

Blanka Jedličková – Milena Lenderová – Miroslav Kouba – Ivo Říha (eds.)

***Krajiny prostřených i prázdných stolů. I. Evropská gastronomie v proměnách staletí*
[*Landscapes of Set and Empty Tables. I. European Gastronomy throughout the Centuries*]**

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Landscapes of Set and Empty Tables. I. European Gastronomy throughout the Centuries is the first book of a two-part collective publication, which was produced by a group of researchers associated with the University of Pardubice in an interdisciplinary collaboration with other scholars from the Czech and Slovak Republics. The project was initiated at a conference, where these topics were discussed and examined in detail. The result is an ambitious study that tries to expand the knowledge production of the history of Central European gastronomy and consumption practices from the Middle Ages to the late 20th century.

The first volume (2016) covers an impressively long historical period, and offers a truly interesting and valuable overview of the changes and shifts in European Gastronomy, with an increased focus on the socio-geographical space of the Czech and Slovak lands. Overviews of this character are unique in the recent research of Czech social sciences, and along with *Traditional Food in the Central Europe*, published by the Institute of the Ethnology CAS in 2013, it constitutes an isolated attempt to offer better insight into the history of regional food studies.

The authors find inspiration in the classic Czech ethnographic production on food and the history of gastronomy (e.g. Čeněk Zíbrt, Marie Úlehlová-Tilschová, Naděžda Melniková-Papoušková, Magdaléna Beraňová, Lydia Petráňová).

Apart from the introduction, the publication consists of altogether fourteen main chapters written by different authors, which follow a chronological and thematic order. In the introduction, Milena Lenderová defines the domain of food as an integral element of human societies, and underlines its necessity for survival. As she further argues, the ways in which life is sustained (food production, preparation and consumption practices) varies across time, space, social hierarchies, and the “stage of development” of human societies (most likely referring to the technological advancement). Subsequently, she offers an overview of various both Czech and foreign prevalently historical studies, which have inspired the collective publication.

The first chapter written by Hana Miketová takes the reader to the medieval Court of Krakow, and depicts the relationships between food practices and diplomacy. Miketová shows how alliances were created and sustained by various feasts, and also explains changes in the menu, which included new exotic and luxurious ingredients imported from abroad. The following chapter by Tünde Lengyelová continues to discuss the shifts in Central European medieval cuisine in the Hungarian Kingdom in the Early Modern Period under the title: “We don’t even want to eat the food of our fathers” – citing Peter Apor in his book *Metamorphosis Transylvaniae*. After that follows, in my opinion, one of the best chapters from

the collective publication by Karel Černý, examining the introduction and the symbolic meaning of three important exotic food items: chocolate, coffee, and tea, which have essentially transformed the European foodways. Černý not only presents interesting historical insights, but also highlights the economical contexts and cross-cultural dynamics between the places of production and the places of consumption. The thematic section on the changing foodways from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period ends with a chapter by Marie Buňatová, which examines the spice and exotic fruit trade in Early Modern Prague. The historical evidence clearly shows that the trade was well-established, and various kinds of exotic products were available not only to the ruling classes, but also newly to the burghers of Prague.

Iveta Coufalová takes the reader to the year 1730, to the military camp of Polish king Augustus II the Strong in Zeithain, and discusses Baroque festivities and representations of power, in which food played an important role. The event is remembered namely for a large mobile bakery, in which an enormous *stollen* was baked. Subsequently, a chapter on diplomatic eating practices at an imperial embassy in St. Petersburg, where a diplomat of Czech origin resided in the first half of the 18th century, follows. The chapter is the result of the collaboration of Vítězslav Prchal and Filip Vávra, and offers a thorough analysis of kitchen bills. Marie Macková brings interesting insight into the salt trade in the Hapsburg monarchy in relation to the state salt monopoly in her study titled: “Salt for Gold”. Vladan Hanulík focuses on the emergence of the “rational” approaches to

consumption practices within the context of the development of both Western medicine and alternative healing practices in the 19th and 20th centuries. The chapter offers intriguing reflections; nevertheless, the overall claim that the contemporary consumer at large increasingly becomes a *homo consumericus medicus* seems slightly too enthusiastic.

The following three chapters are concerned with food in relation to armed conflict and food shortages, with emphasis placed on WWI. The chapter by Tomáš Jiránek discusses the shifts and developments of military eating practices in the “long 19th century”, and asks about the character and the ideological sources of various strategies and innovations (quite often influenced by the introduction of modern nutritional science). Gabriela Dudeková analyses changes in consumption habits during WWI, including the restrictions and increased control of food supplies. Attention is paid to the rationing strategies of the state in relation to growing poverty and despair in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This historical rupture is further examined by Markéta Slabová on the example of South Bohemia. The chapter contains very valuable depictions of local strategies of dealing with the overall scarcity of food based on the personal correspondence of a married couple from the village of Rájov.

The historical shifts in wedding festivities in the 19th and 20th centuries are analysed by Zuzana Pavelková Čevelová with a focus on the urban environment. The research is based at large on the vast Czech ethnographic production on this topic. The question as to why such an important ritual of passage such as

a wedding started to increasingly accent simplicity and non-flamboyancy in the 20th century is not satisfyingly explained, and thus, constitutes an open field for subsequent research. Karel Rýdl examines the topic of the emergence and development of culinary education in the Czech lands up to 1948. The chapter brings insight into the development of the culinary education generally provided by all-female schools. Also, the newly emerging cookbooks played a significant role. The last chapter of the first volume is written by Martin Franc, who brings an engaging analysis of eating guidelines and practices amongst school children in former Czechoslovakia between the 1950s and 1980s. The chapter thus offers insight into the socialist period, and also helps us to better understand the socialist modernisation processes.

Overall, the collective publication “Landscapes of Set and Empty Tables” constitutes a unique attempt to describe and interpret the historical changes in gastronomy and eating practices in the broad socio-historical context of the Czech lands. It is a useful source of information, and can serve as inspiration for further research. One of the few drawbacks of the publication is that the research findings are not interpreted further in terms of a partial comparative analysis. On the other hand, this opens up space for future academic endeavours, and as the findings of the collective publication show, the domain of food still has the potential to bring new and exciting findings. I strongly recommend it to anyone with an interest in the food history of Central Europe.

Markéta Slavková

Jakub Chavalka – Ondřej Sikora (eds.): *Nietzsche On Virtue* 2nd Special Issue of *The Philosophical Journal*, 2018
Prague, Filosofia 2018. 204 p.

The special issue of *The Philosophical Journal* called **Nietzsche on Virtue** deals with one of the motifs of the work of this “great destructor of values”. It is a collection of texts by nine authors from several Czech universities that was created as the extended result of a philosophy workshop held in Pardubice in October 2017. The main goal of the collection is to underline and analyse the unjustly ignored motif of the *bestowing virtue* (*Die schenkende Tugend*). Although generally this concept is not considered to be as significant as the key concepts of the *Übermensch*, will to power, eternal return of the same, transvaluation of all values and The Death of God, the authors declare that it is by no chance a marginal motif, for it can be understood as an important point for interpreting Nietzsche’s *magnum opus*, **Thus Spoke Zarathustra**, while also giving an inspiring semantic perspective on Nietzsche’s work as a whole. Thus, this concept is supposed to both specify and enrich the reading of Nietzsche.

The focal text of the majority of papers is the speech entitled *On Bestowing Virtue*, which lies at the end of the first part of *Zarathustra*. The full version of the speech is to be found at the beginning of the collection in both the German original and the Czech translation by Otakar Fischer. Despite the fact that the interpretations of various authors naturally reach beyond the scope of the speech by using a historicising approach or placing the speech in

relation to works of other authors, it is this very speech that becomes the imaginary core of the whole project. Nietzsche's understanding of the "highest virtue" is thematised from a variety of angles and by accentuating different aspects in the papers. I will first deal with the three studies that engaged my interest the most.

The first study *On Progress, Degeneration and Nietzsche's Bestowing Virtue* by Jakub Marek represents a distinctive comparative study that uses the work of Søren Kierkegaard as a peculiar "interpretation foil". It shows the differently motivated, yet parallel attempts of both authors at rejecting the idea of progress and tracing down certain traits of decline or straightforward degeneration contained within the idea of progress (in Kierkegaard's case, it is primarily the decline of authentic Christianity, or Christianity) in accordance with the patterns of the (also biological) thinking of the second half of the 19th century. Both authors express their critical view of herdness and the nivelisation of humankind in their thinking. For Nietzsche, the specific "cure" does not consist in the restoration, rectification of decadence, but in the unveiling of their sources – paradoxically, the adopted (incorporated) moral judgments are precisely these sources! "Alas, much ignorance and error hath become embodied in us! Not only the rationality of millenniums – also their madness, breaketh out in us. Dangerous is it to be an heir!"¹ announces Zarathustra in his speech. It is necessary to affirm the end of the "last man" for it will enable the advent

of the Übermensch. Zarathustra's bestowing virtue is essentially philosophical and represents the overcoming of man. It is a gift of an ambiguous nature, though – it is both a poison and a cure, it resembles a snakebite that brings about the transformation of a man into a philosopher.

The important theme of embodiment and its pitfalls resonates especially in Jakub Chavalka's study – *Dangerous It Is to Be an Heir* – which I consider to be the apex of all of the texts in the collection. It seems to provide the most complex reading of the motif of bestowing virtue. Chavalka uses the anthropological figure of an heir to explain the problem of the constitution of the "worldly" virtue not as a transferred narrative, but an authentic act of self-creation. This is a very thought-provoking theme, and it is worth following it in other books by this author.²

Another interesting paper is the study by Jakub Šenovský, *Nietzsche and Aquinas – The Question of Resentment in Summa Theologica*. The author works at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University, and is thus quite a solitary speaker for the explicitly Christian positions within the project. Yet, Šenovský definitely does not try to mask the divergences between these two very different authors. Instead, he provides an unbiased interpretation of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, and, above all, an erudite analysis of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, in which he shows that Nietzsche's claim about the bitterness, bodily weakness,

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Part 1, Chapter 22.

² Chavalka, J., *Přivtělení a morálka: pojetí tělesnosti ve filosofii Friedricha Nietzscheho*. Praha, Togga 2014; Chavalka, J., *Dějiny a sebetvorba: Jacob Burckhardt jako Nietzscheův modelový čtenář*. Praha, Karolinum 2019.

vengefulness, and powerlessness of every Christian morality, as well as the thesis that “the blessed ones find joy in the suffering of the damned”, does not stand its ground in Aquinas. The emphasis that Thomas places on autonomous reason, thanks to which man can break away from matter, and on the superworldly goal of human existence is in sharp contrast to Nietzsche’s acclaimed effort to lead “the flown-away virtue back to the earth – yea, back to body and life: that it may give to the earth its meaning, a human meaning!”

The interpretations of other authors also revolve around Nietzsche’s concept of bestowing virtue, around crucial anti-metaphysical accents expressed in the concepts of earthliness, bodiliness, overcoming/end of man, and the superhuman. Individual studies then highlight specific intersections in their interpretations, such as compassion (Kateřina Sváčková), dialogue (Ondřej Sikora), pathos of distance and the will to power (Tatiana Badurová), solitude and overcoming of the human (Tomáš Houdek). The partially historicising study of Aleš Prázný tracks the evolution of Nietzsche’s viewpoint of the foundations of education (alternative to Christian culture). The last study by Jakub Sirovátka then confronts the bestowing virtue with the efforts to overcome the ethical and axiological relativism in Nicolai Hartmann’s work.

In my opinion, the niveau of individual papers spans from detailed interpretation studies focused on a specific topic to studies dealing with moments with a far greater philosophical reach (especially the problem of embodiment and self-creation). Some studies even bare traces of a kind of re-actualisation of Nietzsche’s thinking, such as the very apt critique of nivelisation

supported by arguments drawing from Nietzsche’s work (Marek, Chavalka). However, Marek’s comparison of the fictive city of the Colourful Cow mentioned in Zarathustra to the “global herd” would definitely require further analysis. Nevertheless, such an analysis could not do without surpassing the horizons of Nietzsche’s works towards more present-day views, and the authors that point to contemporary problems related to post-modern de-realisation and the collapse of metaphysics.³

Nietzsche himself was well aware of the many pitfalls and paradoxes of the struggle with metaphysics, of course, and they indeed have a distant character within his semi-poetic discourse. All of the authors of the collection attempted at a consistent interpretation of Nietzsche’s often-times enigmatic insights, and perhaps also inspired those readers who are not that familiar with the wider context of Nietzsche’s work to read him more. There is no doubt great merit in their joint effort.

The depth of Nietzsche’s thinking provides room for further interpretations, but it also represents a very up-to-date challenge to contemporary philosophical thinking. His work speaks to us more if we do not take philosophy merely for an academic aggregate of concepts and approaches, but rather if we perceive it as inquiring into the problematisation of traditional or habitual foundations, truths and values. The collection *Nietzsche on Virtue* undoubtedly is a meaningful attempt to deal with this challenge.

David Sajvera

³ See e.g.: Vattimo, G., *Transparentní společnost*. Praha, Rubato 2013.



CZECH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA) is a civic association of professional academics in social anthropology, graduates, and students of social anthropology and supporters from related disciplines. It is part of the academic community of the Czech Republic. CASA has been a member of the Council of Scientific Societies of the Czech Republic since 2010, and a member of the World Council of Anthropological Associations since 2012.

The aims of CASA are

- to support the development of scientific research and education in social anthropology;
- to represent Czech social anthropology in relation to the government, public and non-governmental organizations, and on international anthropological forums;
- to popularise the achievements of social anthropology among the general public;
- to create and cultivate relations among social anthropologists and specialists of related disciplines in the Czech Republic and internationally;
- to maintain contacts and establish cooperation with similar professional organizations in the Czech Republic and abroad.

To attain its aims, the association organizes specialized conferences, lectures, and seminars, and prepares and produces publications. It elaborates and presents suggestions concerning the improvement of education and research in social anthropology, and offers the findings produced in social anthropology for practical implementation while respecting scholarly standards and ethics. The association assists its members in research and other scholarly activities, actively cooperates with similar organizations abroad, and participates in the global development of social anthropology.

CASA welcomes the applications of new potential members, including, but not limited to, students and graduates in social anthropology and related disciplines who would like to participate in the development of the discipline.

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