

HAPPINESS AND INTUITION

ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS Povilas

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ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS Povilas
Ph. D., Institute of Humanities
Mykolas Romeris University (Vilnius, Lithuania)
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My suggestion about happiness arises out of my conviction that there is a potential hidden in human nature that has been very little used so far – this is certain capacities to which we have been paying very little attention and which should be activated in the age of technologies. This conviction is evidenced by one fundamental distinction which has been discussed by many philosophers, but which – and this is interesting indeed – has been continuously pushed to the margins of the philosophical thinking, depreciated, and forgotten. By this, I mean the distinction, made by Plato and Aristotle, between *logos* and *nous*. *Logos* is a conceptual and logical, theoretical and abstract discourse, a system. *Nous* is intuition of principles, a grasp of the depth of reality, an embryo of the “divine” life in a human being, according to Aristotle. But Plato and Aristotle developed the distinction between *logos* and *nous* rather sporadically. It was much better revealed by the thinkers of the Middle Ages, for instance, by Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart. In their thinking, this distinction acquired the shape of distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus*. *Ratio* is the commonly known rationality, theory, conceptuality, systematicity. And the concept of *intellectus* is explained by Thomas Aquinas as *intus legere*, “reading reality from inside”. (N. B.: the concept of *intellectus* of Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart has nothing in common with Kant’s concept of intellect). *Intellectus* is a grasp of the singular existence, an existential act, a contact with that moment in which the act of existence of a thing is inspired by the divine act. *Intellectus* is an existential judgement, a connection between human life and the flow of reality. It is our correspondence to what really exists. *Ratio* only follows *intellectus*, concepts and systems only reflect life, but they are not life itself. The great human tragedy is the gap between *ratio* and *intellectus*, it is a gap between reflection of life and life itself. In our times, this division was probably most strongly thought by Henry Bergson whose philosophy was overshadowed by other thinkers after the II World War, but today, after 2000, it is entering the centre of philosophical reflection again (this, of course, is not accidental). Bergson differentiated between reason and intuition (intuition of duration). The reason contemplates reality in spatial categories; therefore, it divides it into parts that are located each after other, parts that homogenize it, that stop its dynamic process, make it logical, but lifeless abstraction and concepts. Intuition grasps reality in the development of process, i. e. its duration, time. Intuition never destroys mind and science, but rather turns the concepts created by the mind into “flexible” concepts (*des concepts souples*), i. e. into dynamic concepts that correspond to reality’s concreteness.

Following P. Hadot’s research, I would formulate my proposition about happiness in this way: only connexion with real life can make us happy. For this, we should awaken such thinking which would seek inner transformation of a man, a perception and an experiencing of inner me; which would shake value-based priorities; which would allow answering questions regarding what is good or bad, true or untrue in a very personal (but not “subjective”) way. Thinking should touch, even coincide with, an entire

existence, with life itself, and not with theoretical abstract knowledge about it. Epictetus defined the philosophy in this way: “It is the art of life whose material is everyone’s life”. Thinking as knowing oneself that coincides with a care for oneself, or, as the famous Czech phenomenologist Jan Patočka called it, “the care for the soul”. Namely the thinking that coincides with life itself is *fronezis*. *Fronezis* is the reflection of life that enables “living good” or “living with pleasure”, where the concept of pleasure is understood in the sense of an in-depth experience, in-depth joy. Undoubtedly, here we are in the understanding of thinking as a source of *eudaimonia*. And maybe I am not wrong in giving a reference to the conception of the “therapy of soul” in the philosophy of Marta Nussbaum. Going back to Aristotle, he wrote in his *Protreptique*: “Those who live indeed, are not satisfied with pleasure experienced only from time to time; they derive pleasure from the simplest fact of living”.