

# Forms and Movements of Life

## Existential and Metaphysical Responsibility in the Work of Jan Patočka

*Zuzana Svobodová*

**ABSTRACT** Based on an analysis of the theory of the movement of existence, this paper answers the following question: Where can one see the most important connections of philosophical and religious language in the most re-thought part of Jan Patočka's thinking? The third movement of life is seen as a form of the true philosophical life, but also as a form with metaphysical responsibility. The movement of breakthrough, or actual self-comprehension, is the most important, because it leads to care for the soul—and, according to Patočka's analyses of interpretations of the Faust legend, it leads to care for the true immortality of soul. In the third movement of life, one lives an unsheltered life in openness to all which is not given and cannot be given, which is beyond all objective identification, and yet determines this world. In response to the mission in time (*kairos*), on the way to "asubjective" openness of the soul, in a dialogue which searches for truth and resists temptation, one can still find metaphysical responsibility and freedom.

**KEYWORDS** care for the soul; freedom; life in truth; movement of existence; open soul; Patočka, Jan; responsibility

The Czech philosopher Jan Patočka and his philosophy of the movement of existence has been analysed several times. I studied under his student, Radim Palouš, the first rector of the Charles University in Prague after the November Velvet Revolution in the Czech Republic in 1989. This text is also a small contribution to a celebration of 30 years of political freedom and democracy in the Czech Republic. Jan Patočka, who died in 1977, had a very important impact on shaping the thought of Václav Havel, the first Czech president after the Velvet Revolution, and Patočka also inspired others who helped lead Czech society out of the totalitarian system. The choice of the word “inspired” is deliberate since as a teacher, Jan Patočka encouraged his students to be authentic, to think and to live authentically. They were not meant to copy their teacher but to live with their own responsibility. This also means to think and to live more or less differently. The term “differently” refers to transformation,<sup>1</sup> to vivid movement.

In this paper, I want to ask the following question: Where can one see the most important connections of philosophical and religious language (and thoughts) in the most re-thought<sup>2</sup> part of Jan Patočka’s thinking, in his theory of the movement of existence, in his theory of the movements of life? The aim of this article is not to mention all of Patočka’s themes that are of interest in theological or religious thought, but rather to reflect on the meaning of philosophical and religious language in Patočka’s theory of the movement of existence, the vivid movement mentioned above.

In the chapter “Jan Patočka’s Reflections on the Czech Tradition of Christian Faith” (see Svobodová 2007, 59–68), published in 2007 in the same volume as two other chapters devoted to the topic of Patočka and religion, I reflected upon Patočka’s notions of religion, Christianity, and faith, and especially, the importance Patočka attributed to the Christian spiritual movements from the establishment of the first form of Czech state in the tenth century, up to the nineteenth century. It is well known that the philosophy of Jan Patočka inspired the religious philosophy of Jacques Derrida, as well as of his interpreters, for example as regards the topic of “sacrifice” (see Derrida 1999, 1995; see also Hagedorn 2009, 371–89; 2011, 245–61). However, the present paper focuses rather on the philosophical and theological language in the topic of “movement” than on the topic of “sacrifice” or “Christianity” in the philosophy of Jan Patočka (see Kočí 2017, 2019; Palaver 2018; Tava 2018; Melançon 2013).

1. (See Halík 2016, 55). Tomáš Halík, a former student of Jan Patočka, refers here to Charles Taylor’s call for the necessity of interpreting Christian terms in a new way.

2. See list of secondary literature on Patočka’s works, compiled by The Jan Patočka Archive.

SOMETHING MORE THAN A WILL—GIVING A RESPONSE: AN EXISTENTIAL AND METAPHYSICAL RESPONSIBILITY

J. Shawn Landres (2003, 137) discerns a paradox in Patočka's philosophy that a way of being human rests on responsibility, both existential and metaphysical. In the seventeenth and eighteenth lectures given during the academic year 1968–1969 and later published in *Body, Community, Language, World*, Patočka described the triple movement of human life, at which he arrived thanks to his study of movement.

However, the inspiration of the theory of the triple movement of existence can be seen in Patočka's comeniological works, see "Mezihra na prahu moderní vědy: Cusanus a Komenský," first published in (1953) journal *Vesmír* (see Patočka 2018, 366). Patočka himself implanted this text about Comenius in his book about Aristotle, which was not accepted and it was forwarded into some translation of that book. The beginnings of the theory of movement of existence were already interpreted several times: (see Rezek 2010, 93)—Rezek noted Patočka's study about movement marked the beginning of the theory of the movement of existence which was Patočka's doctoral dissertation "Aristotelés, jeho předchůdci a dědicové," first published in 1964 with comeniological texts (see Patočka 2009, 644—i. e. editors commentary, where we find the first mention that the concept of human life as a triple movement was new in 1969).

Jan Patočka, as a philosophy teacher, wanted to teach his students thus: "To see not trivialities but what is fundamental, determining the world as a whole.... How to comprehend what is seen, what is given in person, and not just as a form" (1998a, 4). Learning to see and to comprehend what is seen and then to give a personal response belongs to the essential dynamism of human life, which means to respond with the whole personality of being who lives as genuine human being.

In the fifth lecture, Patočka stressed the difference between the concept of movement in Aristotle's works and in modern mechanics.<sup>3</sup> Patočka spoke about the human body and wanted to show that the doing of a human being is a response:

Our doing, our projecting always has the character of the *explicit* "I do." That is no longer simply a matter of the world having seized me, the world having placed me somewhere, in a particular situation. Here is the I's response. And

3. (See Patočka 1998a, 44). It was this difference, which fascinated Patočka in its topicality in his time, as it is known from Patočka's letters (Patočka referred to Buytendijk and his school)—(see Patočka 2018, 585–91).

“I do” assumes that I can, I have the ability. I do—that means, I make movements selected among possible ones. (1998a, 44)

In addition, Patočka noted, such a response has a paradoxical character, because the dynamism of the human body, the lived body, is never an object; it means that

it does not present itself as a manipulated object which is just what it appears to be. We do not learn movements and coordination by analyzing and objectifying them. That is why I always need an object and am focused on mastering it (a musician, a clown). The entire dynamism is a thrust beyond itself, toward matters. (1998a, 45)

According to Patočka, the activity itself is something more than a will, one does not see a presented dynamism as a phenomenon: “We master our tasks and projects in a semiconscious mode so that our dynamism is present but it is not that which presents itself, the phenomenon—the matter we are mastering is that” (1998a, 44). While, on the one hand, the dynamism of human body is not a phenomenon, on the other hand, the unity of bodily movement was the starting point of Aristotle’s analyses in his *Physics*. Movement is defined by its meaning; that means, in Aristotle, each movement has a purpose, a direction, goal, known as *telos* in Greek. A movement is a realization of possibilities, i.e., of something that is not yet; according to Aristotle’s *Physics* (201a 10), the definition of movement is a possibility being realized, *entelécheia* in Greek. This conception of movement of Aristotle’s is characterized by Patočka as “far more profound” in comparison to other conceptions of movement, for example, the modern conception of movement as a condition or state, the practical model of movement, governed and governable as a foundation of technology (1998a, 144) or Bergson’s “subjective conception of movement as the lived experience of movement” (1998a, 145). For Aristotle, the lived body is one with dynamism, that is, a moving body; a life of a human being is a movement as the act of being which has certain possibilities: a human being is a movement as possibility being realized, as transformation. From the very first paragraph in this paper, ‘transformation’ has been referred to as the core. Patočka wants to radicalize Aristotle’s conception of movement, because it is still too static and objective (1998a, 146). For Patočka, seeing a human life as the possibility of being realized, it means to see the possibilities which come from the future and can really transform and bring something new to human life.

## MOVEMENT OF EXISTENCE

Jan Patočka answered the question: “How could a movement of human existence be described?” in the following manner:

we need to appeal to a triad of movements which presuppose and interpenetrate each other (1998a, 147)

or

life is perceived in the three basic movements, which are mutually related, each of which reveals another essential aspect of the natural world (2009, 643)

or

the three basic vital movements in their dialectic interrelation make up one movement, the unity of our vital reality. They are linked one to another, presuppose and negate each other; that is what is dialectical about their relation. When one becomes dominant, the others are there, albeit in the mode of absence. (1998a, 163)

Both the first and the second movements are Earth-bounded; both belong to the sphere of the Earth and, even though they are antagonistic, even though they disrupt and suppress each other, at the same time, they are not possible without each other (see 1998a, 158). In the third movement, humans attempt to break the rule of the Earth, it “is an attempt at shaking the dominance of the Earth in us, shaking of what binds us in our distinctiveness” (1998a, 159–60). In the third movement our finitude should be integrated.

The Earth preoccupies us too much, leading us to live within our individual preoccupations, so that ultimately we would not need to see our finitude, our life as a whole. Therein precisely consists the rule of the Earth over us. (1998a, 160; see Patočka 1995, 106; 2016, 169)

The first and second movements are movements of preoccupations, of Greek *ascholia* (business, Latin *negotium*), not of *theoria* (theory), not of *schole* (time free from activity, Latin *otium*).

## ACCEPTANCE

The first movement of life is described by Patočka as a movement of acceptance (see 1998a, 149), or of sinking of roots, of anchoring (see 1998a, 148). In this movement of life, human beings are accepted and subsequently learn to accept others. One can speak about this movement as an expression of certainty, safety and hospitality, for at the core of this movement is the world's hospitable environment (see Svobodová 2017, 10. 14–6). As an instinctive-affective movement (see Patočka 1998a, 148–9), it is the most fundamental of the three movements (see Patočka 1996a, 29–34; 2016, 165; 1998a, 151; 1995, 105). This first movement is like a circling which is “closing in on itself” (see Patočka 1998a, 159; 1995, 112). Each of the three movements of life has its own time dimension, and the time dimension of the first movement is the past (see Patočka 1996a, 33). Furthermore, each of the three movements has its own boundary, as Karl Jaspers wrote about a boundary situation in human existence.<sup>4</sup> The boundary of the first movement is contingency: “Life in this sphere is determined by all manner of contingencies, biological, situational, traditional (customs), individual (skills)” (Patočka 1998a, 150).

## EXTENDING POSSIBILITIES

The second movement of life is the movement of self-sustenance, of self-projection (see Patočka 1998a, 148), of work, functioning (see Patočka 1998a, 150–1; 1995, 107. 124) and defence; it is the movement of extending possibilities, but also of self-sufficiency by self-extension (see Patočka 1996a, 30–4; 2016, 171), of prolongation of being (see Patočka 1998a, 151). By this movement humans reproduce their vital process (see Patočka 1998a, 150). “This is the sphere in which we primarily live, it is the sphere of meaning” (Patočka 1998a, 150). Where the first movement was circular, this second line of life is straight, pointing further and further, however, in many directions (see Patočka 1998a, 159; 1995, 112). During this movement, human beings observe the world as a set of things, including other humans, whom they view only as things that can serve them, thus extending their options. This is why the second movement is also referred to as a modus of self-sufficiency, because if human beings act towards others as things, as objects, then they become manipulative. Human beings swept up in this movement see themselves likewise as things, manipulating themselves, and

4. (See Jaspers 1960, 229–80). Patočka published the article “Co je existence?” (What is existence?) containing the explanation of the theory of tripled movement of human existence on the occasion of the death of Karl Jaspers (26 February 1969)—(see Patočka 1969).

hence disposing of their authenticity such that they become like cogs in a machine that can be exchanged without problems. The time dimension of this movement is the present (see Patočka 1998a, 150; 1995, 106; 2016, 171; 1996a, 33). The boundary situations of this movement are conflict, suffering, guilt (see Patočka 1998a, 150).

#### INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

The third movement of human life is “the movement of existence in the narrower sense of the word” (Patočka 1998a, 148), being an attempt to break the earthliness (see Patočka 2016, 175; 1998a, 151; 1995, 106, 112). It can be characterized as a breaking from the “certainty” of the first two movements. It is this movement that first shakes us out of our naivety and invites us to discover our authenticity. (At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned this authenticity was also a mission given by Patočka to his students.) The task of this movement is integrity in the whole of one’s life (see Patočka 1998a, 151). This is the movement from *ascholia* (business) towards *schole* (free time); it is the movement of conversion, of self-submission, as well as the movement of truth (*aletheia*), un-covertness or openness. Although all three movements are parts of movement of existence, this third is the movement of existence (from Latin: *ex-*, *sistō*) in the true sense (see Patočka 1998a, 151), the revelation of authenticity, of self-finding, self-achievement (see Patočka 1998a, 151), the movement of an authentic way of life. By living a “political” or community life in truth, people care for the community or *polis*. Patočka wrote about this movement as the most humanly significant of the three (see Patočka 1996a, 33–4; 2016, 175). In this movement, we come to understand that our human finality cannot be overcome by any practical activity, here we are not surrendering ourselves to the rule of a power, of the Earth (see Patočka 1998a, 151); man is no longer perceived as a thing, and with this realization we turn away from an anonymous consumer life; in this movement of true existence, man accepts his finality like a soldier in the first line of defence; from now on, he has his life in his hands alone; now he acts freely and with full responsibility. As Patočka writes, “the movement of breakthrough, or actual self-comprehension, is the most important” (2016, 175), because it leads to care for the soul (*epimeleia tēs psychēs*). Such caring humans live from their own essential possibilities and with their own responsibilities; it is a “true existence, the existence in truth” (Patočka 2016, 124). Humans in this movement of existence are free, they live with freedom. The time dimension of the third movement is the future (see Patočka 1998a, 151; 1996a, 33). The boundary or inauthenticity (as Patočka wrote by describing this movement) is being by finitude (see Patočka 1998a, 151, 160).

## BREAKTHROUGH

At the end of the eighteenth lecture, Patočka wrote about Buddhism and Christianity as “two examples of an attempt to reach to the very root of the domination of the Earth within us” (see Patočka 1998a, 160–1). In Buddhism, there is an attempt to escape or break the bondage of life, the domination of the Earth within us through the domination of thirst, need, the intentional character of life, which can try to fill some emptiness within life. Patočka wrote that, in this very radical attempt at a breakthrough, a comprehending of individual existence also perishes with that breakthrough (see Patočka 1998a, 161; 2016, 177). In Christianity, according to Patočka, by attacking vain separation, an orientation to oneself, the closeness of oneself in a private sphere, or the centering the world on oneself, one does not abolish understanding and the world retains its validity. “Only the self-enclosure of the individual I is overcome” (Patočka 1998a, 161). Very similar to these words about overcoming of self-enclosure is the concept of the open soul, which was described by Patočka in the article “Comenius und die offene Seele” (Comenius and the open soul), written in 1970 (see Patočka 1981, 414–21; 1998b, 337–51). Patočka analysed a closed and open soul, but what does a “soul” mean? It must be said that Patočka was a Socratic thinker, which means that, like Socrates, Patočka saw the most relevant task for a human being as “care for the soul,” as one could see in the description of the third movement of life above. This interpretation has been presented many times, especially by Radim Palouš, student of Jan Patočka since 1945, and then by other Patočka’s students (see R. Palouš 1994, 167; 2008, 83). The first volumes of collected works of Jan Patočka bear the title “Péče o duši” (care for the soul), which could be interpreted also as a confession by his students about Patočka as a teacher: Patočka not only taught about care for the soul, but he really cared. The term ‘care for the soul’ cannot be interpreted as something typically Christian—(see Kočí 2019, 5; Patočka 1996a, 82). This bequest of ancient Greek philosophy rethought by Patočka also has far-reaching consequences for the understanding of education ontologically, not only ontically—(see Rybák 2019, 211; Svobodová 2014).

## CARE FOR THE SOUL: CARE FOR THE TRUE IMMORTALITY OF SOUL

It is not easy to understand in our epoch what Socrates meant by the words *epimeleia tēs psychēs*. The translation of these words was not easy even for Cicero. He created through this translation a new meaning of the Latin word *cultura* and translated Socrates’ words as *cultura animi*. In the twenty-first century, both words need a deep personal interpretation, by which we have to ask: What does it really mean “to care”? What does “soul” mean? Jan



Patočka asked and tried to answer these questions not only by his teaching, but also by his life, meaning by doing things according to the task of 'care for the soul' (and he died fulfilling that task).

In 1973, Patočka wrote an article about the meaning of the Faust legend, where he robustly stressed the problem of the selling of one's immortal soul and asked: "What does this sale mean in connection with such immateriality that is soul?" (2004, 511; see Patočka 1996a, 105). Then Patočka wrote about true and false immortality of soul. The true immortality of the soul cannot be thought of as a fact or state, but only as the highest possibility of existence. The false immortality of the soul is the inability of self-submission, a weakness that means to see only the vital root of human existence and to care only for that. We can see it as the tasks of the first and the second movement of existence, where *homo faber* (see Patočka 2009, 594) is in the centre. Patočka mentioned that such a weakness was perhaps forgivable, but "not appropriate for the spirit that is the soul of the soul, that is insight, understanding to being and to not being" (2004, 511–2). Most important for the true immortality of soul is the "possibility to human existence in that way, that existence becomes a spirit" (2004, 514). Man could lose the meaning of his acting and being by the confusion of *Vernunft* (reason, practical moral reason, for Kant it is a priori) and *Verstand* (theoretical reasoning ability,<sup>5</sup> understanding, for Kant it is a posteriori), Patočka noted (2004, 513–4). The last great interpretation of the Faust legend in *Doctor Faustus*, written by Thomas Mann during World War II and published 1947, is seen as a story about the resurrection of the soul, where the soul is connected by service or ministration to being, immortal, all-embracing and universal (Mann 1947). According to Patočka, this interpretation is only possible after an experience of guilt. The offender bears guilt as justice and judgment, longing for cleansing. Through the experience of guilt, Adrian Leverkühn serves neither himself, nor work as labour, but truth. Serving himself or labour would mean saving only the false immortality of the soul: to live with a closed soul. In the end, Leverkühn is responsible before truth alone and, only through this authentic responsibility has he found the unique means. Thus, he has become responsible for the whole world. Only through guilt he could save the true immortality of the soul, by thereby living with an open soul.

5. See definition of "Verstand" by Eisler (1904): "logos, epistēmē, intellectus, intelligentia, ratio, entendement, understanding."

## CLOSED AND OPEN SOUL: A WAY TO ASUBJECTIVE OPENNESS

Making a distinction between the open and closed soul, Patočka saw Comenius as a person of the epoch of the open soul, while Descartes' approach crystallized in *ego cogito ergo sum* is seen as an example of the epoch and thinking of the closed soul. Since the open soul has its centre outside itself, this means that the open soul experiences its essential dependence on something else, it goes beyond its own natural self, its own self-sufficiency and autonomy. The closed soul has its centre in itself, all reality relates only to itself, perceiving itself as infinite because it does not know about its limitations, or its finality. To the repertoire of the closed soul belong usurping, possessing, effective knowledge, dividing and power, whilst, in contrast, the open soul is not lost in the world and its contents. Humans with an open soul are capable of sacrifice, of giving their care or even themselves to others—and to save the true immortality of the soul.

In his book *Heretical Essays*, Patočka wrote about Christianity:

By virtue of this foundation in the abysmal deepening of the soul, Christianity remains thus far the greatest, unsurpassed but also un-thought-through human outreach that enabled humans to struggle against decadence. (1996a, 108)

The decadence here is the soul without cultivation, without care, without *theoria*, without *scholē*, without *Verstand*. The life of a closed soul can include power, achievements and enjoyments like the life of Faust after the pact with the devil, but it is a life without authenticity and real personal responsibility. Forms of human life, such as living with an open or closed soul, not only have personal consequences, but also social ones. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle knew about wrong or bad consequences for the whole society; therefore, they wrote such books as *The Republic* or *Politics*, where one can find the key role of education for a good life, both personal and social. One can see heresy in such effort for change in society. It is also one of the four meanings of “heresy” in the title of *Heretical essays* given by one interpreter (see Karfík 1994, 5–6).

## LIFE IN TRUTH: A WAY TO FREEDOM

When Klaus Schaller asked Jan Patočka in which movement of life we might find education, Patočka responded that it was in the first movement of acceptance, but the essence of education is to come to the crisis of human life and to a turning from subjective preoccupation to asubjective openness, meaning not only to give man the means to manage the tasks of the second movement, but to open him up to the human privilege to live

in truth.<sup>6</sup> (Patočka described with the term “asubjective” something that is neither subjective nor objective.)

Responsibility to “live in truth” (Patočka 2002, 366; see Patočka 2016, 124; 1996a, 33) is noted by J. Shawn Landres as “now popularly described” responsibility which is “the only source of and the only means to freedom” (2003, 137; see Patočka 1996a, 57). This popularization can be credited particularly to the listeners and members of private seminars which Jan Patočka presided over after he lost his position at the university when the communists took power in Czechoslovakia. Václav Havel, who was present at Patočka’s speeches, wrote the play *Pokoušení* (*Temptation*), with the Faust figure named Foustka, which had its premiere in the Burgtheater—Akademietheater in Vienna on 23 May 1986. In *Letters to Olga*, one can read from Letter number 1 (see Havel 1990a, 12), that Havel had been preoccupied with the theme of Faust for more than seven years before its premiere. Václav Havel spoke about the first impulse for the play in the year 1977, when he was in jail for the first time.<sup>7</sup> In 1986, a group of Havel’s friends wrote a book as a gift for Václav Havel, in which they reflected upon the archetype of Faust and Havel’s play *Temptation*. One can read there about human identity or anima mundi as the mysterious mistress (Bratinka et al. 2010, 11, 148, 89) or secret love of Faust. Through his text “Faust’s Mysterious Mistress,” Zdeněk Neubauer gave thanks to Václav Havel, author of *Temptation*, especially for the call to a “descent to mothers”: “‘Human identity’ is thus aligned with Diotima, Corina, Laura and Dulcinea. There is no other way to gain love but to expose oneself to risk” (Bratinka et al. 2010, 189). *On Human Identity*, the collection of essays written by Václav Havel during the totalitarian era was not the only book published about the search for an answer to the question about the aim of human life by Patočka’s students. A desire to live in freedom, truth and love was a bond that connected not only Havel’s friends. However, it is obvious that they felt the yearning for life in truth more than people who lived in democracy and freedom.

#### DIALOGUE: RESPONSIBILITY OF LANGUAGE

Radim Palouš, the organizer of private seminars after Patočka’s death, wrote an essay entitled “Temptation of Language” for Václav Havel (Bratinka et al. 2010, 48–90). Both in this text and in transcribed discussion

6. See Letter 4/69 Jan Patočka to Klaus Schaller, 11. 8. 1969, in (Patočka 2011, 126; see Patočka 2016, 178; 1996a, 82).

7. See “Appendix—O pokoušení s Václavem Havlem” in (Bratinka et al. 2010, 149).

with Václav Havel, one can see the key element of truth in language in Havel's work. Havel described the value of human language also in *Words on Words* (1989). However, the role of place, content and other components of language are best seen in his plays in which many sentences are many times repeated by the same or other actors. This is something very common in Havel's plays.

Life in truth or life in falsehood can be seen in language or in dialogues perhaps better than in other occasions. Moreover, the ability to speak dialogically or in truth is one of the highest expressions of life in truth, of the open soul. As an example of such dialogue, Radim Palouš (1994, 174) referred to a present given by Patočka to a colleague who has been fired from her job. Patočka gave this colleague (whom he personally did not know) an amount worth a third of a monthly wage. He said it was very important that the colleague must understand that she is not alone.

One can see in the ability to speak freely, the form or movement of life: in the movement of acceptance, one has the possibility to speak to people in the same "home," the same society, culture. In the movement of work, one speaks logically, expediently; one can speak in this movement of life also to other people outside one's own home. In the movement of work, there is the world of the language of commands, orders, instructions, means and methods. In the movement of truth, one speaks truly in dialogue with others, who are different, unique, but connected. They are members of the open community of the shaken (see Patočka 1996a, 135; M. Palouš et al. 2016; Svobodová 2019, 219)—shaken in the heretofore accepted meaning—where people through (*dia*) speech (*logos*) are looking for true *logos*, where people do not act and live with indifference, but in dialogue and in truth.

Radim Palouš (in Bratinka et al. 2010, 53) wrote about Havel's *Temptation* (see Havel 1990b) as a play about "knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5). Speech is not only human mightiness, capacity, but also seductive temptation, where there is the possibility to see (or to understand) the honesty or dishonesty of the human being. The honest speech is true *logos* spoken in *kairos*, on time—such as giving away one third of one's wage to a colleague, who was fired from her job, or to sign Charter 77, as will be shown below.

#### RESPONSIBILITY AND TIME

Václav Havel spoke with his friends about the right time (*kairos*) for speaking the truth (in Bratinka et al. 2010, 176–7), just as Plato spoke about *kairos* for a good act (Rep. 370b–c), about "the right season, the favorable moment in any task" (370b) or about "the right moment" (370c). Havel noted, it is

time to say the “big truths” in the period when one can personally guarantee them and even sacrifice something for them (Bratinka et al. 2010, 176). Jan Patočka wrote three days before his death (10 March 1977):

The Charter [77] never intended to act otherwise but pedagogically. But what does it mean to act pedagogically? We can only be educated by ourselves, often inspired by someone other's example; one can also be scared off by poor results and advised by dialogue, through discussions. Education, it means to understand that there is something else in life than fear and benefit... The Charter wishes... to make people aware that in the world it is not money or power, nor talent, what is crucial; the most important thing is to understand the right moment and to come on time. (Patočka 2006, 443–4; see Kohák 1989, 346)

Life in truth is also life in *kairos*, in the right moment. Life in truth is realizing freedom (Patočka 1996a, 130, 6) in the time given to us. Also Goethe's Faust knew about that in the end:

He only earns his freedom and existence  
 Who daily conquers them anew  
 Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away  
 Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day:  
 And such a throng I fain would see, –  
 Stand on free soil among a people free!  
 Then dared I hail the Moment fleeing:  
*Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!*  
 The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,  
 In aeons perish,—they are there!—  
 In proud fore-feeling of such lofty bliss,  
 I now enjoy the highest Moment,—this! (1870, 294–5)

However, in the twentieth century, there was a time for another kind of Faust, one who recognized guilt.

Patočka also recognized the connection between care for death and care for life: “care for the soul is inseparable from care for death which becomes the true care for life; life (eternal) is born of this direct look at death, of an overcoming of death (perhaps it is nothing but this ‘overcoming’).” (Patočka 1996a, 105, see 102, 107). Care for the soul means to live in *schöle*, i.e., in giving time as a free time; care for the soul is care for freedom. Freedom comes with the movement of responsibility to Good, to Truth, to Logos. The

experience of freedom is an experience of transcendence. This claim, taken from *Negative Platonism*, is one which is referred to repeatedly (see Patočka 1996a, 323; Větrovcová 2019, 58). According to some interpreters (see Frei 2019, 80),<sup>8</sup> this work is the most radical and valuable of all Patočka's texts. Here, the genuine radicalism (from Latin *radix*) is in the negativity—it is not the experience which we (positively) have or which could be given (see Patočka 2016, 180). Consequently, also genuine “care for the soul” has “to overcome” (*katabasis* and *anairesis* are the same)<sup>9</sup> all positive approaches<sup>10</sup> in order to find itself:

The responsible human as such is *I*; ... it is a responsible *I* because in the confrontation with death and in coming to terms with nothingness it takes upon itself what we all must carry out in ourselves, where no one can take our place. (Patočka 1996a, 107)

Life repeatedly examined, life repeatedly looking at death and in dialogue choosing the way of the true care for the soul is life as a response, a responsible life.

“Human life is not a life lived in and for itself; it is a living with others and with regard to them” (Patočka 2016, 55). The aim of human life is in freedom:

its freedom is in its innermost foundation the freedom of the undaunted... it is not simply a life of different goals, contents, or structures rather than a life of acceptance—it is differently, since it itself opens up the possibility for which it reaches; while *seeing* this liberation, both the dependence of the one and the free superiority of the other, sees what life is and can be. Without aspiring to the superhuman, it becomes freely human.... Scales fall from the eyes of those set free, not that they might see something new but that they might see in a new way. (Patočka 1996a, 39–40)

After such a conversion (*metanoia*) and truly seeing one's own mission (see Patočka 1996a, 61, 75, 134, 40), one lives an unsheltered life of initiative (but

8. Jan Frei referred to negativity as the experience of transcendentalism on the following pages: 70, 71, 74, 78.

9. (See Steel 2020, 1–25). In the text, Sean Steel recalls Heraclitean dictum “the way up and the way down are the same” several times.

10. (See Frei 2019, 78). I thank Jan Frei, head of The Jan Patočka Archive and a translator of Eric Voegelin for reminding me that Voegelin also found the likeness between *katabasis* and *anairesis* in Plato's *Republic*. (see: Steel 2020, 2)

it comes from the experience of negativity, from the experience of guilt) and care for the soul, i.e., care for the true immortality of soul. One lives an unsheltered life in openness to all “which is not *given*” (Patočka 2016, 180; see Patočka 1996a, 39, 57) and cannot be given, which is beyond all objective identification, and yet determines this world, “a sphere overlooked by both Husserl and the positivists” (Patočka 2016, 180). This means the experience of freedom as the experience of transcendence; it is a responsible life of the open soul. Patočka noted in *Negative Platonism* that this possibility is open to each human being (see 1996b, 323), this possibility can be realized, this movement of existence can be lived.

#### CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to answer the following question: Where can one see the most important connections of philosophical and religious language in Patočka’s theory of the movement of existence? I find the answer in Patočka’s concept of the third movement of life, in the movement of self-submission, in the movement of truth. This is truly philosophical life, where wisdom (*sophia*) is sought and loved (*philein*). However, one can say, that it is also a religious life, because it is a life with an open soul, where one is responsible for the mission which comes after shaking previous presuppositions given in Earth-bounded movements of life. There is both existential and metaphysical responsibility. Caring for the soul, in response to the mission on time, on the way to asubjective openness, in dialogue searching for truth and resisting temptation, means that one can find one’s existential and metaphysical responsibility and freedom. Then, existence becomes a spiritual life and the immortal soul can live in truth.

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