

**Existence and co-existence as a phenomenon**

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**Abstract**

*Existence and co-existence as a phenomenon.* – The intention of this article is to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of our current predicaments. To reach this goal the article uses and develops some key ideas of the renowned phenomenological philosophers. There is always the ontological need present in our existence. We encounter this need mostly in suppression of our fear from the finitude of our life. Precisely this fear is the source of many evils in our society. The fear of death can be cured only by the care of the soul. And this care is nothing but a dialogue we are in with ourselves in confidentiality.

**Keywords:** ex-sistence, co-existence, ‘das Ge-Stell’, modern manipulation**Klíčová slova:** existence, koexistence, „das Ge-Stell“, moderní manipulace

By “ex-sistence” we mean the emerging of figures of bodily motion on our way of life, as it is very well described by Martin Heidegger in his *Wegmarken*.<sup>1</sup> Man as ZON LOGON ECHON is nothing but a dialogue. When the dialogue proceeds with words, we call it speaking. When the dialogue proceeds without words, we call it saying. This distinction is also well-known from Martin Heidegger. Let us take a look at how nowadays the dialogues take place without words; when the individual needs to understand what the boss strictly demands; when for instance one is deprived of his function because he is too old according to the boss. Then we have a phenomenon of a dialogue without words, by saying, not by speaking. Now, the older one sees that he is replaced by someone younger, who obviously tries to assert himself/herself without scruples. Even this phenomenon belongs to our present *ex-sistere*.

One is in a dialogue with his environment, with the situation, and the world – one is situated in the dialogue even in one’s sleep and dreams. These are the dialogues in which man becomes a thinker. Not because one yearns for it, but because he cannot otherwise. And that is because the dialogue begins with the *privation*, we miss something very important and this privation is a source of questions that overwhelm one as bandits. It cannot be otherwise! Such a privation regards the questions as being born in ourselves and constitutes the foundation for education. Our existence is a constant dialogue, an incessant searching for the right way.

According to Hegel, “the existence is being caused from a reason”.<sup>2</sup> We need to remind that “cause” is something very dangerous. Why? A cause is particular and without the simple inevitability. First of all, the reason is the unity of identity and difference and we can understand this identity as something determining. But the reason is mainly something relevant for the individual person and his existence, in his own personal reflection that has no

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin. *Wegmarken*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976, s. 189.

<sup>2</sup> HEGEL, Georg. W. F. *Logika*. Bratislava: Slovenská akademie věd, 1961, p. 170.

substantial necessity in itself. That is why for Hegel the category of reason is conceived as the particularity demanding the universality, i.e., the difference and the identity. And that is why the category of reason is particular, the specific is the difference and the identity is the universal. The triad: particular-specific-universal is very important here in its relation to existence. The reason must be real not only in itself, but also for others, i.e., it must be specific and identical for others, not only in itself. That is why “existence is the immediate unity of reflection in itself and reflection in the other”.<sup>3</sup>

“Ex-sistere” is the accomplishment of reasons, and the reasons as Aristotelian ENTELECHEIA or possibility (DYNAMIS) comes to light, and this motion is called EN-ARGEIA (ENERGEIA). This coming to light, the phenomenalization, the accomplishing of actuality is being in itself and for the others as well. And that is the life itself. We need to phenomenalize in our own ERGA, i.e., in our own deeds.<sup>4</sup>

Hegel would add: “Who is one on the outside that means in his deeds (not only in his bodily extension) such one is in the inside. And if he is virtuous and moral only in inside, i.e., in his intentions and his exterior is not identical with it then the both his sides are empty.”<sup>5</sup> The *decursus vitae* shows his true side to everyone.

What is missing in our present existence? We call it “the profundity” with Eugen Fink: “The profundity is not in the degree of experience, rather the power of the world.”<sup>6</sup> To share this power is possible only in form of my own act. That is why our own gathering is so important. It is a big mistake to believe that the one-dimensionality of our present existence will be destroyed by selling the “deep” experiences, manufactured in the present entertaining machinery.

In Cartesian thinking, restricted to what is *clare et distincte*, “we lost our belief in the innocence of the obvious concealment”.<sup>7</sup> We begin to uncover hermeneutically the layers of DOXA (belief) and it does not bring us to the state called EUDAIMONIA by Greeks. We are not able to just be in the silence, because the silence reminds us of our guilt.

To our human ex-sisting does not belong only what is constituted as phenomena, but the background (*Hintegrund*) as well. This background lets phenomena appear, so the background is more important, for only through knowing about it we can have a spiritual person. Without it, we only have a polymath. All categorical positivity is understandable only thanks to the negative background that has no place in the sense of TOPOS, in the sense of geometrical form. Before any positive place, there is a background that has no margin, the Greeks called it CHORA.

What do we need to become the spiritual persons? We need the CHORISMOS. This word means: the knowing about the ontological difference, i.e., about the difference between beings and Being. Being is the background of all backgrounds; even if we know very well that such a helping idea can misguide us. Why? Because, in case Being would be a background, it also

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the Biblical statement: “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” (*Mt* 7,16)

<sup>5</sup> HEGEL, Georg. W. F. *Logika*, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup> FINK, Eugen. *Existenz und Coexistenz*. Wuerzburg: Koenigshausen & Neumann, 1987, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

needs to phenomenize thanks to something. But Being does not phenomenize, it is the last. What misguides us in thinking of Being? Mostly, the misguiding is that our being is trapped in causality, thus searching for the cause. But Being is not a cause, it is rather the foundation that can be uncovered only by an original spring (*Sprung*), in German: “der Ur-Sprung”. Only in this courageous spring we can get to Being. That is why one needs courage to be alone.

If the substantial ground is missing and everything is ruled by causality, then the sophistry takes place, similarly as we can see it in the media machinery, used as an instrument of power by “Machthabers”. Without the substantial ground that means without the insight into the inception (*der Anfang*) and the essence one cannot be just. Understanding this is rather late accomplishment, one needs to be fully grown. This might explain why the philosophy is replaced by sociology, politics, and anthropology that are expanding extensively in their descriptions and the intentions to the simple comprehension are missing in them. The polymath, is the most dangerous – the one, who has a systematic knowledge but without the origin (*der Anfang*), being born for the first and the last time. The POLYMATHEIA is the origin for HYBRIS, the arrogance of those who do not know what they do not know. Such a situation is the worst in POLIS.

Our existence and co-existence is a place for remedying the human issues, as Comenius wrote about it. “Is there a fire in the steel, Sulphur and pepper? Answer: If it is possible to make them appear from them, then it must be there.”<sup>8</sup> What is substantial must be in the thing itself – that is why we need to return to the things themselves in our thinking, not to our ideas about them, which we get from the multiplicity of human sciences. The availability and accountability is what sociology, politics and anthropology feeds on. The existing person as a co-existence with the others is always a dialogue, and yet the ancient Greeks prefer the dialogue with themselves. Why is that so? The answer is simple; the dialogue with myself is a dialogue with POLIS, with KOSMOS, and with Being as well. We people are open to something that is the highest. We have a soul into which everything fits. The care for the soul is a foundation of the European tradition. “Any drop of water has the properties of all water.”<sup>9</sup>

Living human is nothing but a dialogue. What provides the foundation here is the speech, which we must distinguish from the object language, useful for formal operations, as it is in computer languages. Liberals are misguided when they think that the past being is not involved in our present. Our bond with the dead ones is more important than we are willing to admit. Without them we would not be able to be bodily present, we are in co-existence with them. That is the reason why Sophocles’ *Antigone* is an immortal masterpiece and its depth is hard to appreciate for us. The dead ones from the wars, from concentration camps, from times of peace provide a foundation for our existence. Everything dead returns to the mother Earth.

Liberals are open only for the future, they are immature and voluntaristic. The dead ones are in a dialogue with us without words, by their silence that cannot be broken. They call us back for what lies in our hidden and dark places of our soul. No one can escape it. Hannah Arendt writes about the people without scruples – this is the figure of evil in modern times. But we cannot delegate our own responsibility to something objective as a government, party, market or God. This is the point of Lévinas’ idea of ethical asymmetry.

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<sup>8</sup> KOMENSKÝ, Jan Amos. *Obecná porada o nápravě věcí lidských*. Praha: Svoboda, 1992, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

*Being 'in situ' means being involved in an unfinished business. And such a situation brings up fear as a part of the ontological need (die Not). We cannot escape this fear; only reconcile ourselves with it – that is the inevitability. And precisely this fear is what modern man is not prepared for. This is die Furcht that Heidegger describes in his Sein und Zeit as distinct from die Angst.<sup>10</sup> Considering the second one, we do not know its cause. Ontological need has no clear and distinct cause. One needs to distinguish the ontological and ontic aspect here. That is something that special sciences cannot do. Today, people are escaping from themselves, from the fear, and they are not able to ex-sist freely. They do not live from their own source, but from the manufactured motivations.*

Each of us is in the state of ontological need and it does not matter whether we are poor or rich. Everyone needs to search for the right possibility in his ontic and ontological need in his situation. In our decision we need to make in almost every moment of our life the ARCHE is involved, our origin that we inherit from our ancestors in the form of dispositions; the TELOS, DYNAMIS, and ENERGEIA. The decision cannot be reduced to the mere cause, as it mostly happens. There is *ratio essendi* at work in us, not only *ratio cognoscendi*.

*Ratio essendi* is constituted in the intuition of essences. It is a difficult and substantial process. And precisely this truthfulness is what people are afraid of. They are deprived of courage to overcome the ontological need. But the one who knows about the ontological need will always need philosophy with its intention “ad Unum vertere”! One cannot do without it. The courage plays an eminent role in Plato’s philosophy and we can get to it by care for the soul and the body as well.

Modern man is so foam-backed that he does not want to make decisions about anything at all and he delegates his will to the so called excellent experts, who do not know anything about the CHORISMOS and Being. We need to add that the modern evil has the form of banality and no one here is to blame for it as Hannah Arendt shows us.

Understanding the philosophical essences, i.e., to have the insight, is not a question of a progress as it is in the sciences. Philosophy is participation on insights, not a coherent protocol. Philosophy is METHESIS, not a congruent protocol with pre-ordained system as it works in cybernetics. Who only executes commands from “das Ge-stell” as a machine is like a figure from Orwell’s dystopia. We need individuals who are able to distinguish the inevitable from the redundant and those are the ones who are able of METHESIS, of participation, with the ability to insight into an essence. Such people cannot be educated mechanically – so much should be clear. That is why “the one who cannot listen does not govern well”.<sup>11</sup> The dialogue that guarantees the education we speak about includes the dialogue with words, but even more the dialogue without words.

We are being brought up by situations into which we are thrown. In these situations nothing can be planned, one stands “in situ”, in an unpredictable and unsecure situation in which he must decide for himself. And this is a big problem today, people do not like to decide *hic et nunc*, they perceive it as threatening and insecure, so they delegate their will to specialists. People escape their freedom “to make their own lives”. To repeat, ex-sistence is the emergence of motion figures on the path of life; we are always heading somewhere and

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin. *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993, § 30 and § 40.

<sup>11</sup> KOMENSKÝ, Jan Amos. *Obecná porada*, p. 80.

coming from somewhere; we are in situations that threaten us. From all this, the possibility must arise, the inner purpose, ENTELECHEIA, which then turns into ERGON, the deed. This is the scheme of the dialogue which we are. In our life, we engage in co-existence (*Mitsein*) with others and for others (*Fürsein*). We are the being-in-a-dialogue.

It is this “Mitsein” or “Miteinandersein” that has been the focus of many philosophers in the last few centuries. It interested many distinguished Jewish philosophers who dealt with the issue of existence, like Martin Buber or Emmanuel Lévinas. They both have thousands of followers who try to go deep in this issue of co-existence. Eugen Fink observes that “we always stand in the field of common interpretation”.<sup>12</sup> It is actually a kind of dialogue in which thinking, feeling, will, hope, friendship, hostility, those who are dead and alive co-exist in the simple inevitability that cannot be objectified – the essence. This essence is living, changing and pulsating, unstoppable, it is the life of the whole that cannot be pre-ordained and has no geometrical margins.

It cannot be objectified as productive forces and relationships of production. Such co-existence is much more. And yet, thousands and thousands of politicians, money-makers, lawyers, and many others try to accomplish the task to put this essence under their command. “Miteinandersein” is not the sum of individuals. It is an internal intentional intertwining of our temporality, it cannot be anatomically removed. Maybe a better term is “Durcheinandersein” (going through one and the other at the same moment). We know these phenomena from Aristotle – from his definition of man as ZOON LOGON ECHON and ZOON POLITIKON. We can see the structure of “Durcheinandersein” in the phenomenon of speech.

Through the speech goes the intention “ad Unum vertere”, “to turn to the One”. This intention, phenomenologically speaking, is the “Intention-zur-Welt-sein”. That is why we can assert: home is constituted as a prolongation of the body and by this prolongation the landscape is constituted that is a moment within the higher whole. And by prolongation of the landscape is the world constituted. Finally, by prolongation of the world we can get to the One, to the Being. All of this is put together by the intention that gathers us together with the Being, with the world, with the landscape.

This gathering, which is from the Greek LEGEIN, is the intention to unity that needs to be appropriated so that one can encounter and participate on the simple inevitability of the “self-same”, of the numerically identical thing itself, where man and the Being is one and the same thing. Then we are in peace, we are in a peace of mind, in the state called by Greeks EUDAIMONIA. Man has an infinite soul that is able to conceive everything. And thanks to speech that affirms everything man becomes close to gods. Hölderlin was not mistaken saying that the poet is a semi-god.

There is a bond between “I” and “You”, not in the sense of subject-object relation, as it is in human sciences, but Lévinas’ responsibility for *acher*, for the otherness and difference. That is why the Jewish word for responsibility is *acharajut*. The subject-object relation to man leads inevitably to tattooed numbers on the forearms of the prisoners in the concentration camps. No one can remain hidden in his interior, the interiority is impossible. To “enown”

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<sup>12</sup> FINK, Eugen. *Existenz und Coexistenz*, p. 45.

(*ereignen*) oneself and the world is not in contradiction with this Lévinas' responsibility, the other is identical with me, we are one thing while preserving the otherness of the other.

When two mirrors face each other, they show an infinite depth, an image of bilateral asymmetry that belongs to responsibility. To the individual belongs "die Umwelt", the environment with all the details. And "die Umwelt" belongs to the world. We speak about the infinite depth that man is able to understand. Why is that so? It is because the soul is also an infinite depth. The soul is a wonder of wonders.

Man cannot be only an ontic substance, in that case he would be nothing but a slave. Man is free thanks to his relation to the Being. "Man is *ensontologicum*, he is Being that understands, the living substance."<sup>13</sup> The Greek gods gave people two gifts: AIDOS and DIKE (shame and order). Till today, we do not fully understand what shame is, but we have a clue, we "sense" that shame connects us with the Being. And that is why AIDOS appears when people are close to death; we just need to understand shame and somehow it is not possible.

Perhaps, shame is a privation of something very important, manifesting itself in our regret. So shame and regret are bound together in some way as well. In regret, there is the reconciliation with the inevitable. But despite this reconciliation sadness remains in regret. And shame disappears in the modern nihilism; it is replaced by the assertivity. Today, people become brutal, as if they return to animals and their instinctiveness. This instinctiveness is an expression of force, the power over the others. Thus we can see Nietzschean nihilism in every aspect of our present existence.

Among other things, this nihilism is present even in political aggressive PSEUDOS. To put it with Heidegger: "The basic meaning of 'PSEUDOS' lies in covering."<sup>14</sup> The meaning is "re-built". This kind of lie is visible when one lies on purpose. People just do not know the essence of thing they claim to be true. The unconcealment (ALÉTHEIA) is not understood from the issue itself, but from the ideas easily imputed in people's minds by means of some media. The "re-building" means misplacing the issue itself with something else (*das Verstellen*; purposefully adjusting).

We can understand this misplacing when we consider the structure of the sign: the sign always unfolds and conceals something at the same time. The sign cannot be whole true, the unconcealment. And the symbolic character, the operation with signs belongs to what I call "the digital thinking". Zero is a sign for untrue, one is a sign for true. But the numbers are only symbols. They signify something not unconcealed, but in part concealed. That is why we say that the half-truth is more dangerous than the whole lie. Heidegger provides us with an example: "The cave hides something, but as a cave it remains unconcealed."<sup>15</sup>

That is how politics works today, by means of half-truths and PSEUDOS. We need to consider the phenomenon of correctness, in Greek: ORTHOTES. In law, the forensic evidence can be correct that means in coherence with the norm given in advance. And yet this correct evidence can be untrue. Rich criminals rely on this difference between truth and correctness – the formal incorrectness, the incoherence with the technological process of the law can nullify

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> HEIDEGGER, Martin. *Parmenides*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.



the case. The truth is the unconcealment, i.e., it must be shown from itself, not from the coherence with some pre-ordained system. In order to get to the truth, we must be open to the unconcealment of the thing itself. In such case, we are the same with the issue itself and that is why we do not need the external evidence. The origin is the highest, but it comes to us at the latest.

Thinking is nothing but attention to what is essential. Because the origin is the most essential, we arrive to it in the end. The origin is our own being, our own source that belongs to Being in the sense of METHEXIS. This is the “enowning” (*Ereignis*) and fulfillment of our life. Existence is the emergence of motion figures as an expression of our bodies on the path of our life – the expression is guided by the goal, it goes from our personal origin, inherited from our ancestors, thrown in the situations in which we must struggle with many issues. Such a struggle is also a search for possibilities as solutions of the issue we are facing. There is never one hundred percent certainty that the modern man wants.

These possibilities are very important in our existence. And the deepest possibility that a philosopher wants to encounter is the possibility to be. Just be. To achieve this, he must go through CHORISMOS, the primordial KENOSIS (emptying from the form), so that he could be fulfilled with PLEROMA. When a man has accomplished this task, he finds himself in the calm of the soul and without fear in the deep reconciliation with everything.

We remind the reader of the ontological comparative. This idea teaches us that we can be less or more. We can find this comparative in Aristotle’s distinction between BIOS APOLAUSTIKOS, BIOS POLITIKOS and BIOS THEORETIKOS. Being in the closeness with Being itself means to be more – that is what we call happiness.

Hermeneutical figure KENOSIS and PLEROMA promoted by a Czech philosopher Zdeněk Neubauer in the 1990s. This figure is the way to “enowning” (*Ereignis*). It is a road leading to self-knowledge and at the same time also the hermeneutical figure of sacrifice. In sacrifice, the animal must be emptied out of its form; this is the meaning of KENOSIS. Here, the idea of CHÓRISMOS is at work, CHÓRISMOS as an absolute difference from what establishes our freedom.

The ontological need brings the privation. And from the privation the question is being born. And again, the question is more important than the answer. Why is the question more important? Because the question is constitutive for understanding that starts from encountering with the unknown answer in the living situation on the path of our life. The one who has no question lives in the midst of the mind. This applies also to the modern man in our age of technology. Many experts live this kind of life.

There is always the ontological need present in our existence. We encounter this need mostly in suppression of our fear from the finitude of our life. Precisely this fear is the source of many evils in our society. The reconciliation with the insurmountable belongs to our education. The fear from death can be cure only by care of the soul. And this care is nothing but a dialogue we are in with ourselves in the unconcealment.

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