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The Reaction of Czech Thinkers and Especially of Catholic Theologians to the Evolution Theory of Human Origin in Global Context (1840–1950)

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It is more than surprising to find an unexplored topic after 2010. Yet, the one suggested in the title of this article has so far been overlooked by experts both

in natural sciences and in the history of theology. The article is a result of several years of research.¹

Although the reaction of Catholic theology to the evolutionary theory of human origin is often discussed rather unfavorably, textual research reveals that the issue is far more complex than many contemporary authors realize. Sharply critical and even dishonoring valuation of theologians' attitude to human evolution theory has been deeply rooted in many Czech scholarly publications since the Communist era; see for example Soukup (2014: 63–73). Authors of such articles and books unfortunately know hardly anything about the works of Czech theologians as well as about a majority of issues presented in this article. The situation is similar in the literature abroad; e.g., Palmer (2007), and Hermann and Šimek (2008).

Mapping the field, only partially explored in the context of worldwide theology, one undoubtedly crosses the borders of theology itself, as the gradual process of Christian theological reception of the evolutionary theory of human origin is a phenomenon which would and should interest anthropologists, paleoanthropologists, culturologists, political scientists (social Darwinism), religious studies scholars, as well as experts in the philosophy of science and historians of science.

It must be stated beforehand that the author of this article is in no way interested in defending old apologetics but solely in fundamentally non-ideological research of the real forms and nature of the studied phenomenon. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the presentation and certain evaluation of such research is unthinkable without introducing a broader context determining, in many aspects, the work of Czech Catholic theologians. At first, we shall discuss the basic polarization within worldwide Catholic theology represented at the time by the so-called Mivart's proposition. Secondly, the reception of Darwin's theory by Czech educated public will be outlined and the reception by Czech Catholic theologians will be discussed in detail. On the one hand, chronological borderlines of the analyzed set of texts are formed by the year 1871 when Darwin's famous book was published, and, on the other hand, by the 1930s when the attitude of many Czech Catholic theologians was sympathizing with Mivart's proposition. In conclusion, I will summarize and evaluate the findings and will attempt to draw suggestions for further work in anthropology in a broader sense.

1 Some findings have been published in Pospíšil (2014). This article is a result of the project of GA ČR 08021S.

1 Mivart's Proposition and Worldwide Catholic Theology

Similarly to the theory of evolution of species of flora and fauna,² the idea of human evolution appeared on the scholarly stage several decades before the publication of Charles Darwin's famous book in 1871. As early as 1844, the book "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" appeared, but its author hid his identity under a pseudonym. In this book not only distant geological epochs are explicitly described, but also the development of humans from primates is discussed. It was not until the 12th edition of the book (1884) that the author's real name was revealed: Robert Chambers. Reading the works of the period's Catholic theologians one cannot but happen upon the expression "Mivart's Proposition." Authors agreed that the English scholar tried to reconcile Darwin's theory with Christian faith by suggesting that human body could have originated by evolution but at a certain point God directly intervened and created human soul. It needs to be stated that since the 1930s, Catholic theologians have often taught the same, usually without mentioning the originator of the concept. That could also be the reason why recent works on the subject seem to mention Mivart without fully appreciating his role.

St. George Jackson Mivart (1827–1900) was an English physician and biologist (see Gruber 1960, 2003; Clifton 1998). He was born into an Evangelical family, but during his studies in 1844 he converted to Catholicism, resulting in the exclusion from Oxford University which was then only for Anglicans. Therefore, Mivart had to complete his studies at another university. As a keen biologist, he frequently attended T. H. Huxley's lectures and was a close follower of the idea of natural selection. However, when in the 1860s the theory of evolution started to be applied to human origin, he began to object deeply. In 1871, he published his best-known book, preceded by articles in various periodicals, where he expressed his objections to Darwin's monograph (1871) on the descent of human beings from animal predecessors. Mivart believed that while the human body evolved, the origin of humans was the result of direct Divine intervention at a certain point, when the body was prepared to receive the human soul.

Similarly to Darwin, Mivart, too, had his predecessors. Among those, for example, is the English biologist and anthropologist, the father of zoogeography, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), who

around mid-1860s concluded that higher intellectual activities, such as mathematics, artistic genius, science cannot be explained in a merely materialistic way. He thus maintained that the cosmic Spirit had intervened into evolution three times: at the beginning by creating the first living organism, for a second time when higher forms of consciousness appeared, and, finally, when humans achieved the higher forms of intellectual and spiritual capacities mentioned above (see Fichman 2004). There is an easy answer to the question, why Catholic theology did not speak about the Wallace concept instead: Wallace's ideas are too pantheistic and his cosmic Spirit is very different from the image of the Christian God.

It should be mentioned that the renowned German botanic and biologist Alexander Braun arrived at a similar conclusion in the beginning of the 1870s (1872: 50f.). Therefore, it might be more appropriate to speak about a Wallace-Braun concept. As we shall see, Mivart's concept had its antecedents in the Czech scholarly literature already in the 1840s. I contend that the classical Aristotelian and later scholastic idea, that man is a "rational animal" (*animal rationale*), stands in the background of this paradigm.

The fact that in 1876 Pope Pius IX awarded Mivart the degree of Doctor of Philosophy provides a telling testimony as to the official attitude of the Church towards Mivart's ideas. Eight years later, Mivart received a Honorary Doctorate in Medicine from the University of Louvain. Nonetheless, in his later years he got into sharp conflict with English Catholic authorities because he refused authoritative denial of the application of a historical-critical method in Biblical studies.

As already stated, since 1871, theology had been further polarized into those in favor of Mivart's ideas and those who refused them. Naturally, in the period of 1871–1910, the latter were more numerous. In this context, five authors, tried by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, today's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, are usually named (see, e.g., Brundell 2001; Artigas, Glick, and Martínez 2006). None of them was directly punished; they were simply summoned to reevaluate their stance. However, this does not mean that they did not have difficulties with local clerics and authorities.

Before proceeding to list their names and incriminating works, an inaccuracy constantly repeated in our contemporary scholarly publications must be exposed: authors writing about the history of the relationship between theology and evolution theory include the evolution of flora and fauna as well

² See Rádl (1909, 1913); Lamarck (1809); and Darwin (1859).

as the evolution of humans under the term Darwinism. We can find such a conflation, for example, in an otherwise very interesting publication on Protestant theology, see, e.g. Hans Schwarz (2012). However, Catholic theologians soon accepted the evolution theory on the level of plant and animal species rather openly, while on the anthropological level its attitude was far more cautious and usually disapproving. Therefore, when encountering the claim that John Henry Newman was in favor of Darwinism (Lüke 2011), it must be specified on which of these levels. If his attitude concerned the evolution of species, it would represent a rather standard view, but if it pertained to evolution of man, we would have to include Newman into the following list but that seems rather improbable.

The names of the pioneers of Mivart's proposition within Catholic theology are as follows:

- a) The Italian priest and professor of mathematics, Raffaello Caverni (1837–1900), in his work (1877) contended that it is possible to reconcile Darwinism including even the theory of the evolution of human body with Christian faith. Although his book was blacklisted, the author was not explicitly condemned.
- b) Another priest whose case was brought to the Congregation of the Holy Office was the French Dominican Marie-Dalmace Leroy (1828–1905). He attempted to Christianize the theory of evolution of the human body in his work (1887). As a Thomist, he tried to overcome dualism implicit in Mivart's proposition. According to Leroy, animal body evolved but it did not become human body until the moment God endowed it with human soul. After an admonition from the Holy Office he modified his views and maintained the standard standpoint that pure biology cannot contradict faith if it does not tread into materialistic philosophy.
- c) In our context, Catholic theology in the USA is represented by the priest and member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, John Augustine Zahm (1851–1921) who intellectually followed in his work (1896) the same path as his predecessors.
- d) Bishops were also among the supporters of the possibility of applying evolution to human body. From chronological perspective, the first renowned one was Msg. Geremia Bonomelli (1831–1914, from 1871 until his death bishop in the diocese of Cremona) who maintained the possibility of the evolution of human body and its direct endowment with soul by God (1898).
- e) Finally, it is appropriate to mention the English Benedictine John Cuthbert Hedley (1837–1915,

from 1881 bishop in Newport) who publicly agreed with Zahm's way of applying evolution to human body for which he was severely criticized by the periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

It is known that this Italian Jesuit periodical was then under significant supervision of the Holy Office (*Sacrum Officium*), therefore, views expressed there were generally in agreement with the views of this important Vatican board. It should come as no surprise that in the period under consideration the periodical was distinctly anti-Darwinian, particularly when it comes to the theory of the evolution of human. Pietro Caterini, among others, was a strict anti-Darwinian, writing some 37 articles against Darwinism between the years 1878–1880, later collected in a book (Caterini 1884). Many of the mentioned theologians who were open to the possibility of the evolution of human body were severely criticized in the periodical.

The list of authors usually mentioned reaches up to Leo XIII's Pontificate because materials of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith archives were available for scholars only until the year 1903. My following list of the supporters of Mivart's proposition includes supporters who were not interrogated by Church authorities before 1903; however, it does not mean that it could not have happened later. Their names and works were mentioned in writings of Czech Catholic theologians of appropriate time periods.

- a) From the chronologic point of view, probably the first Catholic theologian who publicly philosophically but not theologically admitted the possibility of accepting Mivart's ideas was Joseph Knabenbauer, SJ (1839–1911). He was an important exegete in Catholic colleges in England and Holland. His commentaries are currently considered rather conservative, but he is valued for his textual work on the writings of Church fathers, medieval commentaries, and theological writings of the 16th and 17th centuries (for a biography, see Koester 1985). Knabenbauer was not sanctioned for his 1877 view on Mivart, which is in accord with the opinion of the Magisterium of the Church before 1885.
- b) Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, had an important predecessor in his fellow member (*confrater*) Erich Wasmann, theologian and biologist (1859–1931), who fought against monistic understanding of evolution and biology. Particularly his polemics with Ernst Haeckel is well known (Haas 1985). Although he advocated evolution, he refused to consider natural selection as its mo-

- tor, an idea usually connected with vitalistic biology. In natural sciences, he was renowned for his entomological work, namely his research on termites and their growth. His positive attitude to Mivart's proposition can be found in his 1903 article.
- c) Norbert Peters (1863–1938) was a Catholic presbyter and exegete who taught exegesis in Paderborn (see also Peters 1907; for a biography see Schilling 1985).
 - d) Franz von Hummelauer, SJ (1842–1914) whose commentary (1895–97: 129) was part of the then highly valued “Cursus Scripturae Sacrae.” In 1903, as a renowned biblical studies' scholar he was an expert advisor of the Pontifical Biblical Institute on the matters of inspiration of the Bible. It seems that he inclined towards Mivart's proposition as a possible solution in the second edition of his commentary in 1908. Based on the data available, he had to pay for his daring step by resigning from the contemporary scholarly exegesis (for a biography see Haspecker 1985).
 - e) Johann Baptist Götsberger (1868–1958) was professor of exegesis in Freising and Munich. He linked biblical studies with clerical spirituality and is credited with overcoming of untenable traditionalism in contemporary Catholic exegesis (1910; for a biography see Hamp 1985).

The scene was not, however, polarized only into the supporters and opponents of Mivart's proposition. There were also those who, while not advocates of Mivart's ideas, nonetheless tolerated it as a theologically plausible alternative, and even defended their colleagues' right to explore it in their studies (Duilhé de Saint-Projet 1896: 340–342; chap. 16 § II).

It is not useful to continue in the list of Catholic theologians openly supporting Mivart's proposition, because already around 1920 it gradually became a frequent phenomenon, especially in the German-speaking countries. The reason is simple: paleoanthropology in the period from 1900 to 1920 offered a plentitude of archeological findings and its comparative method of evaluating skeletal remnants of prehistoric hominids and their stone instruments became far more persuasive than in the last decades of the 19th century. Although human evolution was not conclusively proven, it seemed more or less probable.

This inevitably only panoramic outline must be supplied with a brief note about the attitudes of Catholic Magisterium which, in the 19th century, did not mention Darwinism expressly. It only talked about respect for diverse competences of theology

and philosophy, on the one side, and of natural sciences on the other (Pius IX 1995, 1996a, 1996b). At the same time, though, the Church claimed the right to comment on so-called mistakes of philosophy.³

A statement by German Catholic bishops in a document (*Concilium provinciale Coloniense* 1885), from their synod in 1860, refusing purely materialistic interpretation of human origin, is the only exception. In this case, however, the Magisterium is only partial, not universal. It was too early for a discussion of Darwin's theory of human origin as it was published in 1871. Even the text of the Pontifical Biblical Institute from 1909 was not directly aimed against the theory of evolution as such, but against pronounced historical critical reading of the first chapters of Genesis, although it, nonetheless, represented a regrettable restriction of freedom of research connected with modernist crisis. The decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, until the Second Vatican Council, had the character of Magisterium. After the reformation of the institute's statute by the Pope Paul VI, its decrees are only of scholarly authority. In case of the decree of 1909, it consists of eight answers to questions concerning the historical accuracy of the first chapters of Genesis (see *Enchiridion biblicum*, Filippi 1993: 323–331). It must be added that no statement of Magisterium concerning evolution and the relation of theology to the findings of natural sciences is presented as dogma or as a definite teaching, therefore, theologians are not obliged to resonate with the statements and such statements can eventually be reformed.

For the sake of completeness, I cite statements about evolution by Pope John Paul II, where evolution is no longer a mere hypothesis, but a strictly materialistic interpretation is refused (Giovanni Paolo II 1986). Regarding the so-called “ontological leap” in case of evolutionary origin of human (which is basically Mivart's concept) see John Paul II's message to the board of Pontifical Academy of Sciences, October 22nd, 1996 (Giovanni Paolo II 1999). However, Vatican theologians in 1996 did not know about Mivart and his followers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. It would be at least decent to mention them with respect, once theologians adopted their views and had caused Mivart and his followers troubles during their lifetime.

The following information is redundant for those well informed about the history of the attitude of

³ See *First Vatican Council* (1995: 3004; chap. 2); the first direct and truly important mention of the evolutionary origin of human does not appear until the encyclical by Pius XII (1996: n. 736).

Catholic theology to the evolution theory of human origin, for the others it is, nonetheless, worth mentioning that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was certainly not the first among Catholic theologians who advocated discerning reworking of this challenge of modern natural sciences. The notion that Teilhard de Chardin was the first Catholic theologian who in his theological reflections did not refuse but, on the contrary, worked with the evolutionary theory of human origin is widely spread among Czech intellectuals. Although never directly stated, readers can get such impression from reading (Gibellini 1992: 184–192). For that reason, Hans Küng's (2005: 116) claim is not truly fair, especially in respect to all the above mentioned thinkers: "Rom und seine Stathalter waren durch eine statische Interpretation der Schöpfung durch Gott viele Jahrzehnte auf jene Ideologie eines 'Kreationismus' festgelegt, der gegenüber der Darwinischen Evolutionslehre einen 'Fixismus' und 'Konkordismus' vertrat." Because Küng speaks only about Teilhard de Chardin in this context, he creates the impression that the French Jesuit had no predecessors. Küng is not fair in regards to Magisterium either, because in the statements cited above, there is no trace of fixism or concordism.

2 Evolution Theory of Human Origin in Czech Scholarly Literature

It is beyond the scope of the current article to present all the researched material. Therefore, we will limit it to the most important, most typical, and most interesting.

Firstly, the preconceptions of the theory of human evolution appeared in Czech publications relatively early (see Tomíček 1846). There were also early anticipations of Mivart's proposition, however, they were never militantly anti-Christian according to Čelakovský (1840). This famous Czech writer was supposedly inspired by works of the German professor of dogmatic theology, Johann Baptist Baltzer (1803–1871).

The second important feature of Czech reaction to Darwin's evolutionary theory of human origin were apprehensions about its possible misuse for a racial theory of evolutionary more advanced nations and nations which were evolutionary inferior. Taking into consideration the position of the small Czech nation, such worries are understandable. Therefore, in the second half of the 19th century, there are not many Czech Darwinians, not even in biology. It is interesting to note that even the famous French paleontologist and respected scientific au-

thority Joachim Barrande (1799–1883), who lived and worked for decades in the Czech lands, opposed Darwinism (Prantl 1953). The same is true for the world-renowned Czech biologist, discoverer of the cell, and representative of natural philosophy, Jan Evangelista Purkyně [Purkinje] (1787–1869; see Gabriel 1998b). Similarly, "father of the Czech nation," historian, and politician of Protestant faith, František Palacký (1798–1876 – see Štaif 2009), also rejected Darwin's theory. Another great, representative figure of Czech history, philosopher and the first President of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, sympathized with the idea of evolution, however, not with Darwinism and with the evolution theory of human origin (see, e.g., Masaryk 1945: 49; Čapek 2009: 53). The reasons for his attitude in the sphere of anthropology were predominantly ethical and humanist.

A remarkable publication by the Czech philosopher Josef Durdík (1876) offers insights into the attitude of the Czech public towards Darwinism. The author concludes that the label Darwinist was at that time in the Czech lands rather derogatory. He then describes his discussion with Darwin, in which Darwin refused that his ideas were atheist and anti-religious. Durdík's report is in accord with what Darwin himself claimed on the matter in his autobiography (Darwin 1958: 85–95). Furthermore, Darwin approved Durdík's intention to connect evolutionary theory with Kant's ethics (see Durdík 1906).

Basic information on Czech Darwinists of the last quarter of the 19th century, especially Jan E. Purkyně, Ernst Mach, J. Čelakovský, Josef Adam Bulova, J. Mikš, and František Mareš, can be found in Mácha (1987: 115–120). Unfortunately, the author does not discuss specifically the issue of their attitudes to the evolution of human. Although Mach was born in the Czech lands, he is considered a German thinker; Durdík is completely omitted. Bulova was more or less a popularizer and his attitudes were markedly ideological and anti-Christian. He edited an anthology of translations (1879) and believed in monism (Bulova 1897).

The renowned botanist Josef Ladislav Čelakovský (for a biography see Homolová 1985), son of the above mentioned writer František Ladislav Čelakovský, was a distinguished Czech Darwinist. His example well illustrates that there are various approaches to Darwinism, because Čelakovský's understanding of evolution shows signs of vitalism, which can be understood as a certain intuitive anticipation of modern genetics. In terms of human origin, Čelakovský inclined towards the so-called Braun's proposition according to which cosmic Spirit continually controls evolution of the human on both the

physical and the spiritual levels (Čelakovský 1877a, 1877b). At the same time, though, Čelakovský believed in Kantian ethics, therefore, his concept cannot be perceived as strictly pantheistic. It was rather open towards Christianity, even if it did not unambiguously identify with it. In Čelakovský's works, influences of Novalis, Goethe, Fechner, and Kant are apparent (Humplík 2014).

The first to accept Mivart's proposition was an important Czech professor of physiology, František Mareš (1857–1942; see Gabriel 1998a; Matoušek 1960), who also ventured into philosophy, literature, and politics. In his study, Mareš (1891) attempted to reconcile the evolutionary theory of the origin of the human body with the Christian concept of creation by using Mivart's proposition. The text makes it plain that the main motivation for such attitude is ethical. Many scientists were averse to the idea of being mere "descendants of monkeys" losing therefore the dignity of "God's children" (Frankenberger 1941). The author was an excellent professor of embryology and histology at the University of Prague, who worked in Ljubljana and Bratislava. He was an acclaimed paleontologist, too. His conception of the origin of humankind is completely scientific and, at the same time, it is open to Mivart's thesis.

After 1900, a pronounced change of opinion appears in Czech natural sciences as well as in Czech society. It is the time of a rapid development of paleoanthropology, resulting in a plentitude of evidence of the possibility of human evolution. As an illustration of this change, we can use the series of articles in the journal *Živa* by the prominent Czech anatomist Karel Weigner (1874, 1937; see Syllaba 1938) who discussed contemporary findings of paleoanthropologists. His original caution and hesitation was gradually replaced by a clear acceptance of the existence of prehistoric hominid species (Weigner 1901, 1904, 1907, 1910a, 1910b, 1910c, 1910d).

Precisely at this period, many publications appear both in the form of reports about the Czech prehistoric archeological findings and as works propagating the findings on a global level which influenced the majority of the public to accept the evolution theory of human origin. For most people with at least secondary education, the once forbidden fruit turned into a more or less standard viewpoint. Authors no longer cared to attempt reconciliation of the theory with Christian faith. At the same time, unfortunately, eugenics (see, e.g., Foustka 1904) came into existence and the Czech Eugenic Society (Davenport 1912; *Statute of the Czech Eugenic Society* 1915) is founded, operating until the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and

Moravia. Open and crude racism could also be discerned (Anderle 1913, 1914). The loss of faith in God is manifested also as a loss of respect for human beings. It comes as no surprise that under the totalitarian Communist regime Darwinism became part of state ideology and of a so-called "scientific worldview." The regime's disrespect for basic human rights and its disposal of supporters of different viewpoints is still a warning against ideologies of such kind.

3 Czech Catholic Theology and the Evolution Theory of Human Origin

Taking into consideration the facts that in the last three decades of the 19th century paleoanthropology was not yet able to provide indubitable arguments in favor of the evolution theory of human origin that many natural scientists hesitated and that the cultural elite of the Czech nation were refusing the theory, it should not surprise nor offend us that Czech Catholic theologians refused the theory as well. On the other hand, I have not found a single Czech theologian in the 19th century, who would refuse Laplace's theory of the origin of the solar system (Pospíšil 2014: 32–61). There even exists a theological study defending from the theological point of view the possibility of existence of extraterrestrial beings (Havránek 1852). Also, Czech theologians quite early were open to the possibility of the evolutionary origin of animal and plant species,⁴ nevertheless, they naturally refused the principle of pure chance in the evolution.

A common denominator of the works of Catholic theologians of that period is a radical resistance to racism. The same is true of the works of Czech scientists and philosophers at least until the end of the 19th century. Given opinions at the same period in Western Europe, the situation is not as obvious as it may seem from today's perspective. Even racist theology existed as research proves (see Vorster 2008). It is symptomatic that the first remarkable theological study focusing on the origin of humankind defends monogenism (monogenesis) and on its base it strictly refutes racism, particularly in relation to peoples of Africa (Anonymous 1848).

We can say that many works from the 1880s and 1890s refused the evolution theory of human origin. The main argument was the colossal difference between the spiritual life of humans and of animals. Certain ills, frequent in the works of Czech theolo-

⁴ See Pospíšil (2014: 84–112) and, e.g., Procházka (1888); Heusler (1888).

gians, are their adherence to the so-called short existence of humankind, which the authors considered to be some 10 thousand years old (see, e.g., Lenz 1881). Even in the light of the period's state of geology and prehistoric archaeology, such a view was, in my opinion, already outdated. Nonetheless, the idea kept appearing in some works until about 1910. The ideological reasons for it are clear, as the short existence of humankind did not allow time for gradual evolution. It should be noted that even some natural scientists believed in the short existence of humankind guided by the same ideological interests.

Mivart's proposition is first mentioned in 1897. The renowned Czech Catholic philosopher, Josef Pospíšil (1845–1926; see Sousedík 1988; Gabriel 1998c) naturally refused evolution theory of human origin criticizing it, at the same time, for an inadmissible degree of dualism between human body and soul (Pospíšil 1897; 1923: 311). His reservation is still valid because it fully complies with biblical anthropology as well as with the doctrinal tradition of the Catholic Church (*Council of Vienne* 1995). The above mentioned concept of John Paul II of the so-called ontological leap from animal to human implies a similar theological problem.

In this context, a statement by the philosopher Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk from 1901 is remarkable: "Even theologians, who have always opposed Darwinism, can calm down: Why should we be upset – just as God could create man from dust, he could have as well created him from an ape" (Masaryk 1945: 49). It is obvious that Masaryk's statement was a reaction to works not by Czech theologians but by foreign thinkers discussed in the first part of this article. The opinion was most likely not isolated but supported by many Catholic theologians who probably were not as courageous and outspoken about it.

First sign of openness towards Mivart's proposition is witnessed in a 1906 article by a student of theology who, based on available theological and scientific literature, arrived at the conclusion that a potential paleoanthropologic proof of the origin of human body via evolution would not present a problem for theology (Mejzlík 1906: 177). The journal *Museum – List bohoslovců českomoravských* was published from 1866 in Brno and was devoted only to works of students of theology. It is interesting especially because we can find first fruits of later important representatives of Czech culture and science therein (Husová 2000). It is particularly interesting to note that such daring work was awarded a golden medal by the professorate, which confirms implicit inclination towards Mivart's proposition.

However, let me at this point interrupt the tracing of the reception of Mivart's proposition in Czech

theology in order to introduce the work of an outstanding professor of theology and social philosophy from Brno, Robert Neuschl (1908–09). He there analyzes various modern trends in sociology, especially the intellectual school of Auguste Comte, the biological school of Herbert Spencer, and the economic school of Karl Marx, and critically uncovers the influences of Darwinian evolution theory of human origin in them. Knowing the following course of history, many of Neuschl's assessments read as fateful prophecies. The Czech philosopher and theologian is naturally uncompromising when it comes to Darwinism in the form of worldview linked with materialism. On the other hand, he is accepting the findings of natural sciences concerning the evolutionary theory of the origin of plant and animal species. Therefore, we again encounter signs of openness towards Mivart's proposition when the Czech thinker claims that the necessity of the act of direct creation concerns only human soul. As a disciple of Josef Pospíšil, Neuschl (1908–09: 209f.) was well aware of the peril of dualism stemming from Mivart's proposition.

Other traces of shift towards accepting Mivart's proposition can be found in Czech Catholic theology around 1910. The energetic, active south Bohemian priest Josef Šmejkal (1867–1938) was a dean and a parson as well as an outstanding beekeeper and organizer of beekeeping in the Czech lands. He published on apologetics and Catholic social teaching and in 1910 claims in his apologetics that God could have created human body directly also through evolution, however, he does not mention Mivart (Šmejkal 1911: 121). A similar inkling is apparent in the extensive apologetic monograph by Josef Novotný (1872–1926; see Zouhar 1998). He claims that doctrinal teachings speak of an unmediated direct creation of the human soul by God, but that the body could have been created directly or indirectly (Novotný 1914: 176).

Czech theologians paid attention to paleoanthropology as well, for example, in two articles by future archbishop of Prague and Cardinal Karel Kašpar (1870–1941; see Jiruš 1934) In his articles (1915, 1916) he meticulously presents diverse opinions of paleoanthropology and maintains that the matter is not entirely clear and unambiguous as he proves with citations from experts in the field. Both articles are written in a matter-of-fact fashion and methodologically correct. It is known, that the controversy about E. Dubois's findings from the years 1891–92 was not over until 1920.

The first volume of a Latin dogmatic written by Adalbertus Vojtěch Šanda (1873–1953; see Novotný 2007: 392f.) was published in the second year

of the First World War (1916). When he discusses human origin, he exhibits direct knowledge of Mivart's book and maintains that his ideas were widely spread among Catholic theologians in Germany (see Šanda 1916: 133). Nevertheless, Šanda himself was rather cautious because of the potential risk of dualism. Other cautious suggestions of openness towards Mivart's proposition could be cited here, however, the already mentioned ones are sufficient illustrations of the issue.

The year 1926 represents a breaking point for Czech Catholic theology with a publication by the doctor of the theology and secondary school teacher Bedřich Augustin (1885–1960). It was a secondary school textbook (1926), not a scholarly article of more or less private character. On top of that the book has a certain hallmark of being official, because it is accompanied by a bishop's "*imprimatur*." The Czech teacher clearly introduces Darwin's and Haeckel's views and then provides a sound overview of the period's state of paleoanthropology. He states that scientists are not undivided in their assessment of the findings of skeletal remnants and proceeds to introducing diverse interpretations concerning them. He also names the world-known, prominent Czech anthropologist and patriot working in the USA, Aleš Hrdlička (1869–1943; see Fetter 1954). Arguments in favor and against the application of the evolution theory on human origin are meticulously listed (Augustin 1926: 56f.). Augustin's conclusion (1926: 59f.) is the following: "If the theory of evolution applied on human does not deny God the Creator or the fundamental difference between human soul and animal soul, it is not in contradiction with religious truth of the Holy Bible. Bible does not speak about the physical development of man but does not refuse it either. It only teaches, in a popularly understandable way, that man is God's creation and that his soul is fundamentally different from the rest of living creatures."

Although Mivart is not mentioned, it is obvious that we face an almost officially approved version of acceptance of his solution in the history of Czech theology. It should be noted that the textbook went through seven editions up to 1946 and was used widely at Czech secondary schools. We can, therefore, conclude that at least two generations of Czech Catholic intellectuals were brought up in this spirit.

Not much attention was paid to the issue in the 1930s, as the matter was considered pretty much solved. Theology was open to the theory that evolution of human based on Mivart's proposition. It was up to paleoanthropology to prove the evolution of the human. For example, the Czech Dominican theologian Reginlad Maria Dacík (1938: 28f.)

shares the same position as Augustin. On the other hand, those who refused any compromise between faith and evolutionary theory of human origin also existed (see, for example, Miklík 1930).

With the growing amount and quality of paleoanthropological findings, the number of Mivart's followers naturally grew as well. In the following decades not only in Czech theology but worldwide a higher degree of caution is discernible because racism pronounced during the Second World War discredited the theory of evolution and Communism turned Darwinism into core part of its ideology. However, I have not found a single publication by a Czech theologian from the period of 1940–1989 explicitly refusing Mivart's proposition. Under these circumstances, the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin had a positive impact, even liberating many believers from pressures by the establishment, as suddenly the theory of evolution was presented and interpreted by a Catholic clergyman and a famous paleoanthropologist.

4 Conclusion

It is evident that on the worldwide level Catholic theology demonstrated openness towards the evolution theory of human origin since the 1870s. At first, this pioneering opinion only had a handful of daring adherents. Its number grew over the following decades in proportion to the progress of paleoanthropology. Teilhard de Chardin was certainly not the first theologian to think in terms of evolution.

Furthermore, it is not true that the opponents of the theory of human evolution were only theologians which can be proved with the example of the history of Czech natural sciences and humanities. The fundamental problem for the acceptance of the theory of human evolution was apprehension concerning the loss of human dignity and ethics.

Czech Catholic theology fared well although without producing any pioneers such as M.-D. Leroy. The inferiority complex of a small nation, possibly afraid to venture into untraveled roads and only following ideas presented by major European nations, could have been one of the reasons for such circumspection. And fair enough to add, the historical experience with the Vatican's attitude to the Czech nation did not encourage any risk taking either (Beran 2013). The situation within the Czech Catholic Church during the Habsburg period clearly did not enhance the formation of great and original thinkers of European dimension. Overcoming the currently so frequent hermeneutically incorrect anachronistic reevaluation of the achievements

of Czech Catholic theology in the past, we can rate them as fairly good, in some cases even very good, which of course does not mean that there were no weak or outright bad works.

The work by Josef Hofer (1908), for example, is the disgrace of Czech Catholic theology, because it is scholarly incompetent, containing many half-truths and even outright lies. For example, Masaryk is labeled here as an atheist, which is unacceptable. Hofer ended in 1920 outside the Catholic Church and demonstrated the same level of vulgarity in his works against Catholicism.

The majority of works of Czech Catholic theologians reflected the diversity of opinions existing in 19th-century society, particularly in the period's natural sciences and prehistoric archaeology. Therefore, due respect to such diversity should not be omitted even in diachronic dimension, although later developments in paleoanthropology and paleogenetics validated opinions of those theologians who were more open towards the theory of human evolution. On the other hand, it is worth stressing that the Catholic Church nowadays can be proud, especially of the daring pathfinders who often suffered in their times, while the cautious and the conformist ones nowadays need to be vindicated and explained as historically understandable even if insignificant. One can only hope that contemporary theologians and responsible church authorities will learn from this lesson.

Let me also note that contemporary pronounced fundamentalists, wanting to interpret the first chapters of the Genesis literally, do not find any support in quality world Catholic theology of the 19th century or in the Czech one. There are no traces of a refusal of Laplace's theory of the origin of the solar system; on top of that, the openness towards the possibility of evolutionary origin of animal and plant species is, for today's readers, even surprising. However, it cannot be mistaken for materialistic interpretation of evolution.

Finally, the above mentioned problem of dualism implicit in Mivart's proposition and in a way also in the cited statement by Pope John Paul II on ontological leap from animal and human cannot be satisfactorily solved within this article. I dare suggest, that the gap should not be sought only on the functional level of psychic, technological, and communication skills but above all on the level of moral awareness, which clearly distinguishes human being from mere animal. Such awareness simply exists or it does not. The time of the crossing of this boarder of humanity just as the quality of the moral life of first real humans probably will be puzzling and mysterious for us forever, just as we will remain a

mystery to ourselves. It is especially in the experienced impossibility of reification of our own human existence that we touch the transcendent, the denial of which was so typical for the 20th-century totalitarian regimes and had led to horrible vilification of humanity. Struggles for scientific truth, therefore, must never be separate from striving for hope and human dignity, thus ultimately from ethics.

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