

The difference does not lie in the degree of radicality in their approach to the environment, since Bělohradský „wants to make people conscious that they are standing on the edge of a precipice on this most ordinary of days“ (V. Bělohradský, *Myslet zeleně světa* [Thinking is the Greening of the World], Mladá fronta, Prague 1991, p. 109). The comparison of the works of Moldan, Bělohradský and Keller confronts readers, particularly active environmentalists, with the well-known *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!* The answer to this problem gives rise to inner tensions and clashes between fundamentalists, realists and the neo-liberal stream in the range of environmental parties and movements in western Europe today.

Hana Librová: Pestří a zelení. Kapitoly o dobrovolné skromnosti [Bright and Green. Chapters on voluntary modesty]

Brno, Veronica 1994, 218 p.

Hana Librová has long focused on ecological issues (for example in two inspiring monographs on people's relationships towards the country). For this highly topical and sophisticated issue she possesses a highly favourable combination of professional biological preparation and moreover – a sensitive soul and a virtually unscientific character, which is indispensable for studies of this kind. She drew upon this potential in the reviewed monograph, which is ostensibly the result of one whole stage of research.

The central topic of „voluntary modesty“ is placed in a very factual and broad field which features the main problems of the contemporary ecological crisis, the scale of theoretical analysis it reflects, and the possibilities, weight and borders of different attitudes to social intervention which contributes, at least, to the alleviation of impact of this crisis or to a deceleration in its advance. I do not consider myself a professional in the field of ecology, I only count myself amongst those people who are extremely disturbed by this situation. Nevertheless I am convinced that even if Librová were not to write another thing, her work numbers among the extremely enriching experi-

In a time of „ideological reprise“ (O. Maquard) Keller's *Až na dno blahobytu* is a noteworthy exemplar of the attempt both to develop principles of change which offer hope for the future and to translate the effective mobilisation of the environmental movement's concepts. The fundamental environmental discussion raises major questions in the daily life of the average citizen, stimulates responsibility for the self and the whole. It is virtually becoming a religion – the medium of a new understanding and new foundations of human society – wherein lies its strength, as well as more than a few pitfalls.

Jan Kamarýt, Oldřich Ševčík

ences and essential sources of knowledge for everybody seeking to formulate a strong picture of the state of things. I also appreciate her continual regard to philosophical and historically cultural aspects which cast light on the specificity of ecological consciousness in our European context.

In the framework of this broad overview, Librová turns her attention to an almost marginal topic. After considering the anthropological and cultural determinants of social behaviour and their consequences for man's relationship to the natural world, she constructs a balance sheet of the significance of economic, technological and legislative measures, an understandably rather pessimistic balance. The author considers such measures as ineffectual (as states and other power centres fail to accompany their promises with sufficiently radical action) and looking to far horizons, such that any evaluation must conclude: yesterday was too late.

Librová states this factually, with sorrow but without hysteria. Her attitude is reminiscent of Patočka's „angel of night“ and his „solidarity of the shocked“. She is looking for the „niche in ecological hopelessness“ and analyses „voluntary modesty“ as one possible way of learning to live with the ecological crisis. The author not only returns to early antique wisdom (if we cannot change things, we must change our relationship to them) while main-

taining a highly contemporary standpoint, close to so-called anthropological medicine: an illness (or like „breakdown“) is not only a disturbance (the doctor is not repairman), but is a part of everyday life and a stimulus for the redefinition of its sense (the effort to learn to live with illness or handicap). In no case is there a passivity (shocked is not shackle), but an attempt to do as much as lies within one's power. Being upset provides the impulse „great measures“ can only be a cheap transfer of responsibility to others if unaccompanied by changes, which we can initiate now of ourselves. It is not by chance that Librová does not sympathise with aggressive ecological attitudes.

As a sociologist, she employed the informal interview method (a series of case studies), in my opinion, a highly appropriate method, because it is grounded upon individual or small groups and especially on the problems of the deep and fragile change in personal life attempts and values, which can only with difficulty be inserted into the straight-jacket which is statistical survey. The results of her enquiry are very interesting and an inspiring example of the practical search for and realisation of other qualities of life. It is not of great importance, that such attempts are to be found in a statistically insignificant part of the population. Librová presents an analysis of the individual components of these changes: cars, tourist travel, boarding, housing, fashion, consumption of water and electric power, waste management, male and female roles etc. Each of them demands specific commentary.

From a perspective approaching my own orientation, I am very much interested in the controversy surrounding ecological ethics, with its important theoretical and practical aspects, which touch upon what seems to be the problem: how to draft ecologically favourable social norms and what effects the pressure they exert can have on social behaviour. It is for this very reason (as the author often and rightly emphasises) that for effective changes to be made, these norms should be adopted by a wide range of society.

The work raised the question of anthropocentric and unanthropocentric wrestling with ecological ethics, which brought me to formu-

late several observations, which do not adopt a critical distance from the author's opinions, but rather attempt an answer to the challenge of managing the given problem (connected, as it is, with one of the essential features of „western“ philosophical thinking as a whole).

I accept the criticism of anthropocentrism (the manorial and instrumental relationship to nature, the reduction of its importance to a utilitarian employment measured exclusively by the values, interests and needs of humans as privileged beings) and understand ecological ethics' anxious desire to build new relations of humans to nature based on an unanthropocentric perspective (the independent internal value of nature, independent of human needs, experiences and evaluations, the priority of protecting the integrity, stability and beauty of biological union, or law and legal subjectivity of natural beings before claims of the human component to this entity).

I am never able to free myself from the conception (deeply influenced by traditional culture) that we are incapable of achieving an unanthropocentric vision of the world, that anthropocentrism (panhuman, generic) remains our lot, and I ask myself whether it would not be more adequate to identify the unanthropocentric position as an attempt to redefine humanity, and therefore as a new, more profound or deeper anthropocentrism. This point appears in an interesting discussion between A. Naess and P. Reed, as well as in the author's own dilemma (and in those of further proponents of ecological ethics) with extreme postulations of a „self-identification with nature“, which, after accurate analysis, reveals itself to be hidden in a different form of anthropocentrism (p. 174).

I do not consider the conception of nature as a value of self, as a subject of law etc., as an expression of non-anthropocentrism but rather as a developed anthropocentrism of human beings – or anthropomorphism. It is merely an illusion that we have cast aside notions of the human being's privileged position at the top of the natural order and its specific internal value; however, in reality, by this we draw the nature (deeply, more culturally) into the understood order, which is specifically human. Only this is able to formulate the semantic oppositions of