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## DIALOGUE AND THE HUMAN BEING AS *HOMO CREATOR*

*For Leo Emmanuel*

### **ABSTRACT**

This essay outlines my view on the anthropic conditions of authentic dialogue. In my opinion dialogue as such can be pursued only by people endowed with specific qualities and enjoying maximal fulfilment as human beings: people who are creative, who have an active attitude towards themselves and the world, who do not feel estranged from it but are united with it, and for whom the world is neither alien nor hostile, people who are free and responsible. These anthropic conditions of dialogue are connected with the herein-postulated image of human nature, whereby human nature is not only bound to the world by social relations but is co-created by the world, simultaneously retaining its subjective, individual dimension. In this context I will outline my concept of *homo creator* as a vision of modern humanism. In my belief this anthropological concept is one of the fundamentals of philosophy of dialogue.

**Keywords:** dialogue; *homo creator*; human nature; freedom; responsibility; alienation; estrangement.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In opposition to the *homo contemplator* concept and the idea of the human being's antagonistic juxtaposition to the world, I will present a hypothesis involving the human as creator, and thereby attempt to resolve certain anthropological problems posed chiefly by phenomenology and existentialism. In my intention the *homo creator* concept is a concept of modern humanism, a recipe for the future formation of the human being. Normative in character, it is in part a project of the human being and human transformation. However, it is also a

realistic project as it is completely founded upon a descriptive diagnosis of human nature. It is a vision of a fully accomplished human being. Unalienated from the world, free and responsible, *homo creator* may well come into being in social conditions freed from alienating pressure. I regard this concept among others as an anthropological platform for dialogue, because—to come down to a lower level of reflection—*homo creator* is nothing but a human being involved in authentic dialogue, a human being who is self-active and active towards the world and not merely a contemplator and receiver, a free human being in the sense explained below, responsible, a co-creator of reality, and, at the same time, immersed in and a part of this reality instead of being alienated from it. Such human beings are essentially subject of dialogue as their nature is founded upon the relational—also with regard to their relations with other humans, which not only enrich but co-create them. A necessary condition of authentic dialogue is the acceptance of a system of humanistic values, including truth (attained by cognition), and freedom. I believe these values to be essential for authentic dialogue and pay special attention to them. Humans who are alienated and who perceive the world as alien and hostile have no ability to undertake authentic dialogue.

## 2. THE HUMAN STRUGGLE AGAINST AND UNITY WITH THE WORLD

### 2.1. The alienation of humans and the world

I will only devote a few very brief comments to the antagonistic juxtaposition of humans and the world and human alienation from the world. One of the first, still mythological accounts of this problem can be found in *Genesis*: The expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise symbolises nothing else but humanity's severance from and resulting resistance against the primal whole. Over the ages, the mounting alienation of humans and God (initially their relation was almost family-like, gods were sometimes even a part of the household, and at all times faithful companions of humans) merely reflected the increasing alienation of the world. Generated by authentic social alienation, this motif can be found in various forms in almost all European philosophy.

The most common remedy or, more precisely, opiate involved fleeing to God through salvation or mystical communion. Other such opiates were doctrines which professed a return to humanity's primordial unity with nature and the community. Such doctrines have always returned stubbornly, from Golden Age legends to today's ideas.

The alienation process was additionally enhanced by the fact that the ontic status of the human being was indeed different from that of objects and the world. This distinctness is not only a fact; it is also evidence of our humanity and the condition of our freedom. For this reason the conclusion that the most debatable and criticised motif in Sartre's philosophy is "the ontological dualism

of two spheres of phenomena, i.e. awareness and existence, can arouse serious doubts when uttered in isolation. Only dialectics offers a true solution here. The error in existentialism's ideological tendency is not that it manifests the distinctness of humans and things but in that it fails to see the possibility of eliminating alienation in any form of social organisation. Thus, distinctness transforms into hostility towards the human, transformed into a thing by the mechanisms of rule and enslavement or by his own doing.

These well-known traits are present in a multitude of varieties in civilisation concepts, literature, as well as theories claiming that contemporary mankind is in an essentially dangerous condition.

## 2.2. Human relations with the world and their substantial-subjective fundamentals

For me the most important of our diverse relations with the world are those in which humans do not put themselves against the reality around them as separate, and much less hostile, existences but find to themselves precisely in relations with reality. When Antonio Gramsci wrote that man is the process of his actions<sup>1</sup> he expressed a very similar experience. Friedrich Nietzsche would have said outright that we are not an existence but a becoming.<sup>2</sup> Over the past decades European thought has produced many similar concepts of severance with the substantialistic approach to the human being.

One could say that a human being is a substance also when examined through the prism of its achievements and history. However, such substance can also be defined by its current social position and the mentioned system of relations.

Precisely for this reason the individual as a substance stands opposed to the world in its past attainments, as in the past the individual functions not only as a subject but also as a social position and a legacy. Objectivity embraces only the here-and-now, in the past and future I am an object of remembrance/plans and projects for myself. Our relation with the world is simultaneously an object-subject relation and it is only death which, by destroying the subject, makes us merely an object for others. Nonetheless, community offers protection from annihilation or at least hope for such protection. Community is a collective subject because in it even the deceased are not mere object. Although indirectly, ties and relations continue with those who remain preserving the importance of those who have departed. Thus, only subject-world relations give humans a

<sup>1</sup> Gramsci, A. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers, 351. I quote here Gramsci's view in his original formulation: "We can see that in putting the question 'what is man?' what we mean is: what can man become? That is, can man dominate his own destiny, can he 'make himself,' can he create his own life? We maintain therefore that man is a process and, more exactly, the process of his actions."

<sup>2</sup> This has been best approached by Eugen Fink in his: 1960. *Nietzsches Philosophie*. Stuttgart.

chance for real and not illusory self-formation. In such relations human individuals become through the accumulation of successive biographic “layers” or their “substance”. Individuals exist in relations and are themselves relations in a narrow beam of light—the here-and-now. Subjectivity, which escapes the narrow limits of the traditionally-perceived “I”, confronts individuals with various situations and meanings relating to things and other people as subjectivisation possibilities. This is why such relations are the most essential meeting point for ourselves as objects and subjects and other objects and subjects. In a sense such relations determine where we come into contact with the world or, more precisely, they are, in the subjective and essence-generating sense, a unique extension of our personalities. In fact, personality as such is a relational structure, an extension of the subject and its “I”, hence it is “filled” with the world. But the world is not empty, nor inhuman: it contains human things and the meanings given them by other subjects. Therefore we cannot claim to give things meaning each time we encounter them. This can happen only in special cases and within relatively narrow limits as usually the things we encounter exist with meanings given them earlier by their manufacturers, interpreters, etc.

Therefore, the human world is not constituted by humans as individual subjects but humans who are simultaneously collective subjects or even a species, as most of the meanings allotted to humanised things by earlier generations have survived to this day. Indeed, this is what enables cultural continuity and communication, and lays the ground for dialogue as a primal human attribute.

For also this reason it is not only the subject that humanises the world, but also the human world humanises the subject—the humanisation process is mutual in many areas. Externalisation is usually preceded by internalisation and subsequently both reinforce each other, the process always leading to dual (external and internal) objectification.

However, from the point of view of human theory there exists another method of objectification—as we may describe the partial substantialisation of the subject. The subject objectifies itself not only in products and objectifications but also on a certain level of internalisation on which it forms its own “substance,” history, body and countenance. This, however, is objectification primarily by memory—we build pictures of our past, of things and events which influenced us and which we participated in, in our thoughts and memories.

This opens the path to a further analysis of the subject, to a deeper look into the “ego.” In the subjective sphere we must first distinguish the substantial and relational elements which remain in a close and dynamic relation. The substantial element, in turn, contains at least two ontically differing layers: corporal and mnemonic. The next distinction: the genetically corporal layer consists of that which is given by the genotype and phenotype and that which has been formed by the subject itself in the course of its individual biography.

In a modification of the so-called pre-reflexive *cogito* theory Maurice Merleau-Ponty claims that primary communication with the world takes place through the body which is the imprisoned natural spirit.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we can even go so far as to say that also in this sense the body is the fundament of awareness as the subject indeed consists of body, mind and relationality. Here I accentuate the substantial element of the subject—despite my basic rejection of the substantialistic concept of the human being as a whole—in order to reveal the material-mnemonic fundament of human endurance and identity, which is a unique fulcrum for humans in their entire relations with the world.

This is so because such relations are rooted and stored in the subject's deepest material-mnemonic layers, which is well expressed by the *superego* metaphor.<sup>4</sup> In this sense internalised relations become objectified, become objects within the bounds of our psychological structure. Besides being rooted, these relations are also subjectivity's extension to the world and define and co-determine human openness. Preserved through internalisation, they are a psychological and cultural material whose successive layers cover the deepest "I", enriching it with objectification.

The above distinctions provide a better insight into the destructive influence of alienation on the human personality. Alienation not only leads to the external world's domination over its creator but disintegrates the personality because it internalises alienness, arranging it in us in the mentioned layers. This inevitably leads to internal dissolution. In this way evil layers and arranges itself in the social world.

### 2.3. Types of relations with the world and the specific role of creativity

Especially significant in the present analysis are three types of relations: cognitive, practical and emotional. This is, however, a rather abstract distinction as in reality most relations with the world contain all three, albeit in varying degree. I will introduce a fourth type, i.e. creative relations. The term, however, will apply not only to art or research, but also that practical and theoretical human activity which is also emotional, because creativity is a unique combination of cognition, praxis and emotion. In fact, creativity may be described as uniting theory (cognition) with praxis in a specific emotional climate. It is evident that humans fulfil themselves best in creative activity where they form not only objects, institutions or events, but also themselves in the most complete and deepest sense.

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<sup>3</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. 1945. *Phenomenologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard, 350. English edition: 1965. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans: Colin Smith, C. London: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Freudianism—especially in its concept of the *id* as a reservoir and internalisation of the *superego*—is still a substantialistic doctrine, but the idea of the *ego* as mediator as well as the dynamic relations with the world, defensive mechanism and similar concepts herald a move towards relationism.

The pure cognition process is somewhat one-sided: the cognising subject only internalises the world, adopting a receptive, and at times even defensive, position. The so frequently voiced and refuted critique of the copy theory can, I think, concern only such a purely cognitive approach to the world, without heed of the processual character of cognition which must consist of various, and at times only technically separated, phases. The designate of such purely passive cognition can only be contemplation as a cultural phenomenon.

Paradoxically, a similarly purely practical relation appears only in its “dirtiest” form—when it is utterly deprived of the thought element. There are, however, many kinds of practical activity and in principle praxis is primarily a form of objectification, a movement away from the subject towards the world. The externalisation of cultural and material praxis in everyday human life is counterbalanced by the internalisation of the world in the process of cognition, education and upbringing. Both these relation orientations are united in the creative process. Creationism strives to comprehend and explain precisely this fact by tying it to the complete human being concept. *Homo creator* is the contemporary phase on the path to the creation of *homo universalis*. Creativity is the path to human completeness—not only because it best combines externalisation with internalisation but also because it ensures the most adequate and most complete union with the world.

People usually defend themselves against the world or attack it. However, probably the biggest and practically unceasing human dream is reconciliation with the world, the establishment of a union with it which would allow humans to preserve their separateness and individuality and at the same time eliminate the feeling that the world is a hostile and alien place.

This was heretofore possible only with the help of illusion and this is why humans have been and remain so strongly influenced by religion—although often at the price of real activity, and even individuality (here especially in the so-called mystical union with God). At the same time, however, religion helped societies endure the immensely difficult conditions most of them lived in; on the historical plane however, religion, alongside its conservative function so aptly underscored by classical Marxism, must also be seen as a factor which has indeed given societies some equilibrium, and at times also a stable existence. Even if the hope it provided was illusory, religion did ensure the psychologically important premise of endurance. This is especially evident with regard to the here-discussed model as religion was also a solution for the problems arising from humanity’s relation with the world, a solution which offered a certain basic order. Rebellion and revolution are unable to arise from total chaos and must also have something stable to negate.

That which primarily gives us a sense of unity and separateness (of the positively individualistic kind) is love. True, in its object and scope love is focused on the individual, but we know well that real love is often able to change our view of the world. As Erich Fromm maintains, when this happens the problem

of human existence becomes resolvable—within a certain time limit, to a certain degree and under certain conditions. Nonetheless in the social scale love is at all times a purely personal and individual journey which may at most supplement solutions rooted in ideology and culture.

In the social scale solutions may be provided only by creativity understood as a universal form of communion with a totally dealientated world, a world open to humans, equipped with essence endowed by others, who are friendly and open to us as we are to be open to this world. It is then that we will potentially find ourselves in a good-hearted, understanding and authentic dialogue with the world. Creativity means establishing a possibly strongest bond with the world as it is what co-creates our world, a world which is capable of being in the highest degree humanised. In the course of the creative process we conquer thy world without destroying it—more still, we enrich it in a way that differs essentially from regular practical and productive activity.

Creativity is an authentic social resolution to the problem of human existence as it is precisely the above-described communion with the world which allows the individual for its separateness and helps to develop individuality. This was understood by Georg Hegel who bound individuality to action and put it in opposition to the general and things. However, the power of the individual opposed the might of the above-individual, in other words, the subjective spirit stood in opposition to the objective spirit in the all-embracing unity of the whole.<sup>5</sup> And this is precisely why “nothing but truth constitutes the whole.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, the metaphysical and absolute juxtaposition of the subject and object is replaced by a dialectical juxtaposition of mutually enriching poles. There is no chasm between the object and the subject if both are situated in a history-created, universal oneness.

#### 2.4. The dialectical premises of activity

The dialectical character of human relations with the world is expressed in simultaneous battle and unity, which are permanent determinants of the human fate. Mutually contradicting strivings are an immensely powerful, perhaps fundamental, source of human activity. Universally present, they may indeed appear in all forms of activity and thought. Frequently they differ in what the accentuate, and sometimes one of the conflicting elements appears temporarily absent, nonetheless it is hard to imagine human life without such contradictions.

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<sup>5</sup> Wein, H. 1964. *Realdialektik. Von hegelscher Dialektik zu dialektischer Anthropologie* [Real Dialectics. From Hegelian Dialectics to Dialectical Anthropology]. Den Haag, 178.

<sup>6</sup> The famous statement in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* acquires a special significance here and in the anthropological plan will, of course, lead towards community. Hence also the essence of life is contained in the individual's finding its place in the whole, its fragmentary truth in reference to a religious, historical or social absolute.

Unperceived, pathologically intensified and degenerated by alienation or restrained by passiveness, these essentially dialectical forces have been exploited only in a slight degree and most often for adverse, socially uncreative purposes. They determined the antinomies between the individual and society, the underlying fundament of all ideology which can be seen among others in extreme individualism and totalitarian ideas.

Resolving this problem in class societies proved a stumbling-block even for these societies' major ideologues, including Hegel as the dialectics of rule and enslavement stands in the way of union with the world and already in our encounters with the world's most important representative, i.e. another human being, we are confronted with a deadly hostility. Hegel finally solved the matter—as did Johann Wolfgang von Goethe on the artistic plane—at the tragic price of the individual's happiness.

Consent to the world, to others and to one's place in the world is not always tantamount with conformism or surrender. It can also be a source of psychological equilibrium and in this sense it is always to some degree necessary. It can be an introduction, or stage along the path to, unity. Thus, human dialectics enables the ordering of theoretically important phenomena, their inclusion in a broader philosophical construct and, ultimately, comprehension of the human being.

## **2.5. Self-identification and transpersonalisation**

The human being's inner unity and inner struggle is perhaps the most difficult issue for scholars and also important for the individual's life-plan. I understand this primarily as a constant and simultaneous striving for self-identification and transcendence: we wish to preserve our identity, at the same time we permanently seek to transgress our position and expand our individuality.

Self-knowledge reveals this constant split which Jean-Paul Sartre analysed so thoroughly. Sartre, however, bases his reflections on false premises because his dialectics hangs in a void, is merely a dialectics of awareness, and is moreover juxtaposed to non-dialectical nature. It is a negative dialectics which uses the subtle language of philosophy to express humanity's deep hostility towards a world of reification, and in consequence towards itself.

However, authentic love enabled connections in time and the simultaneous combination of movement towards identification and transcendence. Thus, love is not only a philosophical issue but also one of the important models for the kind of relations which should be predominant.

The dialectics of the human being is the most general description of human essence. Nonetheless, it was more often destructive than creative, its tension, identifications etc. resembling a huge and untempered river of energy. Therefore, it frequently carried with it an unhappy awareness, pain, and even the self-destruction of humans. It was an unexploited and squandered dialectics.

It is also an incomplete dialectics, in other words, in times of reification and alienation humans are incapable of being fully dialectical beings in the social sense. Exceptions to this rule—like Faust—are exactly that: exceptions, and inevitably tragic ones.

### **3. HOMO CREATOR**

Who will the human of the future be? Contrary to how it may sound, this question concerns not only the future, but also—and perhaps most of all—the human here-and-now and human essence in their deepest sense. Because the answer to this question must, if only silently, assume a specified concept of human nature and comprehension of humanity's present situation.

The essence of the human being consists of a unique bond between biological and psychological structure and the human attitude towards the world, viewed through the entirety of human social relations. Practically constant biologically but evidently subject to increasingly rapid social change, humans are primarily social beings. We must, therefore, conclude that the people of the future will be like the civilisation and culture of the future. The future, however, is not automatically granted under perennial laws, nor is it solely a product of human will. It is the effect of objective development trends and organised human awareness.

In relation to the here-discussed problem we can assume that this resembles a self-fulfilling prophecy: in our conditions humans have subjective premises to become what they wish to become and to what they wisely programme themselves. In other words, humanity's future reality depends to a very considerable degree on the human model developed today by philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, educators, biologists, anthropologists, etc.

This reality, however, depends primarily on our praxis. Also the undertaken measures will have to be of a specific kind. They will first of all have to involve investment in the human being, i.e. the fundamental modernisation of the institutionalised public education system, the practical transformation of human upbringing and self-upbringing through the enhancement of knowledge, sensitivity, intellectual and operative efficiency, and the improvement of human relations. If the entire palette of social relations constitutes the essence of man and, hence, the truth about humans, then humans also reflect and co-create the communities in which they participate. We are mutually responsible for ourselves because we mutually form ourselves.

#### **3.1. The human sciences and philosophical anthropology**

One of the most promising phenomena in contemporary intellectual culture is the emergence of a new vision of humanity which opens prospects for the practical transformation of the human being. Once humans are changed, they will also have a different perception of the world, a different everyday life, and

history will take a different course. Let us, however, devote some reflection on what this justifiably hoped-for transformation can mean for us today.

Philosophical anthropology must be connected with the human sciences as, for multiple methodological, social and axiological reasons, these sciences are in need of an open and at once dynamic philosophy. Success in the resolution of the increasingly complex human situation is only possible through a liaison of philosophy with science and its methodology.

### 3.2. The demise of idealistic and materialistic substantialism

The evolution of the human sciences allows us to say today that the onetime claims about the constancy of human nature are ultimately false. This natural evolution, however, gave rise to a number of moral and philosophical/axiological problems: a specific naturalistic essentialism which used the concept of human nature was not only connected with the best traditions of European humanism, but also opened the door to non-nihilistic historicism. On the humanistic plane it enabled the construction of values pursued by the human community as a species. The difficult and complex task, increasingly also for philosophers, will also have to involve the preservation of human bonds with tradition by those who will probably increasingly prevail over their predecessors in their ability to act, understand and feel.

Here, however, our interests concern not the moral, but the ontological issue. The old idealistic concepts of the human being, especially those propounded by religion, which defines the essence of humanity through the immortality of the human soul, are becoming increasingly anachronistic in light of the evolution of biology, physiology, genetics and other sciences which are today laying the ground for what in the future will perhaps be known as “soul” or awareness engineering. At this point the problem signalled above presents itself again: the incredible rise on technological possibilities leads to deep moral problems which we will not be able to deal with by optimistic sophistry.

The above also applies to the classical Thomistic formulation of the thesis about the human being as *compositum humanum*. Complex Thomistic constructs are all the less capable of standing up to contemporary science’s analysis of the real, dynamic and changeable psychophysical and social complexity of the human being.

A similar fate awaits the traditional materialistic/substantialistic vision of the human as merely a biophysical and essentially genetically and environmentally motivated being burdened by its bodily constitution. This traditionalistic materialism embraces not just the materialism of the Enlightenment or the vulgar materialism of the 19th century, but also appears to apply to some influential 20th century thought trends, like certain simplified interpretations of Freudianism (perhaps most to the writings of Melanie Klein and Wilhelm Reich) and some interpretations of behaviourism. This substantialism can also be ques-

tioned from another angle: that of the rising role of awareness and the contestation of the thesis about the absolutely determining role of the environment. Generally speaking, all substantialism must be discarded from the vantage point of the activist concept of the human being.

### **3.3. Relationism. The ego-world relation**

The biggest blow to both kinds of substantialism, i.e. idealistic and materialistic, has been dealt by the new concept of the human being: relationism. Here, the human essence is no longer defined by the soul nor any psychophysical or biophysical complexity but only through the relation between the subject and the world. Thus, relationism breaks away from idealistic and materialistic substantialism's autarchy over the human being.

In relationism relations with the world not only shape but also define the human being, and decide about the human being's essence. Crushed is the substantialistic wall separating the subject from the world's objective sphere, and the human sphere broadens immeasurably. The human essence is no abstract existing within an individual. It is the entirety of social relations. In this perspective the human being in a sense absorbs the world it co-creates and the world becomes a part of the human being seen as a historical, and even cultural-classic species. In the context of human history the concept of humans as a natural species becomes the most universal and above-historical fundament, on which the human being can be comprehended only with the help of historical clarification.

This is important as a point of departure towards defining the relationism I propound here as a materialistic/dialectic and naturalistic/historicistic standpoint. Relationism abolishes naturalism only in its historically limited forms. It is preserved as a genetic departure point and the constant presence of nature both in the human body and the world surrounding humans. However, in relationistic naturalism nature is present not as fate, an absolute determinant, but a flexible possibility from which the human being is created by history. More precisely, the human being creates itself from nature through history, as the here-described relationism is simultaneously activism.

Nature and history (or society) are the two pillars of materialistic relationism. Their interaction creates an extremely expansive network of relations, whose co-creation and clarification constitutes the material from which the essence of the human being is built. The dialectical character of this approach is expressed here by relationality, which breaks through the metaphysical seclusion and stasis of substantialism. This kind of relationism replaces the illusory pathos of idealistic substantialism and its immortal soul as the mainstay of human dignity and eternity, and ahistorical naturalism with its passivistic belief in the eternal constancy of human nature, by an optimism which obliges to practical action and the highest moral responsibility and bases upon the possibility of

changing human nature, transforming it by the above-mentioned genetic engineering and first and foremost by political and economic change in social relations.

Dynamic and developed by humans themselves, human nature thus becomes one of the fundamentals of increasingly expanding relations with the rest of nature and society at large. Here development will consist not only in, as heretofore, the rising number and complexity of humanity's bonds with the world, but also on the changeability of human nature, one of the three pillars constituting the human being. The awareness of animals and children does not emanate from the surrounding world. Children simply see no boundary between themselves and the world. Until now historical evolution from animal and child primarily consisted in the acquisition of a certain distance towards the world, the distancing of the subject from the object. This dynamism can now be multiplied and also very importantly guided thanks to the recognition of the flexible character of the once constant-deemed departure point, i.e. corporeal human nature. And thanks to the recognition that human essence is formed not within human nature but in the relation of the whole subject, i.e. body, mind, and society with the surrounding and co-created world.

Authentic Freudianism, i.e. the theory expounded by Freud himself, can also be understood as not a substantialistic but a relationistic concept of the human being: the superego is the interiorisation of relations between the ego and society, the human character is formed though the resolution of the basic relation between the human being and its parents manifested in an Oedipus or Electra complex. Here, human essence will not be found solely—nor even primarily—in biological determinants despite their major role in Freud's theory, but in relations between the subjective reservoir of psychological and physical energy with the family environment and culture. In this respect social psychology and its latest findings in personality theory have contributed even clearer and better-provable material. Numerous known social anthropology studies which need no mention here are good examples of the universal character of the relational trends present in contemporary research.

### **3.4. Creating diversified unity with the world**

What is the nature of social relations? This historical variable is of primary theoretical and practical importance here. Humans were happy in the utopias of the "Golden Age" and primeval communities because they were reconciled with the world, at one with their communities and with nature, which had not yet alienated itself from them nor within them. However, history of culture is also the history of the human being's mounting alienation from nature, other people, and in effect its own self. Leonardo da Vinci's famous, "If you are alone you belong entirely to yourself" is a beautiful and moving confession, but also evidence of human isolation and mounting hostility towards and alienation from

others even in an era which strove to put the human being in the focus of its attention. It was finally Sartre who rolled out the heaviest accusation against his contemporaries with the conclusion that “hell is other people,” and in subtle analyses of his own writings drew horrifying pictures of a chasm, or at least fundamental hostility, between humans and the world.

Our challenge to that world and those ideas goes beyond lifestyles, political solutions and ideology and aims at the creation of a new kind of relation between humans and the world. This will be made possible by a new society based on authentic community.

The dreams contained in utopias expressed the human striving for unity with the world. They could, however, be realised only in an illusory sense, namely, in utopias, in religion, especially in mysticism where postulated or even experienced communion with God was the highest form of fulfilment. God was everything, so, although in an illusory way, individuals were thus able to find their place in the whole and sense in their lives. Because sense is order and a place within the whole. And happiness frequently involves the acceptance of one’s place in the whole, and therefore also reconciliation with oneself.

However, such acceptance of oneself and the world was rooted in resignation. Humans succumbed to a world symbolised by God, and in some extreme variations of mysticism even annihilated themselves, finding contentment in total depersonalisation, in the surrender of their bodily and spiritual separateness.

In the reverse model of human-world relations (which also has various historical and philosophical variants), individuals in the Western world find their dignity in radical separation from and contestation of the entire environment and wage war on the world, which they usually see as hostile. Some doctrines even claim that the individual is the only reality, or at least the only true value. In this case overcoming the dialectical tension between both poles, i.e., humans and the world, takes place through the negation of the world.

The philosophical novelty of today’s historical and political situation consists in the retainment and simultaneous control over the dialectical tension between humans and the world. The energy generated by this tension, visible both in differentiation (personal separateness, the self-preservation instinct, individualising social trends) and merger (assimilation, many educational processes, community goals, projection and cultural identification mechanisms etc.) is usually exploited one-sidedly and incompletely, which enhances the “fragmentation” of the human being.

Therefore, the full employment of the two-way energy produced by this tension (in philosophical terms this may be called a dialectics which interiorises the world in awareness and objectifies thought in products) will not only help increase the power of societies and individuals but also, in the way described above, lead to the emergence of a new relation between people and the world. This in turn will bring on an era not only of qualitatively new human beings (“complete” human beings, also with regard to the humanisation of the social

environment and increasingly larger areas of the natural environment), but of new interpersonal relations based on mutual enrichment in a unique liaison of energy and values.

Only then will we be able to speak about a true and enriching unity between humans and the world. An essential element of this project is the thesis that this differentiated unity will not be achieved at once through one idea or dream. It will be built gradually, bit by bit, in a progressing expansion of the environment we consider our own in the axiological sense, i.e. which we approve of and value. Hence, creativity appears also here as the most mature and humane bond between humans and the world.

Humans who will create themselves with the mighty help of united other people will also have to find, or rather create a primal, authentic and natural bond with the world. In this bond they will not only be able to retain their autonomy but also develop their individuality. The spiritual wealth of individuals is strictly tied to the cultural wealth of communities. This concerns not just the general and somewhat abstract concept of society as a whole, but also, and primarily, concrete communities: organisational, productive, cultural, etc. Putting it simply, humans are and will be like the workplaces, social organisations, artistic groups or neighbourhood communities they co-create. The wisdom of life lies in the ability to find big issues in everyday life, to raise daily praxis to a work of the heart and mind. An automated life dominated by habit and devoid of reflection and sensitivity is tantamount to gradual self-annihilation.

Thus, human wisdom also means living deeply, sensibly and happily and seeking one's humanity in one's own existence and thereby in community co-created with others. The path to individualised spiritual union with the world can only lead through concrete communities and a new society.

### **3.5. Humans of the future: experts, philosophers, creators**

Contemporary humans are increasingly evolving to experts in ever-narrower theoretical or practical fields. Consequently, it would be advisable for them to take steps to balance this limitation by creating possibly broad cultural and perceptive horizons for themselves. For this reason, individuals, who supplement their communities with their unique personal activity and existence, should strive to be people of profound sensitivity and humanistic coexistence skills, individuals guided by true human wisdom, in other words, philosophy. The term, attributed to Pythagoras, who did not dare call himself a sage but merely one who had a love of wisdom, is today closest to describing the intellectual expectations and ideologically predominant praxis of the contemporary world. Indeed, only philosophy is able to intellectually merge the dispersed and disintegrated sciences and praxis with theory, i.e. elevate praxis to the level of rationality and make theoretical dreams come true. Thus, philosophy also carries hope for individuals as it is able to imbue sense and order into life, define its

natural dimensions and show how one can co-create one's own, everyday existence in accord with the beauty of art and the truth of science. This is why art should become a crucial element of the new human being's broadened perceptive horizons, while humanistic sensitivity and activity should evolve to an all-penetrating factor of practical life.

This, in the briefest terms, substantiates the title of the present reflections: *homo creator*—a creator of himself and co-creator of his environment and world. The toil of a worker masterful with his tools, the visions of an architect or constructor developing ever-better buildings and machines, the reflections of a scientist and the passion of an artist—they all can be manifestations of creativity. Creativity is not only the completion of an original work, it can also involve a reproduction or even ordinary production provided the effort behind it is fuelled by love and free, and reflects the human struggle with finiteness, transience and separation. If it is effort by which the individual strives for self-expression not necessarily through the product's originality but its quality, quantity or perfect workmanship.

First and foremost, however, through their creativity community-reconciled individuals can establish true alliances and true understanding with the world, penetrate it not just by thought but also emotion (as such individuals are not alienated), and activity (in the creative process).

#### **4. FREEDOM AND THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE HUMAN BEING, MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE COGNITIVE SPHERE**

Freedom in all its meanings is a human issue and not, as Plato believed, a divine privilege. Equally alien and morally repulsive is Aristotle's condonement of slavery, e.g. in the famous statement in *Nicomachean Ethics* that "a slave is an animate tool and a tool is an inanimate slave".

Nonetheless, that era's negation of a slavery-based world, resistance (chiefly moral) against social evil and strivings to reconcile the individual with nature also produced the magnificent ethic and ontology of the Stoics—most notably their concept of freedom as an inalienable human right, and simultaneously freedom perceived as awareness of the necessities and laws that determine human existence. This idea is close to my viewpoint, its ethical pathos is also close to mine because it clearly points to the moral responsibility of humans for all their deeds. Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Epicurus before them were certain that humans carried an almost absolute responsibility for their conduct and choices. However, what for them glorified humanity later evolved (especially in Christianity's radically neophytic, apologetic and institutionalised variant) into the individual's dependence on God as a fundamentally sinful and imperfect being. This development-hindering symbolic of the *Genesis* has been fully exploited by the Church. However, Christianity also inherited, and to a greater degree developed (especially in its inspiration of various doctrines), several

interpretations of freedom (we need only mention Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky or Nietzsche).

Human freedom stems not only from the human being's natural separateness and uniqueness, but primarily from the fact that the human being is a part of the world and is subject to its laws. Thanks to the objective dialectics of causality, necessity, the cumulation of influence, relative isolation and the pan-union of systems, freedom appears to be rooted in the very order of existence. In a sufficiently precise definition of freedom animals are also free in that they can choose their flight route or attack mode. The fundamental qualitative difference, however, is that the extent of this freedom is extremely narrow. This is probably so because the degree of a complex system's (the animal's) isolation from its surroundings is very low in the stimulus-motive-response relation, i.e. almost any stimulus within the animal's perception field causes an immediate response. Training teaches animals to guide their responses and select stimuli, in other words to develop some distance to stimuli. E.g. a well-trained dog listens only to its master's voice, eats only upon his consent, etc.

The ontic fundamentals of freedom in the full sense of the term are found only in the distinguished existence that is the human being.

Human ontology is able to offer a more complete and adequate answer to the question about the fundamentals of freedom. The human being is characterised not only by an immeasurably higher complexity than other organisms, but also by a greater isolation from its surroundings. An isolation is constructed consciously over centuries of civilisation and culture. The human being's distance from attacks on its stimulus-motive-reaction system is also incomparably greater, thus enabling immense flexibility of behaviour and allowing the human to co-create situations.

The basic ontic discriminant here is thought. Thought can be described as a relatively autonomous sequence of causes which proceeds over long periods of time in complete independence from the surrounding world. Indeterminism absolutises this fact or, more precisely, fails to comprehend it as the thought's temporary lack of external determinants does not mean that it is totally unconditioned. Analyses of thought processes, even so-called free association sequences, convincingly reveal that they are in every point preceded by a cause or sequence of causes which are primarily mental in character, but also emotional stimuli, processed external stimuli, etc.

We can therefore say that external physical, chemical and biological factors interpenetrate and occasionally clash with the causal sequence of another mental order/system. This mental system's relative and temporary autonomy is the direct ontic fundament of truly human freedom, freedom in the proper sense of the word.

It must be said, however, that the ambiguity of the term "freedom" has led to many misunderstandings. As rational beings we are free in the above meaning, to the highest degree autonomous (though relatively autonomous) with regard to

the surrounding world. This is our ontic, existential freedom. But we are also free in what we may call a moral sense: like all living beings we are subject to the implicit laws of biology and have to die. However, only we humans are able to refer to death consciously. From the physical/ontic point of view we are, like animals (to put it drastically), imprisoned in the grasp of blind necessity and absolute laws. However, we, humans, are able to imagine this predicament. Thus, our entire dignity lies in thought.

Pascal's words, however, are only partly true as, in keeping with the principles of humanistic Prometheanism, we can add to them that our whole dignity lies in thought which produces action. And for us this has not only axiological but also ontic importance, an importance which makes the difference between passive and active, co-creative attitudes. Because in my opinion humans not only describe the world ontologically but also co-determine it ontically.

Human responsibility also hangs together with the human ontic situation, from which it stems, but which it also bears influence on. If our fate lies in our hands, then so does in part our existential (ontic) status. Indeed, the degree to which we make use of our thoughts and skills distances us from the animal world, and even inanimate matter. The dialectics of this relation is that this distancing is the more real, the greater the degree in which we are able to perceive and make use of the laws of nature and the extent to which we actually make use of them.

Let the following conclusion close our ontological reflection: freedom, hence also our responsibility, is not only ontically possible but this freedom also burdens us with responsibility for the evolution of our ontic situation. Neither our place in nature nor our ontic construction are granted for ever; we ourselves have the possibility and the duty to co-create it. Thus, the words said at the outset—we ourselves co-create our freedom—have for us not only an ideological/axiological but also an ontic, existential meaning.

Freedom also means our rule over ourselves and nature. This authority results from cognition, therefore it extends beyond the European tradition which almost identified freedom with cognition. Even St. John says, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." In activism freedom can not be reduced to cognition and awareness, it is closely tied to action and control over oneself and the outside world. First and foremost, however, it is situated in the human existential structure.

Cognition is doubtless a very important part of acquiring and realising freedom. Let me put it in the following simple words: existence enables the possibility of freedom, or, more precisely, contains this possibility, which is enabled by cognition. In a sense, cognition makes freedom aware. Thanks to cognition we know who we are and what our possibilities are. The next step is action, transforming possibility into reality, and this is how freedom is realised. In keeping with the above thesis, however, this is not the end of freedom's path; freedom is co-created in creative human activity.

The more freedom the more responsibility. This common maxim finds full confirmation in the cognitive sphere, which is well-evidenced throughout the history of civilisation and visible with increasing force today. Let us consider how much bigger that the freedom of Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, was the freedom of Einstein, the co-inventor of the atom bomb, and, in effect, how much greater was his responsibility. Today scientists, the depositaries and creators of cognition, carry responsibility for literally the entire world. And they are not freed of this responsibility by the fact that they carry it collectively and share it with politicians.

Thus it appears that increased freedom in combination with increased power (not only political) ought to lead to increased responsibility. How ironically, though deeply, Fyodor Dostoyevsky expressed this in *The Grand Inquisitor!*

This finds confirmation in every walk of social life, of course, with essential modifications imposed by politics. Generally, though, observation of contemporary society allows the conclusion that every human is responsible for the scope of his rule.

In the context of the here-discussed issue cognition is of interest to us because it reveals the immense diversity of the world, and also because it shows how differently freedom, necessity and responsibility manifest themselves in various spheres of life. Cognition also enables us to distance ourselves from (unfulfilled) demands to close the freedom issue in a single formula, which are being forwarded by some philosophical schools. Cognition, which in philosophical generalisation reaches into the disciplinary sciences, offers an overview of the broad and very complex dialectics of freedom and responsibility, their historical and social vicissitude and difficult, dramatic evolution.

## 5. ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND AXIOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Alongside its investigations of the ontic and cognitive spheres, philosophical anthropology also broadens the study of freedoms. Here we arrive at the highest level of freedom, i.e. the subjective freedom of the human being, the subject, but first and foremost the freedom of *homo creator*.

Thus:

1. Freedom may be considered a characteristic feature of the human species. A truly human being capable of developing its humanity is primarily a being that is free.

2. Political freedom is a philosophical term which calls for fulfilment of the human being's ontic status.

3. Individuals and societies are not given a "readymade" world—they co-create and supplement it. Thus, they lay the ground for and co-create freedom. Therefore, in the broad context of historiosophy (philosophy of history) and the anthropological plan we can again speak about a permanent and systematic increase of freedom, or at least about the possibility of such an increase, be-

cause, as history teaches us, the paths of freedom are never simple and all too often marked by bloodshed and tragedy.

4. My understanding of freedom partly follows Hegelian inspirations and distinguishes between “freedom from” and “freedom to.” Juxtaposing the two is pointless as in human evolution it is incomparably more important for humans to know what they are free to do than what they are freeing themselves from.

## 6. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

The above explains the issue of human responsibility. Generally, the scope of human responsibility is identical with the scope of human freedom, and to a degree and in a certain sense with the scope of human rule. In an overwhelming majority of cases real freedom was and is the effect of practical activity, which constitutes a material force. In the realities of contemporary society the scope of freedom is still decided in battle.

Transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom broadens the responsibility of every human being. Humans define the aims of their activity subjectively and internally. For instance a teacher who pursues a certain curriculum accepts a certain framework and certain obligations (necessities), whose execution, however, largely depends on him. He is free not only in how he transmits knowledge to his students but most of all in the degree of his involvement in transmitting it.

In a general and fundamental sense moral responsibility—responsibility for oneself, one’s fate and the shape of one’s life—is an even bigger responsibility. Here those philosophies are right which burden each individual with responsibility for the fate of entire humanity, because all we do to some extent confirms or degrades the humanity within us. In this respect the Kantian categorical imperative and the theses forwarded by the existentialists offer noteworthy and truly morally beautiful proposals.

Thus, moral responsibility varies not just in scope but also in degree. Practically all humans determine the hierarchy of their values on the axiological plane. The choice and hierarchy of values and goals influences our lives to a considerable degree. Therefore, our subjective initial choices, which depend almost solely on ourselves, are the choices that determine our fate. Hence, we have the right to say that we ourselves choose our fate.

The individual carries responsibility for its fate because in oppression-free social relations this fate largely depends on its own activity. We are responsible for our actions because they are the effect of our undertakings, our character, our willpower, etc. They externalise and objectify our inner, subjective world, hence are primarily the products of our freedom.

One of the main motifs in the present reflections is the structural growth of freedom. The more complex the system’s structure is, the broader the freedom. Although presented in a rather abstract form, Hegel’s intuition was indeed in-

genious: history is the path to freedom, more precisely, a dialectical path full of inner conflict which through permanent “reduction” leads to ever-broader liberty.

Freedom is always something concrete. It is, first of all, relative, historically attributed to a social class, group or even a single ruler, as was the case in the eastern empires. This was strongly underscored by Hegel. However, freedom is also (although in unequal measure due to class divisions) the freedom of entire humanity, of cultures and eras, freedom from nature and also freedom from itself. The idea of collective responsibility in its contemporary meaning has a humanistic sense, because it expresses our moral community with others. However, collective responsibility is a concept to be used with caution and only in specific instances. The existentialists’ attempts to lay responsibility both on the henchmen and their victims appear, to say the least, ambiguous. Thus, I once again protest against total responsibility as this puts the criminal on one level with his victim. Only in this awareness can there be sense and true force in the famous words about the engagement of entire humanity by every individual act.

## **7. CONCLUSION—DIALOGUE AND HUMANISM**

Modern-day humanism, a humanism that offers fundamentals for authentic dialogue, should today proclaim not only the freedom, equality and brotherhood heralded by the French Revolution, but also the immense importance of cognition because cognition is a fundamental value. It must also proclaim versatility, which is a sign of humanism and a necessity of our day, and—as I have tried to show here—human responsibility in its varying scope and intensity, because the fate of our environment, and even entire humanity, rests upon the shoulders of us all and, even if in a minute degree, on the shoulders of every individual human being.

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