

# Supervisor's assessment of bachelor thesis

Student: Heriberto Castilla Hernández

Thesis title: Patočka and the Problem of the Second Movement of Existence

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, 2019

Heriberto Castilla Hernández' thesis develops an interpretation of the notoriously difficult and obscure conception of three existential movements in Patočka's philosophy. The author studied more or less the whole corpus of primary sources available in English and supported his interpretation with a few volumes of secondary literature.

The thesis understands movement as the cornerstone of Patočka's philosophy. The exposition of the conception of movement and its specific role in Patočka's writings represents one of the most valuable parts of the whole thesis. Next the individual movements are being discussed. I would have rather seen a short but concise exposition of the three movements preceding the detailed analysis of the movements. The purpose of such preceding exposition would be to establish terminology, to provide a preliminary orientation in the studied topic, etc. Introducing individual movements *en passant* without really developing or describing them first leads to confusions. What is the relationship between the movement of anchoring and of acceptance, etc?

Similarly, towards the end of the introductory first chapter, the exposition becomes obscure, not considering the reader, not disclosing carefully enough the interpretative steps leading to the conclusions or suggestions.

When analysing the three existential movements, the student employs a highly instructive and revealing interpretative instruments of temporality, referent, but also boundary situations or "ideals" (aesthetical and ascetic). Every one of the three movements is thus analysed regarding its temporal extasis, its temporal orientation and grounding, as well as regarding the movement's referent, its objective correlate so to speak, etc. I find this approach very original and valuable. I would have however been happier had the interpretation been clearer, analytically more precise. The approach, its merits and methodological grounding should have been discussed in the introduction or rather in a separate chapter devoted to methodology. On a similar note, the thesis fails to explicitly state its research question. One last similar comment regards the author's interpretative position: it is very hard to distinguish between Patočka, secondary interpretation (mostly Kohák) and H. Castilla Hernández' position. The author of the thesis seems to be buried under a mountain of careful quotations, which give the thesis the appearance of a collection of reading notes.

Further questions: What exactly are the aforementioned "boundary situations"? Does Patočka use the notion in his work? And what about "ascetic ideals"? What are these? At what level, in what relationship to the individual movements, is there "self-understanding"? What kind of self-understanding? What I have in mind: is the analysed self-understanding present in the life-form dominated by the movement? Or is this a sort of retrospective self-understanding?

The conclusion fails to present a nicely wrapped version of interpretative results, it more or less remains blank.

All this being said, I have to underscore the author's commitment to the work, his very cultivated language and the ability of executing philosophical analysis. If it were not for the usual suspects responsible for less than ideal student theses: too little time, too little consultation, too little experience—I think the thesis would have been aspiring for better marks.

As it is, I am satisfied with the thesis enough to recommend it for defence and I am of the opinion that it might be defended as a “very good” or “good” thesis depending on the outcome of the defence.

In Prague on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Jakub Marek, Ph.D.