

NOTE E DISCUSSIONI

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THE ONTOLOGICAL SENSE OF THE CONCEPT OF «MEASURE»

1. Introduction

The concept of measure is not frequently referred to in contemporary philosophical discourses. It may be fairly assumed that the reason for this circumstance is the perception that the concept belongs to the language of traditional metaphysics. Over the past decades, this language has been viewed with increasing suspicion by many members of the philosophical community. The understanding of the concept of measure is to a large degree conditioned by the clear imprint of Hegelian philosophy that it bears on itself. For many contemporary philosophers, the latter stands for a model of metaphysical thought, which is to be overcome.

For example, Derrida interprets the Hegelian dialectic as a manifestation of the desire to maintain the continuity of the *Logos*¹. Here it is apposite to recall that the word «logos» itself can also be interpreted as «measure». Thus, the formulation of questions concerning the authority of universal reason will inevitably lead to a shift in the concept of «measure» on the periphery of philosophical studies.

Meanwhile, it is exactly at the present time that *measure* – that which appears as a regulator or limiter of various phenomena and processes – is becoming a vital issue. The contemporary global situation is characterised by a polarisation of human existence in such various fields as politics, economics, art and everyday life. The discussion deals, in the first place, with the polarisation in the political sphere, which has a global character. An ever more prominent role is played by the forces occupying the extreme positions in the political spectrum: on the one hand, for example, various forms of religious fundamentalism; on the other, a radical movement, advocating human freedom without any restrictions. In connection with the economic sphere, the polarisation is observed first of all in the area of accumulation and consumption, both globally and in individual countries. There is a steadily growing gap between «rich» and «poor»; between, on the one hand, the immoderate consumption of goods and, on the other, the lack of the most basic amenities. The processes taking place in the aesthetic sphere also testify to a growing polarisation, which is expressed in more explicit commercialisation of art. As sympto-

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¹ J. DERRIDA, *From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve*, in Id., *Writing and Difference*, Academic Project, Moscow 2000, p. 412 (author's translation from Russian).

matic of this process, we may view, for example, the infinite replication of commercially successful formats in various television series. At the same time, on the other side of the aesthetic spectrum, «art for art's sake» is becoming increasingly segregated and closed in on itself. Finally, in the sphere of everyday existence, polarisation is expressed in the increasingly widespread lifestyle of the «mass man», which aims at obtaining mindless pleasure at any cost. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of «social exclusion» begins to make its appearance. This phenomenon is associated with the deliberate self-isolation of individuals who strive to maintain the human parameters of their existence (above all, their subjectivity and a holistically understood meaning of life).

Paradoxically, this polarisation is accompanied by an increase in the number of all kinds of norms, standards, regulations and technology designed to regulate various aspects of human life. These widely varied measure-models, with which it is necessary to match things and actions, often contradict each other. This circumstance exacerbates man's cognitive dissonance in the modern «measured world» (M. Tsvetaeva).

The above signs of our time, in our view, demonstrate the need for a new approach to understanding the category of measure in the philosophical (ontological) context.

The purpose of this article is to identify the key moments of this conceptualisation. Achieving this goal requires two major problems to be solved. The first considers the history of the conceptual understanding of measure in the European philosophical tradition. However, this task carries not so much a historical as a philosophical sense. In appealing to tradition, it is necessary to identify the most important semantic aspects of the category of «measure», which can be regarded as its «ontological invariant». In this case we are not talking about any substantial properties of measure, but of that ontological problem with which an understanding of measure is communicated across different historical epochs. The word «epoch» here refers to Heidegger's idea of tradition as a «wealth of epochal transformations of Being», always both different and the same². The second problem involves the identification and explication of the meaning of the concept of «measure» in the context of contemporary ontology. By «contemporary ontology» we refer to the so-called «ontology of the event». The most significant examples of the «ontology of the event» are, in our view, the concepts of 'late' Martin Heidegger as well as those of Jacques Deleuze and Jean-Luc Nancy. Important aspects for our research into the «ontology of the event» are also drawn from Russian philosophy as presented in the works of M.K. Mamardashvili and V.V. Bibihina. The principal ideas of the «ontology of the event» serve both as philosophical guide and methodological basis for this study.

2. *Measure in the European philosophical tradition*

The historico-philosophical aspect of the problematic of measure presupposes an appeal to the history of the understanding of measure within the framework of metaphysics. In our interpretation of the term «metaphysics» itself, we follow Heidegger. According to Heidegger, the main feature of metaphysics consists in establishing the gap between the perceptible and non-perceptible, the material and non-material³. Interpreting the sensi-

² M. HEIDEGGER, *Time and being: Papers and presentations*, Nauka, Saint Petersburg 2007, p. 548 (author's translation from Russian).

³ ID., *The Principle of Reason*, Laboratory of Metaphysical Studies of the Philosophical Department of SPbSU - Aletheia, St. Petersburg 2000, p. 92 (author's translation from Russian).

ble and non-sensible as two kinds of real, metaphysics always establishes a hierarchical relation between them: one kind of real serves as the basis of the other. It is specifically in the context of the conceptualisation of the ground as a *thing sui generis* that measure appears among the most important philosophical concepts.

In the history of European metaphysics, the theme of measure dates back to Greek antiquity. Measure in ancient Greek philosophy was conceptualised as a specific (embodied in a particular thing or phenomenon) synthesis of form and matter. The logical elegance of this interpretation of measure was acquired in the works of Plato and Aristotle. In Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, the problem of the ontological status of measure is explicated in a very paradoxical way. The essence of this paradox is as follows. Genuine measure is unified in all that exists. However, the One *itself*, according to Plato, does not participate in measure; it is literally *incommensurable*⁴.

This paradox (the One is *immeasurable* and, at the same time, it also acts as the only measure of all that exists) is less explicitly present in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which defines the One as «the original measure» of all that exists⁵. In this capacity, the One serves as the *origin* of multiplicity. However, it is precisely in terms of *measure as beginning* that the One should be simple and indivisible⁶. Thus, a single measure of all things can be comprehended only in the «impossible» combination of two theses: «the One not involving a great deal» and «the One involving a lot». This paradoxical connection is put into effect in precisely the measurement of any thing that exists⁷.

In this way, the One is revealed as a measure when a person in the act of thought connects with the mind as «organism» in the world-cosmos. It is specifically this character of the One as measure that does not permit talking about measure having something in common with that which is measured. Here measure does not consist of some objective «measurement tool». Only in his participation in a unified, rational beginning is man revealed as the measure of things.

Thus, man, the human being of Greek antiquity, is interpreted as a paradoxical union-separation of the One and many, limit and infinity, cosmos and chaos. Each of these oppositions can be interpreted as the *relationship* of «external» and «internal»: the perceived «from without» sensuous manifold of existence is ordered by non-sensuous original unity, giving rise to the «from within» voice of man.

In medieval Christian philosophy, this «internal» aspect of measure recedes into the background. This circumstance is primarily due to a rethinking of the category of *Being*, interpreted in medieval European philosophy in terms of the *Act of Creation*. As a created being, man is thrown into an already given, «ready» world in which things are weighed and measured by the Creator. Accordingly, measure here consists, on the one hand, as a moment of the created world, and, on the other hand, as a moment of revelation about the world, requiring unconditional acceptance. Thus, the understanding of any thing from the point of view of its measure is carried out here in a two-fold manner. In the first place, a thing is apprehended as rising towards its divine source through an *act of faith*. Accordingly, to the extent that a thing *exists*, it

⁴ PLATO, *Parmenides*, in ID., *Phaedo, Symposium, Phaedrus, Parmenides*, Publishing house "Mysl", Moscow 1999, p. 366.

⁵ ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, Eksmo, Moscow 2008, p. 254 (author's translation from Russian).

⁶ *Ibi*, pp. 254-255.

⁷ *Ibi*, p. 255.

has its measure of actual infinity (eternity) of the Creator. Secondly, things brought into sense perception are made intelligible to the finite human intellect *in the act of cognition* by means of their concepts (forms).

However, precisely by virtue of that thing as creation having as its measure the unknowable Creator, i.e. *immeasurability*, corresponding with human intelligence, things will never be complete. Thus, measure, as an instrument of the finite human mind, is not in this context an embodiment of absolute (divine) measure, but rather its *likeness*. Human knowledge thus acquires an unavoidably probabilistic nature. A very clear expression of this idea may be found in the concept of «learned ignorance» of Nicholas of Cusa. Finite reason, according to Nicholas of Cusa, is a measure (of the basis) *of the world of assumptions*, or the world of human knowledge⁸. However, the connection of a person with absolute measure (and the sensible world) consists only *in the action of the knowing mind*. The product of this action becomes «the world for the subject» or «objective reality».

Measure thus appears here as a formula describing this or that fragment of *objective reality*. The world as an objective reality in itself allows the possibility of its full knowledge. As the result of this knowledge, there also needs to be a system of knowledge, consisting of a set of measures expressed as formulas. This educational ideal is stated clearly in Rene Descartes' idea of «universal mathematics»⁹. In Hegel's *Science of Logic*, this idea is given a fundamental metaphysical justification. Measure as a synthesis of quality and quantity becomes one of Hegel's moments of self-development of the Absolute Spirit¹⁰. Thus, the determinacy of measure emerges as one of the milestones of the objective process of self-knowledge of the Absolute Idea. The world-object must find full reflection in the system of knowledge in which measure acts as a *set of relations* that characterise this world. Thus, the interpretation of measure is at the forefront of objectification in the process of cognition of the world object within the framework of modern European philosophy. The product of this objectification appears as a formula. This understanding of measure paves the way towards social practices that are in varying degrees related to the regulation and standardisation of various aspects of human existence.

Summarising this brief excursion into the history of thinking about measure within the framework of European metaphysics, we can formulate the following conclusions. In the metaphysical sense, measure is always the basis, firstly, of a thing in its determinacy and, secondly, of harmonic relations of the world as a whole. Meanwhile, the ground of existence itself is also conceptualised in terms of a *sui generis* existent (beyond existence). Man consequently functions, irrespective of the variant of metaphysical ontology referred to, as a link between the diversity of existing things («external») and the unity beyond existing things («internal»). However, this attitude, in the sense of Heidegger's idea of the epochal nature of Being¹¹, is composed in a particular way for every age. In

⁸ N. KUZANSKY, *Concerning Assumptions*, in ID., *Writings in Two Volumes*, vol. 1, Thought, Moscow 1979, p. 189 (author's translation from Russian).

⁹ R. DESCARTES, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, in ID., *Works*, Science, St. Petersburg 2006, p. 41 (author's translation from Russian).

¹⁰ G.W.F. HEGEL, *Science of Logic*, Science, St. Petersburg 2002, p. 296 (author's translation from Russian).

¹¹ HEIDEGGER, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 112.

the philosophy and culture of Greek antiquity, the «external» aspect of measure (knowledge as the objectification of thought) is inextricably linked to the «internal» aspect (i.e. with the Being of thought itself). It is precisely this augmentation to the Being of thought which makes man «the measure of all things» (Protagoras). In medieval Christian philosophy, the external and internal aspects of measure are kept separate from each other. The inner aspect as measure of created things themselves is only comprehensible by a human being through an act of faith. However, the external aspect of measure is understood as the result of human knowledge, which has conditional and probabilistic status. In modern European philosophy, the internal aspect of measure is conceptualised as an activity of the knowing (human) intelligence, while the external aspect takes on an ambivalent meaning. On the one hand, measure as «external» continues to act as a product of human knowledge that has a conditional (relative) status. On the other hand, this relative knowledge presents itself by the subject as a characteristic of objective reality itself. In the process of the development of modern European philosophy and science, it is exactly this last meaning of the category of «measure» that is to the fore. Thus, measure gradually moved from the «authorities» of philosophy to the «institutions» of specific scientific disciplines. The measure becomes a characteristic of the object-world, accessible to a perfect knowledge (*calculus*). It is precisely this circumstance, in our opinion, that comprises one of the reasons for the negative tendencies referred to above, related to the polarisation of the human being. The paradox of the growing influence of calculative thinking (the «external» aspect of measure) being accompanied by the growing inability of a person to self-restraint is becoming increasingly apparent. This inability suggests that contemporary man is losing touch with his «internal» authority, which appeals to a «sense of proportion». The loss of this connection points to the exhaustion of the traditional (metaphysical) way of thinking, which based on an objectification of the «internal». In this context, the trend away from metaphysical thinking in the philosophy of the twentieth century can be interpreted as the paradoxical search for a new (baseless) basis for existence, or – *a new measure of things*.

3. *Measure in the context of the ontology of the event*

The renunciation of metaphysics in modern philosophy is effected in many ways. Somewhat simplistically, the variety of these ways can be reduced to two tendencies. The first is connected with an abandonment of the issues and concepts of traditional metaphysics and the highlighting of new problems of philosophy (for example, the development of the methodology and logic of positivistic science, the criticism of language in analytic philosophy and an understanding of communication issues in social philosophy). As part of the second trend indicated above in terms of an «ontology of events», the basic metaphysical problem persists in terms of a holistic understanding of the world; however, at the same time, the way of thinking is transformed.

In terms of key provisions of the «ontology of events», the following can be identified:

- The impossibility of selection and conceptualisation of the One and only foundation of all that exists, referred to prominently in traditional ontology (metaphysics) under the names of «being» and «substance». In his course of lectures entitled

Basic Concepts, Heidegger refers to the inability to detect the mutual belonging of existence and ground¹².

- The stated impossibility does not imply a rejection of the requirements of a holistic understanding of the world or of ontology as such. On the contrary, it is the very concealment of ground that, according to Heidegger, locates man in front of the task of the conceptualisation of the Being of beings. This task comprises the «essence» of man¹³.
- Support for the new ontological thinking, avoiding information of all that exists in the substance of one kind or another, the appearance of the paradoxical concept of the «event»; the paradoxical nature of the latter consists primarily in the «impossible» combination of the expressible and inexpressible. Regardless of the given interpretation, the concept of the «event» in the framework of the «ontology of events» always points to the impossibility of its full expression. In this sense, the event «takes itself from itself»¹⁴.

Understanding measure in the context of the «ontology of events» is first of all down to a recognition of the principal ends of the human mind. This end here does not imply a recognition of the limitations of human performance in comparison with absolute authority (the «mind» of antiquity, the Creator-God of medieval Christian philosophy or absolute mind of modern European thought). The end in the context of the «ontology of the event» is made comprehensible in terms of the impossibility of asserting the existence of absolute authority in terms of «beyond existence».

This means that measure ceases to be thought of as universal and unchanging, but instead should be seen in terms of a key *moment* in the event-actualisation of Being. Only by inhering to an ontological event does a human being receive the revelation of his or her own truth (and thus measure), as well as the truth (measure) of things. Measure, in terms of the truth of Being, is opened to man in the event, but can never be transferred into a purely external «knowledge of the real». Language, as the «place of the event of Being», at the same time reveals and conceals the truth of things¹⁵. Thus, measure as something external, as a formula, inevitably distorts the truth, claiming its «revivication» by means of a return to Being as event. In other words, «for» the metaphysical sense of measure, like the *ratio* of «external» and «internal» and in the framework of the «ontology of events», the meaning of measure is opened in terms of an *act of measurement*. This act anticipates all ontological opposition, including opposition of the «external» and «internal». By contrast, the perception of «external» and «internal» – or of the existent and the beyond-existent (samples, against which existing things are measured) – appears only in the act of measurement. Thus, measure as the key moment of the event is characterised by uniqueness. The action of measurement is accomplished each time as a response to the «promise of existence», which, according to Heidegger, there is something, «assigning-measure», remains *immeasurable*¹⁶.

¹² *Ibi*, p. 182.

¹³ *Ibi*, p. 148.

¹⁴ *Id.*, *Time and Being*, p. 560.

¹⁵ *Ibi*, p. 274

¹⁶ *Id.*, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 187.

The understanding of measure in terms of a unique action of measurement (measuring) of existents makes it possible to highlight the principal characteristics of this act. The most important of these characteristics is *marginality*. Measure, as the moment of the event, re-draws the *boundary between beings and Being* each time (as that, thanks to which, things exist). By virtue of the uniqueness of this act, the boundary occurring in it divides the *expressible from the inexpressible*. Measure as the action of measurement is the moment of generation of the word as the element of common (universal) language. This moment, however, cannot be included in the «area of the general». Thus, it is possible to formulate an indirect criterion, permitting an identification in thought of the event-driven boundary between existence and Being. When trying to describe things in their entirety, this criterion appears as an insufficiency of language. Any honest and consistent attempt at this kind of thinking leads steadily to the place of which Heidegger spoke in the course of lectures entitled *The Principle of Reason*. From this point, according to Heidegger, it is possible to see what is suggested, but «not agreed to the end»¹⁷. The inevitability of this reticence stems from the fact that any statement consists in words about things in existence (beings), not about Being. Thus, this very reticence testifies to an ineffable closeness of Being. Being born in the act of measurement, the conceptualising word reveals its dual «nature». The action of measurement expresses the inexpressible, connecting and dividing two «plans» of the event. This duality of thought and language sounds, especially in Heidegger's definition of thinking, like «considering hearing»¹⁸.

The acknowledgement of this duality makes it possible to isolate *the second characteristic* of measure as the event-related act of measurement. This characteristic concerns the *method* of realisation of the boundary between beings and Being, between the expressible and the ineffable. The distinction made here by means of a rupture with representation outlines the area of things in existence. In other words, the act of measurement is always an instantaneous touching of the *immeasurable*, which is carried out at the cost of a rejection of everything that can be measured. In his course of lectures entitled *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger plays with multiple meanings of the word «principle» (*Satz*), treating it in terms of a «jump» or «leap»¹⁹. This leap cannot be a point on the continuous line of the reflexive conceptualisation of things in existence, but comes into being as an *interruption* of this line. Specifically, it is in this leap that thought encounters its own limit.

Thus, the leap, like the act of measurement, is not a «breakthrough into the transcendent». The leap is, rather, a recognition of the impossibility of such a breakthrough into the realm beyond existence. However, this recognition does not also imply a rejection of the transcendent. The leap is carried out in response to the requirement of a ground (measure) for all that exists. More precisely, the requirement and the answer here are not separated in time. On the contrary, in the «spatio-temporal gap» of Being²⁰, the possibility of time relations itself opens. Accordingly, in this leap, the possibility of measure as correlation of one being with one another is also opened.

¹⁷ *Ibi*, p. 86.

¹⁸ *Ibi*, p. 89.

¹⁹ *Ibi*, p. 99.

²⁰ *Ibi*, p. 121.

This ability is conceptualised by Heidegger as emerging outside the limits of the conception of the «domain of place»²¹. The repulsion from the real opens the gap in which things are balanced against each other. However, even this gap remains invisible. The «emergence from hiddenness» needs to happen in secret: Being is not *existent*²².

Reflecting on the indispensability of the ontological mystery, Jean-Luc Nancy writes of the «unexpectedness of the event»²³. Unexpectedness, according to Nancy, is a constitutive element of wisdom (*Sophia*)²⁴. Speaking of knowledge, which «is not subject to anything different», the French thinker reveals a paradox: an idea requires a ground, but must refrain from presenting it.

In the context of this paradox, the *third characteristic* of measure is revealed as an act of measurement. In interpreting the ground as something that cannot be represented in terms of a being (beyond existence), the act of measurement always in one way or other appeals to the resources of negative (apophatic) thinking. In an attempt at the expression of its own ground as ineffable, thought establishes a ban on direct speech. The ineffable ground is referred to by describing what it *is not*.

In this sense, those concepts that arise in the framework of the «ontology of the event» – and, above all, in the very concept of «event» – always refer to the experience of the ineffability of ground: it is impossible to think of ground in terms of things in existence. In his lecture *Time and Being*, Heidegger warns against any attempt to think of the event as a «kind of Being»²⁵. To the «properties of the event», according to Heidegger, belongs the «rupture with existing things»²⁶. Also present in the event is that which is possible to name by the act of establishing a ground – or an act of measurement. It is rejected precisely because thinking of things in existence that emerge by means of the ground has always *already happened*.

In the ontology of G. Deleuze, this ineffable ground appears, in particular, under the name of «differences of intensity»²⁷. This expression can also be interpreted as referring to the experience of going beyond any conception. «Unequal in itself»²⁸ is a paradoxical phrase, indirectly indicating the ineffable condition of any comparison.

The event-related nature of this condition makes the *variability* (plurality) of its comprehension and description inevitable. This variability is thematised in the concept of Jean-Luc Nancy. The event, according to Nancy, «is not given, but it happens»²⁹, facing a paradoxical combination of «spontaneous plurality» and «uniqueness»³⁰. In this unique event, the space in which the correlation of things with each other is accomplished is opened anew every time. However, the space itself eludes any correlation.

²¹ ID., *Time and Being*, p. 545.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ J.-L. NANCY, *The Unexpectedness of the Event*, in ID., *Being Singular Plural*, Logvinov, Minsk 2004, p. 246 (author's translation from Russian).

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ HEIDEGGER, *Time and Being*, p. 559.

²⁶ ID., *The Principle of Reason*, p. 404.

²⁷ G. DELEUZE, *Difference and Repetition*, LLP TC “Petropolis”, St. Petersburg 1998, p. 271 (author's translation from Russian).

²⁸ *Ibi*, p. 272.

²⁹ NANCY, *The Unexpectedness of the Event*, pp. 258-259.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

The combination of multiplicity and uniqueness are an obstacle to the objectification of the ground of beings. Objectification always in one way or other leads to the conversion of measure in the *sample*, alienated from the event of the conceptualisation-realisation of Being. The interpretation of measure in terms of the act of measurement makes such a transformation possible. By virtue of this, measure as an external norm is deprived of «ready» meaning and requires constant rethinking.

Thus, the contextual nature of the external aspect of measure can be referred to as the *fourth characteristic* of measure as the act of measurement. Measure as an external norm acquires sense only in the context of the event, engendering the world each time anew. As such, any conventional, ordinary conceptions about things lose their obviousness.

Heidegger's reflections about technology can serve as an example of the event-related rethinking of the «self-evident» reality of the day-to-day existence of man. The understanding of technology as «form of disclosure of hiddenness»³¹ becomes itself the disclosure of that place in which the meaning of any technical device is rooted. This meaning is expressed by the word «enframing» (*Gestell*). However, the understanding or interpretation of this meaning is possible only «from within» the event touching the truth as «unconcealedness». The leap beyond the limit of representation permits the disclosure of a single source and an «algorithm» for a technical treatment of things. In the context of technology as «a kind of disclosure of unconcealedness», any thing must be made «available»³². This event-related meaning of thing as «technical object» lies at the basis of the quantitative approach to the world. For this very reason, neither the technical sphere nor the mathematical-natural-scientific provisioning of this sphere are in fact self-sufficient. Any measure as a set of quantitative and qualitative parameters retains its effectiveness (efficiency) only in the context of the event.

Thus, the characteristics of technical devices must not only be proportionate to the capabilities of the human user: a more fundamental prerequisite here is the willingness of a human being to be a user of the technical device. Similarly, the effectiveness of any legal norm (as external measure of social regulation) has as its basic condition the willingness of a person to accept the responsibility of social regulator. However, this very readiness is always something immeasurable, emerging as the «effect of the event». This immeasurability appears as a limit to any applied science that studies human behaviour and ways of managing it (management, political technology, advertising, etc.).

Thus, the contextuality of measure as ready sample, which is applied to things, is connected with the impossibility of the objectification of *the sense of things in existence*. Sense always in one way or another inscribes a thing into the entirety of the world. Within the framework of metaphysics, any thing in existence is interpreted from a position beyond existence. Even the smallest details in the world are allotted integrity and unchanging meaning in the metaphysical system. Thus, a detailed regulation of everyday human life in a traditional society always somehow has to appeal to the First Cause of things as if the latter was not being interpreted. Within the framework of the «ontology of events», this relationship of a thing with its first cause cannot be expressed at the level of representation. Because of this, there is a gap between a

³¹ M. HEIDEGGER, *Time and Being*, p. 311.

³² *Ibi*, p. 314.

particular (limited) representation of a thing, expressing its «external» measure, and its holistic sense. For example, both a discrete object and the world as a whole (as the sum of things) may be represented as a set of quantitative characteristics. However, this set is devoid of meaning in and of itself. This rupture between holistic sense and bounded representation is emphasised by Jean-Luc Nancy in his work *Ecotechnics*. The French thinker refers to the world without reasons and purposes in terms of «world disorder», pointing out that this «world disorder» is characterised by efficiency. That which is deprived of purpose may, nevertheless, be explicitly calculated in terms of money, calories or kilowatts³³.

Such a calculation, however, always risks becoming a reckless enterprise. In losing sight of the Whole, thought is deprived of measure as its reasonable basis. That is why *partial sense* (for example, so-called «common sense» does not extend beyond the everyday) has no bearing in itself and is balanced on the verge of madness. This strange proximity of delirium and common sense is indicated, in particular, by G. Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*³⁴.

Thus, «external» measure cannot be considered within the framework of the «ontology of the event» in terms of an unchanging (essential) property of things or a guide to action. In terms of the «ontology of the event», any parameters, norms, standards and requirements need to identify the *conditions of their relevance*. In other words, it is necessary to recreate a *context related to the event*.

The acknowledgement of the contextual nature of measure as «sample» or model frees man from his binding to «objective» norms and standards. This freedom allows a person not only to *renounce* these norms in his or her existence, but also to *acqui-esce* in them where they are really relevant. Thus, the interpretation of measure in the context of the «ontology of events» renders any revolutionary pathos meaningless. Genuine freedom from the power of the «external» aspect of measure takes place where «external» as such becomes neutral – that is, devoid of universal meaning. Any picture of the world, describing *things in existence* and appropriating to these things their *due*, can actualise its meaning in the «opening of Being».

This event-driven connection of the «external» and «internal» can be identified as a *fifth characteristic* of measure in terms of act of measurement. This feature allows the meaning of the definition of measure to be specified in terms of the delineation of boundary. The event-related nature of the relationship between the «external» and «internal» can be clarified according to the well-known position of post-structuralism «the outside is the inside»³⁵. This paradoxical thesis does not simply point to the secondariness of the opposition to the «external» and «internal» by relation to the ineffable event. Rather it concerns the *character of the relationship between* «external» and «internal» in the event. With some degree of conditionality, this relationship can be defined as *inversely proportional*. In the context of thinking about measure, this means that any strengthening and expansion of the «external» regulation of human existence leads to a weakening of its «internal» (acting) principle, and vice versa. A maximally

³³ J.-L. NANCY, *Ecotechnics*, in Id., *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 201-202 (author's translation from Russian).

³⁴ DELEUZE, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 277.

³⁵ J.-L. NANCY, *Gaining Access to the Origin*, in Id., *Being Singular Plural*, p. 32 (author's translation from Russian).

clear expression of this dependency is received as part of modern civilisation, which offers to man ready technology to support any kind of life function (including those pertaining the spiritual realm). The combination of these technologies allows the person to be quite «efficient», but deprives him of his subjectivity. This fact is the basis of the contemporary philosophical problematic referred to as the «death of the subject».

In the context of an event-related connection between «external» and «internal» aspects of measure, the meaning of subjectivity can be interpreted in terms of degree of freedom from the «external». This freedom is not a substantial human property, but opens itself in the act of measuring itself to draw back the «opening of Being». Within the framework of metaphysical ontology, a person acquires subjectivity in the act of breaking with what is and participating in the beyond. In the context of the «ontology of the event», this act is interpreted as a «bidirectional» effect, separating and connecting the «external» and the «internal». In this case, the situation of the «the death of the subject» is characterised precisely by the destruction of this event-related connection. The «external» aspect of measure that characterises usefulness, «efficiency» and partial expediency, is emancipated from the «inside». Man becomes a function of things, detached from his existential source.

However, the recognition of an event-triggered connection between «external» and «internal» makes it possible to see the *impossibility* of a complete break between the two. This impossibility is made explicit precisely in the situation of a wholesale loss of «feeling of measure», as described above. Here the fundamental ineffectiveness of measure as an exclusively «external» standard is revealed. Within the framework of any version of metaphysics, the totality of «external» measure-models is always limited to the framework of the *specific* ideological system. These samples do not contradict each other, providing a more or less harmonious coexistence of all aspects of human existence. However, in moving away from its «internal», the «external» measure becomes a victim of uncontrolled multiplication of samples, models, standards and techniques. In other words, the «external» measure becomes fundamentally fragmented. Specifically, it is this circumstance that deprives it of its effectiveness. Facing the multiple and fragmented knowledge of the real, man is confronted with the alternative: to abandon his subjectivity and the possibility of truly rational action or *actualise his subjectivity in its entirety*. This implies a rejection of partial viability and acceptance of *absolute responsibility*.

The concept of «responsibility» acquires an ontological sense in this context. This discussion concerns actions that are not preceded by «ready» rules and regulations. In the free act of measurement, the person and the world emerge anew each time in the fullness of their meaning. Because of this responsibility, freedom is to be understood as the ability to give an answer to «the call of Being», which can be heard only in the leap itself, i.e., «from within» a unique event. The «external» measure as a set of ideas and ways of life acquires a new «configuration» each time in the act of measurement as a unique event of Being. Thus, the responsibility in this context is not the substantial property of the person, but what engenders the person in the truest sense of the word.

A recognition of the finiteness (contextuality) of any «external» measure, connecting with the determination to act, pushes the «space» (location) of the immeasurable. This «space» becomes a measure of the event of Being. Jean-Luc Nancy speaks in this sense of the finitude, which «precisely for itself appears as a universal

measure of existence». This is also Being in terms of responsibility, exclusive of reliance on «any regulatory authority»³⁶.

Paradoxically, it is only in a recognition and acceptance of his finitude (as a function of the event of Being) that the path to the infinite is revealed to man. Implemented in its entirety, this decision highlights the existence of life on the background of the events making «incommensurable measure» available to beings³⁷. This re-creation of an event-related action appears essential for the proportionality of things to each other and man. In *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger wrote that «staying in the truth of Being» is more essential than any «establishment of rules»³⁸.

In the several decades that have passed since the death of the German philosopher, he has been proved right. The events of the third millennium leave no illusions about the possibility of the establishment of a «world order» that provides for «partial» human needs (material well-being, comfort, physical health, etc.). In the face of what is happening, Heidegger's thought that humanism should not be put at the heart of humanity as beings *sui generis* becomes particularly convincing³⁹. It is only in a recognition of his *service role* in relation to the truth of Being, opening in the event, that man is able to find himself. This means that the effectiveness of any rules, regulations, standards and legal rules can only be effective if the person does not lose connection with the immeasurable event-related source of «external» measure.

Thus, the current situation relating to the wholesale loss of a «sense of proportion» opens up new shades of Protagoras' idea of man as the measure of all things. In the context of the «ontology of events», this measure is recreated each time in the moment of actualisation of Being. Man, however, «is» a function of this actualisation. Only in comprehending himself in terms of such a function can man maintain his own existence. Thus, self-preservation is possible for a person only if he interprets himself as something subordinate, something secondary to the «immeasurable». A «sense of proportion» emerges as a «side effect» of the recognition of one's non-self-sufficiency. In *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger wrote that «the concealed nature of measurement of the Sacred» can be considered the only misfortune of the modern era⁴⁰. Perhaps the confusion experienced by modern man as he faces a variety of different views of the world and ways of life is associated precisely with this concealedness. In this case, the contradiction between the increasing standardisation of human life and the loss of a «sense of proportion» can be interpreted as an ontological (existential) call to man. The answer to this challenge can be not so much the improvement of norms and rules in various areas of human life as a return of man to his primary task – «to be the guardian of Being». This return cannot be realised at the «general» level by collective «action»: the act of measurement as «leap» or rupture with representation must be carried out by each person alone. In this sense we can interpret Nancy's call to «a completely different logic» in which to be «at one» means not to be identified with

³⁶ J.-L. NANCY, *Human Excess*, in *Id.*, *Being Singular Plural*, p. 270 (author's translation from Russian).

³⁷ *Id.*, *The Measure of the "with"*, in *Id.*, *Being Singular Plural*, p. 131 (author's translation from Russian).

³⁸ HEIDEGGER, *Time and Being*, p. 303.

³⁹ *Ibi*, p. 291.

⁴⁰ *Ibi*, p. 296.

a particular model⁴¹. However, such a rejection of the «general» or universal measure does not imply immersion in subjectivity. Absolute responsibility, arising in the act of measurement, is not shared between man and the world, but provides them with a genuine connection. Thus, a return to moderation in all aspects of human existence, which is a prerequisite for human survival, can only occur in the measurement of the «singular plural» (Nancy). For this very reason, a solution to this problem cannot appear as the object of planning calculations. And the realisation of this problem and its solution (as the assumption of absolute responsibility) coincide in the event as the act of measurement. In the context of the «ontology of events», the current situation relating to the loss of a «sense of proportion» is characterised by a fundamental openness.

4. Conclusion

The thematisation of measure under the «ontology of the event» signifies a renewal of the ontological aspect of human comprehension and a return (in the new context) to Protagoras' thesis of man as «measure of all things». In the context of the event-related «measure of things», a human being forms conceptions not as a thing among other things, but as a *function* of the conceptualisation-realisation of Being. Man finds himself facing the requirement to serve as a *counterweight* to the growing trend of calculation of the world, i.e. the interpretation of existing things in terms of their external measurability. This counterbalance is needed in many areas of human life today.

Thus, within the framework of lawful reality the increase in the quantity of juridical standards, which regulate life by ever more detailed means, paradoxically needs such a legal person as can reconcile this variety within the framework of the holistic sense, corresponding to the concrete situation. A similar ability to achieve an event-related binding of the separate conceptual fragments is also required from the cognising subject of contemporary science. Finally, the emergence of a large number of increasingly complex technical devices, which support human activity by means of the following formula as an external measure of things, requires a person to be increasingly independent from technology. This freedom is essential for the competent use of technology, involving both technical support on the device and the abandonment of this support in the event that the particular situation allows or requires it.

However, freedom is something that cannot be used. The inevitability of the paradox that characterises the human being should be recognised for this precise reason: this Being is effectuated only in the denial of the existence as a thing of the person him- or herself. This denial also «is» the act of measurement, or the event-related measure of Being. As shown above, this act can be comprehended in terms of a unity of the following moments: a distinction between the expressible and inexpressible by means of a rupture from «ready» knowledge or «externality» of measure; a negative conceptualisation of the event-related source of the existent (actualisation of the «internality» of measure); the vesting of the «external» measure with an event-related (unique) sense. Existing by means of the «measuring» of Being for all things, man is nothing else but the free action of gathering the multiplicity of the unity of the event-related whole.

⁴¹ NANCY, *Ecotechnics*, p. 212.