

Psychopathology of power

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Professor Jan Miodoński was a former prisoner of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In a discussion at the Cracovian Branch of the Polish Medical Society, a few years before his death, he said: “The concentration camp taught me one thing – to hate discipline and order.” This is a peculiar declaration in context of the role discipline and order play in the life of individuals and communities.

The word discipline derives from Latin *disciplulus* and *discere*. Since birth we are “pupils” of the social environment which surrounds us, and time and again, we learn new kinds of “order”. This integrates our ways of behaviour. The process starts with discipline of feeding, then toilet-training, locomotion and grasping. This is later the discipline of the highest forms of movement: words which enable us to use our inborn system of understanding the world, of thinking & feeling, and all kinds of social, cognitive, aesthetic and moral order etc., we encounter through life and submit to.

We do not know the definition of life, but according to the physicist Schroedinger [1], life is a continuous combat against entropy, which is a tendency to chaotic movement of particles. By believing this definition, we have to admit that order is the essential characteristic of life.

In the continuous exchange of energy and information between an individual and its surroundings (energy and information metabo-

lism), each living creature (the simplest and the most complex) tends to preserve its own order. Loss of the individual order is equal to death, a triumph of the second thermodynamic rule (entropy). Living organisms are seemingly stable, but no atom within them stays the same in time; in a short time, other atoms taken from the environment replace them. Only the structure is permanent; the order is specific for the organism. The specificity and individuality refers to biochemical (the specificity of the organisms’ proteins), physiological, morphological and informational levels.

The last type of order refers to signals received from the environment and the specific reactions they evoke. Through information metabolism, not only is one’s own organism “my”, the world around also becomes “my” - one perceives, feels and reacts to it in a specific way. With phylogenetic development of the nervous system, the role of information metabolism is growing, in comparison with the role of energy metabolism.

Preservation of the specific individual organism’s order, the precondition of life, demands permanent effort: an effort to live, which counteracts entropy; its cessation means death. The specific order is, to some extent, saved by biological transmission to the next generation. Sexual reproduction provides for a greater variety of structures, as the genetic composition of an organism is a new one, a result of union of two reproductive cells, not a copy of the maternal genetic plan as in the case of asexual reproduction. The latter resembles a technical production of prototype copies.

Besides biological heredity human beings use a social heredity as well. This is a way to access particular material and spiritual values. The ef-

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fort of thousands of generations contributing to the development of speech, writing, information about the world, moral values, technical equipment etc. is being transmitted to every human being since her/his birth. Deprived of this legacy, humans would have to start everything from the beginning. Culture development would not be possible.

The problem of order is inseparably connected with the problem of authority and power. To transform the environment according to one's own order (the structure of an organism), one must first conquer a part of it, and to become its lord. Conquering territory one lives on is not an exclusively human characteristic, but is seen among animals and even plants as well. Attempting to take over a territory animals already inhabit and "possess" requires the fight or flight reaction; a trivial example is that of a dog barking when somebody tries to take its bowl. Animal sociology gives many interesting examples of the fight for an authority position and the development of hierarchy in animal groups.

The problem of authority and power is also present in multicellular organisms. In a multi-billion "community" of cells some particular order must exist. This order is encoded in a substance of genes, an important component of the cells' nuclei. The nucleus is "the lord" of the cell – the cell does not exist without the nucleus. Endocrine and nervous systems of the organisms play a role complementary to the genetic plan. They support and reinforce its integrative action, modelling activities depending on current organisms' needs and environmental conditions.

Neoplastic disorder can be described as a "rebellion" of a cell against the ruling order of the organism. Neoplastic cells liberate themselves from the general discipline, they are free, "postponing" the rest of the organism, fulfilling their right to preserve their life and the life of their new species. They grow and duplicate against the best interest of the other cells, which did not rebel.

A holistic approach to organisms should not ignore the problem of authority and power; it can be seen even in organisms on the lowest level of phylogenesis. To live and procreate one must conquer the surrounding world. Like many crucial problems of human life, that particular one is also present, in a pathological & ex-

aggerated form, in schizophrenia. A person suffering from schizophrenia, especially an acute stage of the disorder, often oscillates between the feeling of God-like omnipotence – reading other people's thoughts, ruling their will & ruling the course of events of the world & universe, and the feeling of complete loss of authority – when others read his/her own thoughts, rule her/his movements, speech & thoughts, being an automaton paralysed by the world around. During their pre-morbid life, schizophrenics often have a history of difficulty in finding their own place in the world and solving the problem of "to rule/to be ruled".

The problem of authority and power is linked not only with the rule of life preservation, but also with the rule of preservation of the species, and with information metabolism. In the first case the authority is unilateral, in the other – bilateral. The part of the environment, which must be destroyed and incorporated to supply the organism with energy necessary for life, no longer has power over it. In an erotic and sexual act, the power is on both sides. At the same time, one is the lord and the slave of his/her partner. To exchange signals with the environment, one must accept the order of the environment, and try to enforce ones' own influence on it.

The possessive pronoun "my" expresses three kinds of authority exercised over the environment. "My" are: food, flat, money etc. – all things that are necessary for life preservation. "My" are also persons indispensable to preservation of the species, in a narrow sense a sexual partner, in a broader one, persons belonging to the same social groups: family, nation, religion, profession, class, etc. The basis of social unions is formed on the species preservation rule. A family group, being the simplest and the earliest type of social union, is an immediate consequence of this rule. Lastly, "my" are experiences, impressions, feelings, thoughts, information gathered, decisions and actions. The signals from the surrounding world become arranged in a specific way, conditioning a specific reaction to them.

Information metabolism, which Pavlov described as an unconditioned and conditioned reflex system, extends the territory of authority on the surrounding world. "My" refers not only to this part of the environment which has been assimilated by the organism, and not only

this, with which the organism unites to create the new living creature. It becomes a much bigger circle of the environment, minimal energy amounts of which, meaningless for energy metabolism, become signals conditioning the organism's behaviour. The information metabolism is an initiative step, preceding assimilative and reproductive contacts with the surrounding world. Before becoming "my" in a sense of building the organism substance, or sexual union, it has to become "my" in a sense of getting oriented within it. The organism has to "know" how to move in its environment to fulfill two basic biological rules: to preserve its' life and to preserve its' species.

Information metabolism is present in every cell as the ability to receive environmental stimuli and react to them. With phylogenic development, in complex organisms it becomes a domain of specialised cells (the receiving of stimuli – receptors; the reaction – effectors; the transmission and arrangement – neurons), and life becomes more and more a preparation for further life, presuming that the essence of life is fulfilment of the two biological rules. In the simplest organisms life is restricted to following these rules, and the preparatory period is minimal. The world is transformed into the organisms own structure; it is completely "my" world. If this condition is not accomplished, a risk of death appears, or the decomposition of organism structure, which is equal to death. If reconstructing the individual experience of organisms on this phylogenic level was not excessive fantasizing, one could suppose that these organisms oscillate between a feeling of omnipotence and a feeling of endangerment of life. The world would be completely "my", or completely "strange" for them; in this case, strangeness means death.

Satisfying basic biological needs gives feelings of pleasure; not meeting these needs produces distress. "My" world appeals to them, but "strange" repels. Therefore, the feeling of power over the surrounding world is a source of pleasure, but its' absence is a source of unpleasant feelings. A "strange" world evokes fear and aggression, a need to flee from it or to destroy it.

Returning to the problem of power exercised over the environment, there are some analogies between the situation described and the position

of the human being in the early stages of his/her ontogenic development when the internal signal system is still not fully developed functionally. During fetal and infantile periods, the human being is fully dependent on the environment, similar to the way even the most primitive living organisms are. The human does not exist without his environment. The environment is totally and completely its' own, it executes full power over it, and the environment fulfills all the human's needs, otherwise the fetus or infant would be on the verge of death. Many psychiatrists, especially those who are concerned with early childhood experiences, are of the opinion that feelings of omnipotence and the lack of boundaries between the internal and external world characterise infants' feelings. Similar experiences, often among people with schizophrenia, are understood as regression to early developmental stages. Despotism is understood to be a crucial symptom of mental infantilism. Absolute power is strictly connected with absolute dependency. A ruler, as an infant without a mother, is unable to exist without his subjects. But, he also loses a boundary between himself and his subordinated surroundings – as quoted by Mickiewicz: "I am the million and I suffer for millions", or Louis "l'état c'est moi".

The development of a signal system decreases the organism's dependency on the environment. The organism no longer needs to have full possession over the environment in order to integrate it into its' own structure. And, on the other hand, the organism is not transformed into the structure of the environment.

Furthermore, the relationship with the world loses the clear-cut alternative: "I win" or "I perish". Victory no longer means death of surroundings, nor does victory of environment equal death of the organism. A fight with surroundings still exists, being the sense of life, if life is understood as a tendency to support one's own order on account of the order of environment. Nevertheless, victories and defeats start to be less dramatic than within the alternative of "to be or not to be". The fight becomes "as if" a play with the environment. In the play, the environment can defeat the organism without consequences. Its' order can be accepted. This is a core of discipline, in a sense learning the cues of the environment order. One can also be a vic-

tor, and enforce one's own order upon the environment, however not destroying it completely. This happens in energy exchange. These "plays" with the world become the goal in itself. One can find them even in the lowest phylogenic levels. Huizinga's *Homo ludens*, I presume, does not refer only to human beings [2].

Interaction with the environment, understood as receiving signals and reacting to them, the exchange leading to being defeated or victorious, is a precondition of information metabolism saturation. Without information metabolism, there is no opportunity to develop energy metabolism and reproductive contact with the environment. Or, using another verbalisation, one would be unable to enter the core of life – taking into account the two rules of biology – without playing with the surrounding world by the information exchange. As mentioned before, with development of the signal system the insulation field becomes wider. In schizophrenia, the phenomenon of autism, a breakdown of information metabolism, leads in severe cases to disturbance in energy metabolism (e.g. patient stops to eat), and quite often annihilates the species preservation rule.

The appearance of man in evolution is generally understood as a big evolutionary step in the development of a signal system, especially in comparison with changes in other organism systems. The change is significant in this part of the system, which, above all, integrates incoming and outgoing signals – the cerebral cortex. Billions of cortical cells provide exceptional ways of information exchange with the world (functional structures). Only a portion of them is used throughout life. This is explained with an idea of wasteful economy, quite popular in the living world. The same idea explains the small percentage of genetic plans being realised in mature organisms. The organism's organs also only use a portion of their potential. Pressure from the environment, especially social environment and social intergenerational transmission enforce development of only those forms of interaction which are being accepted in the current culture and time. It is possible that without this external pressure, without social discipline, chaos would generate. It is possible that due to an unconscious fear of chaos and disorder of human beings since the beginning of the existence of

man, man himself invents various ways of limiting the freedom of people, animals & plants he is in contact with, and his own freedom as well. Anywhere one may find bars and cuffs one can be sure to encounter traces of man.

Approaching the problem of order and discipline from the former concentration camp prisoners' point of view, one has to accept Jan Miodonski's words quoted at the beginning. There, the tendencies to achieve order and discipline reached a summit of macabre absurdity. The Third Reich was falling apart, but extermination "factories" were functioning effectively, even increasing "production". There was the place the *Mein Kampf* idea was still realised; the camps were the quintessence of the idea itself. Hitler's conception of repairing the world was exceptionally simple: to destroy everything what creates a danger for the purity of *Übermensch* race; above all – Jews. This destruction act completed was expected to be followed by "the paradise of wonderful people". This is not a new conception in the history of humankind, but it was never put forward so frankly and so consequently realised.

Each of the social ideologies, so many throughout history, contains an aversion towards all that is incongruent with it. And above all, towards those people who are not followers of the ideology. The image of the world is simplified to black-and-white; people are divided into "believers" and "non believers"; the first being good, the others – bad. The internal struggle between various options, often perceived as a fight between good and evil, becomes externalised. By accepting the ready form of activity, one reduces one's own uncertainty and doubts concerning alternative possibilities; one becomes good as long as he/she follows the accepted form. Everything outside, not compliant with form becomes bad. A ready structure, taken from outside, makes internal integration easier; dynamic order becomes static; a wavering cane transforms into a statue. The Third Reich man was such a statue: walking straight ahead towards the goal pointed out by the Führer, stepping on and destroying everything obstructing his way.

Development of human signal system, especially the highest form of signal – words – enables human beings, to an incomparably superior degree (as opposed to animals), to use ready

functional structures. A human being does not need to develop them since the beginning; she/he learns them from her/his social environment. Discipline is an indispensable condition to assimilate those ready forms of behaviour from the social environment. Acceptance is rewarded, rejection – punished. This way, an inner system controlling an individual's behaviour is constructed; an individual perceives it as a "social mirror" ("what will people think about me").

With the new functional structure assimilation, an external system of control is incorporated into the inner, self-control system. The power to judge is being transferred from the environment into the individual. The human being becomes her/his own judge. The "social mirror" is thus internalised; it becomes a part of the conscience, or Freud's superego, or Socrates' *daimonion*.

The Third Reich man's conscience was the Führer's order. Guilty feelings were born when the command was not followed and fulfilled. Höess' camp neurosis was not a consequence of feeling guilty for murdering hundreds of thousands people, but being unable to exterminate them effectively and smoothly. His neurotic symptoms decreased when extermination methods had been improved with gas introduction. A consequence of internalisation of the Führer's order is a notorious lack of guilty feelings in war criminals. One could be - *a rebours* – surprised to see that somebody feels innocent being accused of acting in congruence with the Decalogue [3].

Self-control is an important characteristic of each signal system, both technical and biological. The basic scheme of such a system can be presented; in a coming signals are transformed into a language specific for the system (e.g. electric impulse in a computing machine, neural impulse in nervous system). Transformed signals undergo integration within a particular plan (introduced from outside in the case of computers, built up within biological systems). Results of this integration are then transmitted to effectors (e.g. muscle cells in biological systems), where it is transformed into outgoing signal, understandable for the environment. The last stage of signal exchange between a system and its environment is feedback; self-control abilities of systems depend on feedback. A portion of outgoing signals come back to the system. In consequence,

the system plan is never petrified; it changes depending on feedback signals. They bring information on action effects and resulting changes in the environment. There are many examples of feedback in the nervous system. On the highest level of nervous system activity, the integration (awareness of activities) feedback mechanism is experienced as self-control. The "social mirror" represents feedback signals on the results of our behaviour. Conscience could be understood as an integration of feedback information with the general plan of actions we are aware of (internalisation).

Upon entry into a concentration camp, the "social mirror" people were used to was smashed; everything important became irrelevant; a prisoner became a number. His choice was between three possibilities: 1 – to perceive himself as the unusual environment saw him, as a number only; 2 – to preserve his former image, which was unrealistic, but soothed, to some extent, the monstrosity of the first possibility; 3 – to identify with the group of lords, adopting their way of behaviour, to become a leader not a number, at least in front of other prisoners. Life in the concentration camp enforced manoeuvres between all of them, especially between the first two.

Life is characterised by unstable balance, between conscientiousness and invariability. Activity plans of a living system are continuously changing, but the basic development line is preserved. With repetition, the previously accomplished but unsure plan (functional structure) becomes fixed and automatic. Walking is unstable and staggering in early childhood, and requires effort of will, but with time becomes a firm, automatic activity strictly following a schema. One, however, should not forget that the schema is continuously modified depending on feedback signals, mainly from the locomotion system itself. In spite of the schema there is some degree of variability. Instability in this case is so small, that the nervous system is not forced to engage as whole in the locomotive function. Occasionally, e.g. in consequence of tiredness or unusual terrain etc., that realisation of the plan becomes too difficult. Then, each step becomes a conscious activity. Consciousness – total involvement of nervous system – is, so to speak, reserved for the most difficult activities.

At the beginning of their training, many young SS-men flinched at the sight of torture of animals and people. But, with the progress of training, step by step, their inner resistance disappeared. Cruelty was presented as a purely male characteristic; so activities repulsive at the beginning were performed almost automatically, with minimal resistance or without it at all.

Taking on some social ideology reduces the uncertainty of existence, of the necessity to choose the one proper way of behaving among many possibilities. The higher the level of evolution, the more possible ways of behaviour the individual has to choose from (functional structures), so hesitance is inevitable, and the instability of balance becomes greater. *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes expresses this human condition of doubt and uncertainty.

The evolution of life forms and the combat against entropy brings new, richer and better-adapted morphological and functional forms. Creative freedom of evolution seems to be the biggest in the area of functional forms described as thinking. On the other hand, in nature, one can see an opposite tendency; one towards stubborn preservation of the old forms, often maladaptive, or even destructive. That is a specific conservatism of living nature, its sameness in permanent changing, its passivity, avoiding creative effort.

Man, according to his own – probably correct – recognition, is the highest achievement of evolution on Earth. Due to the development of the nervous system, and particularly the brain cortex, man has a practically unlimited ability to create functional forms (structures). Recognising them as a measure of evolution dynamics, one should expect – in consequence of the balance of opposite processes – equally strong tendencies to oppose evolution, the processes limiting freedom to create new functional forms. So, the fact that all forms of restrictions, bars, prisons etc., are specific to humans, is accidental.

The discipline of upbringing, to a great extent, is based on restrictions. Of many potential functional structures only a few become developed; the others must be repressed. The fact that we walk, speak, write etc. in a specific way is a result of a learning process, but not only. While some options were suppressed, others developed. The learning process is easily understood

within a Pavlovian schema of arousal and inhibition. A child learning to walk performs many unnecessary movements, and those are gradually eliminated. Pre-school child drawings, in comparison with school-age child ones, are usually more abundant in themes and form. The older children were introduced to particular drawing expression forms. The abundance of experiences in Schizophrenia can be explained by the idea of the explosion of behaviour forms repressed throughout life. Training of Nazi *Übermenschen* was based on repression of human feelings and promotion of aggression and sadism.

Social ideologies more or less rigorously focus on the holistic formation of human behaviour. While learning particular activities, they stimulate some and repress other forms of behaviour. Their danger is hidden in wholeness. While learning to walk, from time to time a child regresses to the older, ontogenetic form of locomotion, e.g. crawling, but is still the same child; locomotion is a part of his/her behaviour only. Environmental pressure is limited to rewarding one form of behaviour and rejection of the other. If a holistic assessment of behaviour is employed, the whole person, not fitting the norms required, is excluded from her/his social group.

The holistic assessment is rarely really holistic. Very often a small detail, eg. another shade of skin colour, hooked nose, atypical fashion of dress, different language etc., becomes a reason to place someone outside of all familiar and understandable, to regard him/her as a stranger, or even hostile. The ease in assessment of other people is difficult to explain; nevertheless, sometimes even an insignificant characteristic allows for instant attribution of somebody to the right or left. Maybe, in such an extreme, often exaggerated form, it expresses a biological tendency to delineate varying systems. In multibillion communities of cells, those of varying function and structure – for example – are separated by connective tissue, which plays the role of a boundary dividing it into smaller communities of various functions and tasks. On the other hand a tendency to build up boundaries is anti-biological and slows the nature of evolution. Evolution is dependent on harmonious mutual dependency of various forms of life, and on close forms matching to create new ones. In the biological sense the boundary is never clear cut,

and penetration and mutual influence is always possible.

In the holistic assessment of the other person, resulting in the placement of her/him on this or that side of the border, in the classification as “ours” or “strange”, powerful emotions are usually hidden. Such segregation is congruent with the basic orientation tendency, taking an attitude of “towards” or “against”. In humans this is, above all, steered by the phylogenetically older parts of the nervous system (mainly rhinencephalon). This part of the brain is associated with strong vegetative discharge, and – subjectively – with anxiety and hate (in a case of the attitude “against”) and desire (in a case of attitude “towards”). Cognitive functions, in humans associated with the youngest phylogenetically parts of nervous system (neocortex) are reduced to minimum. A differentiated image of the world is simplified to objects, which one either wants to escape from or destroy, or which one can be united with, feeling a need of sexual character, or tribal, national, ideological etc., union. When the emotional tension of the fundamental orientation attitude decreases and the cognitive process is developing again, one sometimes comes to the conclusion, that the object of desire was not so attractive, or the object of fear and hatred not so repulsive.

The power and order of social ideology are appealing; feelings of chaos and uncertainty enforced from outside, but decreasing, seem to be generally of emotional nature: an opportunity to discharge positive emotions on co-believers and negative ones on people or a different affiliation.

Full knowledge of everything around is beyond human capacity; however, the specificity of human relations does not allow for indifference. Indifference itself is a negative attitude, it is the approach to another human being as lifeless object. Therefore, the human being is forced to make a basic assessment and choice: “familiar vs. stranger” (to approach or to escape) relying often on superficial signs. During wartime, “to approach” or “to escape” changes in the assessment of an “enemy” or “ally”. Any mistake in such basic orientation may end in death. Uniform becomes a necessity. Not only were concentration camp prisoners tattooed, but also their perpetrators, SS-men also.

Romanticism of uniform, *esprit du corps*, concepts devalued during the last war, mean nothing more than being an integral part of the social group, at the cost of one’s own individuality; “I” is replaced by “we”; the leader’s will serves as one’s own, and the burden of responsibility is put on the leader. A uniform of different colour and fashion is often a signal of escape.

Attributes of authority can be arranged as follows: responsibility, solitude, and dependency. The burden of responsibility is, among others, a consequence of the fact that the leader’s functional structures are being used by his subordinates; thus, they are multiplied and reinforced. The leader’s every word, each gesture, facial expression become meaningful, important as his group members instantly pick them up and introduce in action. This multiplication within the group easily turns the leader’s thoughts into actions. The leader’s upbringing, e.g. in succession of the crown, in diplomacy, in army, in church institutions etc. was based, among others, on learning a skill of emotional expression control; every gesture could turn into unpredicted consequences. The leader’s face was an unreadable mask, his gestures scarce and well calculated. Democratisation resulted in a decrease of discipline in this area.

Possibility of functional structure multiplication characterises every steering system, both technological (e.g. in automatic production) and biological (duplication of DNA, functional structure generalisation in the nervous system). This possibility gives the ruler a feeling of power, but, on the other hand, deprives him from a feeling of freedom and individuality. Information exchange with environment is no longer a play due to significance of consequences resulting from multiplication of signal only. Perhaps there is a reason of a special kin the rulers had for jesters, and for their tendency to relax in orgiastic events; they allowed for an escape from the burden of their signals’ importance.

The leader is obliged to take into account that his signals (words, gestures, facial expression) will be decoded and multiplied by many. They will become orders for them. People will try to act to fulfil them. The leader is unable to be himself; he is what the idea he represents describes as him, and what his followers want to have as a leader.

Former prisoners of concentrations camps reported that the unthinkable cruelty of SS-men in very rare cases resulted from their sadistic features; more often it was due to their need to show that they are "good Germans", for whom *Mitleid ist Schwäche*, or from a fear of exclusion from the ruling group; any sign of weakness could be equal to penalty of death. Cruelty of the camp capos, often much bigger than SS-men's pitilessness and unscrupulousness, resulted from a need to identify with SS-men. Converts are usually more zealous than old believers. An SS-man taking his uniform off could turn back into a "kind" German, especially if guilty feelings did not oppress him, as what he was doing in the camp was fulfilling Führer's will, not his own.

The degree of reliability or responsibility of a steering system is dependent on its' ability to realize its' plan. It is valid both for technological systems as well as biological ones. A refrigerator is good if it maintains a stable temperature independently from external climate conditions. The nervous system is functional as long as it provides the organism with satisfactory development in spite of external and internal obstacles. The leader is a good leader as long as he succeeds and realizes his idea. If there is no success, the idea becomes a delusion (almost everybody believes so about the Nazi idea). The leader lives on victories, and without successes, he/she perishes. Victory is proof that his idea is not fiction. Victory turn plans into reality. Usually leaders and their followers find it difficult to accept defeat; defeat means loss of the goal of life. The idea they lived for loses its sense as it is no longer realized; together with those who introduced it in practice, it becomes as useless as a damaged fridge. At the end of the World War II, when the defeat of Germans was only a matter of time, many Germans - their Führer including - still believed in victory. Furthermore, there are still some who believe in such a chance. Every past idea leaves its buonapartists.

The necessity to realize a plan implies a specific attitude towards the environment. This can be expressed with a saying: the goal explains the measures, the end justifies the means. The goal becomes the most important issue; each measure that brings one closer to the goal is good. The philosophy of life is reduced to a simple idea:

victory or death. This is characteristic for energy metabolism. For the authority, the richness of functional structures - significant for information metabolism - is irrelevant. What is important is power. The power decides that the goals the authority represents triumph over the environment. The environment subdues and serves toward realization of the plan, or it restrains and becomes the enemy; it must be enslaved or destroyed. A simple consequence of such an attitude towards the environment is a necessity to combat. A battle, from the biological and evolutionary point of view, is a regression to the level of energy metabolism. It deprives life of all, which through evolution formed a shield from the cruelty of the rule: I win or perish. Ruling, in itself, results in a fight for power. This fight in its nature is hard. Losing authority means annihilation, as in energetic metabolism. If one does not change the structure of the environment, one becomes changed, as in the proverb "I shall eat, or shall be eaten". Not surprisingly, the rulers consciously or unconsciously push toward wars; wars are proof of their power, the proof that their authority is real.

For authorities, a human being is worth as much as his contribution to the achievement of the goal. A worker is worth as much as he fulfills the duties delineated by a foreman; the worth of soldier, according to fulfillment of an officer's orders, etc. Even in the concentration camp, where the worth of a human being was zero, people were to be exterminated depending on their functions; there was a hierarchy of individuals' value. The functions were important for camp organization; some were empowered with some authority of SS-men (e.g. capo); in some cases being a functionary made survival possible.

In every steering system "benevolence of authorities" is distributed on the lower hierarchy levels; therefore, due to the long chain of events between the plan and its final effects, each level is a representation of the main idea. The rule of the plan duplication and transmission of power is present in every steering system, no matter if technical, biological or social. The plan encoded in steering mechanism is realised on every stage, each closer to the final effect. On each stage the plan is passed to lower effective levels representing it as a whole, or partially. Each

part of machinery is steered by the one higher - that means closer to the central plan, and, at the same time it is steering the lower one - that means closer to final effect. The genetic plan encoded in cellular nucleus DNA steers the production of RNA, RNA in turn steers the production of peptides and enzymes in the cell, which steer, in sequence, physiological and biochemical processes of the cell. The leader's plan, before it reaches realisation, passes through particular levels of hierarchy. On each level one is a leader to those on the lower level, but subordinate in relation to the foreman. The chief leader, having no superior above, usually is responsible "before God and history". In interpersonal relations, the hierarchy of power is a convenient way for the discharge of aggression: "I am beaten by a stronger one, and I beat the weaker". No wonder there is a natural tendency to climb up: the risk of being beaten decreases, and the opportunity to beat others grows. Acquiring a function in the camp, besides usual privileges of authority (better work conditions, better food), diminished the pressure of aggression that overwhelmed every prisoner, and so increased the chance for survival. On the other hand, it often created a severe moral conflict: how to oppose the Nazi extermination plan while being a link within it? It also required an enormous will effort and a great amount of positive emotions towards weaker ones, not to yield to temptations of power demonstration, typical in such circumstances.

A characteristic of biological symptoms is plasticity; depending on present inner and external situations, they are capable of changing the plan. Recent molecular genetic research revealed plasticity of the genetic plan; the lability of activity plans (functional structures) of the nervous system has been known for some time. In spite of great improvement in technological systems feedback, they are far less labile than biological ones. The level of plasticity in social systems seems to be much closer to that of technological than biological systems. Ideas, social norms, views etc., which govern the life of large social groups of people often are rigid and unchangeable in spite of changing situations and a typological variety of people who have to subdue them. Perhaps this is due to the nature of the human mind stubbornly keeping to the known and pet-

rified forms in defence against the abundance of potential ones.

The unscrupulous fight intensifies the stiffness of social ideology. Even a small deviation from its' line leads to the identification of a rebel and dissident enemy to be destroyed. The whole situation has characteristics of a vicious circle; to bring the idea to reality, followers must fight for it, but atmosphere of fight contributes to the rigidity of a system; stiffness and lack of plasticity increases the atmosphere of hostility.

Rigidity is connected with unscrupulousness; no changes of plan are possible, and the plan must be realised at all costs. The camp road roller comes to mind; prisoners were forced to pull it even if they had no strength to prevent themselves from being crushed by it. Discipline is obligatory on all levels of hierarchy; one must do what was ordered, and, at the same time, unscrupulously enforce performance from subordinates. Assessment criteria of other human beings are formed according to the completion of duties. Other characteristics are unimportant. The system of power deprives the image of another human being and by doing so, diminishes the variety of interpersonal relations. Above all, it paralyses the freedom of choice, and turns human beings into automatons. The effort of life connected with permanent creation of new forms, which evokes hesitation and anxiety to choose between them, is reduced to the acceptance of one form; anxiety is no longer connected with choice. It is a fear of incompetent performance of the accepted form that causes condemnation and rejection from the ruling group. Destruction is often a direct sequence; what is incongruent with the system goals indispensably becomes the enemy.

The loneliness of the ruler comes from his attitude towards the environment. This is always skewed. The ruler perceives his action plan, but for him, the purpose of the environment is to realize his plan. He looks at it from above, and can reach it with his power. If the environment grows or opposes, his anxiety and anger rise. Creation changes into battle.

Forms of relations with the environment are much more abundant in the horizontal plane. One does not have to enforce anything, or accept anything against one's will. Horizontal plane involves free choice, not constraint. In conse-

quence the environment becomes more familiar; one must understand it first, before forms are accepted or rejected. Relation with the environment on horizontal plane resembles a play or dialogue (using a nowadays-popular word), rather than a fight, in which one has to be a winner or a loser. On the other hand, a potential structure becomes real only if is externalised, if becomes a part of the environment. The tendency to transform the environment is then a necessity; otherwise life would become a night-dream. Prisoners of concentration camps, at least at the initial period of imprisonment, were under a pressure so strong, that their conscious activity based on free choice was impossible. A prisoner was acting as automaton, pushed and beaten by everybody. Reality around, in spite of being painful, was a kind of nightmare. Conscious withdrawal from reality leads to nirvana, a state of unclear boundaries between the individual and his/her surroundings and between dreams and reality.

It should be remembered that perception of the world around would be impossible without actions and transformation. A child grasps an interesting object and tries to look inside; a researcher does the same. The cognitive process is often connected with immobilisation and destruction of the objects studied. In this type of cognition, the ability to steer the phenomenon is a measure of knowledge about it. There is, however, yet another type of cognition. Its' task is not to execute power over the environment, but to get to a logical construction. "The task of all sciences – said Einstein – both natural and psychological, is to arrange our experience in a logical wholeness." [4].

External expression of loneliness of the steering system is isolation from immediate relations with the environment. In machines, the steering system does not participate in energy exchange between the machine and its surroundings; it only steers, more or less isolated from the other machine parts. In a cell, the steering system (chromosomes) is separated from the rest of the cell by the nucleus membrane. The blood-brain barrier does not allow the nervous system to participate directly in organism metabolism. In fairy tales and legends the disguised ruler peeps into the households of his subjects, but rarely meets them directly. Authority of the ruler decreases with getting too close. Television brings the im-

age of the ruler close to millions of viewers; this may be much riskier for his authority than beneficial for the efforts of democratisation.

For the human being, a social creature, loneliness is difficult. There are always groups of courtiers, advisers and jesters around the ruler. Relations between them and the ruler are less skewed; sometimes they rule the ruler. Even power does not allow for liberation from the rules of human relations. One can not steer the others only, one must also be steered; in giving only commands one significantly impoverishes information exchange; one should not look at others only from above, human sight goes in various directions. To govern one must keep distance. If the plane of observation between the ruler and his subject is changed form skewed to even, both would often be amazed at how similar they are to each other, having the same vices and virtues. The glamour of power disappears. Both become human beings again; the ruler cannot govern his subject, as he was an automaton; the size of his goals diminishes in an encounter with reality of other human being's life. The subject no longer perceives his ruler as an unscrupulous deity or machinery crushing him in the slightest resistance, but as a similar human being, trying to understand him, and even help him.

In the concentration camp, every gesture, face grimace, half-word of the rulers could be a death sentence and cruel torture for a prisoner. Even watching them aroused a fear so strong, that their image took apocalyptic dimensions. It happened, however, that a prisoner was lucky and charming enough to meet his ruler on the less skewed plane, to communicate, and even steer him to some extent. The apocalypse disappeared, human meagreness was seen. For the ruler, a number in stripped clothes regained features of a human being, with which he could even talk. From the perspective of extermination camp organisation it was accurate for SS-men to maintain a distance from their prisoners. SS-men "favoured" some prisoners – carefully selected, usually criminals – with their authority and power, which in the extermination camp was, above all, tormenting and killing others. If they would encounter prisoners directly, they could be able to notice that prisoners were people, as they were; occasionally it happened.

The example is Höss's gardener and prisoner, a Pole, who was treated in a quite humane way by the big chief of the Auschwitz Camp [3].

Mutual dependency between ordering and performing exists in all steering systems. The lord does not exist without slave; the slave does not without the lord. A machine built of steering parts only, having no executive element would be completely useless. A nucleus does not live without the cell, a cell – without the nucleus. Life of an isolated brain is unimaginable; a highly-organised organism cannot live without a brain. Even a potent ruler, without subjects, is usually referred to a psychiatric hospital. Even the smaller human groups search for a leader; the leader personifies integrative forces of the group; without a leader the group disintegrates.

Nevertheless mutual dependency between those who command and those who perform is not always correctly understood and realised. Close connections, which must develop between them, become artificial. A ruler convinced that he possesses all the power demands blind obedience, forgetting that he is only a representative, a kind of crystallisation, of the tendency within the group he governs. A subject, then, perceiving the orders as strange and unfamiliar to him, rebels – openly or secretly. In the first place conflict endangers him in front of the ruler; later, in front of himself: following orders he must struggle with himself. Or, by accepting what has been overthrown he becomes a blind performer, and in this way feels included in the power apparatus. He gains a feeling of organisation he could not reach himself. An artificial structure replaces an original one. Paying with his freedom, one avoids the effort the inner organisation requires. Chaos is replaced with this artificial order. Uncertainty and anxiety – with firmness of belief in an idea.

The contemporary human, thanks to the development of communication media, history, especially archaeology, has much greater access to a variety of human life patterns. In consequence a belief in correctness of one's own way of life decreases, and with this, a tendency to enforce one's ideology on others also decreases. The memory of the last war confronts us dramatically with consequences of such a tendency. Auschwitz and Hiroshima became the symbols of World War II. These symbols emphasise the crisis of pow-

er and authority, as well as the problem of war connected with them, which calls for a new approach.

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