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## Social Introspection of I. A. Bláha and Wittgenstein's' Argument Counter to Private Language. Anniversary Study on Introspection Approach in Social Sciences.

### **Abstract**

The following text discusses the method of social introspection of the Czech philosopher and sociologist I.A. Bláha. It focuses both on presenting the method and exploring its potentials and limits in order to understand social reality. The application of the Wittgenstein's argument against the private language as a critique of the introspective perspective and a brief analysis of the phenomenological approach in sociology will help to assess the boundaries of this approach. Theoretical conclusions of application of the introspection method in sociology are drawn at the end of the text and thus allow to assess applicability of the Blaha's own method.

### **Keywords**

I. A. Bláha; L. Wittgenstein; Social introspection; Private language argument; Language games; Czech sociology

The anniversary of Wittgenstein and Bláha serves as an opportunity to emphasize an approach in the research of social reality that, as it seems through the vast overflow of specialized methodological literature, almost vanishes from sight. And it happens in spite of, or more accordingly, due to the fact that it is constantly seen. Social introspection as a way of questioning one's own "common" social experience of the researcher is a source of knowledge that sociological literature often remarks, but does not systematically discuss on a regular basis.

Social introspection as an instrument of sociological research can be also considered the most compelling contribution towards sociological methodology by I. A. Bláha (1879-1960)<sup>1</sup>, the Czech sociologist and the founder of Brno sociological

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<sup>1</sup> Inocenc Arnošt Bláha (1879-1960) is one of the greatest Czech sociology classics and founders of sociology in Czechoslovakia. He contributed to its development through discourse by presenting new topics that were rare in sociology: in Czech sociology it was for example studying the city as a social phenomenon; in the context of world sociology he presented a topic of intelligence – and also authentic and revelatory elaboration of standard topics (issues of blue collars, rural province, family, and socialization). In his sociological work he was able to combine various intellectual influences (aside from the domestic influences, primarily from French and German sociology) and formulate own general sociological theory – federate functionalism. Indisputable is his contemplation and construction of sociological method (for example his peculiar method of social introspection, but also his pioneer use of questionnaires for sociological inquiry etc.). As a co-founder and initiator he also

department. Systematic analysis and evaluation of his significance from the perception of (not only) contemporary sociology is still awaiting presentation. Bláha is not the only, nor the first to research use of the introspective method. In the following study, the focus will be Bláha and first and foremost his theoretical possibilities of application of introspective approach, rather than the analysis of applications. L. Wittgenstein (1889-1951), more famous world-wide than Bláha, is one of the key sources of postmodern “turn to language” which characterizes a great fraction of contemporary social science and philosophy. His argument against the private language can be used as a critical lens to view the introspective method from the position familiar to the contemporary approaches. He establishes a general critique of the introspective method and enables us to formulate particular conclusions on Bláha’s method. Due to paradigmatical relevance of phenomenology for the introspective approach in sociological research, inevitable attention will be paid to discussion of core arguments.

Reasons that arise in favor of interpreting Bláha’s method in the context of Wittgenstein’s arguments do not lie eminently in Wittgenstein paradigmatical significance for social sciences. Aside from being co-temporaries, both thinkers were also culturally interconnected. As a resident of Habsburg monarchy, at the turn of the century, Bláha attended Vienna University and absorbed the atmosphere, which also had had an impact on Wittgenstein’s development.<sup>2</sup> The key factor for both thinkers however, is their gradual diversion from positivism that led them towards their heterogenic positions on the issue of utilizing individual experience.

## **Social introspection of I. A. Bláha**

Surprisingly, no passage of Bláha’s work describes the method of social introspection in depth. The fact that it is not only a chimerical perception, is indicated both in primary and secondary literature. In the paramount study, *The Sociology of Intelligence*, Bláha remarks that social introspection is “... *necessary, according to my opinion to give preference due to the fact that it is by far, more reliable and scientific than methods of intuition, or ‘einfühlen des Verstehen’ which are too burdened by subjectivism...*”. He describes it as an endeavor to examine one’s own self in various situations, such as a performance in the role of a member of intelligence (Bláha 1937: 7).

In an extensive study, *Sociology*, published post mortem Bláha (1968) on social introspection remarks:

Furthermore we presume that it can be beneficial, however only as a supplemental method, a method of social introspection. (...) Family, nation, party are not entities that objectively exist only aside from us, but they exist also within us, they are part of our living structure. We know justice, morality, religion not only because we were instructed about these phenomena, but also because we, ourselves, act according to justice,

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contributed to building Czech sociology through institutional and organizational aspect. He founded the second sociological academic institution in CSR (1921); initiated creation of the first Czech Sociological Association (1924); was a key actor in founding the first field periodical in Czechoslovakia – Sociological Review (1923), that he helped to lead it to world accepted standards; led research groups and organized research.

<sup>2</sup> On the relationship of the period cultural atmosphere in Vienna and philosophical thinking see Schorske (2000), Kampits (1995). In particular, on cultural impact of Vienna on Wittgenstein’s thinking see Toulmin and Janick (1984).

morality and live religiously. Therefore we understand them. Nature is only exterior to us. A group is more than exterior to us, it is also interior. We can observe it both outside of the self and within the self. We know it, because we live it. In fact, we would say we know it better because of that. (p. 63)

This is essentially the only remark on social introspection in Bláha's text. While Bláha used the method, he didn't explicitly write about it.<sup>3</sup> Besides, Durkheim also first wrote *The division of Labor in Society*, and consecutively portrayed the used method in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. When examining Bláha's social introspection it is necessary to reconstruct from his texts concentrating on methodological topics which are dispersed sporadically throughout his work. From the argumentation point of view, I consider Bláha's texts dated from the beginning of the twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be key sources on this matter. It is here we can find a turn from critical commentary on sociological approaches to one's own positive compact sociological approach.

### **Genesis of Bláha's noetic position.**

Bláha was a student of Durkheim and an admirer of Masaryk and therefore his own position regarding sociological theory can be perceived as a synthesis of their positions. He preserves critical distance from Durkheim's objectivism which, in a sociological point of view, deprives individual of his own independence with regard to societal forces. Similarly, he is reserved towards Masaryk's psychologism, which emphasizes the role of grand individuals – charismatic leaders – in history and social life. Bláha's position is being denominated by his interpreters and himself as a critical realism. He perceives society as a structure exceeding the individual with inherent laws, which always rely on concrete individuals, who may influence a character of society by using his/her own initiative.

This stance is already enunciated in Bláha's early sociological work from the first and second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and contextually his position does not significantly change in the following years. His arguments on a relation between individual and society can be divided into two segments: (1) Findings counter subjectivism, i.e. "atomistic reduction of social phenomena to individual movement", show that (A) it is not always in preference to individual mentality that we find either precise cause or conditions of why a certain idea is not just an individual force, but becomes also collective. (B) There are a number of ideas that are significant to the individual, but not to society (at least analytically we are capable of the distinction between individual and collective concept). (C) Both psychologism and subjectivism tend to reduce social phenomena to exceedingly elementary causes. Therefore they deprive social phenomena of their social aspect and sociology of its argument in favor of scientific existence. Here he uses Durkheim's argument, that such reductionist aspirations resemble aspirations to reduce biology into a chapter from physics that describes life processes through power, gravity, speed, weight, etc. (D) Phenomena that emerge through interactions are usually ranked as new and therefore can not be predicted beforehand. Hence, it is essential to take them into account as phenomena *sui generis*, even if it is possible to retroactively trace the genesis into qualitatively different levels of existence.

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<sup>3</sup> Probably the most systematically in *Sociology of intelligence* (Bláha 1973).

(2) It can be objected counter to sociological objectivism that (A) no empirical evidence exists to prove that individual's consciousness could not come into existence without psychosociological interaction, at least in its primitive form. (B) No empirical evidence exists to prove that interaction existed before emergence of individual consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

Bláha presupposes that in the extreme versions of both theories, there is something that opposes empirical evidence, or could not be sufficiently evincible. Subjectivism deprives social phenomena of specific character; objectivism on the other hand contradicts mental initiative. Deficiency lies in one-sidedness which is caused by favoring logical priority of one domain of social existence over the other.

In an essay that discusses scientific approach of sociology, Bláha acknowledges Durkheim's approach as the first to be scientific, due to the fact that not until then was sociology based on inductive method as opposed to ad hoc, where facts serve only as illustrations for speculations (Bláha 1912a (3<sup>rd</sup> part): 6). Durkheim's sociology positively relates to reality the way the natural sciences do. The requirement to study social phenomena as facts contains his methodological naturalism which uses the scientific empirical method similar to the way natural sciences do. In the first half of his sociological carrier, Bláha fully identifies with this position and is considered a Durkheimian objectivist. In an article on sociological methods he states, "*the highest point of scientific exactness is offered by a number, statistics*" (Bláha 1912d: 75). In his enumeration of sociological methods he lists alongside with observation where "*observer must be completely neutral*" (Bláha 1912d: 75), also questionnaire, experiment, historical and comparative analysis leading to induction of principles. These formulations show the spirit of methodological naturalism, even though he grants induced social principles with rather presumptive character.

During the twenties, Bláha cautiously adds to Durkheim's theory a statement that, in order to fully understand social phenomena, is not possible to use only objective observation, because society exists solely through us, through individuals it thinks, feels, composes (Bláha 1921a).

"Perhaps aspect of objectivity is of such significance that without it, establishing sociology as a science appears to be unthinkable, still it is not enough. Due to the fact, that the world and social life is not only exterior to us, but also within us, (...) it is inefficient to use only observational intelligence in order to understand it, but also apprehended forcibility, as Dilthey already mentioned (...) there exists a complete human being."  
(p. 178)

Hence, Bláha makes his way to a new noetic position which corresponds with his critical realism of the general theory of society and is represented by social-introspective method.

## Transformation in Bláha's noetic position

One may legitimately question why Bláha qualifies objectivist perspective as insufficient, considering the effect of Durkheim's tradition on him. What is the intent and why is there a need to supplement it – among other things by introspective method? In fact, Bláha was not a Durkheimist.

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Bláha 1912b.

In addition, the reason that Bláha became aware of the limits and boundaries of Durkheim's objectivist sociology evolved from several factors. On one hand it was caused by the fact that he got suspended in 1897 after two years of study at theology seminar due to his involvement in activities of Catholic modern art. Continuous interest in "higher spiritual values" that are difficult to measure can be seen in Bláha's various sociological works. He often crosses from "value-free" analysis to morality – which can be frequently seen among various Czech sociology classics, including Masaryk – followed by social criticism, based on the spiritual values of the collective.

Additionally, during this time of creating studies interconnected with introspection, he finished and published his second major treatise *Philosophy of Morality* (1922) where he faced a problem of phenomena difficult to grasp explicitly by using the objectivistic approach. For example, according to Bláha (1922), conscience defined as an important demonstration of a broader social aspect of morality is impossible to embrace without analysis of one's own subjective experience and practice.

A knowledge of conscience cannot be acquired through any [outside – authors note] specification, but only through its possession by using it and analyzing it as own status. External moral act does not itself offer anything reliable concerning internal morality. It could have clearly resulted from rather different motifs than moral motifs. (p. 85)

Conscience is an example of sociologically relevant phenomena, where Durkheim's objectivistic sociology with certain methodological naturalism becomes cumbersome and according to Bláha, it is possible and suitable to add a dimension of subjective experience analysis, i.e. introspection. The fact, that pressure and contents of conscience can also be perceived through contents of "collective fantasies", serves a different purpose.

His critique of Durkheim's approach in favor of the subjectivistic method is based on the work of contemporary French scholar M. Bernés. However, more influential towards to his argument was W. Dilthey, who is explicitly referred to in the context of correction of objectivism, and neo-kantians Widelband and Rickert. Neo-kantianism itself was a powerful inspirational source for a newly rising social science in Brno. Theoretically, a neo-kantianism normative theory of Fr. Weyra was constructed (Bláha was closely acquainted with his work and on various occasions led discussion with it – see Bláha 1928). Also Rickert's publications were more available and more popular in Brno as oppose to for example Hegel's. These were added to the library in the faculty of arts after World War 2 as a result of a Marx teacher's work.

Limited by the extent of the text, it is possible to mention only basic points in Dilthey's arguments that were essential to Bláha's correction of Durkheim objectivism. The main connecting point between Bláha and Dilthey lies in their similar positivistic intention (never naturalistic) to develop social science and their interest in spiritual world of human being. Bláha's argument also includes clear attributes of Dilthey's *subjet* concept of social practice and appearance of value component into the mere act of understanding the social reality.

In the *Introduction to the Human Sciences (Enleitung in die Geisteswissenschaft)* Dilthey (1967) writes:

Nature is alien to us. (...) Our world is society. (...) We are obliged to control the image of its status in always agile value judgments and at least in our imagination with effort always remodel it. All this imprints certain

basic features to the study of society that distinctly differentiate it from the study of nature...

I alone, experiencing and realizing myself from within, am part of this social unit...

Apprehending unit, that has effect in human sciences is a complete human being: high performances in addition to the power of intelligence result also from greatness of personal life. ...in addition to apprehension it (i.e. cognitive activity – author's note) is connected also with practical tendency of evaluation, ideal, regulation. (p. 586-587)

In a similar direction, Bláha carries his debate about social phenomenon as an experience. When Bláha sees “the spiritual” as essentially human in a human being and argues that in order to recognize a rock, no experience is needed, however, there is a need to experience love, religion, art (Bláha 1921: 177 a n.), he follows Dilthey's reasoning. Dilthey's inspiration is clear in Bláha's concept of indivisible part of a free element in the process of understanding and the role of quality of personal life. Both will be discussed in the text to follow. (see especially Obligation of introspective understanding for practice). At some point Bláha appears to be more radical than Dilthey, especially in the question of sociological competencies to affect social events. Aside from establishing facts and pronouncing theorems, Dilthey also grants social science with the possibility to state social objectives and assign regulations as a legitimate component of their aspirations (Dilthey 1967: 578). Bláha (1939) even pronounces, though cautiously, that sociologist has a duty to “formulate scientifically fortified value judgments about social events”.

...sociologist due to the fact that he can see better, deeper and more accurate into the processes of social events and as a result to that he can more reliably extrapolate references between what actually exists and what should exist, is above all obliged (...), to formulate, (...), respective scientifically fortified value judgments about social events for the need of practitioners. Not only is he obliged to do so, but also it is his social and moral responsibility. (p. 145-146)

It seems that Bláha's interest in “higher spiritual value” goes against Durkheim's attempt, formed in *The Rules of Sociological method* (1926), to cleanse sociology of “all metaphysical”. And the demand for value competence and subjective experience seem to go against Durkheim's pursuit of objectivity in sociological research, inquiring “social phenomena as social facts”. It is not a negation however, but supplementation. He expresses critique of Durkheim for one-sidedness, but not for inaccurate conclusions, or method. Coercion of social phenomena is according to Bláha, only one side of an issue. Another side, the internal side, is conscious individual activism. Their interconnection creates an attribute of the approach which Bláha endorses and which he denotes as “critical realism” (Bláha 1929: 407 – 410). It can be agreed upon that the proposition that Bláha, in his application of introspection, wanted to explore (from within) is represented today by Bourdieu's term “habitus” – bridging the objective and subjective aspect of social phenomena.

## Social introspection

The fact that understanding society relies on the need to live in a society, or experience society, according to Bláha, created a distinction between natural science and human sciences and the possibility to apply the introspective method between them. However, it does not necessarily mean that psychological and social world cannot be allocated with the rest of the nature, as something more complex that includes new characteristics (Bláha 1921a: 178).

In the broad perception of society, Bláha appears to be strongly connected to Durkheim, who views society above all as a psychological reality originated in interaction (compare for ex. Durkheim 1998: 17-48 and Bláha 1968: 9-43). Bláha talks about the birth of qualitatively new “We”-psyche which naturally results from a simple necessity of aggregated people to organize themselves and enter social relations. Durkheim also develops another argument inspired by Dilthey. In this, psychological matters are not measurable, but they are rather experienced and therefore he adopts this knowledge in the concept of social phenomena.

Social phenomenon, as quite rational, emotional and attemptive **experience** of the part of rationality, emotionality and desiderativeness which is common to all, becomes a newly organized and socialized psyche, a constructive architect of social bonds and systems (law, science, etc.). (Bláha 1921a: 179)

A sociologist's experience in exploring social reality is different from the common experience of a human being. A human being does not capture existence in its general validity, because the knowledge was not de-subjectivited into a scientific term. Conversely, individuals who were scholarly trained in critical thinking and working with scientific terminology can better overcome this subjective point of view. As Bláha (1921a) notes,

... ascend over the existence, survey it from the distance as a legitimate order, see its universal purpose. He was able to come to scientific, objective understanding. In addition he realizes that his understanding is not complete, that he has to descend down to the existence and re-live it again, however not in a sense general public does, but in a sense of existence, in its **objective** character and validity. (p. 180)

It is possible to see two matters in Bláha's conclusion. First we find **experience** embraced as an instrument of **objective understanding** and secondly, this experience **obliges to further action**, which completes the process of understanding. Now I'm going to look at the issue of objectivity of understanding that results from experience.

### ***Objectivity of introspective understanding***

Bláha acquires his understanding of objectivity through conceptual analysis with the help of opposition towards subjectivity. He understands objectivity in the first place as super-individual and never as independent from the human being itself. Though, it is not clear whether individual intelligence would occur without society (see arguments against sociological objectivism), it is certain that where individual intelligence reaches the highest point of understanding towards general ideas of

truth, good and beauty, is developed through the continual battle with nature and society. This battle, which guarantees objectivity, includes continual balancing, adjusting and compiling and composing of individual consciousness' all together (Bláha 1921a: 176-177).

Bláha considers scientific truth objective because it consists of overlapping partial attitude towards the super-individual. Perhaps we can find in Bláha's work rather naïve formulations and requirements, such as the necessity to get rid of all own prejudices and more; however theoretical merit in his conception of objectivity is in accordance with contemporary processes and dialogic understanding the way it is elaborated by several scholars who study epistemological issues of social sciences. For example, multi-culturally oriented philosophy of social sciences represented by B. Fay (Fay 2002: 237-263), or a critique of social constructivism by I. Hacking (Hacking 1999) who stands the ground of philosophical realism with a addition of pragmatic corrective, or as continually defended in the major aspects by Rorty (Rorty 2000: 281-320; Putnam, Rorty 1997) in his relativistic critique of objectivism (as a reflection of reality from the standpoint of uninvolved "god's eye"). Bláha is connected with the given positions through tendencies of "approaching understanding as participation on reality" (Rorty). I think that even Quine, for instance, bases his concept of objectivity on understanding of similar principles – i.e. opposition to individual subjectivity when the first step towards objectivity is perceived through expression of private stimulations via public language (compare for. ex. Quine 1994: 12). Of course, Bláha's goals were in major part different from the goals of temporary post-analytical or post-positivistic scholars. It is even possible that he would consider Rorty to be an eccentric and that Rorty would perceive Bláha to be a prisoner of positivism. In spite of that I think it is valuable to be familiar with and discuss Bláha's arguments today.

It would be a misrepresentation to state that Bláha repulsed the correspondent theory of truth leaning towards the consensual approach. Also, it would be a misrepresentation to assume that the objective truth is assigned as an attribute of sentences correspondence and from subject independent reality, with which they represent. In Bláha's case, it is rather a realization of the limits that occur in perceiving the understanding as an identity (full correspondence) with object and at the same time insisting on positive fundamentals of knowledge. This balance results in shifting the accent from substantial criteria of objectivity to procedural criteria. In this sense we should interpret the following argument, as objective truth resulting from the dialogue among various opinions. Furthermore the more the parties engage in the discussion, the more objective the understanding becomes. (compare for. ex. Bláha 1914: 7-8).

The established approach is also present in Bláha's (1921a) concept of the origins of general terminology as a result of social life:

Due to the fact that truth, beauty, goodness exist, we know that society exists. Therein everyone longs for the ideal, (...) therein society talks in us, society lives in us. If the individual would have always lived only for own self, he would have never developed his idea into the endless generality, eternal truth, boundless good (...). (p. 177)

If the society did not exist, beauty as a term would probably not surpass an opaque sensational dichotomy, such as like/dislike, pleasant/unpleasant. In other words, totality as a perspective of intelligence is not a biological attribute of a human



being, but is a *social* attribute. It was not born in the heads of philosophers, but was created spontaneously through the genesis of general terminology via social life.

Leaving the existence Bláha describes as a scientific experiment containing the characteristics of the scientific, methodic experience (Bláha 1921a: 180). By using his own approach, which attempts to deprive the experience of all the categorical attributes, Bláha strongly encourages procedure intentions of phenomenological reduction (without any explicit reference to Husserl); however no basic requirement such as Husserl's eschewal of the general thesis of the world can be found.

Assuming the experience to become a source of objective understanding in a sense of objectivity as described above, the researcher, who tries to apply scientific orderliness, faces the necessity to somehow always participate in inter-subjectively acquired by scientific terminology. In the first place, it is because he/she tries to apply to experience the term of principle, i.e. aspiration to find constancy and perseverance in the flow of experiences.

This implicit conclusion is indicated in Bláha's studies both from the beginning of his sociological activity, as well as later references to development of sociology as a science. Only subordination of social phenomena to legitimacy in Durkheim's point of view, i.e. inductive, provides sociology with the status of objective positive science. In contrast, Saint-Simon's or Compté's application of the term of principle was according to Bláha (1912a (3<sup>rd</sup> part): 6, 1921a: 175) considered a more speculative approach. Bláha's assurance of a correct application on the subjective level is not any more specific than schooling in scientific thinking and/or (in a Dilthey's perception) a greatness of personal life, which is eminent for practical dimension of understanding. Masaryk is as an example of both, according to Bláha.

This much is presented towards the understanding of Bláha's objectivity in the context of understanding resulting from experience. The issue concerning the necessity to understand the actions of the cognizant subject forms one of Bláha's characteristic conclusions; and from the perspective of the theoretical sustainability of the introspective method, it plays an important role in Bláha's system (see Potentials and boundaries of Bláha's introspection). Therefore I will briefly analyze it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>A more precise idea about a possible form of participation based on inter-subjectively acquired scientific terminology in the case of introspection is offered by P. Bourdieu. Bourdieu's focus on the issue of objectivity of understanding acquired from the individual experience is similar to Bláha's and represents a valuable parallel, showing the potential of Bláha's approach. Bourdieu as well, thinks that "social experience tested by the sociological critique" is an irreplaceable source. (Bourdieu 2003: 11) According to both scholars, individual experience should be seized and depicted by the depersonalized scientific tools and therefore objectified. Besides the critical thinking, or as Bláha states "schooling scientific thinking", Bourdieu also offers concrete methodic. Its purpose lies in capturing conditionality of researchers own experience, which gives him/her understanding. It happens through analysis of civil and academic environment of the researcher, or a position which he/she takes interest in, as well as necessary dispositions that result from it (for. ex. Preference of the question, basis and principles of explanation, etc.). Bourdieu puts emphasis on statistical analysis to be one of the tools of objectification of social experience that can be considered as "one of the most brutal tool of objectivism". (Bourdieu 2003: 7). The result of objectification is double shift. On one hand, the primary social experience varies scientific practice by becoming its source; on the other hand, reinterpretation of primary experience takes place after applying objectified scientific techniques. Although, neither did Bourdieu stay away from the need to somehow deal with practical level of personal experience due to its interconnection with evaluation and willingness. Reinterpretation of primary experience leads to some sort of "conciliation of the researcher with him/herself, with his/her social characteristics which bears the liberating anamnesis" (Bourdieu 2003: 14) and with adopting a new attitude towards "the world of origin".

## ***Obligation of introspective understanding for practice***

Bláha (1921a) describes his specific methodic approach of penetration to the lived social reality as entrance into the laws of existence that can be further constructed and developed by a human being.

With own life in the existence, is own scientific countenance above it.  
(p. 180)

Through the step of specific introspection, an individual dissociates from the lived existence in order to say something positive about it from the outside and again on the level of lived practice returns to bring harmony between the theory and practice. The result of theoretical reflection is a practical act. This conclusion is brought by Bláha's (1921b) resolution of an issue in which social scientist becomes part of inquired social process.

... the social world is of a strange nature. It is not only a world of our understanding, but also a world of our practice. (...) it is necessary to connect own understanding and conscience with objectively acquired moral development, to maintain it alive with subjective authorization, which means nothing more than using correct evaluation to choose good means for good ends. Therefore at social existence, the practice is equally important to the theory. (p. 742-743)

According to Bláha, a sociologist lives socially and morally when his/her objective theoretical understanding changes his or her own emotion and will to action. Based on that, it can be assumed that sociology as a science can be distinguished from sociology as a practice only artificially, because both are integrated in a sociologist who both explores the social world through intelligence and lives it through emotion. Such interpretation can be confirmed by Bláha's previous citation about competence or even obligation of a sociologist to provide scientifically fortified value judgments. Value judgments as followed by practical acts develop from the synthesis based theory of "overall living activity of an individual". The voluntary and emotional components of an individual's personal structure become an epistemological category, a tool of understanding.

According to Bláha, a subjective understanding of the objective disposition of social reality results in adequate social practice which is rather a postulate than reality; a postulate that only such great historical figures as Masaryk and schooled scientists (of the future) can manage to saturate. Based on that, Bláha's method can be called a **social introspection**, because it results from questioning the social experience. Such subjective understanding of the objective disposition of social reality is according to Bláha the only way how to get out of the materialized social life. At the same time from romanticism, moodiness and mythicality of thought about social life and also from dangerous experimenting with the social world with reference to a priory projects like Russia (Bláha 1921a: 181). Thus Bláha clearly states that he wants to find an objective societal ideal (transcending "materialized" world) without violating its objectivity during the search (avoiding romanticism, experimenting etc.).

## Potentials and boundaries of introspective method

### *I. Shutz's and Patočka's discussion on phenomenology method*

In order to review Bláha's social introspection method and its effect on sociological research it is necessary to go beyond its mere description, it is important to set its boundaries for understanding the social reality. E. Husserl, the par excellence representative of introspective method, faced a rudimental issue, on how to constitute sociality (intersubjectivity) on the platform of pure subjectivity, a dialogic social relation. According to several authors he was unable to resolve it satisfactorily (compare for ex. Nohejl 2001: 26). Husserl's attempt can be found in the fifth meditation of his *Cartesian meditations* (Husserl 1993: 87-145) named "Uncovering the sphere of transcendental being as monadological intersubjectivity". Here, in order to explain intersubjectivity, Husserl uncovers, at times in a difficult fashion, the human ability of pairing, apresentation and apperception of the other, empathy, reciprocity of subjectivities and similarly difficult sounding approaches that constitute, according to him, an intersubjective world based on the performance of the subject that relates to the other outside of the self.<sup>6</sup>

Husserl's student and one of the most remarkable Czech sociologists Jan Patočka, asserted that critique of Husserl's concept of intersubjectivity was "*presented in the vastest and most diverse form by A. Schutz*" (Patočka 1993: 184), who was the first scholar to apply phenomenology onto the grounds of pure sociology. Fundamentals of Schutz's critique can briefly be summoned as follows: If we reach, using phenomenological reduction, a kind of "*out-of-profane*" observable position towards intentional consciousness that includes phenomena, than we cannot trace within these phenomena distinction between the own self and extraneous self. This situation can be described by Wittgenstein's metaphor; in the eye's range of sight, there exists nothing that would indicate a possibility to be seen by some other eye.

If I'm reduced to the sphere of what I have inhered, according to Schutz, than Husserl's means of how to come to the other, extraneous self, are unclear and inadequate. (...) Schutz intends to say the following: body of the other self can be a subject of coherent experience the way any other physical object is, where the experience does not go beyond the broad synthesis of its aspects; once there is intention of objective subjectivity, it is assumed, that I have noematically<sup>7</sup> in front of me the self as extraneous, to construct extraneousness of this self from own self is a problem that is irresolvable – entirely new element of an intent, obviously can not be transferred to something different. (Patočka 1993: 184)

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<sup>6</sup> It is not possible to talk about Husserl on a wider scale than necessary. His concept is sociologically analyzed in Czech context by M. Nohejl (Nohejl 2001: 17-34). Value of *Cartesian Meditations* in the context of Husserl's philosophy is introduced in a book by I. Blecha (Blecha 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Noema for Husserl always constitutes unity of the purpose of certain object or its aspect in a stream of consciousness even after phenomenological reduction Noema is a part of stream of consciousness, however, by its existence it is transcendent to this, it is a structure allowing for example, to retain the identity of a specific object in a various forms of existence (past x present x future, possibility x reality etc.) – for example, my cup on the table and my cup in the sink, or my cup yesterday and today is still the one and only cup, even though it appears to be different.

Localization in the other (body) by empathy can bring verification of the world that is experienced by the extraneous, as a mutual world (shared, social) through subjective opinion (in a sense of vision and observation) cannot be successful for two reasons. First because, no such input into “you” is known and secondly, by adding the subjectivity “I” to the locality of “you”, the “you” disappears as such and becomes “I”. The difference between “you” – “I” would be erased.

Patočka’s conclusion of Husserl’s analysis on the intersubjective world constitution reads that all the experiences that Husserl describes in his fifth meditation, all the coherences and links of the meaning which he develops (apperception, apresentation, reciprocity of subjectivities etc.), “*are true experiences that define meaning of the other being in its concrete appearance.*” However, these experiences and links of the meaning are not elements that would themselves create a structure of the meaning of “societal world”, but instead they would **presuppose** and **explicate** it (Patočka 1993: 186-187).

As mentioned by M. Nohejl (2001), a similar conclusion was made by A. Schutz, who starts sociological application of phenomenology; his analysis however, harbors a postulate of “mundane intersubjectivity”:

This mundane approach of intersubjectivity stands on an assumption that sphere “we” precedes the individual and the clarification of the issue has to arise from commonly shared reality. It is different from Husserl’s approach where subject additionally forms intersubjective sociality by realizing bodily resemblance with other people. In contrary, Schutz understands intersubjectivity as one of the basic constitutive elements of society and states that “my life world is not my private world, but a world that is intersubjective from the very beginning”. (p. 54)

Schutz starts grounding the introspective method of social analysis on a postulate of mundane intersubjectivity by a point, around which Husserl only tip toed, and to which he got as close as his analysis of physicality and experience of the other in the process of interaction.

## ***II. Wittgenstein’s argument against private language***

One of the most eminent critiques of the introspective methods was presented in Wittgenstein’s argument against private language.<sup>8</sup> Even though this discussion was led in the field of philosophy, it is possible to effectively transfer it to the field of sociology, because Wittgenstein’s later works were created in confrontation with the behaviorist movement and his arguments focused on philosophical coping with positivism. Coping with positivism played an important role while forming foundations of interpretative sociological paradigm.<sup>9</sup> Wittgenstein is more than an important figure of analytical philosophy; he is also one of the key figures in the postmodern turn to language (Hubík 1994) and one of the first representatives of social constructivist

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<sup>8</sup> Some essential essays on Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* are collected in Georg Pitcher’s reader (Pitcher (ed.) 1966), especially on private language argument see Ayer’s (1966), Rhees’s (1966), Cook’s (1966) and Kenny’s (1966) articles. Although my interpretation of Wittgenstein’s private language argument is generally in accordance with these texts the aim of this study is different and more subtle.

<sup>9</sup> One of the first applications of Wittgenstein’s conception in social sciences is P. Winch’s essay which is still more philosophical (Winch 1958) and generally H. Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology, which is more closely to empirical research.

paradigm.<sup>10</sup> It is not an exaggeration to say that in the current social science theory prevails the constructivist perception about society and pragmatic, rather than a visual idea about language. Thus, Wittgenstein's ideas are still applicable and his argument seems as an acceptable tool that can help to unveil the limits of introspective method as well as help to evaluate Bláha's aspiration.

This application enables focus of Wittgenstein's argument towards possible recounts about private sensations or phenomena that can be captured in dimensions of pure subjectivity, these are basically intentions of the introspective method (immersion into own experiences and their questioning).

Wittgenstein's argument against the private language can be found in his *Philosophical investigations* (Wittgenstein 1972). His argumentation is built as follows; first he shows how every language is controlled by certain regulations and then discusses whether the private language as a language about private sensations meets the criteria of action according to the regulation. The part on following the regulation is presented in the argument against the private language and in contemplation about a possibility of discourse on sensations.<sup>11</sup>

For description and analysis of language, Wittgenstein uses term language-games. This term allows him to express his belief that language is always interconnected with specific practical actions (PI: §7 and following.) and also plurality of types of regulations that actors use during their language action, as well as the fact that every language is a game, has certain regulations. To portray plurality of language games Wittgenstein uses examples such as giving orders and acting according to orders, describing objects based on its look or based on survey, making an object according to the description or design, reporting on a certain event, making a joke, translation from one language to another, expressing appreciation, praying, etc (PI: §23 and following)

Due to the fact that every game and every language has its own regulations, the regulations and order must be present even in the vaguest sentence (PI: §98). What Wittgenstein understands under regulation is explained through regularity (PI: §§205-209). For example, if I am trying to understand foreign language for which I have no dictionary, I would try to track regularities among situations and sounds that occur there, I am trying to look at them as symbols. I assume this regularity; otherwise it is impossible to talk about symbols.

An important aspect of Wittgenstein's argumentation in our context lies in the distinction between acting according to regulation and knowing that I am acting according to regulation. I suppose I am acting according to the regulation. If I am acting according to regulation, I do not make a choice, I act based on the regulation without any question (PI: §219), without realizing the fact that I am acting according to regulation or should act according to regulation. This can be seen for example when we automatically say hello to a friend on the street, or when we ask for a menu

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<sup>10</sup> Although „social construction“ is a label, which lived through certain inflation and became fashionable, in Wittgenstein's case it has a foundation as we will see in the following text. For reasonable critique of the label „social construction“ see Hacking (1999).

<sup>11</sup> *Philosophical investigations* do not consist of a compact text that is structured into chapters, but several hundred short paragraphs (693 paragraphs plus cca 70 more pages of subparagraph that are not numbered, which construct the second part of the book). Schematically said, part on following the regulations consists primary of §§ 189-242, part on private language and discourse about sensations of §§ 243-421. Considering the formal structure of *Philosophical investigations*, I will refer to this book only with abbreviation PI and listed numbers of respective paragraph. For quotations I used G. E. M. Anscombe's translation from 1953 reprinted in 1972.

in a restaurant in stead of going straight to the kitchen to place an order. Regulations, according to Wittgenstein, are condensed forms of human practice, abstractly expressed routines, habits, and institutions. A hypothesis that I act according to regulation does not necessarily have to correspond with the fact that I actually act according to regulation. Regulation is an issue of practice, not assumption.

To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are **customs** (uses, institutions). To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique. (PI: §199)

Regulation is therefore a pure form of certain practice; however practice is primary to regulation. Even so called "commentary" to the regulation is according to Wittgenstein, only a substitution of one regulation form by some other (PI: §201).

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to **think** one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it. (PI: §202)

To act by regulation is possible only publicly or "as if publicly." The subjective aspect of acting by regulation relies on the fact that regulation as a pure form can and must be executed and substituted in practice in various ways.<sup>12</sup> For private language, that serves to express opinion on private phenomena that are available only to the narrator, Wittgenstein concludes that it is not possible to consider it as an action by regulation. In §258 he introduces an example of situation where someone wants to keep a diary about recurrence of emotion, and concludes that the only criteria of correctness that my emotion had arrived is my feeling of correctness. Also, same thing would occur if we would not insist on the identity of emotion, but only on similarity. The only reason to make a note in a diary would be that it appeals to me as a good idea to make a note. To talk about correctness (confirmation that I'm acting according to a regulation) in a common sense is unacceptable, because "(...) *justification consist in appealing to something independent.*" (PI: §265) Independent instance in a subject cannot be, according to Wittgenstein, represented by another concept, because it would mean the same as accepting a concept of an outcome of a certain experiment is an outcome of such experiment, or that a concept of a railway guide is verification that I correctly remembered train departures.

And there lie all the difficulties of the introspective method. There is no objective warranty that my descriptions, classification of the stream of experiences was correct, i.e. that they would be actions according to regulations. The only criteria and warranty of accuracy is personal feeling of correctness. There is missing an objective super-personal instance as a corrective that determines if the action meets the regulation. An anomalous situation arises here due to the fact that any action (any identification, description of emotion, etc.) can be initiated in accord with regulation and *„if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it“* (PI: §201) Thus discussion on regulation is invalid.

Speculations about the potential of the subject to record his or her own subjective sensations objectively can be illustrated as a situation when we measure our temperature on a thermometer when we feel we have a fever. The thermometer

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<sup>12</sup> If we would like to prevent it, it would have to be supplemented by another regulation that would determine interpretation and this regulation would have to be supplemented by another and so on ad infinitum.

is a corrective of the basically random feeling of correctness about having or not having a fever. Whether we understood what we see on a thermometer correctly according to the regulation is in line with Wittgenstein's theory indeterminate. The thermometer represents for us in the given moment the other in a dialogic situation of a language game and it is not possible to apply the term of correctness on a language game as a whole. The problem of self-destruction of Wittgenstein's argument when applying it to societal unit is not significant for us and therefore we will not pay further attention to it.<sup>13</sup>

If we approach Wittgenstein's *Philosophical investigations* from the standpoint of the specific theory of language and society, then it is important to realize assumptions on which it is built. Ontological connection of regulation with its application and thesis on possibility to act according to regulation only in a dialogic situation, i.e. in social or quasi-social context, is based on an assumption of principal consonance in social situation. Existence of an intersubjective relation is a primitive fact, which cannot be trespassed. Acted language game is given matter, stream of life, 'proto-phenomenon' which cannot be violated (PI: §§654-656).

P. Kořátko raised an eligible objection asking why someone else can not request to accept transparency and accuracy of own impressions and unity of internal life of individual, as a primitive fact. (Kořátko 1992: 450). Such a basis for their philosophy was accepted by Descartes, or Husserl.

This position leads, at least in a sphere of subjective phenomena, to a visual theory of language, which was denied by Wittgenstein in his later works as unsustainable. According to this conception, the sentences represent visualization (of possible or real) of facts and their veracity is given through correspondence with the real status of the world. This theory is remodeled by Wittgenstein in his early work – *Tractate* (Wittgenstein 1961), however, later he abandons it completely. In *Philosophical Investigations* he offers a different one, one of the pragmatic conception of language.<sup>14</sup> Visual theory relates a meaning of a sentence to objects, pragmatic theory for the use of certain situations.

One of the important theoretical reasons for Wittgenstein's shift lies in the impossibility of the analysis of language, to reach elementary sentences that would correspond with elementary facts. While also maintaining the thesis that all sentences of our language have a meaning and „are in perfect logical order“ (Wittgenstein 1961: 113, sentence no. 5.5563); this thesis Wittgenstein, as oppose to Vienna neo-positivists, supported from the very beginning.

The premise of elementary sentences and elementary facts allow thinking of real the potential of accurate language and also about clear decidability whether the statements are true or false. The premise of basic world elements is essential because they guarantee that the world has a solid structure. The collapse of visual theory in Wittgenstein's thought led to a failure in the approval of the solid structure of the world and to social-constructivist solution of the relation between the language and the world which he applies as an indication of subjective experiences. In §293 he gives the following example.

Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a „beetle“. No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even

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<sup>13</sup> This aspect was partially analyzed by P. Kořátko (Kořátko 1992) and myself (Janák 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Continuity and differences of *Tractate* and *Philosophical investigations* were analyzed by J. Pechar (Pechar 1993).

imagine such a thing constantly changing. – But suppose the word „beetle“ had a use in these people’s language? – If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a **something**: for the box might even be empty. (...) That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of ‘object and designation’ the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (PI: §293)

Using this and other examples, Wittgenstein tries to disqualify a possibility to talk about private emotions with intention of the visual theory of language. Wittgenstein’s arguments are aimed against the concept of self-consciousness of Cartesian type, a sphere of total transparence and pellucidity, or absolute evidence. In a contrast, pure self-assurance appears to be, based on his perception, a sphere of fatal uncertainty and arbitrariness. An important question arises for the presented text, what are the conditions to maintain introspective method as an instrument of description and understanding of social reality? What are the conditions under which we can question or own self to be considered as an action based on regulations? Or is it necessary to fully accept and bring to an effect Wittgenstein’s argument and therefore reject the introspective approach as a method that is totally inconclusive and speculative?

## Theoretical implications

Even if we accept P. Kořátko’s objections and acknowledge that it is possible to create a private dictionary, the applicability for understanding, or description of social relations remains problematic. It would require changing Bláha’s (and Wittgenstein’s) concept of objectivity. Also, based on Schutz’s and Patočka’s conclusions, in order to construct sociality on the platform of subjectivity, it is necessary to implement a new postulate of intersubjectivity. The term “pure subject” has to be cleared of predicate pure.

Therefore, private language itself needs to be rejected in social research. Does it also mean disqualification of the introspective method? I assume not. More likely, it changes the angle of the questions. The question now is not based on whether the introspection method is approved or not, but what should introspection look like, if not as a private language? The introspective method, in the field of understanding and description of social reality, must include a postulate of intersubjectivity. However, that does not mean that it is necessary to disqualify the subjectivistic introspective method in sociology as inapplicable. It is not possible to construct it in a sphere of pure subject investigating intentional stream of consciousness from ‘out of profane’ position.

A subject of investigation must somehow always include the moment of intersubjectivity. That means that either the phenomenological reduction in Husserl’s radicalism which leads to out of profane attitude (and private language in Wittgenstein’s sense) can not be accepted and investigated subject must participate on intersubjective social relations, even after reductive phenomenological steps; or we must change concept examining subjectivities, i.e. we must not see the subject as a unity, but as a fatally divaricated sphere leading to open dialogue (communicating) within itself. Can Bláha’s approach meet such criteria?



## Potentials and boundaries of Bláha's introspection

The main goal of this study does not lie in determining the conditions and developing the concept of the introspective method based on presented theoretical conclusions, but in assessing within these relations Bláha's introspective approach. Even though Bláha did not pay as much attention to the theoretical grounding of a possible introspective method as the other authors did, it is possible at least to reconstruct his view based on the mentioned conclusions and determine sustainability of his social introspection from a context of his work.

Some development can be seen in Bláha's first approach, such as the participation on intersubjective relations, as well as during the introspective observation of existence. The connection with society does not disappear even if taking an introspective step towards detachment from existence. Let's go back to the one of the former Bláha's propositions on the methodic intersection into lived reality based on the introspective approach: "*With own life in the existence, is own scientific countenance above it.*" (Bláha 1921a: 180) and "*... the social world is of a strange nature. (...) ... at social existence, the practice is equally important to the theory*" (Bláha 1921b: 743). I think that Bláha's position can be well characterized when the order of the sentences in the first citation is inverted: With own scientific countenance above it, is own life in the existence.

If we want to follow the analogy with phenomenological tradition, we can philosophically qualify Bláha's solution as similar to Heidegger's, in which he approaches the analysis of human understanding in its existential intra-profane situation of carrying for one's own being. Accordingly, Bláha recognizes social life as a sphere in which the cognizant always participates both by rational understanding, i.e. theoretically, and by evaluation, will and action i.e. practically. That is the reason why Bláha makes the conclusion obligation of sociological knowledge towards social practice. Also, that is why the introspective analysis of one's own self always means analysis of me-as-wanting-and-acting in a certain social situation. It is not an analysis of the pure contents of conscience, pure phenomena.<sup>15</sup>

How should we understand "*... ascend over the existence, survey it from the distance as a legitimate order, see its universal purpose. ... was able to come to scientific, objective understanding*" (Bláha 1921a: 180)?

In order to hold Bláha's position sustainable, an understanding of ascendancy over the existence and surveying the purpose cannot be perceived as taking an out-of-profane (transcendental) position. In the long run, this interpretation is held back by the second sentence of the citation which imports from this ascendancy, the scientific, objective understanding which, according to Bláha, is possible only based on an intersubjective relation (see part on Objectivity of introspective understanding). Therefore Bláha's isolation from existence is not radical in Husserl's point of view. How is it then? How does it function? It is more of an experiment of the reflexive grasp of one's own acting, wanting and feeling (eventually also knowing) in a most objective way, i.e. depersonalization. Sufficiency of such perception is either a matter of exceptional figures, such as Masaryk, or it can be acquired by schooling and practice in scientific thinking (Bláha 1921a: 181) which works with most objective

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<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to remark that contemporary representative of phenomenological sociology L. Embree is trying on a similar grounded basis of phenomenological analysis of willing and evaluating, to unveil the structure of natural world as a cultural world in the concept of "basic culture". He tries to describe, by using phenomenological analysis, such phenomena as social class etc., that the traditional phenomenology, according to its critics, cannot embrace. (Ebree 2003)

acquired terminology. It is a perception from an objective position, i.e. a super-individual observer.

Indeed, it is not a perception from the position of out-of-the world “god’s eye”, or “out-of-nowhere perception”. It is a perception of an observer who stands with both feet on the ground (“is own life in existence”), but pursues objectivity. By permanent relation with the world shared with others, in addition to the objective scientific method (in Bláha’s sense) he/she also provides practical context of social-scientific understanding.

Same as Dilthey’s endeavor to analyze human cognitional potencies from analysis of free impulse and aversion (compare Dilthey 1980), Bláha places “maintaining of life and escalating vitalities” beyond the principle of the individual and social life (compare for. ex. Bláha 1921b: 659-665). Value and evaluation is according to him, a result of experiencing reality (Bláha 1921b: 660) and also a finalization of the process of the subjective understanding of social reality (Bláha 1921a: 180). Evaluation is always connected with understanding. Evaluation and will is in Bláha’s work existentially connected with practical action, it is its fore-step and conclusion. Pure understanding is an abstract. The observer is an actor at the same time. To some degree, in which evaluation is an epistemological attribute of understanding sociality, it is also an intersubjective relation and practice standing in behind, part of the cognition act. Thanks to an indivisible evaluative part of understanding, the link to the intersubjective world is continually sustained.<sup>16</sup>

Inquiring the possibility of grounding such a super-personal (perhaps even collective) observer in the subject of a researcher, we are approaching the field of a concept of subjectivity, which was stated as a second possibility to maintain an intersubjective relation with introspective approach. Bláha does not elaborate a possibility of the dialogic understanding of subjectivity even though he acknowledges the plurality of constituents of individual spirituality. This, according to Bláha, aside from the entirely individual part, contains also a societal part with certain groups in which it participates. Finally, a part that it has in common with all human individuals is in being a human being (Bláha 1968: 38). Otherwise his analysis of subjectivity focuses a determination of the environment effect on forming a child’s morally free qualities, feelings, fantasies, etc., although more from the perspective of practical upbringing. In *The Sociology of Childhood* Bláha describes family as an environment where child “*matures to myself- feeling, to distinction of I-feeling from un-I-feeling, which causes the primary chaos of the most primitive organization*” (Bláha 1927: 124). However, it is more an enunciation rather than a result of analyzing the process in weary detail, known by G.H. Mead.<sup>17</sup>

As shown through Bláha’s argumentation on the issue of sociological subjectivism and objectivism (see part Genesis of Bláha’s noetic perspective,

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<sup>16</sup> Similar principle to “escalating vitality” is a principle of “intra-profane desires” proposed by contemporary French phenomenologist R. Barbaras. “Desire” is a basic instinctive epistemological motion and is (as oppose to need) basically unsatisfiable and beforehand undeterminable, same as “escalating vitality”. “Desire and questioning, regardless of intermission between spatial and spiritual, represent one and identical motion.” (Barbaras 2005: 181). Therefore, Barbaras concludes his reflection on a similar basis to Bláha’s, that there is no alternative between philosophy (theory, questioning) and life (practice).

<sup>17</sup> Mead is one of the first to develop dialogic concept of subjectivity denominated as Self. Self is dialogic unity consisting of parts I (unaware, instinct, biological I) and Me (social, anticipated attitudes of others, adopted situation contexts). “*I, is a response of the organism towards the attitudes of others, Me, is organized collection of attitudes of others, that the individual anticipates.*” (Mead 1967: 175). Self-confidence appears only with Self. I is impermissible to direct reflection, it is accessible only as a historical figure after it answered to Me.

especially arguments 5. and 6. counter the objectivism), Bláha is still conflicted over whether the communication precedes individual understanding or in contrary understanding precedes communication. However, if the introspective method should resist Wittgenstein's constructivist objections and implications of Schutz's conclusions and it should also meet Bláha's criterion of objectivity. Then it cannot be concerned with only that part of the human psyche that Bláha determines as purely individual.

If we would like to answer an implicit question stated in the title of the text and decide whether to deny Bláha's social introspection under the pressure of Wittgenstein's (and Schutz) argumentation as inconclusive or conversely retain and use it in social research, the answer would be rather ambiguous.

Bláha's introspection as a system meets the demands expected by the postulate of intersubjectivity. Therefore we can retain it, metaphorically, in a sociological "stock of knowledge at hand".

If we ask whether to accept it and use it with everything included, than the answer would not be so definite. In the first place, there is a technical problem of application. No specific instruction aside from "schooling and practice in scientific thinking and method", or "magnitude of personal life" is recommended by Bláha. It means that Bláha's reminder towards supplementing Durkheim's approach by dimension of internal experience of social phenomena is irrelevant. It is solely because his avoidance of *Scylle* of objectivism does not end at *Charybdy* of relativism. Thus it is important to understand it only as an ingenious reminder of the limits in Durkheim's naturalistic objectivism.

The second substantial problem lies in full acceptance of Bláha's conclusion of practical accomplishments and application (not only introspective) of sociological knowledge. In this instant though, more questions than answers arise and their solving is beyond the frame of this text devoted above all to Bláha's theory of social introspection.

## Conclusion and discussion

I have tried to present the method of social introspection of Brno sociologist I. A. Bláha and reconstruct the theoretical foundations that this method relies upon. Also, I have summarized theoretical arguments of its applicability from the perspective of contemporary sociology (or the one that deals with analysis of knowledge and culture in a narrower point of view) characterized in general by the social constructivist approach that emphasizes a linguistic form of human behavior.

The main requirement for applicability of the introspective method is its intersubjective grounding. This evolved from the analysis of Wittgenstein's arguments and discussion of the phenomenological method created by Schutz and Patočka in the realm of knowledge of social relation. Bláha's work provides us with a lot of footage for such grounding of the introspective method and thus makes it theoretically vital even for today's social research. On the other hand, Bláha's inconsistent methodic elaboration of this method turns out to be a limiting factor for its practical application.

On particular objective of Bláha's theory, would be good for further elaboration. This is the issue of obligation of theoretical conclusion for practice, which is a characteristic of Bláha's conclusion. If intersubjective communication is needed for verification of theoretical knowledge (insisting on given objective proof, on communicable meaningful argument), than it is necessary to ask for a method in order to deduce obligation for moral societal practice. Does this question provide us

with "verification principle"? If yes, than must it comply with a criterion of intersubjectivity?

All these questions are certainly important and interesting for people and scientists to consider, however finding answers to them goes beyond the theme of this text. This text should provide some guidance for finding the answers to the posed questions.

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