatening gesture as an “pure ethical act”. The two elderly ladies see a professor in downtown Dresden. He is wearing the Jewish star, and is thus forbidden from using the tramway. Without a doubt, this sight, which is initially conveyed physically, i.e. materially, leaves an impression on the real unconscious – as a real sensation – which is translated into the imaginary register. One of the two women (not the other) now approaches the Jewish man, extends her hand and publicly expresses her solidarity to him, the Jew, in full view to a NS public being extremely antisemitic. In principle, she is risking her life. What was going through her mind? One can only speculate. I rather suspect that she had a notion that pointed towards the independent, objective and absolute Idea of Goodness. But it does not stop at this thought. Rather, the lady puts her Idea of Goodness into action. She approaches the humiliated man and extends her hand to him. Only in this moment, the Absolute Idea is completed – through practice, through action. The theoretical knowledge is completed, so to speak, by a motor movement of the legs that walk and of the hand being extended. This is somewhat in the direction of the ethical act referred to by Lacan (1967/1968) and, more recently, by Franz Kaltenbeck (2016). It is the ethics of psychoanalysis, which at this moment consists

not only of desire, but it consists of the desire for the good and the corresponding action that realises the good – within the realm of practical possibility.

Intuitive Reason and the Gesture of Spontaneity

Of course, the question arises as to whether the gesture was intuitive. In this case, I would like to speak of an act of ‘intuitive reason’. If we say that intuition is based on several implicit, i.e., preconscious thoughts that occur in rapid succession, then these thoughts could be part of absolute knowledge, e.g., regarding what is good and what is right (in the sense of Plato’s Idea of the Good). There is no conscious and detailed reflection and deliberation, but rather the action completes the intuitive reason through a spontaneous gesture. It is also conceivable that a perceptual judgement initially existed, accompanied by empathy and compassion, and that this emotional perceptual judgement merged with a conceptual judgement. What counts, however, in any case is that on 8 May 1942, the realisation of an Absolute Idea took place on Wasa Square in Dresden.

When writing down this impressive example, I am inevitably reminded of the ‘climate stickers’, i.e., young people of the ‘last generation’. No reasonable person can doubt that we are heading for socio-ecological collapse, but the majority of democratically elected governments are pursuing policies that can be as described in the words of Pope Leo XIV (2025) “strategies aimed at conquering markets, territories, and spheres of influence; armed strategies, concealed beneath hypocritical rhetoric, ideological proclamations, and false religious motives.” Vittorio Hösle sums up the corresponding consequences for our actions by formulating a philosophy of sacrifice and resistance:

“The speculative attitude relates the practical struggle to the absolute. For those who are capable of this most difficult and highest attitude, there are moments when they can experience the splendour of the absolute in finitude. In the unity of the general and the particular, as characterised by every true work of art, every noble intersubjectivity, every reconciliation of opposites, they recognise, indeed feel, the *presence* of the Absolute. They know that they are bound by unconditional duties that they can never truly fulfil; they know that in extreme cases these duties include the sacrifice of their own lives.” (Hösle, 1997, p. 240, translated by L.G.)

Another experience that points toward the practice of the Highest Good was during a discussion at a psychoanalytic institute in eastern Germany. A colleague recounted an incident in a restaurant in which two people were talking loudly about the political situation. Their views were clearly far-right and dominated the entire atmosphere. We discussed what options for intervention were available to counter the spread of far-right ideology. An open debate? Asking them to speak a little more quietly? In any case, the group agreed that it would have been appropriate to stand up and intervene. Another example would be to step in should someone be discriminated in public space. Here, psychotherapists could, as it were, leave their armchairs and take to the streets, to the market squares, engage as ‘academic citizens’ and take responsibility within society (Adloff, 2026, p. 190). It doesn’t however necessarily have to be the grand ideas of philosophy that constitute absolute theoretical knowledge in an individual’s life—from Plato to Hegel—but I think there are a multitude of absolute, perhaps even implicit, mini-ideas that find their fulfilment in practice. But

even with these personal mini-ideas, the Great Other, as Lacan describes it, certainly has a hereditary influence. The German political scientist and climate activist Tadzio Müller (2025) describes in a drastic and quite provocative way how, in a so-called “asshole society”, people are ashamed of their egoistic way of thinking (because they cannot escape the influence of their mini-Absolute Ideas). Therefore, out of defiance against this shame, they become, as Müller says, “assholes,” i.e., they advocate themselves in a decidedly militant manner in their fight against climate protection measures and advocate far-right politics.

The Ethics of Psychoanalysis in Times of Polycrises

In the case that we follow the dialectic, the action that perfects the Absolute Idea will be negated again by the brutality of paradise. In this circular model, the Absolute Idea is definitely completed when it is thrown back into the bloody primordial state, whose cruelty seems to be the prerequisite for the development of the Highest Good. In this case, the perfection of the Absolute Idea is a very circle – we repeat again, and again: the natural will, the pure will, the action with regard to the Highest Good – and then, the rapid descent down into the catastrophe, e.g., into the catastrophe of fascistic or in another way cruel and brutal societies. But don’t worry, the next round will start towards the Highest Good, perhaps in post-apocalyptic groups that might survive the climate catastrophe, be it at the level of Neanderthals or a hyper-tech community on Mars. Itzhak Benyamini describes the same “mythical movement” in Freud: On the one hand, he is a man of the Enlightenment who believes in the cultural progress; and on the other hand, he exposed the instinctual and brutal core behind reason (Benyamini, 2025, S. 51).

In Seminar VII, Lacan says that ethical thought is at the centre of our analytical work (Lacan, 1992, p. 38). The Lacanian ethics consist solely in the question: Have you acted in conformity with your desire? (Lacan, 1992, p. 314). Thus, one can say that Lacan's ethic relates “action to desire”. Without desire, we are dead—or at least undead, i.e., unable to live or to die. Later on, Lacan shifts the emphasis from the question of acting (in accordance with desire) to the question of speaking, i.e., to the ethics of “Speaking well” (“l'éthique du Bien-dire”). Now, ethical responsibility refers to a speaking that has a contact to the unconscious. Here, however, it is also important to distinguish between the Highest Good that arises from rational reflection—such as Kant's categorical imperative—and that of the strict morality of the superego, i.e., the “inner judge” of Kant's later thought. Of course, it cannot be the goal of psychoanalysis to turn analysands into “better people” who follow the moral demands of their superego which is nothing other than internalized parental figures. But psychoanalysis not only fosters empathy (and the ability to love), but also the reflective function, i.e., the capacity to think about oneself and the world. Moreover, it simultaneously enables insights into one's own nature—that is, into one's own cruelty and into the chaos of the real, such as in the chaos of life and death drive. Typically, these no longer need to be repressed, denied or foreclosed. Thus, the analysand could gain a greater capacity to transform the real experience, first into the imaginary then into a reflexive idea in the symbolic then all the way into Absolute Knowledge. And perhaps the analysand would then be able to practice this knowledge – and also perhaps inspire – e.g., in a partnership or toward his children or his friends.

In this case, it would be our free decision to invoke the Highest Good – connecting with

action. It's our free decision – regardless of whether someone sits behind the couch listening to the patient's words or steps out onto the street (if it's not too dangerous to go out). The capacity of free decision may also arise through psychoanalysis (or psychotherapy in general, of course), i.e., through the subject's insight that it is not “master in the own house”—and through the insight into the desire and the impact of the Real. Action can therefore be the speech act that takes place in psychoanalytic practice, as well as in public discourse. A psychoanalyst or psychotherapist who is in touch with the real may be able to speak there more freely or fully on certain topics (e.g., regarding the climate) than other people who are more under the pressure of their defences such as denial. Action can also be political action—from the demonstrations of the Fridays for Future movement, the actions of the Last Generation who, for example, blocked roads and airports, i.e., sites of the highest CO2 emissions, to the New Generation striving for a non-violent democratic revolution, to resistance collectives that want to progress from direct action to revolution (Adloff, 2026, p. 167). Some focus on climate collapse, others, like Greta Thunberg, operate in broader political arenas, for example, through their actions against the genocide in Gaza. Radical groups carry out attacks, for example, on power lines that supply wealthy neighbourhoods in major cities (as happened in Berlin in January 2026). Suddenly, the villas of the rich became dark and unheated (but also, to criticize these actions, the apartments of those less well-off. Here we see that something like the Absolute Idea is realized not only in the (among other things, material) act of speaking, but above all in material actions (from demonstrations and blockades to attacks on fossil fuel infrastructure). Based on her analyses, the American sociologist Dana R. Fisher (2024) believes

that climate movements have great potential to build public pressure through targeted, radical, and local actions. Fisher and her arguments aim for a moral upheaval that can be triggered by direct, persuasive action. She calls this shift “AnthroShift.” It is a fundamental reorientation of societal priorities and values that can be triggered by political unrest, social crises, or ecological disasters. One may also see how the Borromean circle works, in that material action leads via the Real and the Imaginary to new concepts in the symbolic register. – Of course, the goal of our desire may also lie in the destruction of the Earth, as is the case with current US policy, which massively promotes the fossil fuel industry and fights against renewable energies. The ethics of a Donald Trump or Vladimir Putin lies in the accumulation of wealth and power at the price of destroying the existence of other human beings. I suspect they know that the idea of the Good exists—regardless of whether they have read Plato, Hegel or Kant. But they refuse to

connect their actions with the Highest good and follow rather their desire, which function more within the context of the natural will, subjugating the other without regard for the consequences. The great alternative, however, is that desire is directed toward the Highest Good – toward a ethical life that is put into practice—not solely on the basis of the superego, but through insight that we are responsible for all beings, humans, animals or plants, living on this Earth.

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Authors’ Bio

LUTZ GOETZMANN studied human medicine. He habilitated at the University of Zurich on psychosomatic aspects of organ transplantation and is a professor at the University of Lübeck. From 2011 until 2020, he was in charge of the Clinic of Psychosomatic Medicine in Bad Segeberg, Germany. He is a member of the Swiss Society of Psychoanalysis and works in his psychoanalytical practice in Berlin. He is the co-director of the Institute of Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies (IPPK) in Berlin (<https://ippk.de>) and Co-Editor of the journal “Y – Journal of Atopic Thinking” (<https://www.ypsilon-psychoanalyse.de>). Numerous publications in the field of psychoanalytic psychosomatics and cultural theory.

Address for correspondence: goetzmann@ippk.de.

Correspondence address

Prof. Dr. med. Lutz Goetzmann
Institute of Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies
Maybachufer 20
12047 Berlin – Germany

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Trauma, Identity, and Transformation: A Psychoanalytic Perspective

Roman Kechur

Ukrainian Catholic University

Abstract

The article proposes a conceptual model of psychotherapeutic transformation that integrates a Bayesian understanding of belief updating, a psychoanalytic vision of transference and memory, and an intersubjective theory of the psychotherapeutic encounter. The paper is based on the notion that trauma shapes specific *a priori* expectations from which transference arises, and that the totality of these expectations forms the core of identity. In this sense, identity is understood as the resistant-to-change part of the psyche that encompasses the consequences of individual and collective traumatization. Bayes' Theorem formalizes the description of how new experience alters a prior hypothesis; in psychotherapy, this new fact is the encounter with the Other. The article hypothesizes that the task of psychotherapy lies in reducing the traumatic tension of identity and expanding the zone of creativity. Such transformation is conceived not as the unilateral influence of an expert, but as an intersubjective process in which both participants of the therapeutic interaction are changed.

Furthermore, the author presents a tripartite structural model of the psyche, which distinguishes between unprocessed trauma, symbolized trauma as identity, and a trauma-free zone of creativity. This theoretical proposal is illustrated with a diagram to facilitate comprehension.

Keywords

Trauma, Identity, Transference, Bayes' Theorem, Intersubjectivity, Zone of Creativity.

Introduction

This article grows out of a simple yet fundamental question: how does a human being come to know, and how does that person change?

Psychotherapeutic practice constantly confronts us with both dimensions simultaneously. On one hand, the patient arrives with certain established representations of themselves, others, and the world; on the other, the psychotherapeutic encounter itself sometimes leads not merely to a refinement of these representations, but to their profound structural reorganization. This work proposes to view psychotherapy as a process in which the updating of knowledge (cognition) and the transformation of identity are interconnected, yet not reducible to one another.

The history of ideas already contains models that describe individual fragments of this process. Bayes' mathematical theorem describes a form of reasoning in which a new fact updates a prior probability estimate of a prediction (Bayes & Price, 1763). Freud transposes this logic into psychology, demonstrating that psychic material is not stored in memory unchanged, but is subject to multiple instances of re-processing and re-transcription (Freud, 1896). The intersubjective approach of Robert Stolorow and his colleagues, in turn, emphasizes that truth in psychotherapy does not belong to a single observer but is formed between individuals within a shared field of experience (Orange et al., 2015; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992).

The central hypothesis of this article is that the psychotherapeutic process aims not only at the correction of individual beliefs but also at the reduction of traumatic identity strain and the expansion of the zone of creativity.

To demonstrate my understanding of this process, I will sequentially examine Bayesian belief updating, Friston's Free Energy Principle, the Freudian concept of memory re-transcription, the intersubjective perspective on truth, and my own framework for the formation of identity through trauma.

Bayes' Mathematical Theorem as a Model of the Psychotherapeutic Encounter

As early as the 18th century, Thomas Bayes, an English mathematician and Presbyterian minister, sought to understand how new information alters our beliefs. In this sense, his formula is not merely a mathematical tool; it serves as a model for how knowledge is refined through the influence of experience (Bayes & Price, 1763).

In its simplest form, it is expressed as:

$$P(A | B) = [P(B | A) \times P(A)] / P(B)$$

where $P(A | B)$ is the posterior probability, that is, the probability of the hypothesis A being true after the emergence of fact B;

$P(A)$ is the prior probability, or the measure of the initial belief in the hypothesis;

$P(B | A)$ is the likelihood, that is, the probability of observing fact B given that hypothesis A is true;

$P(B)$ – the marginal likelihood of fact B.

Intuitively, this means that we do not perceive the world from a blank slate: we always already possess a certain hypothesis, and new experience either confirms it or forces us to revise it.

If we translate this logic into psychotherapy, we can argue that a patient arrives not merely with complaints, but with a specific system of prior expectations. A traumatized individual may live with such questions as: How likely is it that there is no justice in the world? How likely is it that the trauma I endured will haunt me for the rest of my life? How likely is it that support will be absent and no intimacy will prove reliable? In terms of Bayes' Theorem, the psychotherapist must become a "new fact" (the Other) in the patient's world – the very fact in whose presence the prior probability estimates may begin to change.

It is essential, however, to emphasize that the psychotherapist is a paradigmatic, but not the only possible, "new fact." Such a figure may also be a priest, a close relative, a compassionate individual, or a group of people – provided that this specific encounter proves significant enough to alter the prior configuration of expectations. In psychotherapy, however, this function acquires a particular concentration: here, the new information is not accidental but is sustained by the structure of the relationship, by attention, by symbolization, and by the capacity to contain and withstand the experience. For this shift in the configuration of expectations – the transformation of identity – is indeed one of the primary tasks of psychotherapy.

The Free Energy Principle and Trauma as a Predictive Mode

Modern neuroscience, represented by Karl Friston, follows in some sense the same path as the Bayesian tradition. The Free Energy Principle asserts that for a biological system to survive, it must minimize prediction error: the brain constantly constructs a model

of the world and attempts to predict what will happen next (Friston, 2010). When a prediction fails, the system experiences tension or stress. This model is exceptionally productive for understanding trauma. A traumatized individual does not simply remember a traumatic event; they begin to predict a world in which trauma is destined to recur. Their psyche often operates as if the threat is not the exception, but the rule. This is precisely why an encounter with support, safety, and reliability might not shift the internal vector of expectations, but rather – on the contrary – intensify anxiety; the prediction is already tuned to the repetition of trauma. In other words, the individual sees a different reality, but their entire internal organization insists: what has already happened will happen again.

In this sense, we are constantly "projecting" or even, in a certain way, "hallucinating" our world, subsequently utilizing our senses and cognitive apparatus to keep these projections within the bounds of reality (Friston, 2010). Therefore, psychotherapy cannot be limited to a simple announcement that "things are different now." For a traumatized person, this is insufficient. What is required is a prolonged process in which the experience of a different kind of relationship is not a one-time exception, but a repeated, consolidated fact – one that is continuously processed and capable of altering the predictive mode itself.

Freud: Memory Retranscription and the Alteration of Representations of the Past

Freudian thought takes another fundamental step. In his letter to Wilhelm Fliess, he posits that the psychic mechanism is

stratified in nature, and that material in the form of memory traces periodically undergoes re-arrangement and re-transcription; the failure of such a transformation under the influence of a shifting contemporary context is what he identifies with psychoneuroses (Freud, 1896). This implies that the psyche does not merely accumulate traces of the past but reorganizes them time and again, depending on the new conditions of experience.

At this point, a crucial distinction between simple cognition and transformation emerges. While the Bayesian formula primarily concerns the updating of a current belief, in Freud's view, a new interaction can alter not only the present representation of reality but also how the subject experiences and understands their own past. Not only is the future prediction affected, but the very memories of the past become fluid. Therapy, therefore, operates not only at the level of "what will happen to me," but also at the level of "who I am" and "what has already happened to me."

From this follows my intermediate conclusion: the psychotherapeutic process alters not only the future prediction – that is, the transference – but also the representation of the past – that is, identity. The actual encounter in therapy possesses the potential to rewrite not the facts of one's biography, but the semantic configuration of those facts. The past ceases to be absolutely finalized when it begins to be held within a different context of experience.

From Transference to Identity

In a psychoanalytic context, I propose understanding priority as a function of the symbolic processing of trauma. Trauma

creates a prior expectation, and it is precisely this expectation that manifests in the form of transference within the psychoanalyst's consulting room. What clinical language terms transference can be viewed as a system of pre-existing probabilistic expectations: "it will happen again," "the Other will wound me again," "intimacy will end in loss," "justice is impossible." In this sense, transference is not an accidental distortion, but an organized consequence of prior traumatic experience. It is this very causal link that enables the reconstruction of traumatic scenarios within the therapeutic process through the analysis of transference and projective identification.

Taking this further, one could say that the totality of prior expectations – that is, the system of transferences typical for an individual – constitutes their identity. In this view, identity is not merely self-definition, nor is it just a narrative about oneself or the stability of the "I-image." It is the profound organization of what the subject deems probable in relation to themselves, to others, and to the world. This is precisely why identity often proves to be a low-dynamic part of the psyche: it resists change because it sustains the very framework within which experience is rendered meaningful.

Bayes provided us with a formula for updating beliefs; Freud transposed this logic into the realm of the unconscious, where the symptom is a sign of a hidden cause, the interpretation is a hypothesis, and the session material constitutes new data (Freud, 1896). Yet even this is insufficient to grasp how transformation actually occurs. Here, we are describing an epistemology rather than a change in being. Another step is required – moving from the individual processing of material to the intersubjective space in which such processing becomes possible.

Intersubjectivity and the New Fact

It is here that the intersubjective approach acquires decisive significance. Robert Stolorow and his colleagues insist that psychological truth cannot be conceived as a neutral, objective entity that one expert simply uncovers within the psyche of another – it is born between people, in the interaction of two subjectivities (Orange et al., 2015; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992).

The conception of truth is always provisional, contextual, and clarifying.

This has immediate clinical implications. If the truth about the psyche is born between people, then the psychotherapist cannot remain an immutable observer who merely provides corrective information. Their task is to become the Other – that is, a “new fact” – but a fact that is itself capable of changing in response to the encounter. In other words, for the patient’s prior expectation to truly transform into a different, liberating, and developmental posterior state, the psychotherapist must cultivate the capacity for their own change. From this perspective, interpersonal interaction in its humanistic sense implies a readiness on the part of all participants to be transformed within the context of each new relationship.

Here, for me, lies the fundamental boundary between psychotherapy and indoctrination. The attempt to change another without the readiness to be changed oneself is a form of imposition, not therapy. The psychotherapeutic process is possible only where deep respect for the other is preserved and their freedom is recognized. Therefore, therapy is not a technique for correcting a personality, but an interpersonal form of labor toward

change – one in which both participants are mutually engaged.

Identity as Trauma Frozen in Time

In the model proposed here, identity is the core of subjectivity – a position, a point of vision, and the source of activity from which the personality grows. At the same time, it is the source of transference; that is, the structure of prior probability that determines what the subject deems possible, impossible, dangerous, just, or hopeless. In this sense, identity is the consequence of not only individual but also collective traumatization. It is the imprint of trauma, frozen in time.

To substantiate this thesis, I propose a framework in which trauma is distributed across several levels. One level consists of the unprocessed part of the trauma, which manifests in “fight,” “flight,” or “freeze” responses, as well as in psychotic and psychosomatic reactions. Another level is the processed part of the trauma, where conceptualization and the “preservation” of meaning occur through symbol and ritual; it is from this layer that identity is formed. Alongside these exists a trauma-free zone – a realm of creativity that is not a component of identity and contains non-traumatic experience, which can be utilized for creative expression without the need for repetitive enactment.

The proposed framework envisions the human psyche as consisting of at least two major zones: identity and the zone of creativity. Identity itself is formed not from the “entirety of the psyche,” but primarily from those traces of trauma that have already been symbolized and ritualized. Thus, identity does not merely bear the imprint of what has been experienced; it is a way of organizing

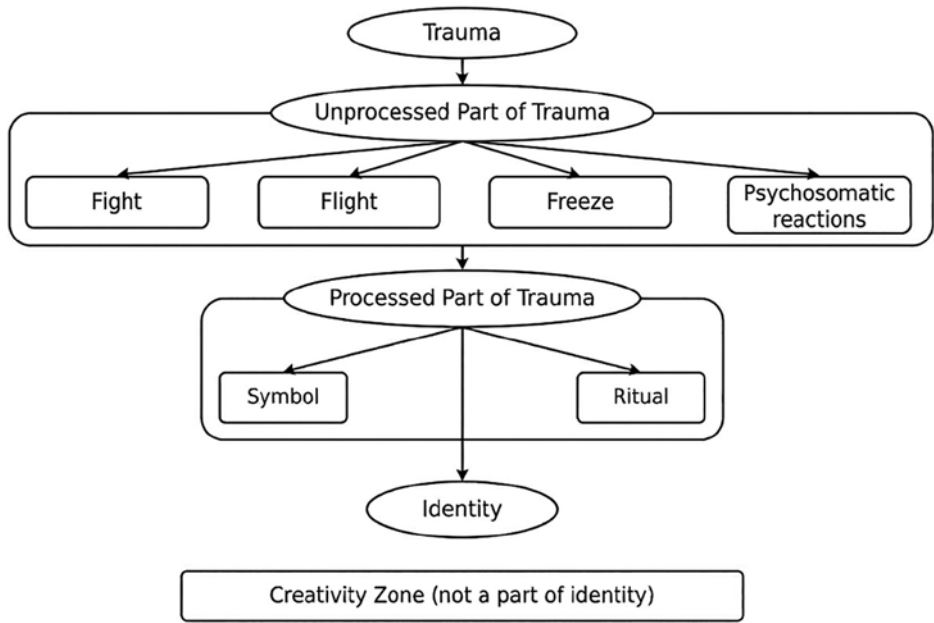


Figure 1. *Diagram showing the impact of trauma on identity formation*

that experience into a stable form that ensures the repeatability of experience and, consequently, the possibility of prediction.

This allows for a new perspective on the task of therapy. If identity is constructed through the symbolization and ritualization of traumatic experience, and manifests itself in transference, then the goal of psychotherapy cannot consist in the “destruction” of transference. Rather, it is about reducing the traumatic tension of identity and, accordingly, loosening that internal rigidity which compels an individual to incessantly reproduce the same prediction, the same type of relationship, and the same way of seeing oneself and the world.

The psyche’s zone of creativity requires separate commentary. On one hand, it is a theoretical construct that allows for a better conceptualization of the psychic apparatus’s functioning within the context of trauma. On the other hand, it allows for a deeper

appreciation of Freud’s brilliant proposal to utilize the method of free association as the primary therapeutic tool. By inviting patients to fantasize freely, we observe the flow of their experiences and thoughts – as well as our own – alongside the obstacles encountered along the way. It is precisely these obstacles that delineate the boundary between the traumatic tension of identity and the zone of creativity. Paraphrasing Freud, the task of psychoanalytic treatment is to ensure that, in the place of fixed trauma, a new capacity for creativity emerges.

Psychotherapy as a Path to Freedom

Psychoanalytic psychotherapy, like any other form of therapy, aims to change a person’s conceptions of themselves and the world. However, these changes are only possible when we, as psychotherapists, are prepared to change ourselves in every therapeutic encounter. Without this, the therapeutic field

is transformed into a site of disciplining, persuasion, or normative pressure. Only the readiness for one's own change makes true dialogue possible.

That is precisely why, for me, psychotherapy is a combination of individual freedom and profound respect for the Other. It does not erase the differences between the participants in the process, nor does it deny the professional role of the psychotherapist; however, it does not allow that role to become dominant. If the therapist becomes a "new fact" in the patient's world, it happens not because they occupy the position of an expert on truth, but because they enter into a type of interaction with the patient where the emergence of a different experience becomes possible.

In this perspective, the hypothesis I propose describes a transformational process aimed at two interconnected outcomes: the reduction of the traumatic tension of identity and the expansion of the zone of creativity. This is not about how one person perceives external reality, but about an intersubjective process of interaction between two transforming subjects. Our patients become the Other for us, and we become the Other for them. It is precisely in this movement – the emergence of new facts through the presence of the Other – that mutual transformation becomes possible and the path to freedom opens.

Conclusions

"Bayes" Theorem in the context of cognition within psychoanalytic therapy and other non-directive treatments can serve as a formal model for how new information is capable of altering existing beliefs. In the therapeutic setting, this definitive "new information" is the encounter with the Other. In this light, Karl Friston's Free Energy Principle allows us to conceptualize trauma

as a specific fixation of a prediction – a "prediction of a recurring threat" – manifested in the difficulty of revising *a priori* expectations. At the same time, the Freudian idea of "re-transcribing" memory traces offers us hope. Freud emphasizes that the psychoanalytic therapeutic process influences not only expectations regarding the future but also the semantic organization of the past, which shapes those very expectations.

From this perspective, transference can also be viewed as a form of *a priori* expectation arising from traumatic experience, while the totality of such expectations constitutes the foundation of identity. Identity itself emerges as a relatively low-dynamic part of the psyche that accumulates both individual and collective traumatization, preserving it in symbolized and ritualized forms.

Thinking in this way, we can propose a new, original tripartite model of the psyche for theoretical consideration. It consists of unprocessed derivatives of trauma, identity (the part processed through symbol and ritual) and the zone of creativity (the part free from traumatic traces).

Consequently, psychotherapeutic transformation is aimed at reducing the traumatic tension embedded within identity and expanding the space for creativity. Such therapeutic activation of the creative zone becomes possible within an intersubjective process, where both participants in the interaction necessarily undergo change.

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Author



ROMAN KECHUR, PhD, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Head of the Department of Psychology and Psychotherapy at Ukrainian Catholic University. Full Member of the European Association for Psychotherapy and Supervisor at the European Confederation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies.

For correspondence: rkechur@yahoo.com

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Травма, ідентичність і трансформація: психоаналітичний погляд

Роман Кечур

Український католицький університет

Анотація

У статті запропоновано концептуальну модель психотерапевтичної трансформації, що поєднує байєсівське розуміння оновлення переконань, психоаналітичне бачення перенесення та пам'яті і інтерсуб'єктивну теорію психотерапевтичної зустрічі. Стаття базується на уявленні, що травма формує певні апіорні очікування, з яких постає перенесення, а сукупність таких очікувань утворює ядро ідентичності. У цьому сенсі ідентичність розуміється як малозмінна частина психіки, що опирається змінам і містить у собі наслідки індивідуальної та групової травматизації. Теорема Баєса формалізує опис того, як новий досвід змінює попередню гіпотезу; у психотерапії таким новим фактом стає зустріч з Іншим.

У статті висувається гіпотеза, що завдання психотерапії полягає у зниженні травматичної напруги ідентичності та розширенні зони творчості. Така трансформація мислиться не як односторонній вплив експерта, а як інтерсуб'єктивний процес, у якому змінюються обидва учасники терапевтичної взаємодії. Також представлено авторську тричленну структурну модель психіки, яка розрізняє необроблену травму, символізовану травму як ідентичність та зону творчості, вільну від травм. Ця теоретична пропозиція ілюструється діаграмою для полегшення розуміння.

Ключові слова:

травма, ідентичність, перенесення, теорема Баєса, інтерсуб'єктивність, зона творчості

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Вступ

Ця стаття виростає з простого, але фундаментального запитання: як людина пізнає і як вона змінюється?

Психотерапевтична практика постійно ставить нас перед обома вимірами одночасно. З одного боку, пацієнт приходить із певними уявленнями про себе, інших і світ; з іншого – сама психотерапевтична зустріч інколи веде не лише до уточнення цих уявлень, а до їх глибинної перебудови. У цій роботі пропонується розглядати психотерапію як процес, у якому оновлення знання (пізнання) і трансформація ідентичності пов'язані між собою, але не зводяться одне до одного.

В історії ідей уже існують моделі, що дозволяють описати окремі фрагменти цього процесу. Математична теорема Баєса описує форму мислення, у межах якої новий факт змінює попередню оцінку ймовірності передбачення (Bayes & Price, 1763). Фройд переносить цю логіку в психологію, коли показує, що психічний матеріал в пам'яті не зберігається незмінним, а підлягає багаторазовому повторному опрацюванню і перезапису (Freud, 1896). Інтерсуб'єктивний підхід Роберта Столору та його колег, своєю чергою, наголошує, що істина у психотерапії не належить одному спостерігачеві, а формується між людьми у спільному полі досвіду (Orange et al., 2015; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992).

Головна гіпотеза цієї статті полягає в тому, що психотерапевтичний процес має на меті не тільки корекцію окремих переконань, а й зниження травматичної напруги ідентичності та розширення зони творчості. Щоб показати своє

розуміння цього процесу, я послідовно розгляну байєсівське оновлення переконань, фрістонівський принцип вільної енергії, фройдівське уявлення про перезапис пам'яті, інтерсуб'єктивну перспективу на істину і власну схему формування ідентичності через травму.

Математична теорема Баєса як модель психотерапевтичної зустрічі

Ще у 18-у столітті англійський математик і пресвітеріанський священник Томас Баєс намагався зрозуміти, як нова інформація змінює наші переконання. У цьому сенсі його формула не є лише математичним інструментом; вона є моделлю того, як знання уточнюється під впливом досвіду (Bayes & Price, 1763).

У найпростішому записі вона має вигляд:

$$P(A | B) = [P(B | A) \times P(A)] / P(B)$$

де $P(A | B)$ є апостеріорною ймовірністю, тобто ймовірністю істинності гіпотези А після появи факту В;

$P(A)$ – апіорною ймовірністю, або мірою початкової віри в гіпотезу;

$P(B | A)$ правдоподібністю, тобто ймовірністю спостерегти факт В за умови істинності А;

$P(B)$ – повною ймовірністю факту В.

Інтуїтивно це означає, що ми не пізнаємо світ з чистого аркуша: ми завжди вже маємо певну гіпотезу, і новий досвід або її підтверджує або змушує переглянути.

Якщо перенести цю логіку в психотерапію, можна стверджувати, що пацієнт приходить не просто зі скаргами, а з певною системою апіорних очікувань. Травмована людина може жити з питаннями: наскільки ймовірно, що у світі немає справедливості? наскільки ймовірно, що пережита травма переслідуватиме мене все життя? наскільки ймовірно, що підтримки не буде і жодна близькість не виявиться надійною? В термінах теореми Баєса психотерапевт повинен стати новим фактом (Іншим) у світі пацієнта – тим фактом, у присутності якого попередні оцінки ймовірності можуть змінитися.

Важливо, однак, підкреслити: психотерапевт тут є парадигматичним, але не єдиним можливим «новим фактом». Такою фігурою може бути також священик, близький родич, небайдужа людина або група людей, якщо саме ця зустріч виявляється достатньо значущою, щоб змінити попередню конфігурацію очікувань. Проте у психотерапії ця функція набуває особливої концентрованості: тут нова інформація не випадкова, а підтримується структурою стосунку, увагою, символізацією та витримуванням досвіду. Бо ця зміна конфігурації очікувань, – трансформація ідентичності, – і є одним з головних завдань психотерапії.

Принцип вільної енергії і травма як режим прогнозування

Сучасна нейронаука в особі Карла Фрістона в певному сенсі йде тим самим шляхом, що й байєсівська традиція. Принцип вільної енергії стверджує, що для виживання біологічна система повинна мінімізувати помилку прогнозу: мозок

постійно будує модель світу і намагається передбачити, що станеться далі (Friston, 2010). Коли прогноз невдалий, система переживає напруження або стрес. Ця модель надзвичайно продуктивна для розуміння травми. Травмована людина не просто пам'ятає травматичну подію; вона починає прогнозувати світ як такий, у якому травма має повторитися. Її психіка часто діє так, ніби загроза є не винятком, а правилом. Саме тому зустріч із підтримкою, безпекою і надійністю може не змінювати внутрішній вектор очікувань, а навпаки посилювати тривогу; прогноз уже налаштований на повторення травми. Інакше кажучи, людина бачить іншу реальність, але вся її внутрішня організація підказує: те, що вже сталося, станеться знову.

У такому розумінні ми постійно «проєктуюмо» або навіть, у певному сенсі, «галюцинуємо» наш світ, а потім за допомогою органів чуття та когнітивного апарату намагаємося втримати ці проєкції в межах реальності (Friston, 2010). Тому психотерапія не може обмежитися простим повідомленням, що «тепер усе інакше». Для травмованої особистості цього замало. Потрібен тривалий процес, у якому досвід іншого стосунку буде не одноразовим винятком, а повторюваним, консолідованим фактом, що постійно опрацьовується і здатним змінити сам режим прогнозування.

Фройд: перезапис пам'яті і зміна уявлень про минуле

Фройдівське мислення робить ще один принциповий крок. У листі до Вільгельма Фліса він висуває тезу, що психічний механізм має стратифікований характер, а матеріал у вигляді слідів пам'яті

періодично зазнає нового упорядкування і перезапису; відсутність такого перетворення під впливом мінливого сучасного контексту він пов'язує з психоневрозами (Freud, 1896). Це означає, що психіка не просто накопичує сліди минулого, а знову й знову їх реорганізує залежно від нових умов досвіду.

У цьому пункті відкривається важлива відмінність між простим пізнанням і трансформацією. Якщо в байєсівській формулі йдеться насамперед про оновлення поточного переконання, то у Фрейда нова взаємодія може змінювати не лише теперішнє уявлення про реальність, а й те, як суб'єкт переживає і розуміє власне минуле. Не тільки майбутній прогноз, а й самі спогади про минуле стають рухомими. Терапія, отже, діє не лише на рівні «що зі мною буде», а й на рівні «хто я є» і «що зі мною вже було».

Звідси випливає мій проміжний висновок: психотерапевтичний процес змінює не лише майбутній прогноз, тобто перенесення, а й уявлення про минуле, тобто ідентичність. Актуальна зустріч у терапії має потенціал переписати не факти біографії, а смислову конфігурацію цих фактів. Минуле перестає бути абсолютно завершеним, коли його починають утримувати в іншому контексті досвіду.

Від перенесення до ідентичності

У психоаналітичному контексті я пропоную розуміти апіорність як функцію символічного опрацювання травми. Травма створює апіорне очікування, і саме це очікування постає у формі перенесення в кабінеті психоаналітика. Те, що в клінічній мові називається перенесенням, можна розглядати як систему вже

наявних ймовірнісних очікувань: «так буде знову», «Інший знову поранить», «близькість закінчиться втратою», «справедливість неможлива». У цьому сенсі перенесення є не випадковим перекрученням, а організованим наслідком попереднього травматичного досвіду. Саме цей причинно-наслідковий зв'язок уможливорює реконструкцію сценаріїв травми в терапевтичному процесі в спосіб аналізу перенесення і проєктивної ідентифікації.

Якщо піти далі, можна сказати, що сукупність апіорних очікувань – тобто система типових для індивіда перенесень – і становить ідентичність. Ідентичність у такому баченні – це не лише самовизначення, не лише наратив про себе і не лише стабільність образу «я». Це глибинна організація того, що суб'єкт вважає ймовірним у стосунку до себе, до інших і до світу. Саме тому ідентичність часто виявляється малодіаметричною частиною психіки: вона опирається змінам, бо підтримує саму рамку, в якій осмислюється досвід.

Баєс дав нам формулу оновлення переконань; Фрейд переніс цю логіку в поле несвідомого, де симптом є знаком прихованої причини, інтерпретація – гіпотезою, а матеріал сесії – новими даними (Freud, 1896). Але цього все ще недостатньо, щоб зрозуміти, як відбувається трансформація. Тут ми описуємо радше епістемологію, ніж зміну буття. Потрібен ще один крок – від індивідуальної переробки матеріалу до міжсуб'єктного простору, в якому ця переробка стає можливою.

Інтерсуб'єктивність і новий факт

Саме тут вирішального значення набуває інтерсуб'єктивний підхід. Роберт Столорю і його колеги наполягають, що

психологічну істину неможливо мислити як нейтральну, об'єктивну річ, яку один експерт просто знаходить у психіці іншого – вона народжується між людьми, у взаємодії двох суб'єктивностей (Orange et al., 2015; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992).

Уявлення про істину завжди є тимчасовим, контекстуальним і уточнювальним.

Це має безпосередні клінічні наслідки. Якщо істина про психіку народжується між людьми, тоді психотерапевт не може залишатися незмінним спостерігачем, що лише постачає коригувальну інформацію. Його завдання – стати Іншим, тобто новим фактом, але таким фактом, який сам здатний змінюватися у відповідь на зустріч. Інакше кажучи, для того щоб апіорне очікування пацієнта справді могло трансформуватися в інший, звільняючий і розвиваючий апостеріорний стан, психотерапевт мусить розвинути здатність до власних змін. З такого погляду міжлюдська взаємодія в її гуманістичному розумінні передбачає готовність всіх учасників змінюватися в контексті кожного нового стосунку.

Тут для мене проходить принципова межа між психотерапією та індоктринацією. Спроба змінити іншого без готовності змінюватися самому є формою нав'язування, а не терапії. Психотерапевтичний процес можливий лише там, де збережено глибоку повагу до іншого і визнано його свободу. Тому терапія є не технікою коригування особистості, а міжлюдською формою праці над зміною, в якій обидва учасники є взаємно залученими.

Ідентичність як травма, застигла в часі

У запропонованій тут моделі ідентичність є ядром суб'єктності, позицією, пунктом

бачення і джерелом активності, з якого проростає особистість. Водночас вона є джерелом перенесення, тобто тією структурою апіорної ймовірності, яка визначає, що саме суб'єкт вважатиме можливим, неможливим, небезпечним, справедливим або безнадійним. У цьому сенсі ідентичність є наслідком не лише індивідуальної, а й групової травми-зації. Це відбиток травми, застиглий в часі.

Щоб конкретизувати цю тезу, я пропоную схему, у якій травма розподіляється на кілька рівнів. Один із них – це неопрацьована частина травми, яка проявляється у формах «бий», «біжи», «завмирай» та в психотичних і психосоматичних реакціях. Інший – опрацьована частина травми, де через символ і ритуал відбувається концептуалізація та «консервування» смислу, і саме з цього шару формується ідентичність. Поруч із цим існує зона, вільна від травми, – зона творчості, яка не є складовою ідентичності і вміщує досвід, що не є травматичним та може бути використаний для творчості без необхідності повторного розігрування.

Запропонована схема передбачає погляд на людську психіку як на таку, що складається щонайменше з двох великих зон: ідентичності і зони творчості. Сама ідентичність формується не з «усієї психіки», а передусім із тих слідів травми, які вже були символізовані та ритуалізовані. Отже, ідентичність не просто несе на собі відбиток пережитого; вона є способом організації пережитого в стійку форму, яка забезпечує повторюваність досвіду, а отже, і можливість прогнозування.

Це дає змогу по-новому побачити завдання терапії. Якщо ідентичність



Рис. 1. Схема впливу травми на формування ідентичності

будується через символізацію та ритуалізацію травматичного переживання, а проявляється в перенесенні, то мета психотерапії не може полягати у «знищенні» перенесення. Йдеться радше про зниження травматичної напруги ідентичності, і відповідно, про послаблення тієї внутрішньої жорсткості, яка змушує людину беззастанно відтворювати той самий прогноз, той самий тип стосунку і той самий спосіб бачити себе і світ.

Окремо потребує коментаря зона творчості психіки. З одного боку це теоретична конструкція, яка дозволяє краще уявити функціонування психічного апарату в контексті травми. З іншого, ж дозволяє краще поцінувати геніальну пропозицію Фрейда застосовати метод вільних асоціацій як основний терапевтичний середник. Пропонуючи пацієнтам вільно фантазувати, ми спостерігаємо за ходом їхніх і своїх переживань і думок. А, також,

за перешкодами на цьому шляху. Саме ці перешкоди і окреслюють кордон між травматичною напругою ідентичності і зоною творчості. Перефразовуючи Фрейда, завдання психоаналітичного лікування полягає в тому, щоб на місці фіксованої травми з'явилась нова здатність творити.

Психотерапія як шлях до свободи

Психоаналітична психотерапія, як і будь-яка інша психотерапія, має на меті зміну уявлень людини про себе і світ. Однак ці зміни можливі лише тоді, коли в кожній терапії ми, як психотерапевти, готові змінюватися самі. Без цього терапевтичне поле перетворюється на місце дисциплінування, переконування або нормативного тиску. Лише готовність до власної зміни робить можливим справжній діалог.

Саме тому психотерапія є для мене поєднанням індивідуальної свободи з глибокою повагою до іншого. Вона не скасовує різниці між учасниками процесу і не заперечує професійної ролі психотерапевта, але не дозволяє цій ролі стати панівною. Якщо терапевт стає новим фактом у світі пацієнта, то це відбувається не тому, що він посідає місце експерта з питань істини, а тому, що він вступає з пацієнтом у такий тип взаємодії, де можлива поява іншого досвіду.

У цій перспективі запропонована мною гіпотеза описує трансформаційний процес, що має на меті два взаємопов'язані наслідки: зниження травматичної напруги ідентичності та розширення зони творчості. Йдеться не про те, як одна особа сприймає зовнішню реальність, а про інтерсуб'єктивний процес взаємодії двох суб'єктів, що трансформуються. Наші пацієнти стають Іншим для нас, а ми стаємо Іншим для них. Саме в цьому русі появи нових фактів через появу Іншого стає можливою взаємна трансформація і відкривається шлях до свободи.

Висновки

Теорема Баєса для пізнання в психоаналітичній терапії та інших недирективних способах лікування може бути використана в якості формальної моделі того, як нова інформація здатна змінювати вже наявні переконання. У контексті психотерапії такою визначальною « новою інформацією » стає зустріч із Іншим. У цьому світлі принцип вільної енергії Карла Фрістона дозволяє осмислити травму як своєрідну фіксацію прогнозу на повторенні загрози, що проявляється у складності перегляду апріорних очікувань. Водночас фрейдівська ідея перепису слідів пам'яті « дає нам надію ».

Фройд підкреслює, що психоаналітичний терапевтичний процес впливає не лише на очікування щодо майбутнього, а й на смислову організацію минулого, яка й формує ці очікування.

У такій перспективі перенесення можна також розглядати як форму апріорного очікування, що виникає з травматичного досвіду, а сукупність подібних очікувань становить основу ідентичності. Сама ж ідентичність постає як відносно малодинамічна частина психіки, яка акумулює як індивідуальну, так і колективну травматизацію, зберігаючи її у символізованих і ритуалізованих формах.

Мислячи подібним чином, ми можемо запропонувати для теоретичного осмислення нову авторську тричленну модель психіки, яка складається з неопрацьованих дериватів травми, опрацьованої через символ і ритуал частини – власне ідентичності, і частини вільної від травматичних слідів – зони творчості.

Відтак психотерапевтична трансформація спрямована на зниження травматичної напруги, закріпленої в ідентичності, а також на розширення простору творчості. Така терапевтична активація зони творчості стає можливою в межах інтерсуб'єктивного процесу, де змін обов'язково зазнають обидва учасники взаємодії.

Подяки

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розроблялися у спільному інтелектуальному полі, де межу між «моїм» та «нашим» провести майже неможливо.

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Author



ROMAN KECHUR, PhD, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Head of the Department of Psychology and Psychotherapy at Ukrainian Catholic University. Full Member of the European Association for Psychotherapy and Supervisor at the European Confederation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies.

For correspondence: rkechur@yahoo.com

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The Way to Freedom

Zvenyslava Kechur

St. Paraskeva Medical Center, Lviv, Ukraine

Abstract

The clinical illustration presented in this paper should be viewed in the special context of the present, in the context of war in Ukraine. Current traumatic experiences bring past memories to the forefront – the patients' and psychoanalysts' re-experiencing of the past. In this way, the horrific past of individuals and entire nations resurfaces as a present reality. The tragedy of individual and collective traumas amplifies in their mutual reinforcement and repetition. It is a traumatic history affecting both our ability to think and our very existence: the history of psychoanalysis bringing together two people in their longing for freedom. In his foreword to the Ukrainian edition of *Creative Readings: Essays on Seminal Analytic Works*, Thomas Ogden writes about trauma's ontological dimension and its correlation with the need of rebuilding a shattered life: "I believe that trauma is essentially an disruption to the individual's ability to be and become someone. The traumatized person not only has to strengthen their defenses – they also suffer a diminished or destroyed sense of being alive, depending on the trauma's severity". This view on both the patient's and the psychoanalyst's personal stories, as well as on the history of our community, allows for a new perspective on these stories. It is this different, new, "creative reading" that becomes the ultimate goal of this and other therapies. This view of the psychoanalytic relationship is consistent with Donald Winnicott's ideas about the true Self as the fulfillment and recognition of individual's ability to be fully present in their own life. The restoration of "being and becoming" potentials as well as presence in one's own existence, is always a painful journey of becoming a subject and, probably, one of the most valuable experiences of psychoanalysis. The psychotherapeutic relationship presented in this reflective clinical essay changed not only the patient's life, but also the psychoanalyst's view on her life story and the history of her country.

Key words

freedom, trauma, Ukraine, totalitarianism, conformism.

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*"We have given you, O Adam,
no fixed seat nor a form of your own, nor any
talent peculiar to you alone,
so that whatever seat, whatever form, and
whatever talents you may desire,
you may have them, as a result of your own
judgment and your own decision."
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola,*

Oration on the Dignity of Man, 1496.

When I received the invitation to share my reflections on freedom, I was deeply moved, as I considered this topic to be still subtle within my personal history, the narratives of my patients, and the experience of my country. Yes, at that time I had no idea what the future transformations in it were going to be. And now, when Ukraine is defending its right for freedom and independence in such a ruthless, brutal war once again, I still do not know what price my nation will pay for these undeniable – and even a little trivial, in the eyes of Europeans – values.

The notion of freedom has been explored for centuries by philosophers, historians, political scientists, psychoanalysts; it is still undergoing significant transformations. Thus, when one begins the discussion on this subject, it is always a challenge or – as Hannah Arendt wrote – it is even something hopeless: "It is as though age-old contradictions and antinomies were lying in wait to force the mind into dilemmas of logical impossibility so that... it becomes as impossible to conceive of freedom or its opposite as it is to realize the notion of a square circle" (Arendt, 1961, p. 143).

Thus, in order not to drown in the thickets of philosophy, theology, linguistics or logic, I will follow my own conscious and intuitive observations, associations, experiences and feelings which have been assisting me

since the very beginning of my life. It is obvious that this narrative of mine came to life through family stories which had been repeatedly told by members of our family.

My parents belonged to the so called 'shistdesiatnyky' – the generation of Ukrainian-Soviet intelligentsia who had a strong civic awareness and got their greatest chance to speak at the beginning of the 1960s due to the weakening of the Communist totalitarianism; this group created a moral opposition to the USSR's totalitarian regime. Many young people among them were brave and radical enough to support and develop seeds of freedom which appeared at that time in all areas of cultural and political life. I think they were brave but also reckless. As we now know, the so-called "Khrushchev Thaw" did not last long, and after such events as removal of Nikita Khrushchev in 1964, suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 the creative, liberal and democratic intelligentsia became one of major obstacles on the way to totalitarianism restoration. In 1965–1972 many Ukrainian historians, poets, writers, artists, translators and philosophers were subjected to repressions (through arrest, homicide, deportation, blacklisted lay-off etc.); they were pushed into the "spiritual underground".

I associate the subject of freedom and cross-generational bond with the word 'liberty' which stems from the Latin word 'libertas' and in its core refers to the Latin word 'liberi' which means 'children' and refers to genealogical transfer of one's right to freedom from parents to their children. Thus, I grew up in the USSR in the atmosphere of 'spiritual underground', and when I came of age, I already expected, the same as many of my peers, that – just as the Ukrainian writer Taras Prochasko put it – "the scenery

would collapse very soon. That I would be able to choose an interesting life in order to accelerate the decay”.

Hence, no one was surprised when on the 2nd of October 1990 the next generation of students went to the then Square of the October Revolution to launch the first protest rally called Revolution on Granite – a student hunger strike which became one of the forerunners of the collapse of the Soviet Union. On this occasion students put forward five postulates (preventing the signing of the new contract on the union; new election of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR according to the multi-party system; non-participation of Ukrainian soldiers in wars taking place on alien territories; nationalization of the property of the Communist Party of Ukraine and Leninist young communist league; resignation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Vitaliy Masol). These postulates were accepted by the Supreme Council of Ukraine on October 17th, and the hunger strike ended on October 18th. “What was it?” – I often asked myself – “Bravery or recklessness?”. Probably both.

“Growing up in a free society is something very different from growing up in the society which is totalitarian. If the society has a history of unfreedom, then you experience the passage from unfreedom to freedom in a very specific, existential way. I spent half of my life in the Soviet Union, and I personally know very well what unfreedom is and what it is like to enter the social and civic freedom” – these are words of my peer, a well-known Ukrainian philosopher from Lviv, Andriy Dachnyi (2018).

In order to continue this genealogical line of writing in a logical way, I will mention one of our favourite family stories that took

place in 2004 during the Orange Revolution. The children of our friends were fiercely arguing about whether camels with one hump existed, and the 5-year-old boy ended the argument with a pathetic statement: “Then we’ll arrange a mass meeting in the kindergarten and we’ll prove that some camels do have one hump!”

And 10 years later the 17-year-old sister of that boy wrote:

“When I grew up, mom told me in one of our talks that the modern young generation, probably, does not understand and value own freedom – freedom of speech, choice, action. I thought it over for a moment and tried to object.

But that was then. And now I wouldn’t. November 30, 2013 – the violent beating of students during the protests in Kyiv. Indignation, anger, and non-understanding.

February 18, 2014 – “Berkut” attacked the Maidan. More than 30 persons perished, hundreds were brutally beaten. February 19 – the Verkhovna Rada did not gather the majority to officially condemn the violence.

February 22–23 – more than 80 people killed. Hundreds tortured and missing. March 18 – annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation.

April 2014 – invasion of Russian troops into the Ukrainian territory. Beginning of ATO.

Tens of killed and hundreds of wounded Ukrainian servicemen.

Today the neighboring state is encroaching on our integrity, independence, and freedom the value of which is now known to us.

This winter a moment came for the whole people that changed everything. The worldview, goals, ourselves”.

10 years have elapsed. Now these words have a different price and a special value for the generation of parents of those children.

Referring to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola again, it is worth voicing the ideals of early humanism: "...in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine". (Mirandola, 1956, pp. 7–8).

What determines a particular choice of a person or a society? Social myths create various social matrixes that establish proper conditions for the development of a totalitarian or democratic style of interaction. The tradition of efficient fight with lawlessness sustains the hope and the readiness for self-limitation (and thereby, the awareness of one's own knowledge limitations); it sustains the sense of one's strength and self-confidence. Failures in this fight inevitably activate totalitarian myths that influence reality and lead to cross-generational trauma.

In his paper 'Cultural ruptures and their consequences for mental health across generations' Michael O'Loughlin – the American psychoanalyst with Irish roots – refers to the history of Ireland and asks: "What happens to the populace who not only suffered catastrophic losses as a result of hunger and ill-treatment, but also lost its indigenous language and its ethnic heritage which included its encoded cultural identity, memory of ancestors, loss and suffering? If these losses remain alive, what happens to the pain? And if the pain becomes repressed,

can it turn into insanity, and can the defence against it take the form of depression, addiction or some other severe mental symptom which is going to appear much later?"^[1].

I repeatedly encountered similar reflections in my psychoanalytic practice, and now I would like to share some of my observations about one of such clinical stories.

At the beginning of this treatment, I had a great hope that work with this patient will ultimately reflect the idea expressed by the Polish theologian, philosopher, publicist and the first chaplain of "Solidarity": "Freedom does not get inside a human being as a result of reading books. Freedom comes after one meets the other free human being. When a slave meets a free man, he starts to hate him for this freedom or he becomes free himself" (Michnik, Tischner, Żakowski, 1995, p. 290).

Clinical material

Introduction

When we first met in January 2015, I got the impression that Anastasiya was a disoriented child who got lost in a big alien city. She seemed numb as a result of her fear when waiting for salvation, and I took care of her with a feeling of great responsibility and concern about her specific needs and complex anamnesis.

Anastasiya linked her illness to the fact that in 2013 she was "displaced" from city "N" (a megalopolis in the east of Ukraine) and moved to Lviv. Here she found herself in certain social isolation, felt alienated, isolated and disoriented. She missed her team from

1. Translator's note: This passage is not the original version, it was translated on the basis of the Polish-language quote presented in this paper.

“N”, she worried about her not speaking Ukrainian fluently enough, as she thought it was shameful not to know the language of the country one lived in. She spoke Russian with me, but she felt tense about it.

Slowly, anxiety started to increase in her; she had sleep disorders, she was not confident about her professional skills, she was depressed with thoughts about her inability, she had a decreased appetite, she felt tired, she felt “stones” in her upper stomach, she was irritated and tense inside. In February 2014, she started a pharmacological treatment with limited results. At the end of January 2015, the psychiatrist referred Anastasiya to the hospital.

Therapy referral

She came to our clinic in a state of severe depression with suicidal thoughts. After a severe phase of her illness, she needed to start psychotherapy. She was consciously seeking support and assistance in the alien city in general, not just during the period of being ill.

First qualification interview

After I had listened to her above-mentioned complaints – which were filled not only with hatred for the Ukrainian language, Lviv cobblestones, and the city’s historic architecture but also with intrusive thoughts about going back to N – I found myself experiencing contradictory feelings toward Anastasiya, as besides compassion, I felt surprised and outraged by her intolerance and contempt for things I found native for myself: my mother tongue and my home town.

I felt as if a disoriented, delicate, and helpless baby had burst into my arms, and perhaps

this was why I had to make endless efforts to keep this baby in my arms and not cause her pain.

Anastasiya seemed to be a very disciplined patient. She grew up in N as the only child in a loving and supportive family. She was breastfed up to the age of 5 months, and one year later her mother took her to kindergarten where she got pneumonia and needed some time to recover before returning to her group. According to my patient, she liked everything in the kindergarten, although children were forced to do many distressful things (to eat things they did not like, to sleep when they did not want to); children were shouted at, and punished. But she was always obedient so it did not happen to her.

When she was three, she developed arachnoiditis, and after intensive treatment, she came down with psoriasis. She developed states of dizziness and headaches at the age of 5.

In school (since she was 6) she was the class representative and one of the best students. She has pleasant memories about this period, although according to her classmates, their teacher shouted at them and sometimes hit them or put chewing gum in their hair. The she developed gastritis which has still been reoccurring since then.

She finished school and graduated from the university with honors. She is married. In Anastasiya’s opinion, they are a perfect match with her husband. They have a daughter who has been suffering from atopic dermatitis since she was 3 months old, and chronic bronchitis with asthmatic features since she was 3 years old.

Her father is a true-born Russian; he had moved to Ukraine with his parents.

He had been treated for depression for all his adult life.

Her mother is Ukrainian and comes from a village in the east of Ukraine; she spoke Ukrainian with her parents, and she spoke Russian with her daughter and husband. The mother's family survived the Holodomor (Great Famine) in 1932–1933, but her relatives never spoke about it. The family developed a cult of eating and a tradition of family feasts during which they never sang. Anastasiya often spent holidays in the countryside. She has warm and tender memories about it, but she always wanted to go back to N.

We worked twice a week in a therapeutic setting for six months, and the therapy was supplemented by a pharmacological treatment. Anastasiya needed to overcome her emotional isolation and this is why she wanted to maintain our relationship. She was capable of self-observation, she understood the metaphoric language and expressed her need to get my support, we agreed to start long-term therapeutic work.

She spent her summer holidays in N and at that time we continued our sessions on Skype. When she returned to Lviv, her state worsened again and I felt sad, embarrassed, and helpless because of the failure of her psychiatrist's, as well as our own, efforts. Then she told me about the situation which became a leitmotif of the next two years of analysis.

[Russian] So I remember when we once flew from Paris by Ukrainian airlines and the plane encountered clear air turbulence. It was terrifying. The plane was just falling down for a few minutes. And there was a very young stewardess there. She sat down on the armrest of the seat and repeated with horror: "I don't want to die, I have a little child". Tears came into my eyes. And then the airport didn't let us land for a long time, and we

were flying in circles above the airport. And when we finally landed, it was raining so heavily that on the way home in the taxi it seemed we were sailing through the highway".

I thought that my concern and despair could reflect the obstacles that made it difficult for Anastasiya to contain her and that she repeatedly encountered in her life. It was probably about her primary relationship's difficulties which led to her psychosomatic problems, narcissistic sensitivity, and uncompleted separation history.

The unconscious reason for referral

The unconscious reason for referral appeared to involve two conflicting wishes: on the one hand, to fall into the arms of someone capable of tolerating and sharing the unspeakable pain of her abandonment while taking full responsibility for her life; on the other hand, to grow up in the presence of a reliable supporting figure who would facilitate her autonomy and independence. These two positions seemed to constitute her unconscious conflict and desire.

The initial phase (the first phase) of the analysis

After a year of psychotherapeutic sessions, I decided to continue the work with this patient in the setting of four times a week on the couch.

Her phantasies, associations, memories seemed to be wreathed with fear. Anastasiya built "correct" association links but her language seemed to be frozen. Long, monotonous and wearisomely uniform descriptions of her suffering created a sense of a barrier behind which the whole scale of unrecognized feelings seemed to lurk. On the other hand, her dreams were vivid,

multilingual and seductive. She quickly realized that dreams were a fertile theme for our conversations, and she began to fill our tentatively expanding space with multiple incredible histories.

At the beginning of her analysis, Anastasiya told me about a dream in which she was standing behind the curtain in her parents' bedroom and observing thieves, dressed in black, taking big boxes with valuables out of her house. She was shaking with fear because her naked feet were sticking out from under the curtain and could reveal her presence. Since childhood she has had dreams in which somebody was persecuting her or wanted to take something valuable from her. She thought she should not trustfully share her thoughts nor feelings with others. She was also not confident about me, and at times when I commented the anxiety concealed in her speech, she used to respond with irony and compare me with her anxious mother who always expected danger.

Anastasiya responded intensely to our first breaks and her state always worsened over those periods. At that time, I interpreted it as a negative therapeutic reaction which not only made it impossible for her to go forward, but also increased her dependency on me and others. We spoke different languages, both literally (she spoke Russian and I spoke Ukrainian), and metaphorically; it was interesting to observe the way she used this linguistic context, as sometimes she added Ukrainian words, quotations or phrases. Anastasiya emphasised that it was important for her to feel my authenticity by way of my speaking Ukrainian because she felt pretty lost in her own identity. Ukrainian language as well as dreams sometimes

enhanced our mutual understanding, but sometimes they created a barrier in our getting closer to each other. It seemed that the language that had made Anastasiya so irritated after her moving to Lviv contained a secret that evoked almost a panic in her when she touched it. Her desire to preserve my Ukrainian language was contradictory to the reason for her coming to analysis – it was like coming closer to a person who should have evoked her irritation from the very start. And thus, before Anastasiya opened the door to her valuables, she had to make sure I would be kind, reliable, and stable. And I – as if pushed by some force – supported her a little excessively with my words, while also compensating her need for physical contact. It was only after some time that I grasped a feeling that I usually spoke about her and avoided meeting her.

I will go back again to the already mentioned Michael O'Loughlin's paper (O'Loughlin, 2020c):

"Jill Stauffer (2018) uses the term 'ethical loneliness' in order to describe the feeling of rejection experienced by such individuals as psychiatric patients when care institutions created for help do not listen to them. Although ethically-oriented listening aimed at solving personal and family problems is necessary, it is not enough for resolving the complex etiology of psychosis. And what should be done with monstrous residues of unsymbolised effects of forced migration, slavery, imprisonment in labor and concentration camps, mass rapes, physical and cultural genocides, wars, and many other heritages of colonialism and imperialism?"^[2].

2. Translator's note: This passage is not the original version, it was translated on the basis of the Polish-language quote presented in this paper.

At the end of the first year of this analysis, I started to experience an unpleasant feeling which I found very hard to tolerate and described for myself as ‘marshy’. It became the sign of a danger which we were both trying to control, actually getting stuck in the marsh. We tried to overcome it by our usual intellectual conversations about literature, language, politics and dreams. She – like a little girl – was hiding herself in this fairy-tale world which protected her from the danger of uncontrolled, unnamed feelings. In this phase of analysis, strong negative feelings (recurrent dreams, her linguistic alienation, and her distance toward me) were compensated and masked by the idealization of our ‘intellectual’ conversations. The distance marked by some melancholy was accompanied by deadness and superficiality of her experiences. She found it very hard to let herself have free associations because they could appear to be fragmentary and divided. Frantic anxiety of encountering a nameless dread concealed by the chest pain foreshadowed a mental catastrophe equal to madness.

“Khanna (2003) expresses particular concern about melancholic remnants of colonialism and encourages us to explore “the way in which the past unassimilated experience creates phantoms or ghosts which manifest themselves as a melancholic affect and image of a critical institution for the future.

Khanna refers to Abraham and Torok’s book *The Shell and the Kernell* (1994) and expresses a particular interest in the way in which such an ongoing melancholy leads to the demetaphorisation of affect. Abraham and Torok describe the process in which the phantom trauma blocks introjection capacity and leads to a more primitive form of incorporation in which trauma is felt

as an unassimilated wholeness. As a result, the trauma becomes walled up in crypts where it remains inaccessible for processing and is transferred to next generations. Thus, psychoanalysis has the potential not only to rescue the destroyed meanings but also to help to restore metaphorization capacity”.

When I analyzed linguistic difficulties that existed in my relations with Anastasiya, I imagined myself side by side with her, a frightened little girl with a Ukrainian-language identity, amidst the chaos of her thoughts and feelings which returned back to her childhood memories. To the place where she was left alone in a Ukrainian-speaking village in the east of Ukraine, missing her home and trying to talk about it in Ukrainian with her Ukrainian-speaking grandmother. Probably, this is how Ukrainian language which later expressed her feelings of abandonment and loneliness in Lviv became a trigger for her. To avoid it, she had to grow up and hold clever conversations about serious matters, while hiding her valuables in the dark corners of her soul and protecting herself from people who could overcome her defenses and make her confront her mad world of feelings. At that time, an illustration of her personal drama as well as her family’s and all nation’s tragedy could be taken from Remarque’s “emigration” story *The night in Lisbon*. It seemed that the greatest treasure that she was seeking herself was to find somebody who could listen to her and understand how horrible it was to suffer a loss.

In one of her papers, Judith Butler wrote:

“Perhaps the most difficult thing is to lose the very loss: somewhere, once, something was lost and no story can be told about it; no memory can bring

it back; a violated landscape of events which can be crossed only with a help of an illusory identity is looming”^[3].

The second phase of the analysis

After my coming back from holidays and a regular aggravation in her condition, my patient, while making sure of my unconditional support and stable presence in her life, started slowly showing more trust in me. However, she still tried to idealize our relationship in order to avoid fear and aggression in our relation.

She did everything she could to sustain our good relations, she tried to be a good and honest patient. But I felt some pressure while assisting her verbally too often, structuring our conversation and directing it, as it forced Maria to join my thoughts instead of formulating her own. She felt a little relieved and reassured when she was listening to my ideas, but at the same time, I was probably an overwhelming and even a smashing object for her that was destroying her Self.

Her humbleness was disarming me. At such moments I thought about Victor Frankl’s statement that in his opinion, two factors hamper individual development and limit the freedom of an individual: totalitarianism and conformism.

I was facing a dilemma. Should I tell Anastasiya about her efforts to make everything between us endlessly and constantly wonderful, and then hear how she accepts my ideas, politely as usual; or should I not tell her about it and rather wait until hidden contents become overt? Then I shyly tried to see how she was experiencing me – as a severe critic

and persecutor or as a person who accompanies her and tries to share all the torments of the journey with her.

The third phase of the analysis

The more valuable our relationship was becoming, the more she feared that it would burst just like a soap bubble. Anastasiya “added wood to the fire” in order to maintain my interest in her, and it was more and more difficult for her to restrain her “dirty” feelings which appeared out of nowhere; thus, she endlessly tried to make sure I was constantly present beside her and unconditionally accepting her.

As time passed, a “new” openness appeared together with the first words of criticism which enabled Anastasiya to state her identity and, at the same time, maintain her relationship with me without her usual fear of persecution, but with a new anxiety of something that seemed to have long been in need of disclosure.

Anastasiya fantasized that it was cool to be a hooligan and make mess in other people’s minds, and at the same time, she saw lack of control and a danger of destruction in playing.

She needed somebody capable of containing her and playing because only then it could be a play and rivalry. Yes, it would be a balance between play and destruction. And it demanded a sense of safety that would depend on the analyst.

Then I remembered reflections of a famous Polish sociologist, philosopher and essayist Zygmunt Bauman:

3. Translator’s note: This passage is not the original version, it was translated on the basis of the Polish-language quote presented in this paper.

"I learnt there are two major, necessary and inevitable conditions for worthy and gratifying life. These are safety and freedom. They cannot exist without each other. Safety without freedom is slavery, and freedom without safety is anarchy... The relation between them is a zero-sum game. You can gain more safety only at the expense of giving some part of your freedom away. And you can gain more freedom only at the expense of losing your safety, of increasing your uncertainty".

[Russian]: *Even first-year students blindly trust their teacher and later, when they have achieved something on their own, they come to have their own opinion.* These ironical reflections increased her hope, but on the other hand, her speaking about *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* indicated her feeling that something in her – something important, true, helpless and dangerous – remained hidden and could be stolen or revealed. Each of us could be a persecutor or a thief expecting to find something hidden, and somebody who hides oneself in order to keep these treasures, perhaps "dirty" and incomprehensible, on the periphery of her mental world.

Anastasiya still tried to master the situation, but probably she already "knew" that meeting her "dirty" feelings meant breaking our bond. Her dreams revealed the sense of upcoming catastrophe, but now she could reflect on her contradictory feelings – her astonishing need for trust and her fear which was blocking the already half-open door. In her next dream, Anastasiya was convinced that the war was far away, in the east of Ukraine, although the explosions were very close.

[Russian]: "I had a dream today, but the content was weird, it was as if I was staying in my home town. And, in the dream, I am teaching Germans who ask

me what the political situation looks like, what about the war; and I tell them that everything is calm, the war is taking place only in the East, but then there are some explosions. I remember I lost my confidence and German children immediately fell on the floor. I went out and it turned out that two explosions had been caused by some problems with wires. And when I was coming here, a girl in the minibus was saying something about explosions at the Egyptian airport, and it reminded me of this panic which can spread. But I wasn't that afraid in my dream. I don't think the war can come this quickly, it's only a coincidence."

It seems that for her, the realization of the panic was equal to failure. In July 2017, when she was watching a film about the ruined lives of so-called "displaced persons" from the East, Anastasiya again felt chest pain and it was probably a sign of her approaching "dangerous" feelings.

Then she told me about the Donetsk Airport where all that was left of the once beautiful place were skeletons of buildings and ruins. I felt like she was a child who had experienced a catastrophe – hunger, emotional coldness, destruction, abandonment... Death and insanity nearby... To speak with her about her mind which was so preoccupied with death and deteriorating just like Donetsk would mean to drown in a marsh – in the emotional abyss, her "desolation", her "nothing". Thus, it was so enormously difficult to realize that, in fact, the very analysis was so dangerous and threatening for Anastasiya since it was bringing her closer to her own emotions.

At one of her sessions, Anastasiya shared her reflections: [Russian]: *"In Regina Brett's book I've read... You don't need to regret the past, because it turns your attention away from the*

present. And my depression results from the fact that I couldn't leave the past aside. Now I can't say that I want to go back to N so badly... The past doesn't allow us to focus on the present, and it obstructs the future. Now I don't think about the past so intensely. Maybe, it does not make sense, or it is a kind of carefulness... In this chapter, a sort of resentment theme was also raised – “it gives us a chance to hope for the better future”. As if the past could be changed... The theme of resentment doesn't seem to be that close to me, but the relation between the present and the future...”.

Her pain passed away after our attempts to let her express her anxiety before separation. When the summer break was approaching, Anastasiya responded in her typical, slightly maniac manner, with sarcastic remarks about my excessive anxiety.

The fourth phase of the analysis

That autumn was the first time when Anastasiya did not experience her usual and expected worsening; for the first time, she had a positive dream about Lviv and our clinic; for the first time, she communicated with me only in her thoughts during the break.

When she was analysing our relationship, she interestingly described a dynamic of how she had been experiencing me in our communication – [Russian]: “*Firstly with fear, and later with fear and respect, and then with respect, and after that with respect without gratitude, and finally with respect and gratitude*”.

Anastasiya finished her analysis sooner than I expected. I regretted that she had not taken the chance fully, and at the same time, I trusted her intuitive sense of balance between the degree of her freedom and the degree of her safety.

“We must understand that both the patient the and analyst do wish to end the analysis, but alas,

there is no end unless the bottom of the trough is reached, unless the thing feared by the patient has been lived through. Indeed, the only way out is for the patient to have a breakdown (physical or mental) and this can work very well. However, this solution is not good enough if it does not include analytic understanding and insight on the part of the patient, and indeed, many of the patients I am referring to are respectable people who cannot afford to break down in the sense of going to a mental hospital” – this is how I was explaining Anastasiya's compromise decision to myself when saying goodbye to her – with D. W. Winnicott's words.

At the end of this story, I want to quote words from Anastasiya's compatriot Ihor Kozlovsky – a Ukrainian social activist, theologian, and writer, the author of over 50 scientific books, more than 200 papers, as well as collections of poetry and prose:

“Dignity, non-indifference, the right to freely choose one's internal position and its external representation, free choice of one's style of living, creativity and openness for other senses – all these things constitute my understanding of freedom. And internal freedom is more important than external one”.

These are words of a man who was raised and shaped in the Soviet system and who spent some time working in post-Soviet local government, but at the same time never concealed his libertarian position, as a result of which he took part in Euromaidan in Donetsk. His pro-Ukrainian position resulted in his capturing by terrorists from ORDLO (the occupied part of Donbas) on January 27, 2016, who kept him captive for about two years and tortured him repeatedly in cruel ways.

“I have my own senses of living further, going ahead. In my opinion, it is senses that turn a simple biological will into human

freedom. This is a necessary path from the reflective longing for freedom to the reflective experience of meaningful freedom of an individual who is responsible for his own freedom not only to himself but also to other human beings”, – this is what Ihor Kozlovsky wrote after he was released on December 27, 2017.

When thinking about the history of these two individuals who represent two different generations but come from apparently similar cultural backgrounds, I ask myself: why have they developed so different mental matrixes? What created conditions for creating a libertarian self-awareness in one of them and what obstacles appeared on the way to development for my patient?

Ihor Kozlovsky, when reflecting on such issues and analysing the impact of totalitarianism and conformism on personality development, wrote that a totalitarian system creates and controls the order “at the expense of killing the spirit, dulling the heart, and devastating the life”; in his opinion, totalitarianism puts limits on humans “from the top down”, and conformism is something a man gets used to “from the bottom up” when he loses his will and creativity; “conformism gets a man ‘trapped’ – by way of fearing the system, self-deception and conscious or unconscious lie – in mass consciousness and stereotypes of opportunism”.

During my work with Anastasiya I used to encounter fear, power, and dulling the heart not only in her, but also in myself. And no matter how much I longed to feel “free” next to my “un-free” patient, I eventually realized that it was just an attempt to maintain control over the sense of helplessness and loneliness in our weak efforts to get out of the trap of “un-freedom”.

Probably it was not only me but also my patient, or Ihor Kozlovsky, or many of you, who experienced something similar in the process of shaping our own personalities.

Where and how does each of us encounter or lose his/her chances for freedom?

Who knows, maybe the fact that Ihor Kozlovsky comes from the old Cossack line which had its roots as early as in 16 th–17th centuries, and that already in his childhood his imagination was saturated with family stories and myths about the role his ancestors had played in the Ukrainian nation’s state-building processes, played the decisive part in creating his idea of freedom and shaping his way of attaching meaning to his life activities?

Roman Kiś, Lviv philosopher, ethnolinguist, poet, and anthropologist who recently died, referred to Hannah Arendt’s (1968) essay *What is Freedom?* and wrote that neither freedom nor action is possible if human acts are not attached any sense to. Thus, both freedom and action are mediated by sensokinesis.

“This internal dialogue with oneself as well as an ‘order’ that a human being gives for himself require not just the will, but the courage to challenge those unconquerable circumstances which can paralyze the will as well” – he wrote in his essay ‘Freedom and movement of meanings’ which was published in an online daily journal *Zbrucz* in 2019.

Kiś also outlines important points which can limit one’s freedom:

1. our experience and gathered knowledge; cognitive limitation of structures of speech in the attempts to express nonverbal reality;

2. excessive heterogeneity and diversity of themes (as Germans say: “he who has some choice faces a problem”) as well as some pressure of dominative or social-prestigious meanings (*preferred meaning*);
3. the dominance of “We” over “I” which leads to the unification, standardization of perception and thinking;
4. conformism and fanaticism;
5. excessive regression and a so-called “return to the womb” (*“Regressum ad uterum”*), and the like.

Those – perhaps not new, but well formulated – ideas help me to understand my patient and millions of other people for whom the idea of freedom and the path to it still remains rather illusory and painful. In any case, it is always about the right to choose one’s own degree of freedom which results from the ethical compromises between oneself and the world and determines the share of responsibility for one’s own actions and sense development.

In the light of recent events, it may seem a little odd when I refer to the words of Russian philosopher and publicist Alexey Rubtsov, who as early as 2014 presented some ideas on the dynamics of Russian society:

“Again, a question arises: is there any end to the history of falling into the social wild and political archaism, or perhaps permafrost will always remain hidden under every future thaw? Even if freedom suddenly comes tomorrow,

every new act of Russian modernization, liberalization, etc. will be perceived for long as the next improbable and elusive excursion to the sanctuary of the future. And it is not the problem of some section of the route, but the problem of the very essence of the country’s movement through the history”.

Now his prophetic words sound particularly terrifying. They oddly resonate with the dreams and phantasies of my patient in her expectation of the catastrophe. In the historical, political, and psychodynamic context, these catastrophes have already taken place. The next catastrophe is happening right now. It is again in Ukraine which is located at the intersection of two mental matrixes – a totalitarian one and a democratic one; at the intersection of freedom and authoritarianism. But it seems that now it is a discourse not only about my country but about the whole liberal world.

In his paper ‘Putin’s war on the liberal order’ which was published in the magazine *Financial Times* Francis Fukuyama wrote: “Liberalism has been under assault for some time both from the left and from the right”^[4]. Freedom House in its 2022 paper *Freedom in the World* emphasizes that the level of global freedom has been decreasing for sixteen years not only as a result of the development of authoritarian countries such as Russia and China but also as a result of a shift toward populism, negation of liberalism and nationalism in countries which have had long-lasting liberal democracies such as the United States and India.

I wrote my contribution amidst the great war with Russia for the right of my nation to live

4. Translator’s note: This passage is not the original version, it was translated on the basis of the Polish-language quote presented in this paper.

and to live freely. I did not stop working, and there was a moment when I was feeling as if encapsulated in my cooperation with my patients and it seemed salutary to me. I tried to monitor certain psychodynamic phenomena of my colleagues and patients and noticed that many of them subconsciously opted for a similar strategy. That reminded me of notes from the diary of Anne Frank who described years she had spent locked in her hiding place as the time spent in the best and safest place in the whole world. The only possible illusory compromise – that’s what I thought when I was analyzing a somewhat maniac mood of my therapist-friend who kept working online in the basement of her house in the occupied city and argued that it was the safest hiding place for her.

Wilfred Bion (1940) in his paper ‘The ‘War of Nerves’: Civilian Reaction, Morale and Prophyllaxis. The Neuroses in War’ wrote about it in the following way:

“The war of nerves is the personal attack on a person. If a man is able to cut himself off from the massive movement of the nation which is fighting in the war, he will probably avoid some results of this attack. But then, from the enemy’s perspective, he will be expelled from the ranks. But he may also remain a member of his society and then, the more emotional bonds among members of the society, the more strongly a man will feel that the attack is directed personally against him. It is only when he remains a member of his community and avoids being affected by the enemy’s attack in a way the enemy would want to, that we

can say that psychologically, he stays in the ranks”^[5].

Millions of temporarily displaced Ukrainians are staying in the ranks thanks to this psychological strategy. Thanks to all non-indifferent people from the whole world, who have created for us, and still maintain, the possibility to oppose the enemy mentally. It is difficult to overestimate what the world is doing now for Ukraine. Since today it is essential to have somebody who can tolerate and share our unspoken horrors of threats, losses, and loneliness.

The war is still going on, but I believe in our shared victory. And I hope that each of us will preserve in ourselves a spirit of freedom not only to fight but also to live.

I will finish my text with the words of Vasyl Stus – a Ukrainian poet of the sixties, a political prisoner from Donetsk region:

You are God. Hence, as the God of yourself, knead your clay, until you feel flint under your hard skin. This is the best time for you to do that – Create yourself!

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5. Translator’s note: This passage is not the original version, it was translated on the basis of the Polish-language quote presented in this paper.



ZVENYSLAVA KECHUR, Doctor of Medicine and psychotherapist, psychoanalyst of the Ukrainian Psychoanalytic Society (UPS), member of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), training therapist and supervisor certified by the Ukrainian Council of Psychotherapy (UCP/ECPP) and the Ukrainian Psychoanalytic Society (UPS), group psychoanalyst accredited by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP).

Specialization: group and individual psychoanalytic and psychodynamic psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis.

Editor of translations of articles and books on psychoanalysis, including August Rüß, *Lacan: An Introduction to Structural Psychoanalysis*, and Timo Storck, *Psychoanalysis and Psychosomatics*.

Currently working as a psychotherapist at the St. Paraskeva Medical Center (Lviv) and maintaining a private psychoanalytic practice (Lviv).

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Dignity and liberty in a turbulent world

Myroslav Marynovych

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Abstract:

This article aims to provide a more detailed examination of contemporary political and state processes, as well as Ukraine's place in the world as a messenger of the idea of the struggle for freedom and dignity. It explores current trends in the United States and globally, including tendencies toward imperialism, the cult of personality, and dehumanization, and seeks to analyse the challenges that the Ukrainian people and the international community will face. As an alternative to the degradation of values and the dehumanization of the individual, the article proposes the consolidation of society around morality and human dignity.

Keywords:

human dignity, freedom, Ukraine, moral values, democracy, war, fear, responsibility, social contract, spiritual freedom.

Let me first say a few words about the situation in Ukraine. If I wanted to depict the 35-year history of Ukraine's modern statehood, I would use the famous ancient sculpture 'Laocoön' but give it a more optimistic title: 'Overcoming fatalistic predestination'.

Thus, for years, Ukrainian society has been entangled and paralyzed by the 'serpents' of our communist legacy: corruption, selective justice, oligarchic economy, vestiges of outdated administrative procedures, and paternalistic instincts. Moreover, the Ukrainian Laocoön has now been openly attacked by the octopus of Russian imperialism, whose undisguised aim is the complete suffocation not only of Ukraine's independence, but of its very identity. All this would inevitably have led to a fatal end, were it not for the periodic spiritual resurgence of the Ukrainian people.

Thus, all three Ukrainian revolutions – the Revolution on Granite in 1990, the Orange

Revolution in 2004, and the Revolution of Dignity in 2013–14 – as well as the surge of patriotism at the start of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022, were true revolutions of the spirit. Of course, they had political consequences, as they thwarted Russia's plans for Ukraine. But these events were, above all, spiritual revolutions, because as a result, Ukraine rose each time to higher levels of liberty and affirmed its national dignity, thereby gaining ever greater national agency.

I would like to begin my further reflections with the value that Ukrainians named one of their revolutions: human dignity. The affirmation by Ukrainians of their personal and national dignity is phenomenal – and I find it hard to recognize in my compatriots today that subjugated people of the 1970s, who were collectively referred to as 'Homo Sovieticus'. Back then, I, a dissident opposing the authoritarian nature of the Soviet regime,



was met with a gesture of disapproval: ‘*Why on earth have you joined the dissidents?!*’ After all, ‘*you can’t break through a wall with your forehead*’. Today, I see before me a formidable fighter, capable of significantly paralyzing the Kremlin’s octopus.

However, having long dreamed of a return to the values and norms of European civilization, and having made titanic efforts to bring this about, Ukrainians are watching with alarm as Western civilization itself finds itself in a precarious state. Throughout 2025, we have witnessed democracy being attacked in its very stronghold, the United States – and attacked from within. And it remains to be seen whether the notorious American institutions will withstand this onslaught of destroyers. As if from some volcano, magma of ancient and seemingly half-forgotten approaches has poured into the political reality of the US, and consequently the world: the cult of power, imperialist ambitions, great-power arrogance, the humiliation of the weaker, and economic blackmail.

In defending their right to independence, Ukrainians have, ever since the days of the dissident movement, sought to engage with the democratic West in the language of values familiar to it: liberty, human and national dignity, solidarity, cooperation, and so on. It was upon these values, which the secular world termed universal democratic values, that the international security order was built, and we wished to fit into this order as an independent and democratic state.

These days, it sometimes seems as though both these discourses are losing their persuasive power. The vocabulary of values has been supplanted by that of national (if not personal) self-interest, and the international order that prevailed until recently has been shattered first by Putin and now

by Trump. Trump’s rhetoric has come to bear a striking resemblance to Putin’s – one need only recall Trump’s territorial claims on Greenland. Of course, I do not wish to overlook the remarkable solidarity and assistance coming to Ukraine from many of the world’s democracies. We are extremely grateful for it! However, the current negative trend could become contagious, infecting more and more countries. After all, who wants to be a fool and miss their chance?!

However, we are dealing here with a clear case of amnesia: the world has forgotten that national self-interest inevitably leads to conflict, and this ultimately results in a Hobbesian war of all against all. The Second World War is a striking example of this. America and certain other democracies will soon have to see for themselves the validity of this conclusion. And what is to be done by us, Ukrainians?

Ukraine’s task

How will Ukraine respond to the described geopolitical and civilizational challenges? There are two possible scenarios.

One possibility is that this turbulent current will sweep us along, and we too will abandon our values, succumbing to the language of selfishness. There’s no doubt about it: we must look after our own interests, and I feel a real sense of relief when President Zelenskyy rejects Russian ultimatums that the American side is prepared to accept. To give up here would be the greatest folly. However, it is no less important not to get carried away by the language of national self-interest, which may seem very cool at first, but could turn into a fatal defeat for us.

Firstly, we have not yet established ourselves on the world stage to the extent that we can

arrogantly ‘demand our rights’. That is why I strongly caution Ukrainian society against taking Trump, Orbán, or Fico as role models. And secondly, I do not believe that a world order established by powerful predators will last for long. Sooner or later, one of these tough ‘alpha males’ will want to be tougher still, for that is the nature of the predator. Let us just recall how Hitler and Stalin – also two ‘alpha males’ – first amiably divided Europe between themselves, and then one of them wanted to be tougher than the other. So, in the current case, too, a global conflict would be inevitable.

Another option is to steadfastly adhere to the principles that inspired us to defend our land and upon which we have built our national stance. I am convinced that Ukraine possesses certain characteristics – such as its mosaic identity – that preclude the successful implementation of authoritarian rule. Such an attempt would inevitably lead to the collapse of Ukraine. Therefore, we should, on the contrary, consolidate society around the values that make up the DNA of the human race. Only when we are united can we defend our national interests in a world of national egoisms. As proof of this, let us at least listen to Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky in his message “Our Statehood”:

“The Motherland can be such a powerful and reassuring source of happiness for all citizens only when it is not a mere artificial construct pieced together from diverse and disparate parts, but an organism akin to a monolith, that is, a body animated by a single spirit, which develops from its inner vitality, compensates for its internal shortcomings, and is by nature healthy, strong, and conscious of its goals—not only a material but also a moral body.” (Sheptytsky A., 1899–1944)

Please note: what matters to us is not only state or national sovereignty, but also moral

agency. Ukraine must strive to the very end to be an island where universally recognized values are honoured and defended. And this moral agency can only be ensured on the basis of the DNA of the human race – the universal human values I mentioned at the beginning, or, to put it simply, Christian values.

And how can the world in general restore the shattered international order?

An interesting pattern has long been observed: the more values decline in society, the closer we are to a complete reset of the value system. Or to the demise of that society, if there are no people within it willing to fight to establish new rules for coexistence. Such is God’s “thermodynamics,” by which He periodically cleanses the earth “of all impurity.”

Let us recall that remarkable statement by the Apostle Paul: “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” (Rom. 5:20). It seems that the increase in sin is evidence that somewhere in an invisible epicentre, grace is intensifying. This is, in fact, a kind of “spiritual thermodynamics,” where the omnipresent and seemingly all-conquering entropy is overcome by the creation of a new order.

This conclusion applies not only to Ukraine but to the entire global order. For it can only be renewed if the value matrix upon which it is to be built is first renewed. So, let’s take a look at the elements that make up this matrix.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, human dignity is considered to be one of the most fundamental elements of this framework. Today, dignity is regarded as a universal

value, but its threefold roots lie in European civilization.

First, human dignity stems from the Judeo-Christian tradition, which holds that every person is created in the image of God: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27). And since the person is the image of God, this person has the dignity of a person – that is, is not “something” but “someone.” A person cannot be a means or an instrument for the realization of various plans. Only the recognition of human dignity makes the comprehensive development of every person possible. And only the recognition of human dignity makes society accountable.

Second, dignity stems from the ideals of Greek democracy, which placed personal liberty above all else. And third, dignity is rooted in Roman law, which demands equality before the law for all. Figuratively speaking, Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome are the three pillars upon which European civilization was built, with its central value – human dignity.

So, the world’s democracies don’t need to “reinvent the wheel” or come up with some newfangled values. All they really need to do is hit the “Refresh” button...

Now let’s return to Ukraine and ask ourselves a few simple questions:

1. Is human dignity respected here in Ukraine?

I agree with the position articulated by Ms. Larysa Didkovska in her presentation at the EAP symposium, which states that war is the most dehumanizing factor today. Yet, paradoxically, it also provides the foundation for affirming human dignity. And we have ample evidence of this. As for the Soviet era, the fact

that human dignity was not respected back then was evident in everything. It is enough to start with the countless human rights violations (in particular, the use of psychiatry for punitive purposes. And may the great figure in the fight against punitive psychiatry, Semen Hluzman (BBC News Ukraine, 2026), whom we buried yesterday in Kyiv, rest in peace, and end with the interminable queues at government offices where there are no chairs (even in hospitals!), or with the need to run around to dozens of offices just to get a single document.

That said, I wouldn’t be telling the whole truth if I didn’t mention the positive changes. For example, at most banks today, you’ll find a machine at the entrance where you can take a number. Then you sit down in a chair like a person of dignity and calmly wait for your number to appear on the display, after which you approach the open window. Equally positive is the “one-stop shop” principle in government agencies, where you no longer have to run around to dozens of offices for signatures. So, the more examples we have of respect for human dignity, the further we move away from the Soviet era.

2. Can a person lose their dignity?

Within the Christian tradition, dignity is a gift from God to every soul He has created, it is not something we have earned. It is not our private property, but God’s. Therefore, no earthly authority and no other person have the right to encroach upon it or deprive us of it. This was precisely one of the main slogans of the Revolution of Dignity.

Dignity is often understood within the Christian tradition as a gift from God and therefore as something a person cannot ultimately lose. This is a very difficult concept to grasp, because our language includes the expression

“an unworthy person (a person without dignity).” And people often say with conviction, *“He has lost his human dignity.”* However, one can lose honour, because honour is something a person acquires. Dignity, on the other hand, is a gift from God, and therefore it is always with a person.

But I am not blind, and I understand very well that, of course, when we do evil, we dim our dignity. We diminish it. It shrinks and becomes invisible. But that does not mean there is no way back. A person can always do good to another, and their dignity immediately shines with great radiance. I experienced this more than once during my imprisonment.

To illustrate this point, I will recount a story that happened to me in the late 1970s. In the Soviet penitentiary system, there was a strict ban on *‘the practice of any religious worship’*, which also included a ban on the use of the Bible. As, whilst in prison, I desperately needed to reconcile my newfound faith with Christian doctrine, I went on hunger strike, demanding to be allowed to use the Bible. I maintained this hunger strike for 20 days, but when I began to experience heart problems, I ended it. To punish me, the camp’s KGB officer ordered me to be sent on a transfer through transit prisons, during which prisoners were given half a loaf of bread and a herring per day. I ate very carefully, but even so, after two or three hours, I had no food left, and after such a long fast, I was desperate to eat.

And so they brought me to one of these transit prisons and led me into a cell where there were three criminal offenders. I greeted them and sat down by the door. And these three lads looked at me, exchanged silent glances, took their loaves of bread out of their rucksacks – and placed them in front of me. I thanked them in astonishment, began to eat the bread, with tears of emotion nearly welling up in my

eyes, and I prayed to God: *‘I do not know what crime these lads have committed, but forgive them for this bread they have shared with me.’*

So, by committing a criminal offense, these lads had, of course, tarnished their human dignity. But as soon as they did a good deed, that dignity immediately shone with a bright light!

And if anyone remains unconvinced by my assertion that dignity can be squandered but not lost, then I will compare it to another gift from God, as it is suggested within the Christian tradition, the voice of conscience. A person can drown out that voice, and then we say that such a person is unscrupulous. But they cannot get rid of that voice – it will always speak within them. For this is God’s privilege to speak to a person’s soul through their conscience.

3. What are the greatest threats to human dignity?

Every person strives to protect themselves, their family, and their homeland. Any threat to this security breeds fear – of authority, of money, of those who are stronger and more influential; fear of war and defeat. And, most importantly, fear is what most quickly traumatizes our dignity, because it forces us to remain silent in the face of evil, to turn a blind eye to crimes and injustice, to be afraid to speak out against unworthy behaviour, pretending that we neither see nor hear.

There is a story about a horrific experiment reportedly carried out by the Nazis. They wanted to punish two concentration camp prisoners by burying them alive. But they ordered two other prisoners to do it. They began to bury them, but at some point, they couldn’t bear the moral pressure and refused. Then the Nazis dug up the half-buried prisoners and ordered them to bury those who had

refused. And they did it. What drove them? The savage, animal fear of death that they had experienced. Thus, fear paralyzes the weak and turns them into playthings to be manipulated by criminals. It is no coincidence that Benjamin Franklin, the founding father of the U.S. Constitution, once said: *“Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety”*. (Franklin B., 1775). Replace the word “Liberty” here with “values,” and you get the formula for human downfall. For Evil, having sensed the scent of our fear and taken a liking to our compromises, will inevitably escalate its demands. This can be easily seen in the circumstances of the current war. Throughout those gruelling four years, many statements from our Western partners simply exuded fear of the threats from a nuclear blackmailer. And Putin relished this, further stoking that fear.

4. What should you do when your dignity is deliberately undermined?

This is a common pattern in life: in response to humiliation, we try to humiliate the offender – and as harshly as possible. The attempt to humiliate us seems to free us from our moral obligations toward our neighbour. I have to defend myself, so I let go of all restraint and humiliate the offender in return. I’ve seen this a million times; it’s our form of self-defence. But in reality, we are sorely mistaken. For by humiliating someone, we become like our own offenders and tarnish our own dignity and honour.

An example of such a misguided response to injustice in our history was the so-called “dumpster lustration” following the Revolution of Dignity. The injustice was obvious: many officials continued to demand bribes, completely ignoring the expressed desire during the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity

(also known as the Maidan protests) to put an end to this social scourge. People’s patience finally snapped, and filled with Maidan enthusiasm, they began forcibly and publicly throwing those officials into dumpsters. And that’s where things went wrong. Because what did we tell Yanukovych on the Maidan? *“It wasn’t you who gave us dignity, but God. Therefore, you have no right to strip us of our dignity.”* And what is forcibly throwing an official into a dumpster? It is a humiliation of his human dignity. But it was not we who gave him dignity, but God. Therefore, we dare not deprive an official of his dignity. We can bring him to justice, take him to court, but – we must not humiliate him.

So let us not undermine the dignity of any ethnic, religious, social, or gender group, and let us not remain silent when others do so in our presence. Disrespect for human dignity rebounds to undermine the dignity of both the offender and the one who remains silent. It is no coincidence that the Book of Leviticus in the Bible states: *“thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour and not suffer sin upon him”* (Lev. 19:17).

In the camp, prisoners’ dignity was undermined in countless ways. But from that very first incident, I developed an important form of self-defence: *“They won’t succeed in humiliating me!”* It’s like a protective shield that you mentally put up around yourself, and it helped me maintain my composure and dignity.

5. Does a person who admits guilt and repents humiliate themselves? What happens to their dignity in that case?

Traditionally, people here believe that admitting guilt and repenting are forms of self-humiliation. Here are two typical

scenarios, for example: (1) you rebuke someone – what do you hear in response? Of course, an aggressive response, sometimes even cursing; (2) the cynicism of so-called “entitled driver,” whose criminal negligence causes people to suffer. They are convinced that taking responsibility for one’s actions means being a “sucker.” And your success supposedly depends on how well you’ve managed, by hook or by crook, to avoid punishment.

Conclusion: We can change governments as often as we like, but unless we put an end to this irresponsibility, we will continue to live in hell.

I once had to convince a high-ranking politician, whose reputation had been tarnished, that it would be better for him to publicly acknowledge his mistakes and apologize. I even drafted the statement myself. But it was never read aloud. By the way, I recently read that early in Trump’s career, one of his advisors – a lawyer – advised him: “*Never admit you were wrong!*” It seems Trump truly believed this. Because it’s commonly thought that when a person admits a mistake, they hand their rivals a trump card. But in reality, those who apologize and repent only grow in the eyes of others! In doing so, a person affirms their dignity and ceases to be bound by the mistake they made; a human being becomes free.

A failure to understand this is the reason why there is such a difference between Ukraine and Europe when it comes to admitting guilt and resigning. In Europe, this is standard practice: if the government makes an obvious mistake, a politician or official takes responsibility and resigns. At least that was the case in the pre-Trump era. And what do we have in Ukraine? Unfortunately, a typical Ukrainian politician

will never take responsibility. Most likely, he will lie and wriggle out of it until the very end and will never voluntarily resign. Because he believes that doing so would mean losing his dignity.

6. Does a state lose its dignity when scoundrels come to power?

In my view, unfortunately, yes. Because a state’s dignity is not bestowed by God, but is created by people. And when politics falls into the hands of unworthy people, such a state begins to be despised. The blame for this lies not only with politicians, but with all citizens. For, as Lord Acton asserted, “*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*” We bear responsibility for the corruption of our government to the extent that we allow it to be absolute.

Liberty

We haven’t really talked about liberty, yet this topic has been implicitly present all along. For only a spiritually free person can assert their dignity. And here, the word ‘*spiritually*’ is key. In the Gulag, I realized time and again that it is possible to be a powerless prisoner, whose physical liberty is restricted, yet still feel free. What is more, I can testify that, during the five months I spent in solitary confinement, I was never as spiritually free as I was then. Liberty is, above all, a state of mind.

Unfortunately, in post-communist society, there are many spiritually scarred people who are convinced that their liberty is synonymous with lawlessness and arbitrariness. They refuse to acknowledge that true liberty is responsible liberty. For a person has not only rights, but also duties – towards God and towards others.

There is another important aspect of liberty. The late Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, His Beatitude Liubomyr Huzar, is credited with what may at first glance seem like a curious statement: *'Liberty is simply the right to do good'* (Huzar, L., 2013). And every person – just like every nation – does this in their own way. Every nation has its own spiritual landscape – we feel this clearly when we move from one country to another. And we need freedom in order to be able to sustain this spiritual landscape, to protect it from all forms of trauma. I am reminded of a historical fact: after annexing Ukraine, Muscovy destroyed church books in Ukrainian monasteries. Why? Because they contained elements of the Ukrainian spiritual field, and Muscovy sought to impose its own.

People do not become free overnight. It would be a mistake to imagine that the transition from the state of a slave to that of a free and dignified person can happen in an instant. There is a certain distance between *'wanting'* and *'being'*. The aforementioned Liubomyr Huzar also coined another memorable phrase: *'Let people grow up in liberty'* (Marynovych. M., 2017). And the verb *'to grow'* implies a duration of time. In other words, the transformation of a slave into a free person is somewhat akin to childbirth: a child is not born through the mother's efforts alone. Yet there is no pessimism in this. Let us simply be able to see not only the contractions that seem endless, but also that marvelous path of civic maturation which Ukraine has, after all, traversed since independence. As has already been said, the struggle for independence, the Ukrainian Maidans, and then the spiritual resurgence following Russia's invasion were fantastic stages in that growth of Ukrainians in freedom. Much has been achieved – but the journey is not yet complete: we must continue to grow in freedom!

In conclusion

A war is going on. The Ukrainian nation is making an enormous sacrifice today, but it is not in vain. This sacrifice can and must become the fruitful seed from which the transformed destiny of our land will spring. But this task will require one further essential prerequisite – the transformation of the Ukrainians themselves. We need the tablets of the new law of our lives – or rather, we (in the words of my camp comrade Zenovij Krasivskyj) must ask God to return to us *'the broken shards of His holy, desecrated tablets'*. Well, it seems that the Lord is now returning these shards of broken tablets to us...

It is generally believed that changing the social contract requires at least two generations. This notion, of course, stems from the forty years Moses spent leading the Israelites through the desert. So, it seems we still have another five years to go before we can shake the dust of slavery from our feet. But there is a catch here: it is not about the magic of the number forty. Between the exodus from Egypt and the entry into the Promised Land, an event took place that was of fundamental importance for the future life of the biblical people: Moses ascended Mount Sinai and received the Tablets of the Covenant from God. To put it in modern terms, the people received the foundations of a new social contract, by which they were henceforth to live. Of course, they did not accept it immediately, but in the end it was precisely this new social contract that finally severed the umbilical cord by which the people were bound to the land of their slavery.

So, we have been wandering through our own deserts for over thirty years now, yet we have still not reached Mount Sinai. Nor has the Constitution become our tablets of the law. That is why we must renew our country on the

basis of a fundamentally different concept of state governance and a new ‘*social contract*’. And both these changes must spring from new ideas and age-old spiritual values. And everything must be crystallized by the ‘*critical mass*’ of those who, in memory of the innocently slain, will renounce the dishonour of recent times.

However, I have often noticed that when people speak of a ‘*critical mass*’, they are referring primarily to some political force that will come to power and transform society from above. Well, it would be ridiculous of me to deny the importance of wise and moral leadership of the state. However, when it comes to leading society out of a state of moral crisis, I do not believe in laws. They are important for maintaining the existing level of public morality, but laws cannot make a person righteous. As Václav Havel wrote in his work “The Power of the Powerless”, ‘*Laws are merely a tool; the keys to a dignified life lie in morality*’ (Havel, 2014). And I shall take the liberty of drawing an interesting theological parallel here.

In the Bible, we read about a significant conflict of worldviews that arose between Jesus and Judas. Judas sincerely believed that Jesus was the King of Israel. But if you are a king, then behave like a king: dress appropriately, align yourself with the powerful of this world, and come to an understanding with the

Sanhedrin. And when you are recognized as king, you will be able to enact the necessary laws and purify society from above. Jesus, however, did exactly the opposite. He came into conflict with those in power because he did not believe they were capable of change. After all, did Herod change simply because John the Baptist had rebuked him? Instead, Jesus went to the common people and, there, almost at the very bottom of society, sought out those capable of changing the values underpinning their behaviour. In this way, he brought God’s people together – or, as we might say in modern terms, formed the backbone of a new social organism.

In my opinion, Ukrainians should take on this work in the spirit of Jesus. They must seek out those in their midst who are capable of changing their values. Such people do exist – many honest people have grown tired of living by the laws of a time that was, until recently, immoral. We must become a spiritual support for them, join hands and build new networks of trusting solidarity. Learn to trust one another, do not betray one another at the slightest opportunity, abide by the accepted rules of the game, and expand the circles of solidarity. And, as the famous saying, attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, goes,

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

About the author:

On 9 November 1976, the Ukrainian Helsinki Group began its work in Kyiv; Myroslav Marynovych was one of its founding members. The group set itself the aim of monitoring the extent to which human rights guaranteed by the Final Act of the Helsinki Accords were being upheld in Ukraine, which was part of the USSR at the time. This was one of the first attempts in the then USSR to establish a non-underground group, and so the founding members included their surnames and addresses in their Declaration. Of the Group's first ten members, eight were arrested at various times, and two were expelled from the USSR. Myroslav Marynovych was arrested on 23 April 1977 in Kyiv and, as he did not repent, was sentenced to the maximum term: seven years' imprisonment in strict-regime labour camps and up to five years' exile. He served his prison sentence at the Kuchino-36 camp in the Urals (Russian Federation) and was exiled to a remote village in the Aktobe Region (Kazakhstan). In late March 1987, on the initiative of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR pardoned around 200 political prisoners of the time, including Myroslav Marynovych, who subsequently returned to Ukraine. In 1991, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine rehabilitated him.

Myroslav Marynovych has worked at the educational institution now known as the Ukrainian Catholic University since 1997. From 2000 to 2025, he served as the university's vice-rector. Today, he serves as an adviser to the rector of the UCU and as president of the Institute of Religion and Society at the same university.

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Гідність і свобода в умовах світової турбулентності

Мирослав Маринович

*Виступ на симпозіумі Української спілки психотерапевтів та
Європейської асоціації психотерапії УКУ, 20 лютого 2026 року*

Анотація:

Ця стаття має на меті надати більш детальне дослідження сучасних політичних і державних процесів, а також місця України у світі як посланця ідеї боротьби за свободу та гідність. Вона досліджує сучасні тенденції у Сполучених Штатах і світі, зокрема тенденції до імперіалізму, культу особистості та дегуманізації, а також прагне проаналізувати виклики, з якими зіткнувся український народ і міжнародна спільнота. Як альтернатива деградації цінностей і дегуманізації особистості, стаття пропонує консолідацію суспільства навколо моралі та людської гідності.

Ключові слова:

людська гідність, свобода, Україна, моральні цінності, демократія, війна, страх, відповідальність, суспільний договір, духовна свобода.

Дозвольте спочатку сказати кілька слів про ситуацію в Україні. Якщо б я хотів зобразити 35-літню історію новітньої державності України графічно, я би використав відому античну скульптуру «Лаокоона», тільки надавши їй оптимістичнішу назву: «Долаючи фаталістичну приреченість».

Так, українське суспільство роками обплутують і зневоджують «змії» нашого комуністичного спадку: корупція, вибіркове правосуддя, олігархічна економіка, рудименти відсталих управлінських процедур, патерналістські інстинкти. До того ж на українського Лаокоона відверто тепер напав і спрут російського імперіалізму, неприхованою метою якого є повне удушення не лише незалежності України, а й самої її ідентичності. Все це неминуче призвело б до летального кінця, якби не періодичні духовні піднесення українського народу.

Так, усі три українські революції – Революція на граніті 1990-го, Помаранчева революція 2004-го і Революція Гідності 2013–14 років, – а також патріотичне піднесення напочатку повномасштабної війни Росії проти України 2022 року були справжніми революціями духа. Звичайно, вони мали політичні наслідки, оскільки перекреслили російські сценарії для України. Але ці події були передусім духовними революціями, оскільки в результаті Україна щоразу підносилась на вищі ступені свободи й утверджувала свою національну гідність, набуваючи в результаті цього щораз більшої національної суб'єктності.

Свої подальші рефлексії я хотів би почати з тієї цінності, іменем якої українці назвали одну зі своїх революцій, а саме: з гідності людини. Утвердження українцями своєї особистої та національної гідності є феноменальним – і мені важко



впізнати в нинішніх моїх земляках той упокорений народ зразка 1970-х років, що його окреслювали збірним іменем «гомо советікус». Тоді мені, дисиденту, показували пальцем біля скроні: мовляв, чого ти приєднався до дисидентів?! Адже «лобом стінку не проб'єш». Сьогодні передо мною потужний борець, який спроможний суттєво паралізувати кремлівського спрута.

Однак, тривалий час мріючи про повернення в європейську цивілізацію цінностей і правил і докладаючи титанічних зусиль, щоб це здійснити, українці з тривогою спостерігають за тим, в якому небезпечному стані перебуває сама ця західна цивілізація. Упродовж 2025 року ми стали свідками того, як демократію було атаковано в самому її бастіоні, у Сполучених Штатах, – й атаковано зсередини. І це ще питання, чи встоять славнозвісні американські інституції перед цією навалюю руйначів. Ніби з якогось вулкану, в політичну реальність США, а відтак і світу вилилась магма давніх і, здавалося, напівзабутих підходів: культу сили, імперіалістичних зазіхань, великодержавної зверхності, приниження слабших, економічний шантаж.

Обстоюючи своє право на незалежність, українці ще з дисидентських часів намагалися говорити з демократичним Заходом звичною для нього мовою цінностей: свободи, гідності людини й нації, солідарності, співпраці тощо. На цих цінностях, що їх секулярний світ називав загальнодемократичними, виріс міжнародний безпековий порядок, у який ми й хотіли вписатися як незалежна й демократична держава.

Сьогодні часом складається враження, що обидві ці мови втрачають свою

переконливість. Лексику цінностей заступила лексика національних (якщо не особистих) егоїзмів, а чинний донедавна міжнародний порядок розтрошили спершу Путін, а тепер і Трамп. Мова Трампа стала разюче нагадувати мову Путіна – досить згадати лише територіальні зазіхання Трампа на Гренландію. Ясна річ, я не хочу зігнорувати ту дивовижну солідарність і допомогу, яка надходить до України з багатьох світових демократій. Ми надзвичайно вдячні за неї! Однак нинішній негативний тренд може стати заразним та інфікувати все нові й нові країни. Бо ж кому хочеться бути лохом і прогавити свій шанс?!

Проте тут маємо справу з виразною амнезією: світ забув, що національні егоїзми неминуче зазнають зіткнення, і це врешті завершується гоббсівською війною всіх проти всіх. Друга світова війна – цьому яскравий приклад. У справедливості цього висновку Америці й деяким іншим демократіям ще доведеться невдовзі переконатися. А як бути нам, українцям?

Завдання України

Як відреагує Україна на описані геополітичні й цивілізаційні виклики? Можливі два варіанти.

Один варіант – що цей турбулентний потік нас потягне за собою, і ми також зречемося цінностей, перейшовши на мову егоїзмів. Слів нема: про свої інтереси дбати треба, і я відчуваю справжнє полегшення, коли Президент Зеленський відкидає російські ультиматуми, на які готова погодитись американська сторона. Упокоритись тут було би найбільшою глупотою. Проте не менш важливо і не захопитися мовою національних

егоїзмів, яка напочатку може виглядати дуже круто, але може обернутися для нас фатальною поразкою.

Бо, по-перше, ми ще не набули у світі такої суб'єктності, щоб арогантно «качати свої права». Тому я дуже остерігаю українське суспільство перед тим, щоб брати Трампа, Орбана чи Фіцо собі за зразок. А по-друге, я не вірю, що світовий лад, який встановлять сильні хижакі, втримається надовго. Рано чи пізно хтось із цих крутих «альфа-самців» захоче бути крутішим, бо це в природі хижака. Згадаймо лише, як Гітлер і Сталін – також два «альфа-самці» – спершу люб'язно поділили між собою Європу, а тоді один із них захотів бути крутішим за іншого. Отож і в нинішньому випадку загальний світовий конфлікт був би неминучим.

Інший варіант – це стійко триматися тих принципів, що покликали нас захищати свою землю і на яких ми досі вибудовували свою національну позицію. Я переконаний, що Україна має такі особливості – наприклад, мозаїчну ідентичність, – які виключають успішне втілення силового автократизму. Така спроба неминуче призвела б до розпаду України. Тому варто, навпаки, консолідувати суспільство довкола тих цінностей, які складають ДНК людського роду. Лише тоді, коли будемо єдині як кулак, зможемо ми у світі національних егоїзмів обстояти свої національні інтереси. На доказ цього, прислухаймося бодай до того ж Митрополита Андрея Шептицького з його послання «Наша Державність»:

Такою могутньою та запевнюючою щастя всім громадянам організації може бути Батьківщина тільки тоді, коли не буде цілістю, зложеною

штучно з різних і різnorodних частин, а подібним до моноліту організмом, себто тілом, оживленим одним духом, що з внутрішньої життєвої сили розвивається, доповнює внутрішні браки і з природи є здоровим, сильним, свідомим своїх цілей не тільки матеріальним, а й моральним тілом. (Митрополит Андрей Шептицький)

Зверніть увагу: нам важлива не лише державна чи національна, а й моральна суб'єктність. Україна має до кінця намагатися бути острівцем, у якому шанують загальновизнані цінності і вміють обстоювати їх. А забезпечити цю моральну суб'єктність можна лише на основі ДНК людського роду – згаданих мною на початку загальнолюдських, а простіше кажучи – християнських цінностей.

А як світові загалом відновити зруйнований міжнародний порядок?

Уже давно зауважено цікаву закономірність: **що більше в суспільстві занепадають цінності, то ближче ми стоїмо до моменту повного перезавантаження ціннісної платформи. Або ж до смерті цього суспільства, якщо в ньому не знайдуться люди, готові в борні задати нові правила співжиття.** Такою є Господня «термодинаміка», якою Він періодично очищує землю «від усякої скверни».

Згадаймо оту дивну формулу ап. Павла: «А де збільшився гріх, там зарясніла благодать» (Рим. 5, 20). Схоже, збільшення гріха є свідченням того, що десь у невидимому епіцентрі йде інтенсивне нарощення благодаті. Це власне і є своєрідна «духовна термодинаміка», коли

всюдисуща і начебто всепереможна ентропія долається творенням нового порядку.

Цей висновок стосується не лише України, а й усього світового порядку. Бо його можна буде оновити лише за умови, якщо спершу буде оновлена ціннісна матриця, на якій він має вирости. Тож погляньмо, з яких елементів вона формується.

В юдео-християнській традиції чи не найголовнішим елементом у цій матриці є гідність людини. Гідність сьогодні вважається універсальною цінністю, але її триєдине коріння – в європейській цивілізації.

По-перше, гідність виростає з юдео-християнської традиції, якій характерно вважати кожну людину створеною за образом Бога: «І сотворив Бог людину на свій образ; на Божий образ сотворив її» (Бут. 1,27). А оскільки вона є образом Божим, то й має гідність особи, тобто є не «щось», а «хтось». Людина не може бути засобом чи інструментом для реалізації різних планів. Лише визнання гідності людини уможливорює всебічний розвиток кожної особи. І лише визнання гідності людини робить суспільство відповідальним.

По-друге, гідність виростає з ідеалів грецької демократії, яка ставила особисту свободу вище за все. І по-третє, гідність закорінена в римському праві, яке вимагає рівності усіх перед законом. Образно кажучи, Єрусалим, Афіни і Рим – ось три кити, на яких постала європейська цивілізація з її центральною цінністю – гідністю людини.

Отож світовим демократіям не треба «відкривати колесо» й формувати якісь

новомодні цінності. Все, що фактично треба зробити, це натиснути кнопку «Refresh»...

А тепер повернімось до України й поставмо собі кілька простих запитань:

1. Чи шанують у нас в Україні людську гідність?

Я згоден із п. Ларисою Дідковською, що найбільш дегуманізуючим чинником сьогодні є війна. Але вона ж і парадоксальним чином дає основу для утвердження гідності людини. І ми маємо численні докази цього. Якщо ж говорити про минулий радянський час, то той факт, що гідність людини тоді не шанували, можна було підмітити з усього. Досить почати з численних порушень прав людини [зокрема з використанням психіатрії з каральною метою. І хай з Богом спочиває велика постать у боротьбі про каральної психіатрії – Семен Глузман (BBC News Ukraine, 2026), якого ми поховали вчора в Києві] – і закінчити довжелезними чергами в державних установах за відсутності стільців (навіть у лікарнях!), чи з потреби обігати десятки кабінетів за однією довідкою. З грубими порушеннями прав людини в Україні, на щастя, вже покінчено, тоді як на дрібніші рудименти радянського минулого ви можете натрапити ще й сьогодні.

Поряд із тим, я розминувся б з істиною, якби не відзначив позитивних змін. Ось, для прикладу, в більшості банків сьогодні ви знайдете при вході апарат, через який ви фіксуєте номер своєї черги. Тоді сідаєте в крісло як гідна людина і спокійно чекаєте, коли на табло з'явиться номер вашої черги, після чого підходите до вільного віконця. Так само

позитивним є принцип «єдиного вікна» в державних установах, коли вам не треба оббігати за підписами десятки кабінетів.

Отже, що більше в нас є прикладів пошанування людської гідності, то більше ми віддаляємося від радянської епохи.

2. Чи може людина втратити свою гідність?

Оскільки гідність дарована Богом кожній створеній Ним душі, тому вона, гідність, не є нашим надбанням. Це не наша приватна власність, а Божа. А тому жодна земна влада ані жодна інша людина не сміють на неї зазіхати і не можуть її позбавити. Саме це й було одним із головних гасел Революції Гідності.

Так-от, оскільки гідність це – Божий дар, то людина не може цю гідність втратити. Це дуже складний момент для розуміння, бо є ж у нашій мові вислів «негідна людина». А ще в народі переконано кажуть: «Він втратив свою людську гідність». Проте втратити можна честь, бо честь – це те, що набуто людиною. А гідність дарована Богом, а тому – з людиною завжди.

Але я не сліпий і добре розумію, що, звичайно ж, чинячи зло, ми затемнюємо свою гідність. Ми її принижуємо. Вона зіщулюється і стає невидимою. Але це не означає, що шляху назад немає. Людина завжди може зробити добро іншій людині, і її гідність одразу спалахує великим сяйвом. Я досвідчив це не раз під час ув'язнення.

І якщо когось усе-таки не переконує моє твердження, що гідність можна занепасти, але не втратити, то я порівняю це

з іншим Божим даром – голосом сумління. Людина може заглушити той голос, і тоді ми кажемо, що така людина безсвісна. Але вона не може позбутися того голосу – він промовлятиме в ній завжди. Бо це – Божий привілей промовляти до душі людини через її сумління.

3. Які є найбільші загрози для гідності людини?

Кожна людина прагне захистити себе, свою родину і свій край. Загроза цій безпеці породжує страх – перед владою, перед грішми, перед сильнішими та впливовішими; страх перед війною і поразкою. І, що головне, страх найшвидше травмує у нас гідність, бо змушує нас мовчати перед лицем зла, закривати очі на злочини й несправедливість, боятися дорікнути за негідну поведінку, роблячи вигляд, що не бачимо і не чуємо.

На одній конференції я почув розповідь про жахливий експеримент, що його якось зробили нацисти. Вони захотіли покарати двох в'язнів концтабору і покарати тим, щоб закопати їх живцем. Але доручили це зробити іншим двом в'язням. Ті почали закопувати, але в якийсь момент не витримали морального тиску і відмовилися. Тоді нацисти викопали тих напівзакопаних і наказали їм закопати тих, що відмовилися. І ті це зробили. Що ними керувало? Дикий, тваринний страх смерті, що його вони пережили. Отож страх паралізує слабких і перетворює їх на іграшки, якими шарпають злочинці.

Недарма батько-засновник американської конституції Бенджамін Франклін якось сказав: «Той, хто жертвує основоположними свободами заради тимчасової безпеки, не вартий ні свободи, ні

безпеки» (Franklin B., 1775). Замініть тут слово «свобода» на «цінності», і ви отримаєте формулу людського падіння. Бо Зло, відчувши запах нашого страху та вподобавши собі наші компроміси, неминуче піде на ескалацію своїх вимог. Це можна легко побачити за обставинами нинішньої війни. Упродовж тих її виснажливих чотирьох років із багатьох заяв наших західних партнерів просто линув страх перед погрозами ядерного шантажиста. І Путін цим насолоджувався, ще більше той страх роздмухуючи.

4. Що робити, коли твою гідність свідомо принижують?

Стандартна практика життя така: у відповідь на приниження ми намагаємося принизити кривдника, причому якнайдошкульніше. Спроба принизити нас неначе звільняє нас від моральних обов'язків щодо ближнього. Я мушу захиститися, а тому відкидаю всі гальма і принижую кривдника у відповідь. Я бачив це мільйони разів, це наша форма самозахисту. Але насправді ми гірко помиляємось. Бо, принижуючи когось, ми уподібнюємося до своїх кривдників і плямуємо свою гідність і честь.

Прикладом такої помилкової реакції на кривду в нашій історії була так звана «смітнікова люстрація» після Революції Гідності. Кривда була очевидною: багато чиновників й далі вимагали хабарі, цілковито ігноруючи виразне прагнення Майдану покінчити з цим суспільним лихом. Ось нерви в людей не витримали, і, сповнені майданного ентузіазму, вони почали тих чиновників насильно і прилюдно викидати у смітники. І тут стався збій. Бо що ми казали на Майдані Януковичу? «Не ти нам давав гідність, а Бог. Тому ти не смієш нас позбавляти

нашої гідності». А що таке насильне викидання чиновника у смітник? Це – приниження його людської гідності. Але ж не ми давали йому гідність, а Бог. Тому ми не сміємо позбавляти чиновника його гідності. Ми можемо притягнути його до відповідальності, подати на нього до суду, але – не принижувати.

Отож самі не принижуймо гідності будь-якої етнічної, релігійної, соціальної чи гендерної групи і не будьмо терпимі, коли в нашій присутності це роблять інші. Зневаження гідності людини б'є рикошетом по гідності як самого кривдника, так і того, хто змовчав. Недарма у Книзі Левіт у Біблії мовиться: «Конче вияви неправду свого ближнього, і не понесеш гріха за нього» (Лев. 19, 17).

У таборі гідність в'язня принижували численними способами. Але з першого випадку у мене виробилась важлива форма самозахисту: «Ім не вдасться мене принизити!» Це ніби захисний екран, який ти подумки одягаєш на себе, і це допомагало зберегти спокій і гідність.

5. Чи принижує себе людина, яка визнає провину і кається? Що тоді відбувається з її гідністю?

Традиційно наші люди переконані: визнавати свою провину, каятися – це принижувати себе. Ось, для прикладу, дві типові сценки: (1) ви комусь робите зауваження – що у відповідь чуєте? Звичайно ж, агресивну відповідь, часом навіть лайку; (2) цинізм так званих «водіїв-мажорів», через злочинну недбалість яких страждають люди. Вони переконані, що нести відповідальність за свої дії – це бути «лохом». А твоя

успішність буцімто залежить від того, наскільки ти зумів правдами і неправдами уникнути покарання.

Висновок: ми можемо міняти скільки завгодно урядів, але якщо не змінимо цієї безвідповідальності, то й далі житимемо в диявольстві.

Мені довелося одного разу переконувати високопоставленого політика, авторитет якого похитнувся, що йому краще публічно визнати свої помилки і вибачитися перед людьми. Я навіть написав відповідний текст. Але він ніколи не був зачитаний. До речі, я недавно прочитав, що на початку професійного шляху Трампа його дорадником був один юрист, який повчав Трампа: «Ніколи не визнавай, що ти помилився!» Здається, Трамп справді у це свято повірив. Бо вважається, що коли людина визнає свою помилку, то дає козири в руки своїх суперників. Але насправді той, хто вибачається і кається, лише зростає в очах інших людей! Цим самим людина утверджує свою гідність і перестає бути залежною від вчиненої помилки, стає вільною.

Нерозуміння цього є причиною, чому є така різниця між Україною і Європою в питанні визнання провини і поданням у відставку. В Європі це звична практика: якщо влада робить якусь очевидну помилку, якийсь політик або чиновник бере на себе відповідальність і подає у відставку. Принаймні так було у дотрампівську епоху. І що маємо в Україні? На жаль, типовий український політик ніколи не візьме на себе відповідальність. Скоріш за все, він буде брехати й викручуватися до останнього і ніколи добровільно у відставку не піде. Бо вважає, що тоді він втратить свою гідність.

6. Чи втрачає свою гідність держава, коли до влади приходять негідники?

На жаль, так. Оскільки гідність державі дав не Бог, а її творять люди. І коли політика стає справою негідних людей, таку державу починають зневажати. Вина за це лягає не лише на політиків, а й на всіх громадян. Бо, як твердив лорд Актон, «кожна влада розбещує – а абсолютна влада розбещує абсолютно». Ми несемо вину за корумпованість нашої влади тією мірою, наскільки дозволяємо їй бути абсолютною.

Свобода

Досі ми начебто не говорили про свободу, але насправді ця тема підспудно була присутня. Бо виявити свою гідність може лише духовно вільна людина. І тут слово «духовно» є визначальним. В ГУЛА-Гу я мільйони разів переконувався, що можна бути безправним в'язнем, фізичну свободу якого обмежено, але при цьому почуватися вільним. Мало того, я можу засвідчити, що, перебуваючи п'ять місяців у камері-одиначці, я ніколи не був настільки духовно вільним, як тоді. Свобода – це передусім стан твого духу.

На жаль, у посткомуністичному суспільстві є дуже багато духовно травмованих людей, які переконані, що їхня свобода дорівнює всездозволеності і сваволі. Вони не хочуть визнати, що справжня свобода – це відповідальна свобода. Бо людина має не лише права, а й обов'язки – перед Богом і людьми.

Є ще один важливий аспект свободи. Покійному Главі УГКЦ Блаженнішому Любомирові Гузару належать, на перший погляд, дивні слова: «Свобода – це лишень

право творити добро» (Гузар, Л.). І кожна людина – як і кожен народ – робить це по-своєму. Кожен народ має своє духовне поле – ми це чітко відчуваємо, коли переїжджаємо з країни і країну. І свобода нам потрібна для того, щоб мати можливість підтримувати це духовне поле, обергти його від усяких травм. Мені пригадується історичний факт, як після приєднання до себе України Московія знищувала по українських монастирях церковні книги. Чому? Бо вони містили елементи українського духовного поля, а Московія прагнула нав'язати свої.

Вільними людьми стають не відразу. Хибно було б уявляти собі, що перехід від стану раба до стану вільної й гідної людини може бути одномоментним. Між «хотіти» і «бути» є певна дистанція. Згаданому Любомирові Гузару належать ще одні знаменні слова: «Дайте людям вирости у свободі» (Маринович, М.). А дієслово «рости» передбачає тривалість у часі. Іншими словами, перетворення раба у вільну людину чимось нагадує пологи: дитина не народиться з одного лише зусилля матері. Проте в цьому нема песимізму. Просто вміймо побачити не лише перейми, які видаються безконечними, а й той дивовижний шлях громадянського змужніння, що його з часу незалежності Україна все-таки пройшла. Як уже було сказано, боротьба за незалежність, українські Майдани, а тоді духовне піднесення після вторгнення Росії були фантастичними етапами отого зростання українців у свободі. Пройдено багато – але ще не ввесь шлях: треба зростати у свободі далі!

На завершення

Йде війна. Українська нація сьогодні платить величезну жертву, але вона не

є даремною. Ця жертва може і повинна стати тим плодоносним зерном, з якого постане преображена доля нашої землі. Але це завдання потребуватиме ще однієї необхідної передумови – преображення самих українців. Нам потрібні скрижалі нового закону нашого життя – точніше, нам (за словами мого табірному побратима *Зеновія Красівського*) *треба випросити в Бога, щоб Він повернув нам «розбиті черепки Його святих осквернених скрижалів»*. **Що ж, схоже, що ці черепки розбитих скрижалів Господь нам зараз і повертає...**

Вважається, що для зміни суспільного договору потрібні мінімум два покоління. А певність ця походить, звичайно ж, від Мойсеевих сорока років, упродовж яких він водив ізраїльський народ по пустелі. Отже, щоб ми струсили зі своїх підшов порох рабства, нам буцімто залишилося ще років п'ять. Але є тут одна заковика: справа не в магії числа сорок. Поміж виходом із Єгипту і входженням у землю обітовану відбулася подія, яка мала засадниче значення для подальшого життя біблійного народу: Мойсей зійшов на гору Синай та отримав від Бога скрижалі Завіту. Кажучи сучасною мовою, народ отримав засади нового суспільного договору, за яким йому відтоді треба було жити. Звичайно, прийняли його не відразу, але врешті-решт саме новий суспільний договір остаточно відрізав пуповину, якою народ був прив'язаний до країни свого рабства.

Так-от, досі ми вже понад тридцять років проблукали по своїх пустелях, але на свою гору Синай так і не зійшли. І Конституція нашими скрижалями не стала. Тому ми й повинні оновити нашу країну на основі якісно іншої концепції управління державою і на основі нового «суспільного договору». А обидві ці зміни мають вирости

з нових ідей та одвічних духовних цінностей. І все має **увіразнити** «критична маса» тих, хто в пам'яті про невинно убієнних зречеться донедавнього безчестя.

Проте я вже не раз помічав, що коли кажуть про «критичну масу», то мають на увазі передусім якусь політичну силу, яка прийде до влади і трансформуватиме суспільство згори. Що ж, було би смішно з мого боку заперечувати значення мудрого й морального керівництва держави. Проте коли йдеться про виведення суспільства зі стану моральної кризи, я не вірю в закони. Вони важливі для підтримування здобутого рівня суспільної моралі, але зробити людину праведною закони не можуть. Як написав Вацлав Гавел у своєму творі «Сила безсилах», **«Закони – лише інструмент, ключі гідного життя – у моралі»** (Havel, 2014). І я дозволю собі навести для цього одну цікаву богословську паралель.

Свого часу між Ісусом і Юдою розгорівся важливий світоглядний конфлікт. Юда щиро вірив, що Ісус – це цар Ізраїлю. Але якщо ти цар, то й поведься як цар: одягнися відповідно, тримайся сильних світу цього, порозумійся з синедріоном. І коли Тебе визнають за царя, Ти зможеш

прийняти належні закони і згори очистити суспільство.

Ісус же діяв прямо навпаки. Він увійшов в конфлікт із властью імущими, бо не бачив, що вони можуть змінитися. Адже чи змінився Ірод від того, що до нього волав Йоан Предтеча? Натомість Ісус пішов до простих людей і там, ледь не на соціальному дні, шукав тих, хто був спроможний змінити ціннісну основу своєї поведінки. Так він ліпив до купи Божий народ – або, як би ми сказали сучасною мовою, творив становий хребет нового суспільного організму.

Отже, українцям слід виконати цю Ісусову роботу. Шукати у своєму оточенні тих, хто може змінити свою ціннісну основу. Такі люди є – багатьом чесним людям набридло жити за законами донедавнього аморального часу. Стати для них духовною опорою, взятися разом за руки і творити нові мережі довірливої солідарності. Вчитися довіряти одне одному, не зраджувати одне одного за найменшої вигідної нагоди, дотримуватися прийнятих правил гри і нарощувати кола солідарності. І, як сказав *Махатма Ганді*, **«стати тією зміною, яку хочете здійснити!»** (*Махатма Ганді*).

Про автора:

9 листопада 1976 року в Києві розпочала свою роботу Українська Гельсінська група; Мирослав Маринович був одним із її засновників. Група поставила собі за мету відстежувати, якою мірою в Україні, яка на той час була частиною СРСР, дотримувались прав людини, гарантованих Прикінцевим актом Гельсінських угод. Це була одна з перших спроб у тодішньому СРСР створити невідпільну групу, тому засновники вказали у своїй Декларації свої прізвища та адреси. З перших десяти членів групи вісім були в різний час заарештовані, а двоє були виключені з СРСР. Мирослава Мариновича заарештували 23 квітня 1977 року в Києві і, оскільки він не розкався, засудили до максимального терміну: сім років ув'язнення у таборах суворого режиму та до п'яти років заслання. Він відбував тюремний термін у таборі Кучино-36 на Уралі (Російська Федерація) і був засланий до віддаленого села в Актюбінській області (Казахстан). Наприкінці березня 1987 року за ініціативою Михайла Горбачова Верховна Рада СРСР помилила близько 200 політичних в'язнів того часу, серед яких був Мирослав Маринович, який відтак повернувся до України. У 1991 році Верховна Рада України реабілітувала його.

Мирослав Маринович працює в навчальному закладі, який нині відомий як Український католицький університет, з 1997 року. З 2000 по 2025 рік він обіймав посаду проректора університету. Сьогодні він є радником ректора УКУ та президентом Інституту релігії та суспільства того ж університету.

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Editorial

MARZENA RUSANOWSKA

Hope Emerging From Conflict

PATRICIA HUNT FRSA

**“Надія, що народжується з конфлікту”
ІСТОРІЯ СИМПОЗИУМІВ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ТА
ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО ПСИХОТЕРАПЕВТИЧНОГО АЛЬЯНСУ**

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