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Editorial

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The December 2024 issue of Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe) *Generational and period impulses in the philosophical and ethical kinetics of the 20th century in Central Europe* focuses on critical analysis of the phenomenon of philosophical generation(s) and it aims to explore the relationships and developmental tendencies of (mostly) Central European philosophical and ethical thought, shaped through interactive connections between philosophy teachers and their students, as well as between these teachers and other philosophers.

Existing investigations of philosophical and ethical thought have been predominantly oriented towards the analysis of foreign influences on the formation of domestic thought. This issue attempts to enrich these investigations with an internal dimension and deepen the understanding of personal ties, relationships, and the life and social circumstances that influenced 20th century philosophical thought. It can help to increase potential to initiate new historical-philosophical readings and research in the key field.

The main focus of the issue depends on definitions of the term 'generation', such as those given by Karl Mannheim, José Ortega y Gasset, Yulia V. Sineokaya, William Strauss, Neil Howe. The issue attempts to examine the current methodological approaches to the research into 20th century philosophy and ethics. Examination of the ideological nature of the generation as a phenomenon of the Central European philosophical and ethical environment in the context of thinking about philosophical workplaces in Central Europe as specific ethical and philosophical schools and creative environments is another key area of the special issue. The papers in this issue also analyse the personal and individual ties, relationships, life, and social circumstances of personalities of philosophy and ethics, representing different ideological positions that interacted, debated, and caused tensions among each other and present new readings and explorations of their legacy.

It is necessary to highlight that the phenomenon of philosophical generation represents a relatively new discourse in philosophical debates. It is a consideration and search for continuities, traditions, ruptures as well as new philosophical fractions within national philosophical environments. It finds its support and first impulses, for example, in the thought of Mannheim. His concept of *Zeitgeist*, together with the motif of social entelechy, is accepted as one of the classical starting points for this discourse. A non-classical understanding is captured by Ortega y Gasset especially with his thesis that contemporaries are not necessarily peers. For some thinkers, in the American setting it is, for example, Marina Bykova, the legacy of the work of Strauss and Howe is seen as a key interpretation. In this special double issue, we offer you a series of scientific articles dedicated to above mentioned issues. Therefore, we are pleased to present scholarly articles falling under three clusters of papers.

The first cluster is dedicated to generation as phenomenon and methodological approach of new readings in the history of 20th century philosophical and ethical thought. It is a great honour for the special issue that Yulia V. Sineokaya, the founder of the philosophical generation approach, joined our group of authors. Her paper is first in this special issue. In her paper, Sineokaya points out that the generational approach aims to reconstruct the existential context of the development of philosophy. It also aims to study the personal ties within the philosophical community and its influence on the birth and development of philosophical ideas. One of the key generational frames and influences in her paper is the fact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

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in February of 2022. It has led to a split in the Russian philosophical network. She highlights that two years of war practically destroyed professional solidarity in the Russian academic community, which has been divided in separate camps of thinkers and philosophers. The second paper of this cluster is written by Ondrej Marchevský. The paper is focused not only on introducing the current discourse of the generations as philosophical generations but represents the expression of examining the relations and developmental tendencies of domestic – Czech and Slovak – philosophical thought of the 20th century and the present. The domestic – Slovak and Czech – philosophical space is the *We* in this paper.

All texts in the second cluster of papers shed light on tendencies and key struggles in the 20th century philosophical end ethical thought. The first paper of this cluster written by Rudolf Dupkala is based on the consideration that 'Slovak philosophy' is the only philosophy that already "speaks Slovak" and is presented exclusively by *Slovak scholars*. He is convinced that its origins date back to the middle of the 19th century, when it can be encountered in the work of *philosophizing* representatives of the Štúr generation.

The leitmotif of the paper is presented in the form of the disputes about the nature of Slovak philosophy in the period from the middle of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century. These controversies are exemplified by the work of representatives of three generations working within Slovak philosophy. The first generation is represented by the already mentioned *Followers of Štúr*. The representatives of the second generation are Slovak *promoters* of classical positivism, Masarykism, and religious philosophy. The third generation is the generation of the first *professional* Slovak philosophers and academics. The paper by Petr Jemelka and Martin Gluchman focuses on the development of Czech philosophical thought during the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938). It is a time of remarkable diversity in this important part of spiritual culture. The so-called "struggle for the freedom of Czech philosophy" represented an intergenerational conflict, reflecting the broader issue of interpreting Czech history and its meaning. This article thus attempts to provide a brief perspective on intellectual diversity as the outcome of this discourse.

Ján Kalajtzidis in his paper delves into the ideological and strategic shifts in scientific atheism within Czechoslovakia during the 20th century. Kalajtzidis points out that much of the existing literature has explored Marxist-Leninist atheism's role as a tool for ideological state control and its impact on societal structures. The author is convinced that there has been limited focus on the evolution of its application across different generations of intellectuals and political leaders. This paper contributes to filling that gap by examining how scientific atheism transitioned from an ideological end to a pragmatic tool for consolidating political power, promoting social unity, and facilitating state control in the context of Czechoslovakia. The aim of Martin Foltin's article is to reconstruct the picture of philosophical thinking focused on moral and ethical issues in the 1950s and 1960s, with a specific emphasis on the journal *Filozofia* [*Philosophy*], published by the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) in Czechoslovakia since 1946. This journal was published under various titles. It served as a platform for anthropological thinking, thinking about culture and society, and man and knowledge. Jan Svoboda in his paper highlights the historical significance of the term 'breakthrough generation', which was programmatically coined and purposefully developed by the German philosopher Hugo Fischer (1897–1975) at the times of the Great Depression. The paper stresses that the term 'breakthrough generation' does not denote a partial or narrowly ideologically defined movement of an artistic and philosophical character. It is an expression of an independent critical and humanistically oriented stance – a natural need for rationally based intellectual defiance against existing dysfunctional approaches or patterns in modern thought.

The third cluster of papers falls under the heading of "Creators of generations and their legacy". The paper by Daniel Brennan is situated in our era as the time dominated by Big Data,

Generative AI, and public health crises like COVID-19. Brennan is convinced that in this era society finds itself navigating the tension between scientific progress and the human need for ethical and existential reflection. This paper explores how contemporary critiques of scientism parallel earlier 20th century Czech philosophical thought. By revisiting thinkers such as Tomáš G. Masaryk, Karel Čapek, Josef Šafařík, Jan Patočka, and Václav Havel, the reader can see how their reflections on the role of science remain highly relevant in our present context. This paper seeks to demonstrate that the debate between science and anti-scientism found in the Czech tradition offers a crucial framework for reassessment of the role of science in contemporary society. Lukáš Švaňa based his paper on the attitude that the essential idea of scientific atheism is to show that religious conceptions are untenable. In contrast to religion, scientific atheism describes man as an autonomous, free, and active being, and this is related to its aspirations to be a humanist position. As the creator of the generation this paper is focused on the legacy of the post-war generation of the Marxist Slovak intelligentsia. The author focuses especially on the legacy of Jaroslav Čelko. This paper describes and explores his ideas and their influence on the development of secular humanism during the existence of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and after its disintegration. The paper evaluates the influences and connections between the ideas of Jaroslav Čelko's scientific atheism and secular humanism in Slovakia.

The authors Peter Rusnák and Marcel Martinkovič present a congenial and undeniably up-to-date concept of syncriticism as developed by Jozef Piaček and analyse its contribution to Slovak philosophical discourse especially in the dialogue between phenomenology and existential philosophy in Slovakia. The authors also examine the cultural-philosophical starting points and specifics of Slovak modern philosophy and postmodern thinking as phenomena of the Central European intellectual space. The authors highlight the issues which can be understood as stimuli influenced by generational shifts in the Slovak philosophical environment, such as the critical stage of Piaček's philosophical thought (1970–1986) saturating questions of phenomenological philosophy and calling for a critical reception of Edmund Husserl's philosophy of the *lifeworld* (Lebenswelt), Piaček's thought about original epistemological foundation for understanding the world from the perspectives of Neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt School and the concept of transhorizont reality.

The editor views this special issue with pleasure and confidence that it will prove illuminating and helpful both to students looking for ways to better understand the phenomenon of philosophical generations and for researchers looking for new avenues of investigation.

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