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PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF "HUMAN NATURE" IN THE CURRENT PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF JONATHAN HAIDT'S RESEARCH ON FOUNDATIONS OF MORALITY

INTRODUCTION

Many issues in the contemporary social discourse concerning ethical problems are confronted with universality or with the individual character of human morality. The central problem seems to be a definition and usage of the term "human nature", which is rooted in the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical tradition.

In the philosophical discourse, the early modern era brought a shift in understanding of the notion of "human nature". The metaphysical discourse, on which anthropology and subsequently the ethics of that time were built, was subjected to serious criticism. The turn to the subject, completed by Kant, showed that metaphysics as a science is not feasible and that human knowledge, including knowing oneself, remains within the limits of our own subjectivity. This shift in thinking has determined the way we understand the term "human nature". For Gianni Vattimo, an Italian contemporary philosopher, "human nature" is a powerful metaphysical concept that enables power-laden interventions in the realm of ethics and law (concerning sexual minorities, etc.).[1]

On that basis, many postmodern philosophers have rejected this term, even if they accepted the existence of some universal human traits. However, the term "human nature" is not linked to these traits. We may well speak of some biological constants common to all human beings but these are not final since they are dynamic

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[1] Cf. D. Hruška, *Duchovný rozmer konca doby veľkých metafyzických narácií*, in: R. Šoltés, D. Hruška, P. Dancák (eds.), *Disputationes quodlibetales. Duša a Európa*, Prešov: Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove, Gréckokatolícka Teologická Fakulta 2012, p. 20.

and subject to evolutionary development. Hence, they do not meet the criteria of the metaphysical term "human nature".

Examining the theory of social constructivism, we come across a widely accepted opinion that there are no common biological determinants shared by all people. Social constructivists claim that humans are primarily formed through their social interactions. Human biology linked to "anthropological constants" is also subordinate to being formed within a social community. This way of thinking is not new. Empiricists argued in a similar manner. John Locke, for instance, claimed that a child is born pure, without innate ideas and tendencies and acquires moral competencies exclusively through upbringing and education.

Today, however, the thesis is rather enfeebled. In the context of psychology and sociology, there have been numerous discussions about certain innate structures that determine and condition the development of a human being. That includes also the sphere of morality. More emphasis is being placed on the bio-psycho-socio-cultural unity of a human person, which is dynamic to some extent, but at the same time conditioned by our biological and psychological dimensions.[2]

 Cloninger's typology of personality distinguishes between temperament and character traits. The *temperament traits* are inherited inclinations towards certain emotional reactions and learning which are responsible for automatic emotional reactions observable from the early stages of an individual's life. They are rather stable over time. There are four basic dimensions of temperament: novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward dependence, and persistence. On the contrary, the *character traits* are less stable and only partially affected by temperament. Character is developed during ontogenesis and shaped by learning. There are three dimensions of character: self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence.[3]

The following text attempts to analyse the possible application of the term "human nature" in the works of Jonathan Haidt, a leading American social psychologist, whose principal line of research includes psychological foundations of morality.

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[2] Cf. M. Zaviš, *Spirituálna neuroveda ako nová paradigma interreligiózneho dialógu*, in: K. Kardis, G. Paľa (eds.), *Globalizácia a náboženstvo*, Prešov: Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove, Gréckokatolícka Teologická Fakulta 2011, p. 165.

[3] Cf. R. Hrubý, I. Ondrejka, G. Nosáľová, *Základy teórie osobnosti podľa C. R. Cloningera*, „Psychiatria" 14 (2017), no. 2-3, p. 115-118.

1 RESEARCH ON MORALITY AND "HUMAN NATURE" IN JONATHAN HAIDT

Jonathan Haidt received a degree in Philosophy from Yale University and a PhD in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. He researches the psychology of morality within the framework of social psychology. In his ground-breaking book *The Righteous Mind* (2012), Haidt claims that in the research on morality he found the key to understanding the reasons why people are often divided by politics and religion and why we are emotionally concerned with the type of justice that is convinced about its own truth. Human nature does not involve only morality, but also moral reasoning, criticality and a tendency to denounce. According to Haidt, it is a purely human trait and it is a result of our evolutionary development.[4]

Haidt starts by saying that many researches in the field of moral psychology and human behaviour have been conducted in Western universities through interviewing students. Would the findings of such researches be valid in other cultures too? Haidt draws attention to a study claiming that the vast majority of research is carried out on a small subset of the human population – members of Western culture who are educated and come from a wealthy, industrialized and democratic country. And yet these people are the least typical and the least representative sample of people. It is also the least suitable group of people for any research that aims to provide a generalization about human nature.[5]

This can be also said about philosophy. European philosophers have been developing moral systems that were meant to be universal, but they were still based on the principles of Western culture. Perhaps we fell into the trap of an *abstract* and, as Kant put it, *unity-seeking judgement.*[6] We cannot ignore cultural differentiation when we wish to explore the human mind.

Haidt began researching morality against a backdrop of continuing dispute over universal morality between psychologists and anthropologists. While some researchers stressed fundamental universality, others pointed to differences in interpreting something as right or wrong across various cultures. Anthropologist Richard Shweder focused his research on the moral understanding of US Americans and Indians. His findings revealed that people in the USA base their decisions predominantly on the principle of harm, whereas Indians rely on a variety of determinants in their decision-making.

Shweder's approach, which inspired Haidt and enabled him to translate the findings of anthropology into a language of psychology,[7] lies in presenting subjects

4   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, Praha: Nakladatelství dybbuk 2013, p. 16-18.
5   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 132.
6   Cf. I. Kant, *Kritika čistého rozumu*, Bratislava: Pravda 1979, p. 251.
7   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 38.

with the *invented stories and moral dilemmas* that violate certain taboos, but are completely harmless.[8] The American sample of respondents included children and adults from Chicago and the Indian sample consisted of members of Brahman culture. They responded to various behavioural cases. Some responses differed whereas some were identical. Haidt decided to examine the foundations of moral emotion and moral reasoning and establish the origin of morality. Is it purely innate; is it taught or is it a combination of the two? Considering the last one, is there a relation between intuition and cognition? If so, to what extent do they affect one another? To what extent do the things we have learnt influence what is innate, or vice versa? Haidt conducted his research in America, Mexico and India.

Haidt invented several stories that were to provoke moral emotions. All of these stories violate certain taboos. Although the violations might be regarded as offensive, they were harmless to others. These stories prompted a respondent to adopt a moral stance – either condemn or agree with the acts described in the stories. The trained interviewers then asked a set of probing questions to determine the reasons behind the subject's response (why does he/she consider certain acts unacceptable). The majority of the respondents perceived even the harmless taboo violation as wrong, regardless of the circumstances, even if the violation causes no harm to anyone.[9]

Haidt understood that the responses prompted by the invented moral dilemmas and situations in real life are not necessarily the same. He aimed to establish to what extent the difference between intuition, which is based on emotions, and reasoning is evident in situations when we are faced with a moral dilemma. Although there is a certain aspect of cognition in emotions, mature moral judgement without emotions is not possible as evidenced by case studies about people in whom the part of the brain responsible for processing of emotions is damaged.

1.1 REJECTION OF A DUALISTIC PERCEPTION OF THE HUMAN BEING

In his research, the American psychologist Jonathan Haidt showed that reason is, by far, not as independent of emotions as we often wish to think. Let us just think about how difficult it is for us to choose from six or seven options (capacity of short-term memory). Decision-making is closely linked with the feelings which this or that option arouses in us. The researches of the neurosciences also confirm these findings. Haidt introduces the research of a well-known neuroscientist Antonio Damásio published under a symbolic title *"Descartes' error"*. René Descartes' (1596 – 1650) dualism is a known fact. He believed that the mind (*res cogitans*) is a separate substance independent from our body (*res extensa*). This dualism often

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8   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 41.
9   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 49.

appeared in spiritual traditions that assumed that our mind can control our body and emotions and can be independent from emotions. Plato (427 – 347 BCE) even placed the body and mind as opposites and claimed that the human life should strive to free the soul from the body and passions. Plato's assumptions, however, were false.[10]

Damásio observed that patients who suffered damage to one particular part of the brain – the ventromedial prefrontal cortex - show an unusual specific set of symptoms. Although the basic feelings remain normal, there has been a severe damage of higher feelings. It means that if we, for instance, showed them pictures with amusing or terrifying images they would not feel anything. Their ability to distinguish between good and evil remained fully functional and their IQ did not drop. They were capable of reasoning about everything, but their emotions associated with social feelings were disrupted. As soon as they returned to their everyday private lives, they had great problems with decision making. They made unwise decisions or they were not able to arrive at any decision at all. Oftentimes, they became alienated from their families and employers and their lives became more complicated.[11]

A similar example, often presented in the scholarly literature, is a story of a railroad construction foreman Phineas Gage from 1848. Gage was trying to place a blast into a prepared hole with the help of an iron rod. There was an unexpected explosion and the rod penetrated his skull. The rod was driven through the front part of his brain and permanently damaged both his left and right prefrontal cortex. Gage survived the accident, but his injuries damaged his ability to make decisions and process emotions. Although he recovered physically, there were considerable changes in his personality. Before the injury, he was a responsible, intelligent, and socially mature individual. Gage's intellect, learning capacities and memory were not affected following the accident, but he soon changed. From being a composed, modest, ambitious, and patient man, he became an irreverent, hot-headed and unstable person often using profane language. His behaviour showed some characteristics of "*acquired sociopathy*", that is a social behaviour disorder. Dr. John Harlow, Gage's doctor wrote: "*His physical recovery is good, I would say he recuperated. The equilibrium or balance, so to speak between his intellectual faculties and animal propensities, seems to have been destroyed. He is fitful, irreverent, indulging at times in the grossest profanity, which was not previously his custom, manifesting but little defence for his fellows, he hates corrections or advice when it conflicts with his desire… Previous to his injury, although untrained in the schools, he possessed a well-balanced mind, and was looked upon by those who knew him as shrewd and persistent in executing all his plans of operation. In this regard his*

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    [10] Cf. M. Zaviš, *Spirituálna neuroveda ako nová paradigma interreligiózneho dialógu*, in: K. Kardis, G. Paľa (eds.), *Globalizácia a náboženstvo*, p. 165.
    [11] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 60n.

mind was radically changed, so decidedly that his friends and acquaintances said he was no longer Gage."[12]

The truth is that Phineas Gage is just one of the cases and it would not be possible to jump into quick and generalising conclusions. Such observations, however, show that our reasoning is rather restricted without the involvement of emotions. Figuratively speaking, if the head does not cooperate with the heart it can hardly solve tasks of its own competence. Emotions also become the source of cognition and processing of information and hence influence our way of thinking. For instance, walking down a dark street and hearing somebody following us triggers a response of "fight or flight", our pulse rate increases and our pupils enlarge so that we can take in as much information as possible. Our subconscious mind enables us to survive in the world that requires processing a vast amount of information. Intuition and emotions usually come first, followed by reasoning.

1.2 EMOTIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON RATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

The researches show that when assessing some data to which we bear an emotional relationship, our brain automatically takes into consideration our desires, dreams and wishes. Our judgements are then influenced by how we feel and what we want to achieve.[13] The same happens during a discussion when someone contradicts us. Oftentimes, it is an emotional defensive response that comes first and not the logical evaluation of the presented arguments. When the discussion touches issues related to morality, politics or religion, our mind switches to the "fighting mode". Our mind is divided into two parts, while one of them comprises automatic and subconscious processes (emotions), the other includes controlled processes (reason).

In his studies, Haidt compares them to the image of *the elephant* (automatic processes) and *the rider* (controlled processes)[14]. He became inspired to use the analogy when conducting research in India. The elephant represents the emotional side, whereas the rider represents reason. But who controls whom? When saying that the human is a rational being we cannot forget to add that he is also an emotional being. Undermining emotionality when arguing or making a life-changing decision could come at a price. Haidt is right when he says that it is not the rider who is in charge of leading the elephant. He can only make some adjustments. Emotions often work on the subconscious level and are triggered sooner than we even manage to become aware of them rationally. Even if we try to be rational and in control, our judgement is always affected by our emotional impulses. For

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[12] Cf. F. Koukolík, *Nejspanilejší ze všech bohů. Eseje*, Praha: Karolinum 2012, p. 49-50.
[13] Cf. L. Mlodinow, *Vědomí podvědomí*, Praha: Argo 2013, p. 250.
[14] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 72n.

example, as soon as *the elephant* meets, sees or hears another person he begins to either lean towards or turn away from that person within the first hundredth of a second. This significantly determines what happens next. Intuition comes first.[15]

Controlling our elephant is very arduous work and you need to be trained in it. If we underestimate it, we could find ourselves in a place where the elephant leads us and we will search for rational justifications for every path and bend in our life afterwards. Since man is a rather resourceful being, he can convince himself and others around him of this self-deception. Reason, as the rider, can see the path ahead and into the future and can learn a lot of useful information from other riders or studying maps, but what he cannot do is to command the elephant against its will. The rider can assist and gradually control the elephant, but that requires comprehension and knowledge.[16]

The way we decide when choosing the products in the shops serves as a great example. Frequently, our decision making is guided by emotionality. That is the reason why marketing places so much emphasis on packaging, design and promotion. The packaging sells products and the cover sells the book. Attractive women are photographed beside the cars to increase the chances of a sale. *Special offer* or *discount* are phrases that influence our decision making too.

Similarly, our judgements are, to a considerable extent, dependent on fleeting flashes of intuition also in political and social matters. Emotions play a crucial role in our judgements. Yet it does not mean that they are "damaging" or "questionable". In dangerous and life-threatening situations, they can be lifesaving because they enable us to respond very quickly. Naturally, reasoning is also important, especially when interpersonal relationships are concerned and in situations where logical arguments can provoke new intuitions.

Haidt compares our thinking to *scientific* or *legal* work. They are, figuratively speaking, two paths leading to the truth. *Scientists* gather evidence, search for connections, and deduce results from theories, which they then verify using experiments. *Lawyers* begin with a certain position and they must convince others about it being true. Only then, they try to find the evidence to support it or discredit the evidence that does not fit into the context. The human mind was created to be both of science and of law. Rivalry between these two approaches forms our attitude towards life. We arrive at the first judgment practically instantly and in the search for evidence that could refute it we act like complete amateurs. Intuition comes first and reasoning usually takes the floor afterwards with the purpose of influencing others.[17]

Our mental architecture can be easily abused in the rhetoric of marketing and politics, so when deciding for a politician or a political party, we do not even

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[15] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 89.
[16] Cf. J. Haidt, *Hypotéza štěstí*, Praha: Nakladatelství Dokořán 2014, p. 31.
[17] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 76, 101.

realize that we chose a marketed political product that has been created knowing the mechanisms of our subconscious processes.

1.3 MORAL MODULES - A FOUNDATION FOR MORAL MATRICES

Haidt raises a question: Why do we react in a certain way in different situations? Is it learnt or innate behaviour? Haidt suggests that morality is not influenced purely by the social environment manifesting itself in principles of *harm and fairness*. Besides justice, other *moral modules*, which have evolved in response to impulses in our ancestors, are of equal importance. It is undeniable that cognition also influences our moral judgement. It is particularly evident in matters pertaining to justice and dominates among members of the male population. In fact, our moral reasoning is based on moral modules activated by the original and current triggers and depends on our moral matrices. These modules lead us to the concrete moral judgements and decisions we make at present. Activation of these modules evokes certain emotional reactions, which are then manifested in our decision-making and behaviour.

Haidt presents (building on ideas and research findings of several evolutionary psychologists and anthropologists) six moral modules (foundations of morality)[18]:
1. module *care/harm* (triggers our response, for instance, to seeing harm being done to a child or the weak and vulnerable),
2. module *fairness/cheating* (endorses our sense of justice and evokes aversion to cheating),
3. module *loyalty/betrayal* (endorses cooperation and rejects betrayal),
4. module *authority/subversion* (encourages respect for authorities and criticizes disrespect and subversion within a group),
5. module *sanctity/degradation* (evokes awe of something untouchable on a profane level (e.g. state symbols) and opposes degradation and disgusting behaviour)
6. module *liberty/oppression* (evokes in us aversion to tyranny and abuse of power).[19]

These moral modules create a foundation for a particular *matrix* that reflects the innate modules as well as cultural aspects and individual personality traits. These *moral matrices* are linked to individual cultures. That explains differences in moral codes across cultures. The differences might be found within the same culture too. It all depends on which of the modules is given greater emphasis by an individual person or a group places the greatest emphasis. For instance, would

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[18] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 164.
[19] Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 169, 194, 204, 358 n.

we say that people in India who step over a person lying on the ground, respecting his or her karma (behaviour that we deem unacceptable in our culture) are more indifferent to one another than are people in Europe? Do they value life less than Europeans do? We could go on and find differences like this across cultures. And yet we share the same moral modules.

We can therefore say that the original trigger was a universal activator for the creation of a moral module(s) in all human beings across cultures. Then, individual cultures and societies were formed. Based on the particularities of the geographical environment, genetic aspects, and personality traits of individual members of different cultures various moral matrices were created, which may, to some extent, overlap with moral matrices of other cultures and societies. Differences in moral matrices, however, may lead to conflicts and misunderstandings among people with different views on violations of taboos in religion, politics, economy, culture and so on.

Haidt concludes that the foundation of morality is not only innate (as claimed by moral nativists) or acquired in childhood through learning (as claimed by empiricists). It is a combination of innateness and social learning. Based on this we can answer the question about why people across different cultures *agree* on some moral issues and *differ* on others.

Analysing these findings, Haidt sought to understand the constant conflicts that occur in political and religious discourse. The moral modules are the same for all of us; we just activate them in different ways. Plurality is therefore not only possible, it is necessary. We must not disregard a different opinion in the discourse at once. First, we must find the common ground *on which we can agree* and then explore what is that crucial moment in the moral matrix of the opposing party. It is not about the necessity to accept the other person's belief. It is about understanding and avoiding unnecessary affective reactions, which, if escalated, could provoke conflicts.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge that "absolute" tolerance across all moral matrices is a rather "ideal" view on plurality and not the one reflecting reality and the natural state of matters. Haidt aptly remarks, "Imagine if there were no countries and no religions too. If we could just erase the borders and boundaries that divide us, then the world would "be as one". It is a vision of heaven for liberals, but conservatives believe it would quickly descend into hell. I think conservatives are on to something."[20]

Understanding the principles of our moral matrices can lead to a change in political space bringing greater decency.[21] Haidt explained how libertarians who

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[20]   J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 168.
[21]   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 376.

sacralise liberty and conservatives who sacralise traditions and institutions provide a crucial counterweight to the liberal reform movements. [22]

2 PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE

"Human nature" in our contemporary discourse is perceived only as a social construct or a construct built upon our biological and psychological determinants. Still, there appears to be some shift in thinking from the original meaning of "human nature" as defined by Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle. The principal difference lies in the way Aquinas understood the concept of "causality", and especially the term *causa finalis* – the final cause, which plays a crucial role in his philosophical and theological theory.

Thinking about the concept of "human nature", Aquinas considers (in line with knowledge of his time) some functionalist and biological determinants that play a crucial role in human life. He goes even further though. Aquinas holds that natural human reason is capable of discovering the natural moral law in our human world. He understands human nature in connection to three human inclinations: 1. instinct of self-preservation, 2. inclination to preserve one's own species, 3. inclination towards what is good for a human being. The third type includes the inclinations that are purely human – ability to live in society and to know the truth about God.

For Aquinas goodness encompasses everything towards which humans have a natural inclination and can be identifiable by natural reason. Important, however, is *the final purpose* of human life, which was already reflected in Socratic philosophy.[23] St. Thomas speaks of natural inclinations on three levels. The first two levels of human inclinations and goals are on a prehuman level and we share them with other animals. The third level of inclination determines in which way the first two should be regulated. At this point reason takes the initiative with its power to align all the inclinations with the ultimate goals out of which arises the moral concept of good included in the concept of "human nature". Aquinas urges us to perceive a human being in a conjunction of all three levels.[24]

We can say that Aquinas would probably not object to notions suggesting the direct influence of biological structures and social aspects on what makes us human.

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[22]   Cf. J. Haidt, *Morálka lidské mysli*, p. 375.

[23]   Cf. P. Dancák, *Premeny myslenia o Bohu ako prejav hľadačskej povahy človeka*, in: P. Dancák et al. (eds.), *Súčasné premeny náboženského myslenia*, Prešov: Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove, Gréckokatolícka Teologícka Fakulta 2013, p. 13.

[24]   Cf. A. Anzenbacher, *Úvod do etiky*, Praha: Zvon 1994, p. 88-91.

He would however refuse to go beyond this point in his reasoning, because he would see this way of thinking as insufficient, respecting the transcendent finality of human life.

Today, the question of the purpose and finality of human life seems rather problematic in the scientific discourse. Is it even possible to grasp the finality of a human being in the scientific discourse? It appears that it goes beyond the competencies of empirical science. For Aquinas and his peers (with the exception of nominalism) finality and the meaning of human existence are not an issue – humans were destined for salvation. This also influenced the formation of moral norms and standards. Today, in the multicultural and secular world, the concept of finality is criticised, especially when linked to a Christian worldview.

CONCLUSION

Modern philosophy and science influenced the contemporary philosophical discourse in many ways. The concept of purpose or goal, which once played a crucial role in determining "human nature", has gradually "disappeared" from the discourse. This does not mean that purposefulness has disappeared altogether; it has only been reduced to functionalist or biological and psychological dimensions. This trend has also affected ethics. Does it have to lead to relativism and the disintegration of society? Haidt asserts that it does not. At least not on the innate/natural level. This is where the moral module of *sanctity* comes into the picture. Claiming that if something is sacred for me it must also be universal or natural for others will not stand the test of time any longer. Many values cherished by believers are built upon causes and goals, which believers must simply put their faith in. There is no other alternative than grounding the discourse on human nature across a plethora of worldviews in scientific findings that must be subjected to critical reflection and Popper's *falsification*.

Our history teaches us that many conflicts, including those provoked by different worldviews, were of ideological rather than of rational or scientific nature. Therefore, Christians too must be more cautious with their universalistic efforts when engaging in discourse on the purpose of human life, especially with regard to statements that are ultimately grounded in faith.

Christians are often left with no other alternative than arguing on the basis on their own testimonies, following the example of John the Evangelist *"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:35). The ultimate purpose and goal (*eschatos*) is a matter of faith to which bearing testimony is foundational. If faith wants to attract, it must bear testimony. Surely, it is

harder than changing and transforming society through legislation. Nevertheless, it is more effective and convincing.

PROBLEM KONCEPCJI "NATURY LUDZKIEJ" W OBECNYM FILOZOFICZNYM, TEOLOGICZNYM I NAUKOWYM DYSKURSIE W KONTEKŚCIE BADAŃ NAD MORALNOŚCIĄ JONATHANA HAIDTA

Summary

W chrześcijańskim dyskursie etycznym i antropologicznym koncepcja „natury ludzkiej" stanowi jedno z głównych kryteriów, z którym pochodzą normy etyki społecznej i indywidualnej. Epoka Oświecenia była związana z poważną krytyką tego konceptu, odrzucając jego metafizyczne uzasadnienie. Nowe koncepcje przeważały w filozoficznym i naukowym dyskursie tamtej epoki. Odrzucono istnienie wspólnych antropologicznych determinant i zaczęto opowiadać się za tezą, iż istoty ludzkie są przede wszystkim formowane przez społeczeństwo oraz że koncepcja „ludzkiej natury" zawiera w sobie ryzyko nadużycia władzy, promując tylko jedną wizję człowieka. Niniejszy artykuł zawiera analizę tego konceptu we współczesnej dyskusji, sięgając po perspektywę psychologii społecznej Jonathana Haidta, która, jak twierdzi jej twórca, pozwala lepiej zrozumieć ludzką naturę. Standardowa metafizyczna i teologiczna definicja ludzkiej natury, która dominuje w dyskursie chrześcijańskim, musi być poszerzona poprzez dokonania nauk społecznych i ścisłych. Mogą one stać się odpowiednim środkiem do podjęcia dialogu z pluralistycznym otoczeniem i poszerzyć granice poznania ludzkiej natury.

S ł o w a   k l u c z o w e: natura ludzka, filozofia, Teologia, psychologia społeczna, etyka.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF "HUMAN NATURE" IN THE CURRENT PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE AGAINST A BACKDROP OF A JONATHAN HAIDT'S RESEARCH ON FOUNDATIONS OF MORALITY

Abstract

In Christian ethical and anthropological discourse, the concept of "human nature" represented one of the main criteria from which norms for social and individual ethics derived. The age of Enlightenment brought about a serious criticism of this concept refusing its metaphysical justification. New opinions prevailed in philosophical and scientific discourse of that time. They rejected existence of common anthropological determinants and supported a thesis claiming that people are primarily formed in society and that the concept of "human nature" entails a risk of abuse of power by promoting only one view of the human being. The presented paper studies the relevance of this concept today and examines it from the perspective of Jonathan Haidt's social psychology, which, as the author claims, contributes to better understanding of human nature. Standard metaphysical

and theological definitions of human nature that prevailed mostly in Christian discourse needs to be extended by including findings from social and exact sciences and use them as a suitable medium for a dialogue in a pluralistic environment, and push the limits of our knowledge about humans.

K e y   w o r d s: Human nature. Philosophy. Theology. Social psychology. Ethics.

DAS PROBLEM DES KONZEPTS DER „MENSCHLICHEN NATUR"
IM GEGENWÄRTIGEN PHILOSOPHISCHEN, THEOLOGISCHEN
UND WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN DISKURS AUF DEM HINTERGRUND
DER UNTERSUCHUNG DER MORALBEGRÜNDUNG BEI JONATHAN HAIDT

Zusammenfassung

Im christlichen, ethischen und anthropologischen Diskurs stellt das Konzept der „menschlichen Natur" eines der wichtigsten Kriterien da, nach dem sozial- und individual-ethische Normen formuliert werden. Die Zeit der Aufklärung übte eine ernsthafte Kritik dieses Konzeptes, indem sie seine metaphysischen Grundlagen verwarf. In dieser Zeit wurden im philosophischen und wissenschaftlichen Diskurs andere Konzepte vorgelegt. Gemeinsame anthropologische Determinanten wurden in ihnen verneint und der Mensch wurde vor allem als durch die Gesellschaft geformt angesehen. Dazu wird ein dem Konzept der „menschlichen Natur" innewohnendes Risiko des Machtmissbrauchs diagnostiziert, wenn nur eine Sicht des menschlichen Wesens bevorzugt wird. Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht die heutige Relevanz dieses Konzeptes aus der Perspektive der Jonathan Haidt' Sozialpsychologie, die – wie der Autor behauptet – zum besseren Verständnis menschlichen Natur beiträgt. Die meisten metaphysischen und theologischen Definitionen der menschli-chen Natur, welche vor allem im christlichen Diskurs dominieren, müssen durch Ergebnisse der Sozial- und Naturwissenschaften erweitert werden. Diese sollen zu einem geeigneten Medium für einen Dialog in der pluralistischen Umgebung werden und die Grenzen des Wissens über das menschlichen Wesens durchbrechen.

S c h l ü s s e l w o r t e: menschliche Natur, Philosophie, Theologie, Sozialpsychologie, Ethik.

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