Daniela FOBELOVÁ
University of Matej Bel, Banská Bystrica

ETHNO-ETHICS AND ETHNO-CULTURE AS ASPECTS OF CULTURAL ETHICS

Summary. This paper deals with current problems related to the ethical reflection of its cultural diversity. Differentiation of monologic and dialogic or multilogic cultural communication allows us to avoid conflicts with "a strange" (culture). The paper includes a case study that reveals this optimal tool in dealing with cultural and moral value conflicts along the lines of post-fundationalism.

Keywords: Applied Ethics, Ethno-ethics, Ethno-culture, Case study, post-fundationalism.

ETNO-ETYKA I ETNO-KULTURA JAKO ASPEKTY ETYKI KULTURY

Streszczenie. Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy aktualnych problemów związanych z refleksją etyczną w jej różnorodności kulturowej. Zróżnicowanie monologicznej i dialogicznej lub multilogicznej komunikacji kulturowej pozwala nam uniknąć konfliktów z "obcym" (inną kulturą). Artykuł zawiera studium przypadku, które pokazuje optymalne narzędzie rozwiązywania konfliktów kulturowych i moralnych wartości wzdłuż linii post-fundacjonizmu.

Słowa kluczowe: Etyka stosowana, etno-etyka, etno-kultura, studium przypadku, post-fundacjonizm.

The term "cultural ethics" has neither been clearly defined in philosophical ethics nor in applied ethics yet. From the point of view of applied ethics, this term is topical for problems and dilemmas related to ethics and morality because of its connection with culture/cultures; i.e. the plurality of cultures. Therefore, the comparison of social life of these cultures is the subject of ethical reflection.

We even face problems when we try to define the term "culture" itself. Herder expressed it best when he said: "Nothing is more certain than this word, and nothing is more misleading

than the application of this term to all the nations and times".[1] Despite this fact, it is a term through which many phenomena are explained in sciences and media. Its ambiguous meaning includes the phenomenon of real human life with its morality, values and sense of life. Though the traditional meaning of the term "culture" is not unambiguous, it has a common denominator – culture is normative, hierarchical, and as a rule, nationally perceived. It is a comparative term, which does not refer to the contingency of live forms, but to their authenticity and morality, and thus to their inherent correctness. According to J. Derrida all the terms we use to describe our own and foreign cultures determine dominant values (uncivilised, unbeliever)[2]. Cultures are understood as clearly defined entities, which were originating in relative isolation during processes lasting hundreds of years as specific ways and styles of culture.

Globalisation caused national-state borders to be suddenly cancelled , similarly to the links between geographical space and power. The global market with transnational corporations (economy) and the related increase in international migrations have become a decisive bearer of this development. A strong foreign influence, the gradual extinction of culture, fast food chains as an expression of an unhealthy lifestyle are accompanying negative phenomena of this process. As many authors mention, with respect to the development of these prospects, the globalised world destroys the authenticity of original culture (ethno-culture) through shallow hedonistic principles. However, the term "authenticity" should not be understood as the meaning that authentic culture is here forever, but on the contrary it also takes into account the way of the acquisition of something foreign. The principle of the coherence of vertical and horizontal enrichment with foreign cultures is applied here. Culture in the current world (global, multicultural, intercultural, transcultural, pluricultural) is an imaginary stage as well as a wide discussion forum. It presents itself as the social and moral memory of mankind.[3] Culture in its traditional understanding is always associated with the morality of culture as meaning that it is attributed to moral norms and values or denies them, and people living within the framework of culture are required to act in a specific way. The current understanding of cultural ethics has three levels of reflection.

The first level: In general, there is no ethics that would not be cultural ethics, because all ethics occurs in the sphere of culture, and maintains, criticise or changes it.

The second level: Ethics of culture in its specific meaning and dealing with the reflection of a given place (locality), which presupposes the certain structure of symbols and meanings as given. Cultural ethics as an ethical reflection of the moral aspects of culture becomes a normative prerequisite of the criticism of institutions or the forms of communication. At the

[1] Herder J.G.: Idee zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit. Neudruck, Bodenheim 1995, p. 408.
[2] Derrida J.J.: Die Einsprachigkeit des anderen oder die Prothese des Ursprungs. In.: Haverkamp A. (Hg.) Die Sprache des Anderen. Übersetzungspolitik zwischen den Kulturen, Frankfurt a M. 1997.
[3] Fobelová D.: Kultúrna – sociálna a morálna pamäť ľudstva. In. Etika kultúra a multikultúrny dialóg, FHV UMB, Banská Bystrica 2004.

third level, ethical reflection leads to the establishing of norms as a normative meaning as well as looking for a sense of well-being, which enables the ethical evaluation of cultures.

Ethical responses to current situations in the "world of cultures" bring old-new normative problems. The old moral problem of normative chauvinism (the absolute rejection of everything that is foreign) is one of them. The opposite moral problem is a problem of normative romanticism (a foreign word is morally more valuable). The current situation is typical of the position of normative scepticism, which declares that every culture is permanent and therefore morally neutral.

The solution of the question of universalism and particularism is a more urgent issue. Marta Nussbaum offers a centric stream between these two extremes, which seems to be a good perspective. Following Aristotle and his concept of virtue, she introduces the categories of "human ability (strong values) and human needs". This author rejects ethnological relativism and is of the opinion that the highest current values comprise the preserving of the traditional social forms of life in general and specifically in the third world. According to Nussbaum every man has some specific universal abilities (properties, needs) based on which it is possible to form global ethics as well as the international justification of distributive justice.[4] The purpose of efforts and the achievement of these abilities is well-being. This author includes the list of elementary human functional abilities to the universal abilities of man that would have enabled the transition to well-being regardless of particular cultures. It is a task of the relevant culture of community, society to create the condition for the implementation of these abilities, which means that they will differentiate in a cultural context. It should remain in the hands of every concrete community, society and national culture. But, what should we do with supranational corporations, global policy and the resultant universal ethics?

How to live in the current world, in the world of the various cultures of moralities (ethno-cultures, ethno-moralities)? Or otherwise, the theorists of culture (ethicists, philosophers, anthropologists, culturologists, and others) have been working out various concepts for many years. The theory of multiculturalism represents a concept that does not enable the development of other cultures and it contradicts the recognition of modern tolerance. Interculturalism admits the mutual influence of cultures, but it deals more with conflicts among them than with the possibilities of their solutions. According to this concept, culture is understood as an island, a homogenous and clearly defined entity.

Multiculturalism is based on Herder´s understanding of culture; i.e. the closed entity, and the possibility of the existence of cultural variety within its framework. Many theorists are very critical about this term. They are convinced that it is not possible in principle. And the

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[4] Strong values comprise: mortality; human body – hunger; thirst; accommodation; sexual needs; mobility; passions; cognitive abilities; human development; practical reason – projecting of life; social relations; humour and play; uniqueness; identification of oneself. M.C. Nussbaum, 1993 Menschliches Tun und soziale Gerechtigkeit. Zur Verteidigung des aristotelischen Essentialismus. In. Brimlik, M. Brunkhorst, H. (Hrsg.) Gemeinschaft ung Gerechtigkeit, Frankfurt 1993, pp. 323-361.

current practice confirms it. Transculturalism[5] is understood as a possibility to sort out conflicts and withdraw itself from isolation. Cultures should be opened to one another, and be dependent on one another. In general, they create the networks of interconnections (human, economic, technical and others). However, cultural hybrids result from it.

Pluriculturalism[6] (in the sense of atomised separated pluralism) means the existence of various cultures, separated from one another and respecting one another; i.e. non-connecting of cultures because they are incompatible in their varieties. Interdisciplinarity was replaced by pluridisciplinarism with diatopics (the method of diatopical hermeneutics) in science, but also in ethics and morality.

Cultural communication originates as a mutual dependence of cultures, because each of them needs contact with other cultures. However, we should differentiate between monologue and dialogue cultures, because monologue culture expresses the relation within the framework of one (monoculture) ethno-culture and ethno-ethics as well as dialogue culture expresses the broad relationship between (interculture) ethno-culture and ethno-ethics. "Ethno-ethics" demonstrates the opinions of the relevant group of people on what is good and what is bad, but does not presuppose that a speaker identifies himself with the described opinions, and does not say at all that the described opinions deserve a favourable acceptance, and just because they are experienced by people who are the subject of description. Thus "ethno-ethics" informs about beliefs and opinions that people follow when they differentiate between good and evil, but nothing explains whether these opinions are good or bad"[7]. As mentioned above, these types are old fashioned now, and now the authors start to consider polylogic cultural communication also emphasising broader relationship, but with many ethno-cultures at the same time. This is an expression that is closer to pluriculturalism.

From ancient times, all these discussions about individual theories are closely connected with the perception of something foreign, a foreigner, foreign culture and its values, traditions and customs. The first consideration can be found in Cicero and his De Officis. And the debate goes on. The foreigner and foreign culture as well as active opposition to them are typical of any culture. Such an attitude results from its "immune" function, whose purpose is to guard and protect the inviolability of culture; i.e. their own culture. In this case theorists prefer the term cultural tolerance (from the point of view of philosophy and ethics). Tolerance (Latin tolerare – patience) "in general indulgence, tolerance of attitudes, conviction, faith (religious tolerance) or behaviour of others"[8]. Ethicists understand it as a virtue or moral quality: "Tolerance is a moral quality characterising some relation to interests, convictions,

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[5] Welsch W.: Transculturality – The Form of Cultures Today. Le Shuttle: Tunnelrealitäten Paris – London – Berlin. Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin 1996.
[6] The author of this concept is Panikkar R. and Horyna B. writes about his method; Žité a normatívní náboženství. Základní otázky. In.: Bělka L., Kováč M.: Normatívní a žité náboženství. MU, Chronos, Brno 1999, pp. 146-158.
[7] Bauman Z.: Úvahy o postmoderní době.. Sociologické nakladatelství. Praha 1995, p. 115.
[8] Slovník spoločenských vied, SPN, Bratislava 1997, p. 262.

faith, customs and behaviour of other people"[9]. Cultural tolerance is the subject of tested patience. The acknowledgement of particular cultural and moral norms, cultural, ethnical or national customs connected with differences in social life or professional work is only possible in mutual polylogic cultural and moral communication. Only the "subsequent agreement or acceptance" can start a harmonic coexistence, otherwise culture persists in conflicts, distrust, disrespect and contempt. Thus, "in a multicultural world it is of particular importance this tolerance, a necessary condition for the value of openness to otherness[10]", giving the possibility of understanding and coexistence.

Happy home versus a happy life

It is said that different countries have different manners. But a conflict can suddenly occur. People have been happily living in a small spa town– local residents and spa guests. But, only till foreign guests from a non-European culture arrived. Anger quickly replaced euphoria. Financial profit could not overcome it. Guests arrived with families consisting of many members, and they lived their lives abroad as at home. They were quite silent during days and spent time in their hostels. But at night, they came to the town park where they grilled food, ate and were very noisy. Their children played and threatened other guests who left the park to avoid them. In the morning, the inhabitants found the park very dirty. It happened every day. First, the local residents tried to speak to them, clean the park, but they resigned finally. Rodents multiplied, diseases occurred and the air was filled with a bad smell, and consequently their happy homes were not happy any more. The head of the spa was very disappointed. He came from the same cultural environment as the relatives of his spa guests. He married here, and partly adjusted to the domestic culture, specifically according to the basic principles of local residents. His faith had been a private issue for him. His daughters had been raised accordingly, and became doctors like him. The father and daughters decided to solve their moral dilemma resulting from the different cultural way and style of lives between the local residents and the spa guests.

Hypothesis:
The father was influenced by a new culture, a new one for him, and his daughters were raised in this new culture and morality, trying to solve the problem actively.

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[9] Gusejnov A.A., Kon I.S.: Slovar po etike. Politizdat, Moskva 1989, p. 351.

[10] Kuzior A. Dialog międzykulturowy a koncepcja zrównoważonego rozwoju, [in:]: Historicke a sucasne podoby myslenia a komunikacie, R. St'ahel, Z. Plasienkova (eds.), Iris, Bratislava 2008, p. 239.

Alternative solution

1. This is an issue of the town, municipality, and therefore they will leave it up to them.
2. They will adopt an active attitude and look for solutions on how to help the municipality.
3. They suggest that the guests coming from these cultures should not be admitted.

Moral consequences of individual alternatives

The first alternative is buck-passing. Though this issue relates to the municipality, the doctors have better knowledge about the culture and morality of the guests. From the point of view of the ethics of virtue, they would behave egoistically. From the aspect of the ethics of responsibility (who, for what, whom and according to which criteria) they are not responsible for the situation, but as citizens, they are jointly responsible. It is not their obligation, but they are concerned and they would like to help.

The second alternative points out the high level of their involvement; i.e. civic virtues, the virtues of decency and the sense of belonging and responsibility. Their solution is communication with spa guests. Their behaviour and action can be considered to be responsible (who?) with respect to themselves and the municipality (whom?) for the non-cultural behaviour of the people of a different culture from which his father also comes from (for what?), and based on the cultural and moral standards that he accepted as a foreigner in the new culture.

The third alternative is a possibility which from the point of view of utilitarianism brings more harm than good. As a doctor and the head of a department in the spa he is obliged to invite prospective guests and not refuse them. From this point of view, such behaviour and action would be irresponsible for the spa and him as well as the spa town.

Solution of the moral dilemma:

With respect to normative ethical theories that should be balanced (coherent) while solving the moral dilemma, the second alternative seems to be the best. The father with his daughters as citizens and also professionals in the spa have behaved well. They helped the spa and the town in this delicate situation. The spa did not lose (should not lose) their spa guests, and the town and its citizens should return to their happy lives. It seems that this solution corresponds with the ethics of responsibility, because it is reasonable not to ignore the problem, in particular if we understand it from the point of view of the other culture (values, morality). The ethics of utilitarianism, specifically when taking into mind its financial aspect, is also fulfilled. But the communication ethics contributed to the solution the most. The father and daughters discussed the issue all the time with the relatives of the spa guests, and they explained cultural and moral norms of the relevant country, as well as hygiene norms

resulting from it, taking care of children, environment, life style and the reasons why they should respect them. They explained why they have to pay the fine for breaching the rule of night-time noise, and how to avoid it in the future in accordance with relevant domestic legislation. It is only a short visit for them, and cultural tolerance has its limits. They also explained the status of cultural–religious tolerance because they had knowledge about it. They practice the same religion. The action and behaviour of the father and daughters were very responsible. Thus they succeeded in avoiding unfair gossiping about cultural, moral and religious values according to which "they were all the same".

Our hypothesis has been verified. However, the question arises whether they are motivated to do this again and for how long.

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Omówienie

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