Dissenting Voices — Moral Resources for the Transformation of Political Community in the Czech Twentieth Century

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Introducing the problematique

On 1 January 1990, Václav Havel addressed the citizens of Czechoslovakia as their newly elected President proclaiming, in a manifest allusion to the spiritual heritage of Comenius, that the government of the Republic had returned to the people[1]. However, and in spite of the celebratory mood that the moment called for, the speech remained mitigated by constant appeals to the moral reconstitution of the community and the redressing of the contaminated moral environment in which it lingered. Revealingly, the point Havel wanted to make in that momentous occasion concerned the harm inflicted to the political community by a totalising system of power that had controlled Czechoslovakia for four decades. Everyone had eventually turned out to be the 'co-creator' of such a system, transforming the community into a 'social auto-totality'[2], an instrument of its own control, atomisation and disaggregation. Moreover, by adapting and adjusting to the system, the community ended up accepting it as an unchangeable feature of life. The moment the velvet revolution was lifting dissent to office in Czechoslovakia, Havel identified the indifference to the common good as the main enemy of the day and the struggle against it the crucial task permitting the community's real emancipation. Besides, in his appeal to the moral reconstitution of the community and the public space of the polis Havel clearly committed himself to the moral and political legacy of Czechoslovakia's founding father, Tomáš-Garrigue Masaryk. The grounding and justification of political community in the post-communist era had then found the inspiration and ultimate source:

'Masaryk based his politics on morality. Let us try in a new time and in a new way, to restore this concept of politics.

> *Let us teach ourselves and others that politics should be an expression of a desire to contribute to the happiness of the community rather than of a need to cheat or rape the community. Let us teach ourselves and others that politics can be not simply the art of the possible, especially if this means the art of speculation, calculation, intrigue, secret deals and pragmatic maneuvering, but that it can also be the art of the impossible, that is, the art of improving ourselves and the world."*[3]

Altogether, Havel shows an earnest attachment for both moral groundings and cosmopolitan frameworks in the reconstruction of the public space after communism, an attachment that acquires a renewed significance when he explicitly draws on Masaryk's "Jesus, not Caesar". The reason is that Masaryk left no doubt about the political character and consequences of this axiom[4]. Jesus, not Caesar, is the *exemplum* Havel appropriates at the decisive moment he reflects upon the just conduct of public life, the decisive moment new grounds for the life in the πολις are needed. A renewed conception of the matters of the πολις follows: politics subordinated to morality, not morality depending on an utilitarian conception of politics; politics as a just means toward the common good of the community; politics as the art of improving man and the world. A particular synthesis begins to take shape according to which the transformation of the world and of world politics is indeed possible. The apparently 'impossible' in politics is conceived as a legitimate and moral aim and can be brought about provided the matters of the polis are formulated and lead as practical morality. Likewise, the formulation of a moral ground for the renewed life of the community turns out to be Havel's starting point regarding the prospect for the transformation of world politics:

> *"Our first president wrote: 'Jesus, not Caesar.' In this he followed our philosophers Chelcický and Komenský [Comenius]. I dare to say that we may even have an opportunity to spread this idea further and introduce a new element into European and global politics. Our country, if that is what we want, can now permanently radiate love, understanding, the power of the spirit and of ideas. It is precisely this glow that we can offer as our specific contribution to international politics."*[5]

Havel's first presidential address to the Czechoslovak citizenry has definitely an important role to play in the following of my argument. In fact, as the touchstone for the questions I intend to arouse, it illuminates the present framing of what is in my view the constant problematique in the Czech national experience of the twentieth century. Hence, my central claim is that this problematique concerns directly the transformation of political community, the search for its moral grounding and the expansion of its meaning and its ideal. With this dissertation,

I set out to clarify the extent to which the moral expansion of the community appears as the shared project binding together three very different moments in the Czech twentieth century. The first of these moments came about with the re-foundation of the Czech State after World War I and the need to locate it in the new context of world politics. The second moment arrived with the resistance against the ever-spreading totalising ambitions of the communist regime. Face to face with a systematic attempt at demoralising the community and annihilating all relevant social bonds, the dissidents found themselves with the responsibility of protecting and bringing forward the ideal of community. Finally, the demise of totalitarianism marks the third moment of this journey. As the head of state of Czechoslovakia and, afterwards, of the new Czech Republic, Havel has ever since made solid efforts to redress the harm inflicted to the community by communism's totalising experience. Concurrently, he never lost the opportunity to make the case for the attainment of a more inclusive community uniting the peoples of the planet. In each of the three moments outlined above, the problematique developed through the appropriation of a specific Czech historical legacy that goes back to King George of Podebrady, Jan Hus or Comenius. In truth, and by drawing on it, the Czech attempts directed to the transformation of political community denote an all-comprehensive *Weltanschauung* and are clearly observant of cosmopolitan frameworks that gave meaning to the national community and shaped its redemption.

Havel has never been an academic of International Relations, nor have his considerations ever reflected a systematic theorising of the matters international. However, his first official words as head of state denote a sharp understanding of the political responsibilities of a state in a brand new era. At the same time, the text I have been drawing on is not commonly considered a crucial one in the study of this discipline. Nevertheless, it definitely inaugurates and gives the tone to a decade that left many International Relations academics with nowhere to hide regarding the state of disarray in the discipline. It was not a sense of relief that accompanied the revolutionary events of 1989 as far as concerns the theorising of international relations. Conversely, a sense of crisis expanded within the discipline and the various sorts of problem-solving realisms faced increasing contestation, with both the epistemological and ontological debates gaining momentum and shaping new possibilities. There is then a common point of departure for post-positivist challenges to the realist discourse and the endeavour urged by Havel and the dissidents, as well as by Masaryk. All of them have in fact recognised the need to distinguish the immutable and natural from the mutable and contingent in the realm of human affairs.

All in all, my dissertation sets out to stress the relevance of the Czech problematique that revolves around the moral expansion of community to the prospect of a reconstituted discipline of International Relations. Accordingly, the Czech

journey I identify above will be clearly linked to Andrew Linklater's project of a critical international theory based on the re-opening of the question of political community[6]. Linklater's central contention is that "[t]he idea of citizenship provides modern societies with the moral resources with which to create new and more inclusive arrangements, domestically and in international relations"[7]. By focusing on the moral grounding and the moral extension of the community as the crucial problematique in the Czech twentieth century, I am actually in search of moral resources. I hope to find them in the tradition of thought and praxis that links Havel down to Masaryk and that has its paramountcy in the experience of dissent. In fact, the moral-spiritual struggle for civic and human rights in the communist state of the seventies and eighties mobilised a concrete 'solidarity of the shaken'[8] and ended up as a potent challenge to the totalising, totalitarian project. In the way, I argue, that challenge constituted as the moral resource capable of bringing about a more comprehensive and inclusive idea of community.

This dissertation includes four chapters. Before making out and exploring, in chapters two, three and four the argument pertaining the moral resources, it is my intention to elucidate the extent to which my dissertation draws on Linklater's project of re-opening the question of political community within the general prospect for a reconstituted subject of International Relations. This is my concern in chapter one.

1. Nowhere to hide in the academic discipline of International Relations

In a recent endeavour to advance a genealogy of International Relations Theory,[9] Steve Smith has remarked the importance of Zygmunt Bauman's 1989 book *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Drawing on Bauman's claim that sociology has been strangely silent about the Holocaust, Steve Smith started his paper on the self-images of International Relations stressing the importance that silences acquire in the understanding of academic disciplines. He then took further the argument in order to show how commonly received conceptualisations of international theory and debates generated within it tend to ignore the bond that exists between social practice and the constitution of social knowledge. The purpose was definitely one of a thorough inquiry into the identity of the discipline by exploring the interconnections between international theory and international practice. How does the academic field delineate its relevant empirical domain? How does it represent its empirical domain? Plus, how does it erect and defend the boundaries that assure the specificity *vis-à-vis* other domains? And with what purpose? According to Steve Smith, "[i]nternational theory tends to speak of international practice as if the 'reason' of theoretical understanding can be opposed to, or separated from, the 'unreason' or 'irrationality' of the anarchy of

international society: the discipline comments on, or observes, or evaluates, or explains an empirical domain; it does not constitute it"[10]. In accordance then with a genealogical approach to international theory, we must take the anarchy of international society as a particular reading of the 'international' which remains embedded in the core assumptions of the prevalent theoretical understanding.

That the way in which we conceptualise and represent the 'international' is itself constitutive of that practice stands as a clear sign of the presence of new theoretical departures in the discipline. In addition, this corollary makes it easier to understand the ways in which multiple academics have written about a deep sense of crisis pervading the discipline of International Relations. Early this year, Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth edited a book meant to account for the state of the art in the discipline and to trace its trajectory in the period between 1919 and 1999. The suggestive title they chose—*The Eighty Years' Crisis*—is unsettling and prepares the reader to the conscious analogy with the argument present in E. H. Carr's best-known book. "Sixty years on", they write, "another sense of crisis pervades the discipline"[11]. In introducing the book, the editors make clear the sense in which the word 'crisis' is again helpful in the task of locating International Relations. The regained sense of crisis springs clearly from the uncertainty of thinking about world politics. Far from being restricted to the difficulty of coping with a turbulent and changing world, uncertainty and crisis should otherwise be inscribed in a comprehensive process of intellectual transformation that questions the ontological and epistemological foundations of the social world.

Giving his particular contribution to this thematic, Fred Halliday has peremptorily asserted that with "[n]o crisis, no academic discipline"[12]. This he advanced on the conference held to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the department of International Politics in the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. The topic was the direct relationship between the emergence of distinct academic disciplines and the sense of crisis in modern society. Looking at International Relations from the vantage point of an eighty years' crisis then seems to suggest that we take up a perspective of the discipline that evolves from 'uncertainty' to 'crisis' to 'transformation'. A discipline pervaded with a deep sense of uncertainty and crisis is definitely a discipline on the brink of transformation.

The question raised by Andrew Linklater regarding the 'next stage' in the theorising of the 'international' therefore aggregates much of what is at stake regarding the possibility of transformation in the discipline. According to him, the next stage "should be concerned with the subversion of orthodoxies, the deconstruction of disciplinary boundaries and the admission of previously marginal or dissident concerns"[13]. The new theoretical departures mentioned above have precisely taken up such concerns, claiming concomitantly for a major restructuring of the discipline. The result has been a far-reaching debate within it, sometimes referred to as the third debate, concerning not only what the subject

of International Relations is but also, and more revealingly, what the subject ought to be. Brian Schmidt depicts this problematique as the result of a particular intellectual atmosphere derived from the influence of post-positivism. In his words, and "[u]nlike philosophical positivism's claim about the cumulative character of knowledge, the transition to post-positivism has required social scientists to rethink this tale about the unilinear and progressive search for truth. Disciplinary identities mortgaged to positivism have been thrown into disarray by post-positivist philosophers of science, critical theorists, feminists, post-modernists, and other voices of dissent"[14].

Altogether, the task set out by the new theoretical perspectives of International Relations throughout the 80s and the 90s is one that challenges the realist/neo-realist discourse and its hegemony over what the subject matter of the discipline actually is. However different in character and sometimes even with contrasting approaches, all these perspectives have progressively been questioning the mechanistic reading of international relations according to which this empirical domain is the realm of repetition and recurrence. Jim George has for instance set out to think International Relations beyond the specific 'egoism-anarchy thematic', asserting at the same time that "[q]uestions of ethical thought and behaviour have become integral to the agenda of global politics, as it has been enlarged by the long-overdue pronouncement of the nakedness of the Realist/neo-Realist theoretical emperor and the power politics approach to the contemporary state system"[15]. The 'egoism-anarchy' thematic is generally what new departures in International Relations identify as the realist framing of the world, a 'theoretical emperor', the mainstream theoretical framing against which renewed questions of ethical behaviour and ethical responsibility must be counter-posed. Moreover, it has been made clear that this mainstream theoretical approach is invested of its own normative conception of the 'international', even when it purports to represent itself as value-free and objective. This conception is clearly Hobbesian, one that "combines the analogy of international relations and the state of nature with a conception of ethics according to which moral judgement is inappropriate outside of sovereign political communities"[16].

The genealogy of international relations theory advanced by Steve Smith has then been the occasion to focus the attention on the stories the discipline has told about itself, how it has been described and categorised and how specific descriptions and categories were accepted and became commonplace. Drawing on Michael Foucault, Steve Smith explores, in a genealogical way, the sense of crisis in the academic discipline of International Relations and questions its self-images and that which they actually tell us. Genealogy then turns out to be the useful method allowing two movements into the very self of International Relations. By *descending* upon it, the common idea of unity and historical continuity of the subject area is challenged. By looking at its *emergencies*, the actual significance of all

political manifestations becomes known: how historical and transitory they are and how they are always constrained by specific forms of domination. Altogether, Steve Smith questions the central tenets of realism as the received wisdom of International Relations, i.e., that the 'international' is an a-historical domain and a separate realm of inquiry based upon a specific set of regularities, repetitions and recurrences. The implications of the relationship between theory and practice are now easier to grasp and relate directly to the crux of my argument. The fact is that "international theory is implicated in international practice because of the way that theory, in the main, divorces ethics from politics, [...] promotes understanding via a 'reason' separated from ethical or moral concerns [...] and sees ethics as applicable to the kind of community that international society cannot be"[17].

At this stage it might be helpful to recall Ken Booth and Steve Smith's prescription that theorising about politics ought to resemble a palimpsest, acknowledging the interconnection of the three sites at which such theorising has traditionally taken place. It has become untenable, they claim, to consider the three sites—domestic, international and global—as spatially separate. On the contrary, "[o]n a particular issue one or other of the three sites will be the main focus of interest but the other narratives will nearly always intrude with more or less clarity. The different texts of political theory exist on the same page, not in different books. Each narrative—'domestic', 'international' and 'world'—develops within a context in part shaped by the others"[18].

Andrew Linklater's critical international theory categorically addresses these concerns, questioning in a distinctive way the traditional readings according to which the sole purpose of international theory is to explain the reproduction of the system of states. According to him, in the post-Westaphalian era in which we live, inquiring into the ethical foundations of political community is the central concern of the academic discipline of International Relations. What is obviously at stake here is the recovering of a certain ethical imperative by overcoming the sharp division of labour between political theory and international theory advanced in Martin Wight's famous paper[19] "Why is there no international theory?" The claim that political theory implies the question of the 'good life' of the community whereas international theory cannot be more than the theorising of survival in the realm of inter-state relations has for Linklater obvious implications. The insistence upon the constraining effects of an ever-present and immutable anarchy has actually contributed to exempt states from the responsibility of imagining and accomplishing more just world political orders. The assignment is definitely one of subverting 'immutability claims' and resisting what he calls the conspiration to "construct human subjects who are resigned to the stultifying distinction, and allegedly unbridgeable gulf, between utopia and reality"[20].

Most revealingly then, Linklater replaces the Wightian question with the Kantian question. In this case, the crux of the matter is not why there is no

international theory, but what makes international theory possible. All told, there can only be international theory provided this body of thought incorporates the element of human intervention in the social world and its capacity to transform it[21]. Likewise, it is via the Kantian question that Linklater establishes his project of a reconstructed discipline of International Relations. Mechanistic readings of the 'international', based on the explanation of recurrence and repetition, ought to be supplemented by normative and philosophical accounts of the prospects for reconstructing the ideal of political community. Contra neo-realist asseveration of reductionism, Linklater develops the argument that necessity in the realm of international relations springs from the inner character of the particularist associations called states which claim men's exclusive political obedience. Consequently, the modern state appears as a limited and incomplete moral community and its claim of an exclusive obedience does no other than concealing an actual realm of universal human obligation.

The reconstruction of the academic discipline of International Relations then corresponds to a project engaged in devising the possibilities of overcoming all sorts of inter-societal estrangement. As Linklater elucidates, "these remarks do not anticipate the demise of the state, but envisage its reconstruction"[22]. This reconstruction should proceed along the lines of more inclusive practices meant to establish a widening understanding of the human association within which the notion of common good should materialise. All told, it follows that the presumably closed question of the community is understood here as much more than a domestic matter. In re-opening it contra all 'immutability claims' Linklater's purpose is to advance the superseding of the modern state's exclusionary character, bringing to the fore the prospect for the transformation of the international system via the transformation of the political community.

The prospect for the moral extension of the community is undoubtedly the central question in my dissertation. Hence, I set out to detect an earnest manifestation of it in what I identified above as the distinctive Czech tradition of thought and praxis that has developed throughout the twentieth century. The three historical moments I mentioned are, above all, three specific stages in which questions involving the community—the question of its moral foundation and of its boundaries—were faced, theorised and worked out in practice. All three stages alike represent moments in which an inherent moral tension between distinct realms of human obligation was recognised, leading to a synthesis committed to the moral expansion of the idea of community. The foundation of the Czech State in 1918 is a crucial event here, given the profound moral significance ascribed to it by Masaryk. So it is the subsequent stage, when the totalising communist project contrived the dramatic shrinkage of all relevant social bonds, with dissent confronting basically the same set of questions about the moral boundaries of the community. Insisting on the necessity of recovering the meaning of community

after the demise of the communist regime, Havel has nonetheless inscribed this problematique in a wider domain of transcendence of particular national interests. On behalf of a wider domain of human obligation.

Through this trajectory, we can also follow the reading and interpretation of Czech identity and tradition, a constant activity in search of those influences, authors and ideas that accentuate the universalist frame giving meaning to the more particularist community. In the words of Linklater, this is the "moral framework which extends beyond the one surrounding insiders, so necessitating ethical as opposed to merely pragmatic orientations towards relations to outsiders"[23]. In this context, my purpose here is to give an account of particular moral and political experiences from within the Czech twentieth century that have produced ideas of enlarged communities beyond the exclusive attachment of citizenship bonds that separate insiders from outsiders[24]. Linklater's project comprises a normative as well as a sociological and a praxeological analysis of political community. Accordingly, and by focusing on particular moral and political experiences, I set out to elucidate the way in which these experiences can be said to carry with them immanent possibilities, moral resources, for the transformation of political community.

2. Tomáš-Garrigue Masaryk and the social theory of human emancipation

In his book on Czech literature, René Wellek asserted in 1963 that everybody had at least some knowledge of Masaryk's political work, either of his role in the creation of the Czechoslovak state or of his subsequent presidency. On the contrary, few people would be able to give a clear account of Masaryk's philosophy, considered by Wellek to stand as the foundation of his political work. The author also referred to Masaryk's enduring authority over his nation that "cannot be obliterated even by the present conditions which have submerged the political and cultural life of his nation. When it will arise again, it will be in the spirit of Masaryk's thought"[25]. The 'present conditions' Wellek insisted on were clearly those brought about by the communist rule in Czechoslovakia, which cut itself off from the Masarykian tradition and actually settled on the antipodes of it.

Masaryk's background was clearly shaped by his studies on philosophy and the subsequent professorship in the University of Vienna on this academic field. During his studies in the capital of the Hapsburg empire he came under the influence of Franz von Brentano and later on, having moved to Leipzig, developed a productive friendship with Edmund Husserl. According to Walter Capps, Masaryk was instrumental in convincing Husserl to switch from the study of mathematics to philosophy, and directed him to the work of Brentano[26]. Nevertheless, Masaryk's special interest in the philosophy of history led him to focus increasingly on the

meaning of history, the course of universal ideas and the evolution of the international system. The main question of his life, both theoretical and practical, was undoubtedly that of the right location for the Czech nation, a question he addressed always from the vantage point of a much wider context. The eventual achievement of an independent Czechoslovak state at the end of World War I usually counts as his most relevant deed. Masaryk's reading and interpretation of this deed is certainly the starting point regarding my current purpose. In approaching the pre-1914 world, Masaryk denoted in it a deep moral crisis. The crux of the matter rests on the character of a technical age that divorces theory from practice and denies any philosophical foundations to the empirical endeavours. Likewise, Liberalism is part of the problem and is criticised for being excessively rationalistic and indifferent to moral groundings and religious questions.

Masaryk's incursion into the philosophy of history, I argue, brought him directly to the problematique that marked the earliest stage of the discipline of International Relations. The point here is that in developing a specific *Weltanschauung* based on the belief of a coherent and directional universal historical process, Masaryk drew nearer to the concerns of academics like Alfred Zimmern, Norman Angell or Leonard Woolf. It is true that his academic concerns were never directed to the discipline, but the moral and political questions he faced throughout his life would unmistakably triggered a thorough inquiry comprehending the nature and the evolution of the 'international'. My argument is that we must ground Masaryk's interpretation of international politics on the specific paradigm that is usually identified with the 'idealist' label and that Andreas Osiander has recently reread with revisionist purposes[27]. In accordance with Osiander, my concern here is to present Masaryk's thought as an intellectual endeavour that relied on the notion of a historical process showing undeniable signs of a universal tendency towards democracy and the rapprochement of humankind. By envisioning the position of Czechoslovakia within this universal tendency he points, I argue, to the problematique of the moral extension of the community. Moreover, it is my intention to stress that such an endeavour was not based on sheer wishful thinking or devoid of critical analysis. Neither was it inattentive of what has been called the 'realities of power'. It was as much empirical and analytical as it was obviously normative.

In Masaryk's view, history is then a process whose aim is clearly the establishment and accomplishment of the ideal of humanity. Accordingly, the crux of his work comprehends a social theory of human emancipation, i.e., the account of the development and interaction of those social forces and ideas that have been shaping and realising that ideal. In common with Zimmern, Angell and Woolf's interpretation of the international system, Masaryk understands the historical process as a long-term cumulative transformation equivalent to what he called the mills of God. Addressing Karel Capek's insinuation that the idealists are usually

not right in their own time, he asserted that "[s]ometimes they are not, sometimes they are: in politics too God's mills grind slowly, but they grind very fine"[28]. This is consciously the belief in teleology, in the purposiveness of the world, for to conceive of an aimless world is itself contrary to reason. Besides, it is a matter of epistemological certainty, that through the progress of the ages humanity shall approach ever nearer to the truth. But it is also a matter of determinism, i.e., "to learn to understand the causes of evil, so that we may induce the causes of reform"[29].

In *The Making of a State*, published for the first time in 1927 by George Allen & Unwin, Masaryk recalls the events that led to World War I and how, in the course of it, it was possible to convince the Allies about the Czech crown's historical rights. In fact, this book recalls the making of Czechoslovakia. Notwithstanding, its original Czech title was *Svetova Revoluce*, World Revolution, and it explicitly invokes Masaryk's interpretation of the stakes present in World War I and in the independence of Czechoslovakia. According to him, this first conflict of the twentieth century was openly a revolution of peoples and nations carried out against the old aristocratic and monarchic order that had survived to 1914. In his edifice of the philosophy of history, Masaryk conceives of the First World War as a war between theocratic absolutism and humanist democracy, out of which humanity would come to redemption. Moreover, and grounding his thought on the one he considered the first great sociologist, Masaryk sees his opposition between 'theocracy' and 'democracy' as an actualisation of Vico's distinction between the era of gods and heroes and the era of man. This then is the 'problem' of humanity to Masaryk. And in his view, "the problem of humanity is a specifically Czech problem"[30].

By focusing on the universal tendency leading from theocracy to democracy, Masaryk intends to uncover the deep relation that exists between religion and politics, the church and the state. The church itself he looks upon *sub species* of politics, as a political phenomenon and in its substance a social reality. "[B]esides doctrine and ritual it is the guardian and initiator of morality, and of the whole conduct of life. From this point the springing up of theocracies of various types: religion and politics, church and state lead society jointly by the hand"[31].

Consequently, in trying to grasp the evolution of the historical process, Masaryk concentrates on the history of Christianity on the one hand, and on the struggle for power common to all political entities, big and small, on the other. What interests him here is the interconnected process of state-building and church-building that took place since the times the spiritual centralisation of the Roman church was shaped along the political centralisation of the Roman empire. The state ended up founding its moral conception in the church, but whereas in the East theocracy took on the character of Caesaro-Papism, in the West, the authority of the Pope over the fragmented temporal power determined instead

Papo-Caesarism. In Masaryk's view, the Reformation stands as a remarkable event in the evolution of the Christian world. Its origin and development had already been prepared by a gradual detachment of critical reasoning from official theology and in the way, the relation of the church to the state came to be altered. Masaryk's contention is that Protestantism was more democratic whereas Catholicism remained more aristocratic, and that it has prepared the ground for political democracy by favouring a more egalitarian and freer conception of the church and of all social life. The reason would have been that, for instance, "by making the individual conscience the final appeal, it fostered individualism, subjectivism, personal freedom, and personal responsibility as against priestly and ecclesiastical authority"[32]. Altogether, Protestantism represented an important step toward the accomplishment of the true ideal of humanity, and therefore Masaryk praises its role in the emancipation of mankind.

As I stressed above, he would complement his perspective with the analysis of how the urge for power has moulded the rise and fall of the great empires. Concurrently, he could reach the conclusion that relations between political entities tend to outdo the mere quest for political power. Despite recognising the role played by the sword in international relations, Masaryk acknowledged that the spirit also conquers the world and that the exchange of natural and industrial goods, commerce, brings together humanity in a kind of cosmopolitan reciprocity. In this, it is easy to see the influence of Marxian and Kantian analyses. Both aspects—the sword and commerce—are unequivocally twins in the unending historical process, meaning that "nations and states cannot live in isolation, besides their internal organisation they strive for organisation among themselves, for associations between states and between nations"[33]. This is the conviction that mankind gradually organises itself as a whole. The First World War and the post-war period then appear as crucial moments to decide whether this organisation of states *should* come about through violence—conquest and subjugation —or through federation—the accomplishment of political and economic agreements for that purpose. This is the normative question for Masaryk, and through it we can understand the importance he invested on the League of Nations and the efforts his foreign policy has ever made to help its proceedings. His conviction was that the post-First World War represented in fact the threshold of a true cosmopolitan organisation marked by reciprocity among the peoples of the world and by syncretism of culture, language and population.

Along the route he traces, Masaryk remarks the changing character of the modern state, especially the fact that "[t]he very conception, substance and dimensions of State sovereignty are undergoing transformation [and that] [n]ationally and internationally, the independence of a State is to-day only relative"[34]. In accordance, the modern state is viewed as a political phenomenon undergoing a process of secularisation and de-centralisation, and passing over

into a constitutional and democratic regime that should preserve peace in the world. Against the divine and omnipotent state theorised by Hegel, he conceives of the state as a human institution based essentially on morality and humanity. Its outward authority should not be belittled but neither should the state and its power be deified. His standpoint "is deliberately and consciously antagonistic to modern attempts to derive the sanction of the State and of law from some fundamental, non-ethical principle"[35]. Against the degradation of Austrian politics, which he called illusionist, Masaryk would insist on individual responsibility as the necessary ethical guarantee of all politics. The phrase 'unpolitical politics' was used by him to insist on the moral and educational side of public affairs[36]. Consequently, democracy and the public life in the Republic were altogether conceived of *sub species aeternitatis*. Democracy was regarded not only as a form of government but primarily as a comprehensive view of life resting on the idea of metaphysical equality of men. This meant for Masaryk that the ethical basis of democracy is actualised in the political realisation of love of one's neighbour. The democratic ideal, however, is not only political; it is also social and economic. Altogether, his resolute convictions about social justice were an inevitable outgrowth of his ethical and religious *Weltanschauung*.

Masaryk always conceived of the Czech question as a world-problem[37], which meant that the eventual founding of a separate Czechoslovak state was in his mind deep rooted and justified by the historical process. Hence his urge to fit his people into the structure of world history and world politics. According to Ernest Gellner, Masaryk's crucial problem was always to explain and give an account of the reason he found to fight Austria-Hungary, a political entity in whose semi-constitutional proceedings he had taken an active part for quite a long time[38]. In his books, Masaryk discloses how he became increasingly aware of the moral and political problem represented by Austria. This had become a morally and physically degenerate yet powerful state, and his aim had been for long to de-Austrianise the Czechs while still within the state. The First World War had proved the narrowness and backwardness of Austria, and had constituted the occasion to fight it on a new basis.

The declaration of the Czechoslovak state in Prague, on 28 October 1918, was invested by Masaryk of a profound historical and philosophical significance. It was indeed a part of the historical process whose purpose was the substitution of theocracy and absolutism by democracy. National independence then took its justification from a global and deeply moral process. Its advancement was not in any case the product of the whims of its leaders; it was the product of the democratic disposition of history. For Masaryk there could be no state without a corresponding philosophical moral grounding. On the other hand, the Czechs were not just taking profit of a process to which they had not contributed. This is then the moment the philosophy of universal history meets the meaning of the

Czech experience as interpreted by Masaryk. Accordingly, and since the end of the Middle Ages, the Czech nation had been at the forefront of the universal tendency pointing toward human emancipation. And it was right from that tradition that Masaryk set out to proclaim that the politics of the new state ought to be cosmopolitan, i.e., with an international orientation and based upon moral foundations. The source is what Masaryk called the Czech national ideal of humanity[39], embodied in the Hussite pre-Reformation and its democratic and open character; Komenský and the climax of the Czech Reformation; the national revival of the nineteenth century and its cosmopolitan impulse or king George of Podebrady and his medieval plan of perpetual peace.

For Masaryk, "[t]he ethical basis of all politics is humanity, and humanity is an international programme"[40]. At the centre of this axiom, there is his concept of man as a spiritual being and of his natural right to freedom and social dignity. In these he saw the fulfilment of the ideals of humanity. Far from being a shallow notion, humanity and mankind are conceived by Masaryk as a concrete and practical idea taking the form of an organisation of nations. Consequently, his central political problematique ended up being the reconciliation, within this distinctive vision of man and politics, of particularism and globalism. In his cosmopolitan *Weltanschauung*, internationalism ought to be complemented by the new nationalism, for the notion of humanity requires positive love toward one's own people while rejecting hatred toward other peoples. In trying to balance the two realities, Masaryk deprives them of any exclusivism. On the contrary, he conceived of internationalism and nationalism as compensating each other. Likewise, he saw the problems posed by minorities and small states in the post-World War I new political order as part of a global question. The proper solution to such problems would carry out a more cosmopolitan organisation in the world. This was the case to advance new ways of co-operation in Central Europe uniting the peoples of the former Hapsburg empire. This was also the case for the recognition that the new Czechoslovak republic could not help conceding large political and cultural rights to the minorities co-existing within it. Altogether, "small states, and nations are minorities among the bigger states, and nations, and even the greatest states and nations in the last resort are a minority in comparison with the whole of mankind"[41]. The tension between particularism and globalism is well illustrated in the next quotation. It introduces, I argue, the problematique of the moral extension of community, suggesting the presence of multiple levels of human obligation that, far from excluding themselves, presuppose one another:

> *"Humanity, love, not only for one's neighbours, but for mankind—how am I to imagine that mankind concretely? I see a poor child that I can help—that child is mankind to me. The community with which I share its troubles, the nation with which I am combined through speech and culture is man-*

kind. Mankind is simply a greater, or smaller sum of people for whom we can do something positive in deed, and not only in words. Humanity does not consist in day-dreaming about the whole of mankind, but in always acting humanely. If I ask politics to serve mankind, I do not infer that they ought not to be national, but just and decent. That's all."[42]

3. The moral resource of dissent and Jan Patocka's solidarity of the shaken

In his *Summer Meditations* on the nature of the transition to a democratic regime in Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel concentrated once more on the grievous experience of four decades of communism. The crucial question in that occasion was definitely how to carry out the moral reconstitution of the community, an urgent task in need of theoretical guidance. Consequently, Havel's concern was to stress the relevance of realising the existential dimension of the experience and its consequences, including the exclusively metaphysical ones. By concentrating on the threat to identity as a direct attack on the essence of humanity and the human being, he was definitely pointing to that existential dimension:

"It is not by chance that in this space where identity had to be defended against permanent threats, the idea of truth as a moral value worth suffering for has had such a long tradition. This tradition goes back to Cyril and Metodius, Hus, Masaryk, Štefanik and Patocka."[43]

Havel's words then suggest the existence of a particular experience generating a resource that the liberated Czechs and Slovaks should not neglect—a most valuable resource indeed in order to lay the foundation of the community upon rediscovered values and principles. No doubt, my contention draws on this reading, precisely on the relevance of what I identify as the moral resource of dissent. In fact, in opposing the totalitarian regime by pacific means, the so-called dissidents have produced an important body of thought that transcends the particular situation they experienced. Moreover, it was the starting point for relevant actions in defence of those unjustly persecuted by the regime. In this context, the 'essay' has definitely represented the privileged medium, "an endeavour, with the help of personal witness, to disclose something *universally human*, and say something about being in general, about people in today's world, about the crisis of modern-day humanity"[44]. These words were chosen by Jan Vladislav to introduce the collection of texts published in 1986 to pay a tribute to Havel, an initiative that counted with the financial support of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation. They clearly point to the width and relevance of the moral undertaking that has in Havel its main representative, but whose philosophical foundations have

unequivocally been laid by Jan Patocka. The eminent Czech philosopher was also a dissident—signer and speaker of the civic movement *Charter 77*—and a martyr, having died in 1977 after a harsh interrogatory by the state police.

Although having as its starting point the concern to think life under a particular totalitarian regime, the abundant theoretical production of the dissidents has become universal and with practical overtones. We must approach it, especially in the case of Havel and Patocka, as the urge to understand their particular situation in the context of the all-comprehensive issue of human emancipation, to find out what to do and act accordingly. Consequently, it is helpful to locate this project within a critical strand of thought, for which the concept of emancipation is indeed central. In common with Ken Booth's definition of this concept, the dissidents clearly understood their undertaking as a way, the only possible way, to free "people from those constraints that stop them carrying out what freely they would choose to do"[45]. *Charter 77* and the countless other civic initiatives that marked the late seventies and the eighties were the means to advance a new community in which human autonomy and security could be preserved against the totalising threat of the state. The project was consciously normative, in that it laid down ethical principles for a more just political order. It was praxeological too, in that it explored pragmatic ways of bringing it forward. Havel's writings show yet a third element: a sharp sociological analysis of the totalitarian regime, i.e., the concern to understand how the unjust political order had come about and had developed.

Although Jan Patocka has on the whole been the philosophical anchoring to the Czechoslovak dissidents, it is in Havel's thought and *oeuvre* that we can find an immediate and most direct influence of the issues developed by the philosopher. Havel never considered himself a philosopher and had never the ambition to construct a conceptually fixed and comprehensive system of thought. However, the fact is that in trying to grasp the actual meaning of the totalitarian regime and in theorising the peaceful resistance to it, he adopted some of Patocka's crucial concepts, interpreting and expanding them. In addition, he rescued these concepts from their textual complexity, bringing them to the analysis of specific situations. This he has done both in the essays and in the plays he wrote for the *Theatre on the Balustrade*. By reading Patocka, Havel eventually provided him a much wider social relevance, placing his concepts in the centre of dissent and making them the source of hope in overthrowing the totalitarian regime.

I am convinced that the inspiration supplied by Patocka lies primarily in the acknowledgement of the intimate relation between theory and practice present in his later understanding of phenomenology[46]. Accordingly, "[w]hat initially gives access to the natural world is definitely not contemplative reflection but, on the contrary, reflection as a constitutive part of praxis, as constituting action and

inner behaviour. We do not turn to the natural world as a matter of mere theoretical curiosity [...]; we turn to it because we look for life in its originality, the meaning of things and our own meaning"[47]. In this context then, the concept of natural world, *lebenswelt*, is central and would influence Havel's thought as the world of deep-rooted personal experience and responsibility. Patocka conceived of it as the original ground of the human being, a world that opens up to him or her because all praxis is eventually anchored in the natural world. Moreover, Patocka conceived of the natural world as the fundamental ground of praxis, the ground that must precede all theory. This is actually the starting point to the notion of 'living in truth', another one to which Havel would give a particular meaning and that Patocka saw as the crux of a well-grounded life. In the essay "What is existence?" Patocka would precise that "the conception of human existence *as living in truth* seems to bear a considerable relevance to understand man, his position in the universe, his relation to the others and to himself"[48]. In fact, it is the movement of human existence that leads, through its three stages, to 'living in truth'. In the first and second stages of existence, human beings find themselves engaged with the realisation of vital necessities and distracted with individual activities and objects. It is only in the third movement when "I am able to transform my engagement with the singular into an authentic relation to the universe"[49], and to understand that life is actually a mode of praxis. The third stage is the moment man opens up to the world and to others, when he or she takes responsibility for the world and for others. Moreover, an ethical turn in life and the responsible commitment of citizens to the matters of the polis come about, as well as the acknowledgement that such ethical turn might even ask the sacrifice of one's own life. The civic initiatives against the totalitarian regime were in the first place the embodiment of such an ethical turn. The commitment to the ethical reconstitution of community and its public life was very often made at a very high price, as Patocka's own death attests.

We must go back to phenomenology to ascertain further the influence of Patocka over Havel. Truly, for Patocka, Phenomenology is much more than the study of general matters concerning knowledge and science; it is, first of all, "*Besinnung*, conscience, *und zwar Besinnung auf die Krise*, reflection on the crisis, *the crisis of humanity*. Phenomenology must scrutinise this crisis and its hidden origins"[50]. The crisis Patocka talks about, as Masaryk had already done in his days, is a crisis afflicting humanity as a whole, a crisis that is, undoubtedly, the direct consequence of the evolution of European civilisation. In his *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History*, Patocka gives a comprehensive account of the spiritual history of Europe. He begins this voyage with the Socratic 'care for the soul' and finishes it with an exposé of the twentieth century as a war and the dark side of the evolution of science and technique. In stressing these issues, and in trying to

point out the contradictions of both capitalism and socialism, Patocka was actually taking a stand against Masaryk's conception of history as the continual progress of reason in human affairs.

For Patocka, politics, history and philosophy have been the crucial elements in the shaping of Europe, and his studies on the nature of the three led him to conclude that politics, history and philosophy are linked by a common goal. According to Raymond Klibanský, "[h]e [Patocka] wants to prove that the goal of politics is more than the guarantee of survival, it is life in freedom; that the advancement of freedom in the public domain carried out by politics is actually the object of history; and that philosophy is freedom of thought applied to the fundamental principles of both politics and history"[51]. The question for Patocka lied on the fact that technical civilisation has not solved out the greatest of all human problems: how to live according to the possibilities portrayed by history, i.e., how to fulfil human freedom. In fact, as he sustains in a study on Comenius, the source of it lies in the conception of 'ratio' provided by the precursors of modern science, for whom rationality was independent and superior to things apprehended by it. Referring to the modernity of Comenius, Patocka asserted that "[o]ur 'European epoch' develops a specific conception of history and the spirit centred on the autonomous subject, who does not acknowledge any authority whatsoever over him"[52]. Concurrently, a parallel political philosophy developed and achieved its consummation with Hegel's theory of state sovereignty.

In his analysis of the modern world, Patocka insisted on what he called the 'solidarity of the shaken', i.e., the solidarity that unites those being shaken or disturbed by the detrimental forces that stand in the way of human emancipation. This he advanced in the distressing essay "The wars of the twentieth century and the twentieth century as war", where he presented the experience of the warfront as the privileged moment to awaken the solidarity of the shaken. Besides, the experience of the warfront is the moment to ground a new community, constituted by those who have shared the same misery, in spite of all that separates them. Patocka mentions as witnesses of the community that is born out of the same disturbance two personalities as opposed as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Ernst Jünger. Having in mind their experience, Patocka maintained that "[b]oth stress the shock of the warfront not in the sense of a superficial trauma but, on the contrary, in the sense of a fundamental change in human existence: war as front marks forever."[53] This potentiality for change inspired dissent and made the 'solidarity of the shaken' a turning point in the struggle against the totalitarian regime.

This concept is particularly important in the works of Havel, both in his sociological analysis of the nature of totalitarianism and in his praxeological attempt to resist it. Moreover, the solidarity of the shaken was the starting point for a new spatio-temporal account of community, as it is well attested, for instance,

in "Politics and conscience". In this essay, Havel stressed the universal character of the undertaking that the dissidents had in hands when resisting totalitarianism. He thus maintained that the attack on human identity in Czechoslovakia and the communist world was in fact an attack on human identity elsewhere. Again, he clarified, the point about the dissidents' undertaking was what it attested "about the condition, the destiny, the opportunities, and the problems of the world"[54]. For Havel, the totalitarian experience in the Soviet bloc represented a warning to the West, in that such experience personified the vanguard of a global crisis affecting modern civilisation. Totalitarianism was after all a convex mirror of modern civilisation, calling for a new understanding of it. Consequently, dissent in the Soviet bloc constituted a challenge to the West in that it ought to be viewed as "a specific modern experience, the experience of life at the very ramparts of dehumanised power"[55]. Therefore, its undertakings should arouse a sense of common destiny irrespective of the political bloc people lived in.

The resistance to totalitarianism was definitely envisioned by Havel within a universal attempt to provide an answer to the crisis of modern civilisation. In his view, the central point consisted in a global existential revolution that could make human community meaningful by appealing to a renewed sense of higher responsibility in the conduct of public life. In summoning those that have been shaken by the constraints to human freedom, no matter the state boundaries or the political blocs, Havel clearly implied the problematique of the moral extension of community. The prospect of human betterment would lie on the constitution of an 'international community of the shaken', springing from a specific solidarity and relying, in the first place, on the power of human conscience. The reconstituted natural world, the world of personal experience, appears as the true terrain for a rehabilitated concept of politics. This Havel called 'antipolitical politics', i.e., the dealing of the public space that places morality and responsibility above personal interests and recovers the autonomous human being as the initiator of all relevant social action; politics understood as practical morality. "Politics and Conscience" first appeared in 1984, in Prague, in a samizdat collection called *The Natural World as Political Problem: essays on modern man*. Seven years after his death, Patocka and his legacy were indeed very much alive:

> *"When Jan Patocka wrote about Charter 77, he used the term 'solidarity of the shaken'. He was thinking of those who dared resist impersonal power and confront it with the only thing at their disposal, their own humanity. Does not the perspective of a better future depend on something like an international community of the shaken which, ignoring state boundaries, political systems, and power blocs, standing outside the high game of traditional politics, aspiring to no titles and appointments, will seek to make a real political force out of a phenomenon so ridiculed by the technicians of power—the phenomenon of human conscience?"*[56]

In fact, the solidarity of the shaken was the phenomenon that would mark the outset of an independent life of community in Czechoslovakia in the late seventies, resisting the totalising threat posed by the state. This was the source and motivation for the civic initiatives that would develop in the eighties and that would eventually conceive a 'parallel community' as the means to defend human autonomy against the state. The mobilisation of this kind of solidarity emerged for the first time in late 1976. The occasion was the trial of an underground music band, the Plastic People of the Universe, a bunch of boys whose only crime had been to play the music they enjoyed. A month later, in a powerful essay, Havel recalled the trial and the events linked to it. If the public prosecutor represented the totalising attempts of the state, the band was the challenge of example and so the people attending to the trial realised they were taking part in a singular event. In Havel's words, this was a 'unique illumination of the world', enacted by "the exciting realisation that there are still people among us who assume the existential responsibility for their own truth and are willing to pay a high price for it"[57].

The gathering of the attendants to the trial, many of them did not know each other, was described by Havel as an important shared experience. In fact, "only the urgency of the challenge that everyone felt in it could have explained the rapid genesis of that very special, improvised community that came into being here for the duration of the trial, and which was definitely something more than an accidental assembly of friends of the accused and people who were interested in the trial"[58]. The trial of the Plastic People ended up being the mobilisation of the solidarity of disparate people, shaken by the atomisation of community that was attempted ceaselessly by the totalitarian control. This mobilisation would be thoroughly analysed by Havel in the essay he dedicated to the memory of Jan Patocka[59]. In it, Havel attributes to the solidarity of the shaken the political potential that springs from living within the truth, i.e., the concrete capacity to reawaken the sense of higher responsibility and genuine community among strangers. The solidarity of the shaken is above all a moral resource, which acquired a political potential in face of the totalising ambitions of the communist regime. This moral resource as political potential was clearly perceived by Havel as the true 'power of the powerless'.

Charter 77 was the civic initiative that first called for the awakened responsibility of Czechs and Slovaks. It was conceived as a community of mutual support, based upon profound moral groundings and demanding the full respect by the Czechoslovak state for the international covenants that protect human and civic rights. In the formal declaration of 1 January 1977, its goal was presented as follows:

> *"Charter 77 is a free informal, open community of people of different convictions, different faiths and different professions united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civic and human rights*

in our own country and throughout the world—rights accorded to all men by the two mentioned international covenants, by the Final Act of the Helsinki conference and by numerous other international documents opposing war, violence and social or spiritual oppression, and which are comprehensively laid down in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Charter 77 springs from a background of friendship and solidarity among people who share our concern for those ideals that have inspired, and continue to inspire, their lives and their work."[60]

As first speaker of *Charter 77*, Jan Patocka would found this civic initiative on the necessity of grounding the development of mankind and the progress of knowledge on a non-technical criterion, i.e., the absoluteness of moral principles. Besides, the respect for an absolute morality that stands above political power and the state was presented as the fundamental condition to keep up with the possibilities of 'technical and instrumental reason'. Consequently, in his communication of 7 January 1977, Patocka stressed the way morality defines and allows man to be human. Altogether, he claimed that "the aim of Charter 77 is the spontaneous and unbounded solidarity of all who have come to understand how significant a moral way of thinking is for a real society and its normal functioning"[61]. *Charter 77* was in fact the point of departure for a cobweb of civic initiatives and groups that struggled for the defence of human rights and civic freedom in all dimensions: for the support of the poor, for free trade unions, for religious freedom, for women's rights. It became truly a 'parallel polis' or 'parallel community', in the sense Václav Benda[62] gave to it. In practice, it meant the creation of an independent structure that actualised the citizens' right and duty to participate in the affairs of the community, thus overcoming its demoralisation and atomisation at the hands of the totalitarian regime. In the Czechoslovakia of the seventies and eighties, a parallel community developed as the actualisation of a moral resource that was immanent in the solidarity uniting those shaken by the same destructive experience. Václav Benda would describe it as a means to "break through the communications and social blockade, to return to truth and justice, to a meaningful order of values, to value once more the inalienability of human dignity and the necessity for a sense of human community (*pospolitost*) in mutual love and responsibility"[63].

4. Václav Havel and the need for transcendence in human affairs

When Havel pronounced his first words as the newly elected president of Czechoslovakia, on 1 January 1990, he appealed unequivocally to the re-foundation or reconstitution of the community and its public sphere after four decades of

totalitarian control. On that occasion, and as Masaryk had done seventy years before, Havel proclaimed that the conduct of public life should be grounded on morality and that the state ought to find a philosophical justification. More importantly, the moral reconstitution of the community was urged as the opportunity to introduce a new element into European and global politics. By stressing Masaryk's motto 'Jesus, not Caesar' and by drawing on a Czech tradition that goes back to Chelcický and Comenius, Havel was categorically representing the new element in global politics as the power of the spirit and of ideas. Two years later, in the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Comenius, and in the spirit of the Czech philosopher, he would then point to a renewed concept of politics formulated as the 'amelioration of community affairs' aiming at a better organisation of the world. In accordance to what he had advanced throughout the years of dissent, Havel made clear once more that "[t]hat way involves the development and improvement of what I would call an engineer's relation to the world, in which people, society and the planet are never more than the application of general and knowable laws and an object of technical evolution"[64]. Altogether, and in order to counter the generalised disposition he found in the 'engineer's relation to the world', Havel has favoured the development of politics with a global scope and a spiritual dimension. Its point of departure is "neither the will to power nor an ideological view of the world, but rather a moral stance"[65], deriving from the awakened and recovered personal responsibility for the world. Its aim, then, can only be the amelioration of community affairs, i.e., the extension of communal bonds beyond political boundaries and the correspondent heightened sense of a global shared destiny.

Masaryk is clearly the point of reference for Havel, as concerns the grounding principles for the conduct of public life, truth and justice being unequivocally these principles. Havel also received from Masaryk the awareness of leading a country placed at the crossroads of Europe and the need to formulate its politics within a global frame. Nevertheless, it would be the experience of dissent to influence Havel more directly in his understanding of politics and in his providing it with a global scope and a moral dimension. The solidarity of the shaken theorised by Patocka had in particular proved to be a powerful moral resource to resist the totalising attempts of the regime. It gathered people willing to defend human conscience and human autonomy, and integrated them in a new kind of community, a parallel community, marked by the common awareness of the threat. Speaking from that part of Europe where the resort to traditional sources of identity has provoked, after the demise of communism, endless fragmentation, Havel would recuperate Patocka's notion and would give it a new meaning in the post-cold war world. In fact, he has been invoking a new solidarity among the shaken against the politics of identity and difference that have provoked the formation of closed communities of meaning based on the exclusionist value of the nation.

In his essays and speeches as president of Czechoslovakia, a state that would eventually break down under the pressure of such politics in the end of 1992, Havel always tried to expose the exclusionist practices embedded in the re-awakened nationalism. Moreover, he ascertained that the nationalist movements very often replaced a system of injustice and exclusion by an alternative system of injustice and exclusion. In this, Havel is not very far from bell hooks when she points out that separatism deprived of democratic political culture is not self-determination, or from Balibar and Wallerstein when they show that nationalists promote forms of racism and sexism by transferring the past cultural and economic exclusions to the present ones. As Martin Matuštik has put it, "[b]oth racism and sexism underpin certain forms of nationalism and all three overlap in distorting any emancipatory or democratic dividend that is expected to arise from the postcolonial freedom movement on nationalist grounds"[66].

We then must understand the solidarity of the shaken as a system of inclusion that develops new communal bonds among strangers and gives birth to post-traditional communities of meaning. It clearly stands for a cosmopolitan strand of thought in opposition to the communitarian politics of identity and difference. According to Havel, and in this context, it is possible to conceive of an all-embracing community, based on "thousands of tiny, inconspicuous, everyday decisions whose common denominator is precisely the spirit and ethos of a politics that is aware of the global threat to the human race". Indeed, the new community of the shaken must be actualised through a global and moral politics which "does not support general consumer resignation but rather seeks to awaken a deeper interest in the state of the world and rally the will to confront the threats hanging over it"[67]. The awakening of a common civic responsibility for the world and its common destiny is the crucial point here. The respect for human rights, civil society and the indivisibility of freedom are some of the notions that, according to Havel, bound people together around an allegiance that surpasses political boundaries.

The way trailed by Havel toward the conception of a new community of the shaken is achieved through a radical mode of social analysis. We can call it a hermeneutics of suspicion, in which he brings forward a comprehensive critique of modern ages and modern civilisation. The first element of it is clearly the existential critique, formulated as the means to resist any totalitarian closure on identity formation and to dismiss exclusionist groundings for the community ideal. The second one represents a critique of the systemic forces that operate in society, controlling the material reproduction of life. This is the critique of power and the market.

Following Martin Matuštik in his *Postnational Identity*, I refer to the 'existential' as "a form of praxis rooted in the attitude of a critical examination of those motives and presuppositions that influence the formations of identity, the parameters of communication, and theoretical ideals"[68]. Likewise, the existential

critique carried out by Havel must be interpreted, primarily, as a mode of praxis coming out from the radical inquiry into individual and collective identity formation. He developed this problematique in Oslo, during the conference on 'the anatomy of hate' that took place on 28 August 1990, an event sponsored by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity and the Norwegian Nobel Committee. In his paper, Havel set out to identify the causes of hatred in individuals and the correspondent pattern of behaviour. He found its origin in a deep egocentrism: the certainty that one lacks full recognition leads him or her to find shelter in hate in order to justify the feeling of being the victim of an universal injustice. Concomitantly, those who hate are incapable of putting their lives under the scrutiny of irony, i.e., they are incapable of self-distancing, of realising the absurd dimension of existence and, therefore, of acknowledging their mistakes, limitations and guilt. Notwithstanding, individual hatred would be just the point of departure for a more comprehensive inquiry in which Havel would complete a thorough examination of collective hatred as the basis of unidimensional identities: nationalism, religious fundamentalism, racism.

In this context, his main concern was definitely the collective hatred of nationalistic overtones that was developing in Central and Eastern Europe following the breakdown of totalitarianism. This, Havel depicted in 1990 as the potential threat generated by a moment of disillusion and depression that followed the initial joy of liberation. The potential threat came also from what he called the 'shock of otherness', the sudden encounter of peoples stripped of totalitarian façades. "Rid of the uniforms and the masks that were imposed on us, we are looking for the first time into one another's real faces"[69]. Yet, in his "Anatomy of Hate" Havel spotted a deeper cause of trouble in Central and Eastern Europe, one inscribed in the very essence of the totalitarian control of society. In here, national intolerance is derived from the erasure of civic culture and human autonomy managed by the totalising communist project during four decades:

> *"For years the totalitarian system in this part of Europe suppressed civic autonomy and the rights of individuals, whom they tried to turn into pliant cogs in its machine. The lack of civic culture, which the system destroyed, and the general demoralising pressure ultimately can make possible the careless generalising that always goes along with national intolerance. Respect for human rights, which rejects the principle of collective responsibility, is always the result of a minimum level of civic culture."*[70]

The critique of systemic forces, in special that of political power, was delineated by Havel between Jerusalem and Copenhagen. In it, his hermeneutics of suspicion reveals all its radicality. More specifically, in these two cities he addressed the audiences with the clear purpose of analysing what he called the delusive and

ambiguous elements present in the temptation of power. In fact, drawing explicitly on Kierkgaard's *Sickness unto Death*, Havel advanced a thorough inquiry into the motives that make people long for political power and concluded that they very often deceive or delude themselves about these motives. Political power is indeed a potent *mobil* toward self-affirmation, one that has nevertheless its most obscure side and in which lies a terrible danger. The danger then lies in the possibility "that while pretending to confirm our existence and identity, political power will in fact rob us of them", i.e., that someone "becomes captive of his position, his perks, his office"[71]. Hence his paraphrasing Kierkegaard with the expression 'power unto death' and his stressing the need of self-awareness and critical distance for everyone in power. Likewise, when accepting the Sonning prise presented by the University of Copenhagen on 28 May 1991, Havel surprised the audience confessing that being in power made him permanently suspicious of himself and vigilant over his own motives to hold office. His self-awareness and self-distancing regarding the phenomenon of power had yet been previously exposed by Havel at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Nowhere else has Havel disclosed better this subject than when he established the closest relationship between Franz Kafka and his presidency:

> *"The lower I am, the more proper my place seems; and the higher I am, the stronger my suspicion is that there has been some mistake. And every step of the way, I feel what a great advantage it is for doing a good job as a president to know that I do not belong in the position and I can at any moment, and justifiably, be removed from it."*[72]

No matter Havel's radical hermeneutics of suspicion, the difficulty to counter the spread of politics based on traditional conceptions of identity and difference in the aftermath of totalitarianism became very much obvious. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union attested it, and the same fate awaited Czechoslovakia: on 1 January 1993 there would be no place for the traditional New Year's presidential address. In fact, the head of state of Czechoslovakia had resigned some days before, anticipating the breakdown of negotiations between Czechs and Slovaks for the attainment of a satisfactory federal system. This event clearly represented a defeat for Havel's dearest principles, in special for the ideal of an all-inclusive community organised around the civic principle and capable of accommodating within it multiple national affiliations. On 1 January 1993, the state founded by Masaryk no longer existed and the Slovak political elite had achieved the control of an independent state in the name of the nation. As the president of the new Czech Republic, Havel would rapidly insist, though, on the open and all-inclusive identity of the new political body. In fact, and recuperating the legacy of Masaryk, he proclaimed that "the nation's 'Czechness' cannot be the sole or even the

chief point of its existence, and that the state that represents it must be something a little different and a little more than the mere pinnacle of the nation's being"[73]. The point here was the clear recognition of alternative levels of belonging, all acknowledged and ensured by a political body grounded unequivocally on the primacy of the civic principle.

The question for Havel is definitely that of giving expression to multiple levels of belonging, or of being at home, inscribed in the *natural world* of personal experience. "We must see the pluralism of the world", Havel uttered in 1992, addressing the participants at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. At this meeting, where global and regional economic issues are discussed every year by the most influential people in the planet, the Czech president assumed the critique of modern rationality, objectivity and arrogant universality. The crux of his message was that "[w]e must try harder to understand rather than to explain. The way forward is not in the mere construction of universal systemic solutions, to be applied to reality from the outside; it is also in seeking to get to the heart of reality through personal experience. Such an approach promotes an atmosphere of tolerant solidarity and unity in diversity based on mutual respect, genuine pluralism and parallelism"[74]. The question haunting Havel is definitely the 'how' of unity in diversity, the balance between universalism and particularism that we can find in other strands of cosmopolitanism.

The bringing together of universalism and particularism implies, for Havel, the radical conception of identity and responsibility he borrowed from Emmanuel Lévinas. In accordance with this legacy, Havel conceives of identity through asymmetry and verticality, for it always carries the demand of the other, not the personal will to exist: it is the other who actually calls the individual for responsibility. The individual is subjected to the other, not in a reciprocal positionality toward him. Moreover, the unbounded responsibility for the other pre-exists his freedom, his will and even his project of existence. As Martin Matuštik as put it in relation to Lévinas, "[i]dentity permanently lives in exile; freedom reminds one of a permanently dangerous memory of exodus. In my desire to exist I am always a refugee from my ego; I am vertically robbed of my horizontally projected possession of identity. Every horizontal project of an ideal community necessarily experiences exile and exodus"[75]. It is, I believe, in this asymmetrically conceived ethics, and in its renewed responsibility for the world, that Havel grounds his prospects for a post-traditional and post-national enlarged community, in which particularism in fact complements universalism.

The problematique involving the 'how' of particularism and universalism has been developed by Havel in the last few years, while taking further his sharp critique of the modern age. When referring to globalisation, the dimension he always stresses is the development of science as the basis of the modern conception

of the world and the crisis that accompanies this conception. While binding together the peoples of the planet and submitting them to a common shared destiny, modern technological civilisation, claims Havel, appears nevertheless to have exhausted his potential and to have missed something fundamental in the relationship with the world. His point is that modern technological civilisation has simply globalised the surface of our lives, being "now more of a source of disintegration and doubt than a source of integration and meaning. It produces what amounts to a state of schizophrenia, completing alienating man as an observer from himself as being"[76]. The consequence is the inevitably deepening gap that develops between the rational and the spiritual, the objective and the subjective, the technical and the moral, the universal and the particular, i.e., the unidimensional character of present-day civilisation.

The critique of the modern age advanced by Havel has definitely in mind the mobilisation of solidarity binding together the new shaken of the world against the unidimensional character of civilisation. This is indeed a new form of solidarity, post-traditional and post-national, that ought to assume the unbounded and global responsibility for the common fate of humanity, against all totalising constraints on human emancipation. Auschwitz is clearly the point of reference here, in that it confronts man with a global responsibility for the conduct of the whole human community. Consequently, and if the new community of the shaken is envisioned as a space enabling real human communication, theatre, claims Havel, is a telescope into its very future. Not because it provides a vision of alternative better worlds, "but because it embodies the main hope of humanity today, which is the rebirth of a living humanity. For, if theatre is free conversation, free dialogue among free people about the mysteries of the world, then it is precisely what will show humankind the way toward tolerance, mutual respect, respect for the miracle of Being"[77].

For Havel, it is the moral imperative of human coexistence and the radical conception of common responsibility in a multicultural world that shapes the prospect of a common human project. Altogether, this project entails the disclosure of a 'common minimum' and a new 'political metaculture' capable of embodying the spirit of a true worldwide co-operation. It contains what he calls elementary moral principles of human coexistence. These principles are understandable by every human being since they spring from the same basic archetypes in which all cultures are grounded and they comprehend the universal experience of human race. Amongst these principles he includes the respect for human freedom and dignity, for human rights, for democracy in its multiple manifestations, for property, tolerance and faith in the non-violent resolution of conflicts, concern for the material development of all human communities. Altogether, Havel starts from what in his view lies at the root of all cultures and

communities, particularly the capacity for self-transcendence. It represents the ultimate goal of an emancipatory praxis that summons the solidarity of those willing to confront the threats hanging over the future of the world:

> *"Transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us, to foreigners, to the human community, to nature, to the universe; transcendence as a deeply and joyously experienced need to be in harmony even with what we ourselves are not, what we do not understand, what seems distant from us in time and space, but with which we are nevertheless mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world; transcendence as the only real alternative to extinction."*[78]

Concluding remarks on the nature of the current problematique

"Thou art perfect then our ship hath touched upon the deserts of Bohemia?"[79], asks Antigonus in act 3, scene 3, of William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1609-10), a play in which Bohemia is located somewhere on the Mediterranean coastline. The Czechs tend to see in this presumed misrepresentation the typical example of foreigners' ignorance of their land and of the concomitant indifference toward what happens in it. The British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain tragically contributed to that perception when, in September 1938, and in order to justify Britain's appeasing policy, he referred to Czechoslovakia as "a faraway country", inhabited by quarrelling peoples "of whom we know nothing"[80]. According though to the prevalent interpretation of *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare's real intention would have been to set the second part of this play in an imagined place, a new Arcadia, in the moral opposite pole from the decadent and equally fictionalised Sicilian court in which the play begins.

There is also a particular concern with moral or ethical poles in the present dissertation. In fact, and by bringing to the fore the problematique of political community explored recently by Andrew Linklater, I have focused on the recovering of a certain moral imperative inherent in the overcoming of traditional readings of the 'international'. This is then what I imply when, drawing on Linklater's argument, I turn to immanent experiences and moral resources regarding the transformation of political community. In addition, and contra neo-realist arguments of reductionism, my contention has intended to uncover 'immutability claims' that support the representation of international relations as a separate empirical realm, a-historical and given. It has therefore intended to expose how the re-opening of the question of political community can indeed become the

starting point for new readings of the 'international' that depart from notions of recurrence and repetition. My dissertation has suggested a specific journey into the Czech twentieth century and has advanced that the problematique of the moral grounding and moral extension of political community has been consistently present in it. It was then from within this journey that I hoped to gather relevant experiences concerning the transformation of political community. Moreover, what supposedly was a series of endeavours with strict domestic relevance has eventually disclosed a much wider and comprehensive meaning, with implications that extend to the very conceptualisation of the 'international'. Indeed, in each of the three moments taken from the Czech journey I identified, the working out of a synthesis for the moral grounding and moral extension of the national community presupposed a global solution for the world. It definitely presupposed an explicit cosmopolitan understanding of the bonds uniting the peoples of the planet.

What clearly came under scrutiny here was the subject matter of the academic discipline of International Relations, and the extent to which this discipline is moving from uncertainty to crisis and from crisis to transformation. If the discipline is today in a state of disarray, this is due undoubtedly to the challenging of traditional assumptions about the social world. Consequently, a central concern throughout this dissertation has been to expose how international theory is implicated in international practice. This is particularly evident when theory divorces ethics from politics and constructs a specific reading of the 'international' based on recurrence and repetition in the realm of inter-state relations. Or when the academic discipline of International Relations constitutes as the study of the reproduction of the system of states, takes anarchy as immutable, and envisions ethics "as applicable to the kind of community that the international society cannot be"[81].

By insisting on particular experiences that shed some light on the problematique of the moral grounding and moral extension of political community, I have finally purported to cross the boundary between political theory and international theory. The solidarity of the shaken emerges undoubtedly from my dissertation as the crucial experience mobilising a new kind of community. In fact, the post-national and post-traditional character of this solidarity exposes the state as a limited moral community and consequently creates an enlarged space where the theorising of the 'good life' is not restricted to state boundaries. The solidarity of the shaken then appeals to the possibility of overcoming all sorts of inter-state estrangement and is a potent challenge to the reading of the 'international' based on an immutable anarchy. Moreover, it is a potent call for states to embrace the responsibility of bringing forward more just political orders, domestically and internationally. A reconstituted discipline of International Relations then follows which draws on the Kantian question about what makes international

theory possible and recuperates the potential of human capacity to transform the social world. Altogether, the inquiring into the moral grounding and moral extension of political community that I took forward in my dissertation directly addressed and answered the question of what makes international theory possible.

Notes

[1] cf. Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society: selected speeches 1990-1994*, Nakladatelstvi Lidové Noviny, Prague, 1995, pp. 13-21.

[2] cf. Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless", in *Open Letters: selected writings 1965-1990*, Vintage Books, New York, 1992, pp. 127-214.

[3] ibidem, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 18.

[4] cf. Tomáš-Garrigue Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1927, p. 404.

[5] Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 18.

[6] cf. Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community*, Polity Press, London, 1998.

[7] ibidem, p. 11.

[8] Jan Patocka, *Essais Hérétiques sur la Philosophie de l'Histoire*, Editions Verdier, Lagrasse, 1981, p. 141.

[9] Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory", in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, Polity Press, London, 1995.

[10] ibidem, p. 2.

[11] Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, Ken Booth (eds.), *The Eighty Years' Crisis. International Relations 1919-1999*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. xiii.

[12] Fred Halliday, "The futures of international relations: fears and hopes", in Steve Smith, Ken Booth, Marysia Zalewski (eds.), *International Theory: positivism & beyond*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 318.

[13] Andrew Linklater, "The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical-Theoretical Point of View", in *Millenium*, vol. 21, no. 21, p. 78.

[14] Brian Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, SUNYP, Albany, 1998, p. 6.

[15] Jim George, 'Realist 'Ethics', International Relations, and Post-modernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic", in *Millenium*, 1995, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 195

[16] Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, Princeton U. Press, Princeton, 1979, p. 181

[17] Steve Smith, op. cit., p. 3.

[18] Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), op. cit., p. xii.

[19] cf. Martin Wight, "Why is there no International Theory?", in James Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory: critical investigations*, Macmillan, London, 1995, pp. 15-33.

[20] Andrew Linklater, op. cit., p. 21.

[21] cf. Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*, Macmillan, London, 1982, pp. 11-12.

[22] ibidem, *The Transformation of Political Community*, p. 44.

[23] Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in International Relations*, p. 40.

[24] ibidem, p. 12.

[25] René Wellek, *Essays on Czech Literature*, Monton & Co. Publishers, London, 1963, p. 62.

[26] cf. Walter Capp, "Interpreting Václav Havel", in *Cross Currents*, Fall 1997, vol. 47, no. 3.

[27] Andreas Osiander, "Rereading Early Twentieth-Century IR Theory: Idealism Revisited", in *International Studies Quarterly*, 1998, no. 42, pp. 409-432.

[28] Tomaš-Garrigue Masaryk, *Masaryk on Thought and Life: conversations with Karel Capek*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1938, p. 158.

[29] ibidem, p. 79.

[30] ibidem, *The Making of a State*, p. 72.

[31] ibidem, *Masaryk on Thought and Life: conversation with Karel Capek*, p. 118.

[32] ibidem, p. 186.

[33] ibidem, p. 171.

[34] ibidem, *The Making of a State*, p. 394.

[35] ibidem, p. 410.

[36] ibidem, p. 47.

[37] ibidem, p. 292.

[38] cf. Ernst Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p. 135.

[39] Tomaš-Garrigue Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 424.

[40] ibidem, p. 407.

[41] ibidem, *Masaryk on Thought and Life: conversations with Karel Capek*, p. 174

[42] ibidem, p. 212-213.

[43] Václav Havel, *Summer Meditations*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Barcelona, 1994, p. 165.

[44] Jan Vladislav, "Asides to Readers of Havel's Essays", in Jan Vladislav (ed.), *Václav Havel, living in truth*, Faber and Faber, London, 1989, p. xvi

[45] Ken Booth, "Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice", in *International Affairs*, vol. 67, no. 3, p. 534.

[46] Jan Patocka, "Méditation sur 'le monde naturel comme problème philosophique'", in *Le monde naturel et le mouvement de l'existence humaine*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1988.

[47] ibidem, p. 101.

[48] ibidem, "Qu'est-ce que l'existence?", in *Le monde naturel*, p. 261.

[49] ibidem, "Méditation sur le monde naturel comme problème philosophique", in *Le monde naturel*, p. 119.

[50] ibidem, "Was ist Phänomenologie", in H. Kohlenberger (ed.), *Reason, Action and Experience. Essays in Honour of Raymond Klibanský*, F. Meiner, Hamburg, 1979, p. 48.

[51] Raymond Klibanský, "Jan Patocka", in Henri Declève (ed.), *Profils de Jan Patocka*, Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Brussels, 1992, p. 140.

[52] Jan Patocka, "Comenius et l'âme ouverte", in *L'écrivain, son 'objet'*, P.O.L., Paris, 1990, p. 124.

[53] ibidem, "Les guerres du XX siècle et le XX siècle en tant que guerre", in *Essais Hérétiques* sur la Philosophie de l'Histoire, p. 135.

[54] Václav Havel, "Politics and conscience", in *Open Letters*, p. 263.

[55] ibidem, p. 269.

[56] ibidem, p. 271.

[57] ibidem, "The Trial", in *Open Letters*, p. 106.

[58] ibidem, p. 107.

[59] cf. ibidem, "The Power of the Powerless", in *Open Letters*.

[60] "Charter 77, Declaration", reprinted in H. Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1981, pp. 209-211.

[61] Jan Patocka, "Was die Charta 77 ist und was sie nicht ist", in *Schriften zur Tschechischen Kultur und Geschichte*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1992, p. 318.

[62] cf. Václav Benda, "The Parallel Polis", in H. Gordon Skilling and Paul Wilson (eds.), *Civic Freedom in Central Europe*, Saint Martin's Press, New York, 1991, pp. 35-41.

[63] ibidem, "Czech Responses", in H. Gordon Skilling and Paul Wilson (eds.), op. cit., p. 51.

[64] Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 192.

[65] ibidem, p. 216.

[66] Martin J. Matuštik, *Postnational Identity*, Guilford Press, New York, 1993, p. vii.

[67] Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 217.

[68] Martin J. Matuštik, op. cit., p. ix.

[69] Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 108.

[70] ibidem, p. 109.

[71] ibidem, p. 138-139.

[72] ibidem, p. 73.

[73] ibidem, p. 265.

[74] ibidem, p. 180.

[75] Martin J. Matuštik, op. cit., p. 191.

[76] Václav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society*, p. 309.

[77] ibidem, p. 306.

[78] ibidem, p. 317.

[79] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, p. 1256.

[80] BBC radio broadcast of 27 September 1938, reported in the *Times* (London), 28 September 1938.

[81] cf. above, p. 8.

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