The concepts “Erwartung” and “Antizipation” in N. Hartmann’s philosophy

With the present-day increasing interest in Anticipation Studies the differentiation of expectation and anticipation approaches to reality becomes a subject matter of a special scientific concern (Poli 2010, 2016, 2017; Rosen 2012). In this context N. Hartmann’s interpretation and application of these concepts demonstrate an authentic approach in the range from the Kantian to the neo- and post-Kantian anticipation scholarship. The discussion of this question is briefly covered with an inquiry into the nature of causality and possibility in Hartmann’s ontology (Väyrynen 2016; Tremblay and Peterson 2017). This paper attempts to reveal the axiological context for the clarification of the abovementioned concepts.

Life as being is constantly in the state of an “expectation of the coming” (“Erwartung des Kommenden”). The act of expectation implies a possibility to look at something what remains invisible here and now. It demonstrates a peculiar weightiness of the “testimony to reality” (“Realitätszeugnis”), though it may sometimes seem partially illusionary and misleading (Hartmann 1941).

The act of expectation discloses the ethos of the self-creating man. Only the creative man (“der Demiurg im Mensch”) can complete the world in one’s vocation (Hartmann 1935). To be human means to fulfill oneself in the creative vocation (“Schöpferberuf”). Hartmann applies his ethics to this creative power (“das Schöpferische”, “das Demiurgische”) of man and thereby leads a human being to the realm of values. Accordingly, any philosophy should take care of ethics as a source, motive and goal of human thinking in general, focusing on a lively feeling of that what is valuable in itself.

Human life may be compared to a piece of music, which forces us to listen to and await the coming. We “antizipieren” (Hartmann 1966, p. 119) a particular required continuation of a melody, its tone harmony (cf. Negretto 2012). In Hartmann’s terms, even in anticipation we are able to await something more than a simple piece of melody, longing for the unity of the ought-to-be experience. Human art reveals the possibility of the fulfillment of the ought-to-be. Thus man as the Demiurge creates the world.

Hartmann’s causality of the world is creative. As a whole it is always actual and necessary. A human being in one’s anticipation perceives only a part of this wholeness. This partiality of human perception leads to some errors in human representations of a possible future. As a part of the whole representations still carry their actuality. In this context expectation may grasp the wholeness, whereas anticipation awaits only a part in the range of all possible next moments. The human act as a part of the world demonstrates the ability to anticipate events in a specific limited field. At the same time, the human act as a revelation of the realm of things valuable in themselves may produce expectations embracing the real world.

The present-day rebirth of Hartmann’s approach to the phenomena of expectation and anticipation becomes evident especially in Anticipation Studies. They confirm to the soundness and validity of Hartmann’s argument for the support of a gradual turn of Anticipation Studies to a less determinate but no less actual field of human expectation enrooted in the realm of values. Nowadays scientific endeavors quite often replace expectations with anticipations, building them into worlds of artificial intellect and living organisms. However, not every living organism being able to anticipate may produce expectations. This misunderstanding leads to the loss of an initial ancient sacred mystery of an expectation caring for the totality of our future.