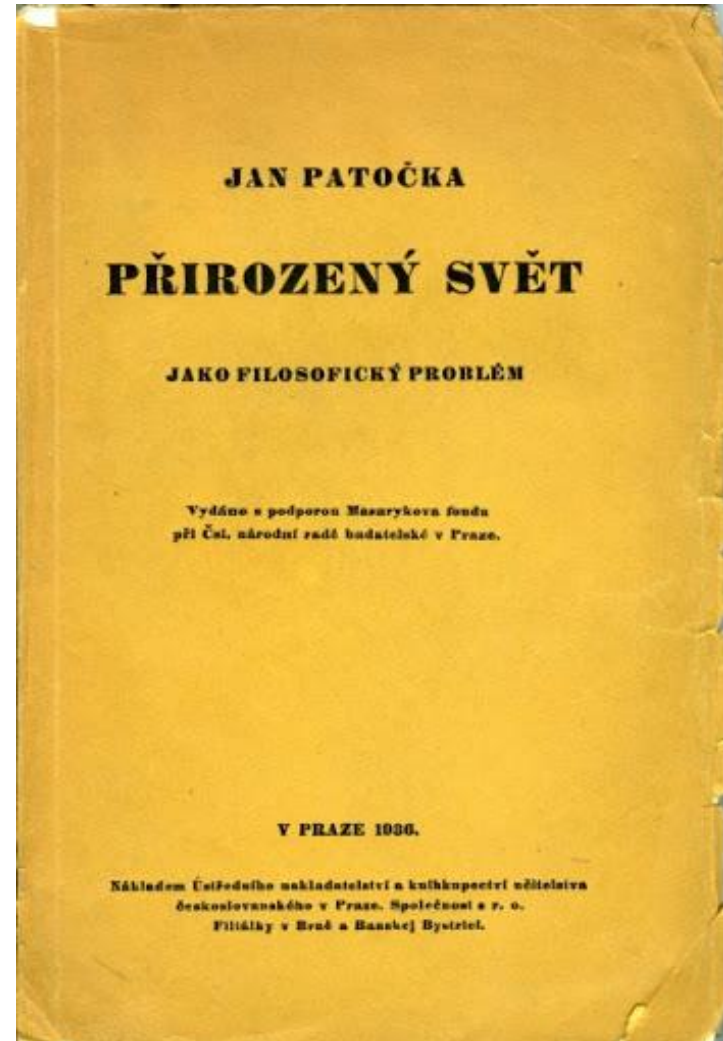
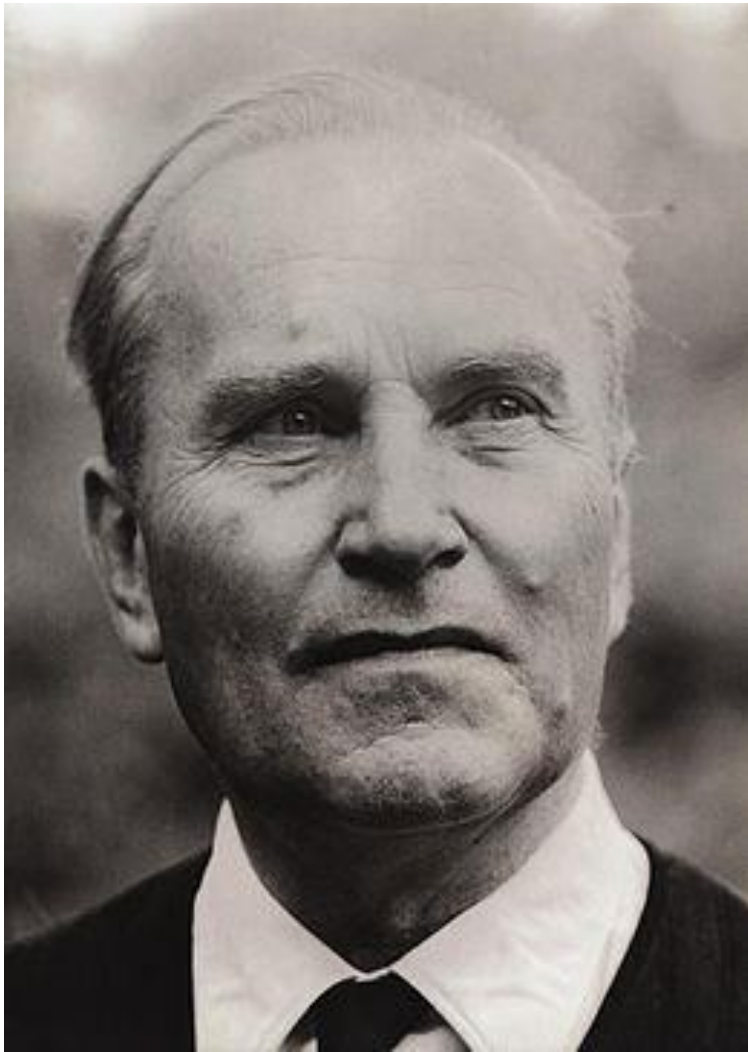


The natural world as a philosophical problem, Jan Patočka 1936



- 4 chapters
- Main claim: there is a lack of unified worldview
- A SPIRITUAL CRISIS as well cf Masaryk and Husserl
- “**Modern man** has no unified worldview. He **lives in a double world**, at once in his own naturally given environment and in a world created for him by modern natural science, based on the principles of mathematical laws governing nature.”, p. 2.

- For too long, thinkers and philosophers tried to overcome this duality, between the world of science and the natural world
- Another solution = both way converts into a third : the SUBJECTIVE activity

Analysis upon the relationship of man to the natural world + the foundations of this world

A method, related to the activity of
PERCEPTION

- Stating the problem : “The **thinking of the whole, classical ontology, has exploded** under the pressure of criticism, but nothing consistent has taken its place in our cultural awareness.”

= Unlike Antiquity or Middle Ages, our modern time is marked by a loss of unified worldview + irreligiosity

“What has changed is not *merely* the picture of the world but rather **the very principles of understanding things.**” p.6

Chapter 1: The naïve life-world and the world of science

- **What is the « naïve » world?**
= things, objects that are given to us naturally,
without explanation, theories or concepts
- The world is GIVEN
- **Why the natural world is a philosophical problem?**
- The problem is that science takes us away from the naïve, natural world: “man who has experienced modern science no longer lives simply in the naïve world; **the habits of his overall relationship to reality is not the natural worldview.**” p.8

- Not the fault of theorizing = men have done that since centuries BUT because now the world of science offers a **RECONSTRUCTION of the natural world** and **not only a DEVELOPMENT**
- = SO profound dichotomy between these two worlds + dichotomy with the apparent FREEDOM that we experience
- Indeed, modern science is telling us that our actions are in response to mathematical laws
- **If we only think in terms of mathematical structure, how is it still possible to think the “natural world” as our reality? The reality?**

Chapter 2: The impact of the scientific worldview on our life-feeling

- What are the modern explanation impacts in our life, on the way we conceive it?
- First, a DEPRECIATION for our naïve experience and a **tendency to mark it as “non- original derivative”, p.9**
- But Patočka reminds us that this “objective” world is a derivation from the natural one and NOT the opposite
- Otherwise, **“It is a life remote from the true, creative, world forces, distrustful of its own immediate understanding.”**

- From the strict scientific POV, “the natural world” cannot “contain nothing that (...) be objectively categorized and explained”, p.10
- **= that is why the solution will lie, not in an explanation BUT in A DESCRIPTION of this natural experience.**
- The real PB is that, if we follow what the scientific explanation tells us, we can never feel free
- **= man can feel himself like “the agent of objective forces, perceives himself not as a person but rather as a thing” = REIFICATION**

- **This worldview is alienating man by offering him a dual world:** what science tells him and what he experiences
- = leaves plenty of room for ANXIETY
- “Alienated man finds it difficult to enter into the spirit of his self-prescribed role, or rather, the role prescribed to him by the objectivist view of his essence”, and SO, **tries to escape through the infinity of distractions** that modern life is offering him.
- Thus, there is a need for philosophy as an **attempt to reoffer a unified worldview.**

Chapter 3: Attempt at a historical typology of possible solutions

- In modern philosophy, already the intuition that this debate could not resolute itself with the disappearing or condemnation of one of these two worlds BUT the means were inadequate
- “The debate on the natural worldview requires above all the apprehension, the analysis, and the restitution of the given state of affairs; **the natural world must be described as accurately as possible in its fundamental structures**, examined as to the mutual relationships of its various components and aspects”,
- = by describing the method, Patocka is evoking, without naming it, what is the goal of phenomenology

Chapter 4: Solution proposed by Patočka

- “We believe that **the reason for their failures** is that all without exception **begin by considering the nature of the object and go on from there to explain lived-experience**, dispensing with the descriptive and analytical work necessary to apprehend such experience in its original form and its naïve world”, p.19.
- = a fail because they skipped the description.
- The idea is to try to explain in terms of objectivity the natural world that we experience but to try to analyze and describe it.

- We need ANOTHER method: the phenomenological one, we need to access subjectivity but a « **deeper subjectivity** »
- = We have to find what is experience “in its ultimate essence”
- Cf Merleau-Ponty explaining what is the goal of phenomenology in preface of *The Phenomenology of perception*: “It **tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations** which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide”.

- According to Patočka, we have to access the “structures of the givenness itself” = reach the structures of the world before science or the rational discourse is entering it
- In a way, we have to do what Husserl was thinking = going back to the things itself or as Merleau-Ponty is saying it **“To return to things themselves is to return to that world which proceeds knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks.”**
- Moreover, “The world, as a universe, is no longer a dead object to us” = and we are always being-to-the-world, it is the background of our experiences
- AND we have to rethink ourselves as active subjects, and not only patients of higher forces.

- CONCLUSION that “**the transcendental (ie) preexistent subjectivity is the world**”, p.19
- We also shouldn't remove the scientific world or approach but remember that it is a derivation from our natural world and not the other way around
- = in order to overcome the split between the two
- One of his objective is to make us understand the wrongness of our habits of thoughts and rectify it.

- **STRENGTHS** of Patočka analysis : he is underlying problems of the lack of unified worldview and how it makes us perceive our actual life + offers a solution, another method, who doesn't suppress the scientific world but adjust it and replace it where it belong
- **WEAKNESSES:** talks about a “methodical procedure” possible, but doesn't call it by its name = the phenomenological procedure, and if he says what we are supposed to reach, doesn't explains (yet), how it “works”, doesn't talk about the ÉPOCHÈ for instance

Questions to be discussed:

- What is phenomenology for Patočka?