

On Humanization of Life

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Abstract. To go on in the business of living, man needs a basic certainty. This is what I interpret as metaphysics. A prerequisite for making metaphysics is that you have some understanding of Biography of Philosophy. On the other hand, life is not a pre-given entity; it depends on what you do out it. This is the action directed aspects of life. In short, what I am arguing for is that the human being itself is the foundation for every story we tell and re-tell about what we have done, and what we are doing in review of our plans and project for the future.

Keywords: life, Metaphysics, biography of philosophy, the human being

The subject of my research is life. Talking of and thinking of life as my own life means to conceptualize it in terms of an aspiration, or from some place in the world where the main concern is a dialogic relation between my *quid* (what I am) and my *quis* (who I am).

In other words, what I talk of is the relation between my circumstances and my situation in life. Thus my life is a basic aspiration, rooted in what I have gone through, what I have experienced. This again means that if my construction does backs out of the life I have lived through. I live alongside myself, or like a stranger in the house I myself have built. For this reason the starting up with philosophy is a humble venture, and being such a humble venture it means that in life there is no guarantee in advance that one will succeed with such a project. The stepping forward as a philosopher at the same time means to stake everything on one single throw, and when the lot has fallen there are no possibilities of resigning. This means that every attempt at resigning is meaningless. In this respect my life is not anything which is so to say given in advance; it all is determined by what is made out of it. Alternatively formulated: What talents and gifts you might possess is not the most important in life; what really counts is what you make out of your talents and your gifts. Life is the most unforgiveable there is: It is silent, reserved. Therefore it steps forward as something in need of to be humanized. The act of writing means to treat

what is problematic in our lives: As human beings we often lack strength and power, we do not have a clear understanding of ourselves and other persons, we live our lives in uncertainty, concerning both what happened yesterday and our days into what does not yet exist, the day tomorrow. Nevertheless, to be able to live, people need and depend on being strong, learned and confident. For this reason I am stuck with what means the most to me, forever: working with philosophy.

My basic concept is: People have their own lives to live, and they have their own lives to go through. This needs an explanation. To have a life to go through is what is common and which is common to a great number of human beings, and thus it is what is normally meant with “the ordinary”.

This means: Providing a person has been put into life and world, that he or she grows up, attends school, finds a work, gets a hobby, attends some society or makes a career in some political party, or by becoming an artist, this definite person, living here and now, whatever what or who it is, and who also has its own individual history of life, has one and only one life to go through. In addition to this way of characterising people and their lives, it should also be remembered that they grow older, are taken ill, at that at last they die.

Thus life is about many heterogenic circumstances, but it is also about significance and meaning in the respect that we humans do not only go through our lives, or that it all runs away like a machine, or that it is based on routines; for we also need to know, experience, or feel, that some reason or base is given to our lives, and not only that what we do has its reasons, for we also make concerns of questions like why we are here, and what meaning and significance life on earth has to us. We can formulate it like this: To us human beings it is extremely important that the life we go through does not just disappear up and into the outer world, in the form of material prestige and status, or where we belong in some or other social structure. The meaning is: A complete life includes the aesthetical dimension as well as the ethical one, but even philosophy (eloquence, education), for in our display of life we meet with phenomenon like society, culture, tradition, history and religion, and then the challenge will be how to relate to these aspects of life. Of course we also meet with ideas, ideals, norms, values and judgments, or what functional roles they play in human life, for example their mutual compatibility. We may also meet the challenge of living in very fast changing urban societies, concerning both the physical framing of the space where we walk about, and the people we encounter and deal with in our daily life.

This means that our lives include ideas and actions, they concern feelings, perceptions and the inner memory as well as meaning and meaning of life, not to forget what contributions philosophy and literature can offer about the phenomenon mentioned above.

The last mentioned – about meaning (and meaning of life) – I will formulate in the direction of our activities as human beings meaning that we let time or life be concerned with valuable activities through active involvement in one's own situation, and it means to interfere with one's own plans and projects, or at least be aware of the need for different plans and projects which one even strives to realize or carry into effect. As to me it simply means to look upon my own life as a dynamic project into the future.

What is certain is that our life and our words and our conceptions of life have to go the long way through language and communications because the use of language and communication are human activities: This is what we as human beings do and something we are met with, and to which we relate and involve ourselves in, may it be because we are linguists or because we are *in* the language or the language is *within* ourselves, for every time we address somebody outside ourselves, or we enter a so called "monologue with ourselves", e.g. *dia-lo* (from Greek where the prefix *dia* means through and the mean word stem – *log* – concerns words, meaning that speech manifests itself through words, leading to meaningful speech), language and communication are necessary constituents if anything conceivable should take place. Any human language having a certain *grammar* is a matter of course to anybody having got a systematic education as to the dimensions of language; even life having it may to begin with seem to be a curious point of view. We can reverse it all by stating that much is in favour of the supposition that unless we attain understanding of the life history of some human being we do not know either what or who that person is. This means that circumstances like time (when) and place (where) and the factual circumstances (how, why) play basic parts in really getting to know some person (who).

Thus I maintain that much can be learned about our circumstances and our situation in the world by becoming deeply absorbed in different linguistic moods like poetics, prose and scripture, because they concern our unique situation and what we are as unique, irretrievable persons.

By the very fact that my activities and my work are connected with philosophy and literature this implies that my life has already got a certain form with a certain content. Presumably the lives we have to live, through

the many small choices we have made, even implies that they have just got a certain direction, not necessarily being based on some lasting project of life, like for instance reading books about philosophy and oneself writing books on philosophy.

Thus my interests and values involve me in both what we do from day to day, meaning “daily life”, and what is described in terms of “existential problematics”.

METAPHYSICS

What has been said so far even applies to *Ideas of metaphysics*. From times immemorial the ideas of metaphysics and something being of a metaphysic nature have meant a number of different things. Firstly, they concern general qualities of the world and the experience, and their inner structure. Secondly, they concern transcendental forms, or universal forms. Thirdly, they concern the natural development/the life and history of man and the conceptions connected with them, in the fourth place they concern logic studies of ideas and their history, and in the fifth place, being of a cognitive-linguistic type: They imply a closer examination of the use of words, or the literal signification included in such a conception.

As a common denominator of the five types of metaphysics mentioned above I will point out the study of humans (soul), the world (matter), and God (the absolute).

From my point of view the idea of metaphysics means devoting oneself to a *radical* search for an inner certainty of belief in the highest, utmost and ultimate concerns, or for my own inner reality: whether there exists something in my innermost or deepest self, implying that if I do not take account of it, my life will be wasted, meaning that I so to say live outside myself in a state of apparent life, a life of falseness or illusion. The idea of the existence of something which means or implies that our life is a life of lies is based on the existence of something implying a life of truthfulness, or an ambition to lead a *real* life; to me this means not just an inner certainty of belief but, above all, that I strive for the actualisation of what to me is real and true about myself. The meaning of this is: There are at least two criteria of such a life: 1) that your life backs out of a certain internally anchored certainty of life which could be described in terms of “something genuine” (original, faithfulness to an inner desire, something you feel to be yourself, with which you identify yourself or *are*), and 2) that you live *authentically* (that you try to live up to your inner certainty of belief,

that you strive for realisation of yourself through relating yourself to the plans or projects you might have, of which one or more emerges as your basic project). I would also maintain that when you lead such an intense life, this is also what you constantly return to, since it is an expression of what or who you are, not letting go of you. This also implies a certain passiveness of life, in the meaning that you have to realise it, you have to comprehend and accept who you are and what you have become as a human being.

In this sense I can formulate it in the direction of the humanizing of life so to say claims from everyone of us a *certain type* of metaphysics, because no exploration of ourselves is possible lest there occurs some clarification, or some presentation of reasons, or the base of our life in the world – its *logon didonai* – meaning a *philosophical* presentation of the multitude of elements, or peculiarities of human life *as* human lives and the way in which these peculiarities or characteristics are connected, and this means that it concerns the multiple structure of the dimension we call “human life”.

HISTORY: A REMINDER TO OURSELVES

From my point of view it is just the dimension we describe as human life which emerges in our mind and is brought into focus of our attention through the transition from the great systems of thought to another type of philosophy, viz. all those who took themselves as starting point and from an inner desire to practise philosophy (like e.g. the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel and the Spanish philosopher Julián Marías).

It is possible to talk about and think of the last things without including theology and all the nameless ontological conditions which, by earlier thinkers, were tacitly taken for given (that terrible events in human life correspond to dreadful screams out in nature, outside ourselves, concerning cosmological balance, or some ontologically based justice, in which we rightfully do not more believe). If we connect what is treated above with this, it is very important to maintain thinkers like Platon, Aristotle, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Descartes and Hume, Kant and Hegel, even if their basic ontological qualifications have long since lost their credibility. Without their efforts we would after all hardly have had any information and knowledge about what we are and who we are as human beings; the questions rising in our minds concern the essence of their philosophy (metaphysics, ontology, ethic reasonings and political

scriptures) are adequate, even fully understandable to us living today, even if the antique world differs fundamentally from our times.

Perhaps this could be formulated in the following direction: that what it is all about is to turn off from two pitfalls. The first one is the attempt to dress up as they did, i.e. give, or try to give, the same content to our philosophical discourse as they did (Plato, Aristotle). The second one is to ease them away from us by looking at their system of thinking as completely obsolete, some thoughts originating more than two thousand years ago and thus something we do not need any more. Reasons for the last attitude may arrive from their verbal expressions, their vocabulary and conceptual apparatus not agreeing with our own, or that they have been overtaken by a less exaggerated, more sober or unbiased basic orientation, like the one met with in natural sciences, where all thinking not emerging from empirical investigation of reality is rejected.

What I have treated above is also due to all systematically thought (philosophy) after 1900, that one has rejected the great time of systems, turned one's back on philosophy, betrayed the heritage from the past.

In antiquity, for example, people felt uneasy about natural forces, believing or thinking that nature was filled with gods, giants and heroes (Zeus, Ares, Prometheus, Poseidon, Chronos); in Middle Ages there was a fear of perdition, Hell and Purgatory while in modern times, from the 18. and 19. century to our own century, the things produced by ourselves are more feared than anything else. Our own times stress the colossal, while the small is attached to almost no significance. What is stressed is comfort and safety, an attitude emerging from a consequence-oriented advantage philosophy, based on the life of great numbers, in the meaning of everything being focussed on the highest possible happiness (benefit, pleasure) for the biggest possible number of human beings, or orienting oneself in the direction of reducing pain (reluctance) for most possible people.

It is far from sure if reduction of pain is alpha and omega in human life since no human beings can live a whole life without pains and suffering (which does not mean that I go in for being a votary of pains and sufferings as a value of its own).

The countermove of human beings facing things which are mightier than themselves, thus forcing upon them fear, horror and anxiety, is to try to take control over them. Thus is it reasonable to understand, interpret and expound the mentioned, previous epochs as some titanic attempt at, from the human side, to pile up philosophic and theologic systems of thought which can contribute to an existence as a human being becoming

something positive, providing everyone of us with new strenght of life and a durable *joie de vivre*. In accordance with this the different sciences, like modern medical, health and social sciences, have also a practical purpose, viz. the development of a certain technology, so that all the hazards and all the nameless terrors with which people fought and struggled in previous times, could be overcome once and for all.

THE IDEA OF ATARAXIA (CALMNESS OF MIND)

A passable path into life's multitude of aspects, or dimensions, is to think according to some basic attitude; life as a rule appears like a restless ocean where the one who rows the boat and the ocean itself could barely be distinguished between: Thus there is both following and contrary wind, reliefs and inconveniences, fortune and misfortune, soon shifting to fortune, and vice versa. For this reason it can seem reasonable to keep the calmness of mind, even if life flows easily by, or if one becomes stuck, or if one does only spin and spin, without making any progress.

Immediately a serious objection to such an adopted stoicism appears: The risk of adopting a stoic attitude to life is apathy, or the total indifference to everything, including my self and my own life.

BIOGRAPHY OF PHILOSOPHY

It is not only human persons who have individual biographies, or who have *biographical* lives to live, for it can also be transferred to philosophy, as a *homology*, meaning that Antiquity had another philosophy than what we find in the Middle Ages, and medieval philosophy, as well as Renaissance philosophy and every succeeding philosophy, were different from modern philosophy. If we try to put what has been discussed above into a historical-biographical context like *biography of philosophy*, it has always been so that being concerned with philosophy has meant to relate oneself to the time, the place and what the specific circumstances demand from the person who engages in the activity called philosophy, and even in one's personal life where the challenge is to keep floating by living in accordance with the world in which one lives and the items one has taken on board, or into one's own life, so one can continue to live, and die, with decency safe and sound.

According to Aristotle and his philosophical teachings, or conception, people live their lives in mind and body, and their different understanding

comprise the entire world. Because manhood, and only manhood, has language and reason, and because human beings, according to their nature, are equipped with the ability to separate between good and evil, right and wrong, they therefore have the capacity to perform ethical choices of acts, and to take responsibility for their choices.

With Pax Romana Christianity is made part of the Roman state, and the idea of charity and compassion is expanded to the inclusion of all Roman citizen. We are familiar with examples of slaves having been set free by being admitted to the society of free citizenship (e.g. the philosopher Epictetus). Throughout the Middle Ages the Christianity's Ideas of Creation, God's love to mankind, compassion, forgiveness and salvation serve as sustaining forces for a number of personalities (St. Augustin, Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, Cusanus). At this time people even constructed ethical systems, arts and culture in the shape of paintings and beautifully elaborated church buildings, together with sophisticated construction of ideas, based on inner certainty of faith (*Summa Theologica*). With the explorations of the world outside what today is called Europe a meeting between different ways of life, worlds of life, practical habits and types of government takes place. The European spirit is given a new direction through the emphasis of the practical aspect of human life, such as the development of trade and interaction with different peoples within the European continent proper, like the new land areas being looked after and secured.

Parallel to the explorations of the world outside Europe there also occurs a transition from ways of life based on crafts and artistic a structuring of life to ways of life in which the new sciences and instrumental use of these, through social and political organization of labour, with emphasis on goal-directed activity, efficacy and economical profit, has the upper hand. The uniformity of medieval culture is something having been abandoned for good by people, at any rate when it comes to the conception of the persons controlling the means of power, or the dominant classes, groups and social strata in Europe. Thus a number of scientific philosophers have revealed to us, through their exploration of the period and world called "the Enlightenment" (for example Toulmin), the main parts of the population live on as if nothing had happened, common people having no idea of what had been going on in areas like science and technology, social economics not to mention the bureaucratic, administrative and productive organization of labour.

In the perspective of the period called "Renaissance" considerable alterations take place, a score of materials in the form of ruins and

manuscripts in Greek and Latin are made accessible to people in Europe, the background being that the people of Byzantine had to flee the Turks. The term “Renaissance” encompasses several meanings, which at first glance do not seem to be present: the prefix ‘re’ often pointing in the direction of repetitions, but even at decline or regression; much more important is the fact that people, by losing oneself in the past and its many documents, also make their way forwards, into the future. Thus the term ‘renaissance’, when connected to the main stem of the word (*nessaince*) means that something new is taking form, though not from a single starting-point, because there is a continuous beginning, meaning that one must all the time start again.

With the progress of the different sciences there occurs a declassification, or a degradation of man as a kind of itself, as it is placed on a level with any other living species on Earth. And with the ongoing approbation of different doctrines on what constitutes the ‘true’ nature of human beings and their pre-formed needs, it is from now on imperative to seek the means by which one could possibly meet or satisfy what could in advance be taken to constitutive what is really needed by man to have a good life. This again means that the instrumental or the technological and socially determined conception of life and the world gains the position of defining the specific qualities of *Homo sapiens*.

According to my view there are thus different ways to handle the crisis in which philosophy finds itself in modern times, and this is just connected with a thorough consideration of what epistemological ways may lead to the real truth of ourselves. This is true as long as the basic pattern of all correct philosophy and all inductive and deductive orientation, based on evidence, along with verification/falsification of statements, scientific explanations, definitions and descriptions, do not go beyond the limitations given because we fail to draw up limits between the questions of *what* understanding and learning is, and – on the contrary – the search for *criteria* of understanding, or what it is to start with definitions of understanding and learning.

Thus, certainly the basic consumption of the idea of understanding and learning is that we have already a kind of perception of what understanding and learning mean, even if we can’t provide an explicit definition of it; these things are also discussed by Plato, in the dialogue *The Sophist*.

The alternative to the above mentioned conception is to look upon understanding and learning as something expressing (unfolding) the whole idea; we human beings need some preconceived sense of, or feeling for,

what is meant by these ideas if we may altogether engage ourselves in methodical exploration of what it is all about.

Much better than losing oneself in fruitless speculations on past ontology, it is important to try out the limits of what can be said without breaking the limits of what gives meaning. Here, thus, it appears that there is very much to engage oneself in since we have not at all a clear understanding of what we say, or whether we express what we mean. In addition it is also a fact that if we become able to express what we mean this does not only mean to use phrases we have got from the language of the society in which we grew up and whose words and expressions have become almost matters-of-course; it is also important to make the words *live*, something taking place through innovative, new creative, *innovative* use of the language: everyone of us having something to add, something to give from ourselves, and which only we ourselves can gain, and nobody else than we ourselves.

To achieve and gain knowledge of what really counts in human life, founded on certain basic experiences, and what these experiences do with you of me, is not something which could be explored by virtue of certain scientific methods, thus providing a certain base consisting of independent data, by which the one having had the experiences could claim support for the hypothesis, or the scientific theory she or he is arguing for; we humans are more than what secularized thinking/science brings forward and to the language. This means that we are thrown back upon what goes beyond, what goes further than what all technical philosophy and all science can teach us, for what is far mightier than ourselves is immanent in our lives, even if it is and becomes something exceeding our limited power and our position in time and space and within the time we have at our disposal (say eighty years).

Not until our own times, with the historical consciousness and the realization that the world has approached us so much and that so much still lies ahead, concerning the exploration of life, it has become clear to us that there are some central dimensions of life that neither can be conceptualized through the *calculating* reason or any other *empirical* science. This is far from meaning that there are good reasons to doubt our conscience and reason concerning the first and last things, only that it is about *lux humana*: that we humans take into use our human reason concerning things belonging to ourselves and our lives, and that we choose not to believe that the *secularization* itself has the last word as to what we are and who we are.

Modern culture has a rough time because it seems to suffer mentally in legitimating itself as culture; pure science is not able to seek out good arguments for it since there in spite of everything exists an anticipated hope for mankind; that life is valuable, that it is far better to take care of life than to destroy it, that there exists something holy and untouchable in human life. The only possible thing is to proceed in such a manner that the world and life and knowledge and truth seem to be identical with goods which can be bought and sold at the market. This means: Here applied science steps in as technology, whether or not it is described in terms of human.

According to my understanding and experience one certain characteristic is very precise when it comes to the expression of what is basic and important in life, in a phenomenological as well as a conceptual sense: We human beings are what we do and what we meet with, and we are all the like as to what comes out of it; it is a good thing that books are released about other humans and their lives, for it may happen that someone is accused of having committed terrible things, and then a book is appropriate, so that this human being may be purified once and for all.

From the formulation I have brought forward it follows that it is inadequate to characterize life in terms of something given in advance, as if it should come under some or other natural science or in extensive cooperation with different natural sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology), as if life should fit into the modern habit of making it a topic of biologic science (neurology + some modern type of social darwinistic orientation).

Perhaps it would be far more appropriate if we started with looking at ourselves as experts on ourselves and our lives, rather than leaving it to people who observe and analyse it from outside, in an extern perspective. At any rate the words and ideas which I have and which I have to my disposal, the starting point is that it is something running from moment to moment, daytime and light being followed by night and dark, and that one day follows after another; so life is to human beings something *reticent, internal, silent*. Somehow the above mentioned condition in some respect, out from itself elicits the idea that such a silence has to be broken, for the day of today is like yesterday and the day of tomorrow is just a bad repetition of the day before, so it all emerges as an inhuman condition, or as sequences of incidents without inner meaning because nothing really happens but it all remains the same, and it seems to be much like incidents out in the nature, outside our minds, like "leaves being blown away by the

autumn wind” or like “a door striking and striking in an unoccupied house”.

Unlike incidents in nature, lacking agents, a human life is filled with incidents caused by persons themselves, or they walk around waiting for something to happen, or it is if they did not really live, for the one they care about, or cared about, is not physically present any more in their lives: If it becomes too tedious, or boring, they have to make up, shape and structure their lives in a way meaning that things set going, that something happens, if for no other reasons in such a way that it is not a condition going on and on, never being put an end to.

What I have treated above is that my entire humanity *is at stake* as soon as I open my mouth, for what I can risk, and I have met with and experienced it before, is that it is not only a fact that other people do not comprehend what I mean with what I say, but even worse, I do not myself understand what I express, or what I try to express through my words, for even I myself struggle to get behind them, and into life itself.

As soon as life comes forward it stands out as a thematic object for the conscience/mind, and then it has all become acute since there is no longer a way back to a life where I let days and nights roll away; seriousness has entered my life. Thus the questions which I have brought forward are related to the entire life and life in its entirety, and there is according to my view no straight phenomenon which runs from the past into the future. The reasons for this are multiple, for there exists even such a way backwards in life that a person, working its way backwards in its own life even, through this process, works its way into its own future, though without being subject to some or other inferior circular thought, or even bad values.

Thinking of, and talking about life as I do it may even lead to attempts at throwing light upon questions about birth and life, life and death; life is after all stronger than death, and what is stronger than anything else includes, or comprises what is weaker (death); in other words, I write about the relations between what is *transcendent* and what is *immanent*, or what on the one hand surpasses ourselves and our lives – what goes beyond, or has to go beyond – and what is included in ourselves and our lives, on the other hand. In other words, and I shall come back to this even if neither the room nor the place are big enough to permit any elaboration, what I am concerned about is *reality* (which is far more comprehensive than anyone of us human beings, and which therefore represents a kind of humiliation because our mental powers prove inadequate to get full

information and knowledge of it; it is like evoking the idea of some compensation for the humiliation brought upon us by the confrontation between ourselves and the reality), and this has to do with the relation between the *material* reality and the *immaterial* reality, and what might be able to connect these orders.

LINEAR LIVES

In modern times all thinking and second thinking of what we are and who we are seem to be pushed aside to something which at first presents itself as intelligible along some line, or which only expresses itself in some non-literal language. We can also express it in terms of some lines which in modern times originate in certain types of culture which the modern culture long since has put aside to certain ways of thinking of and talking about what goes beyond the destruction of our biological organism, and our individual consciousness of it, meaning that any idea of what surpasses the destruction of our biological organism, and our conscious thoughts of it, which makes all ideas of the relations between what surpasses the limitation of our understanding of life is also made equivalent with the lack of certain understanding of modern philosophy and modern science. Or to put it more humble: The religious language and the religious life in a strict sense is marginalized as an expression for what and who we modern human beings are.

However, it seems to be both too much and too little, as concerns what such wordings aim to reveal to us, if anyone claims it as an assertion, seeking to show proof of what it is all about: that reputation of scientific explanations come to the same thing as being stupid, or not to have understood that it is incompatible with modern explanations.

What I try to have shown above is that the relation between the flat, or empty, culture (secularity) and the high, or deep, culture, primarily means that what goes beyond death and what is stronger than death, is the basic, or radical, circumstance, and that secularity is derived, or deduced, from what gives the grounds for it. One example is: that scripture and writing is not the same as text and text production, in the same way as the one talking and the one listening to the speech are not one and the same person, even if, among other human beings, transmitter and receiver, speaker and listener, writer and reader, may be one and the same human person.

SPOKEN LIVES

Indeed, when writing, I do not write what I have thought out in advance to write, since the very process of writing contributes to bring forward things on the run, of which I had not at all been aware, and when having wrought something out I read through it; sometimes keeping most of what I have wrought, changing the expressions I am not content with by reformulating them: in addition I may simply reject parts of it. Altogether I have to find the “red (continuous) thread”, and this has to do with the inner context of topic and presentation of problems.

Scripture and the act of writing, recovering the real substance, is not the same as to look at it all like any other natural object, or as any object at all, objects created by human beings, which we encounter or meet with in ourselves, or which present themselves in our surroundings.

LIFE, LIKE OUR OWN LIFE, IS SOMETHING WE DISCOVER

Life, as a *phenomenon* and what we think about and talk of when relating to his, hers; your life, my life, our lives, is something we *discover* rather than make it up, or produce, according to our *occasional* goals and purposes.

As seen in another and very important perspective, it is about the swarm of ideas and value-ideals we human beings have received and accepted, or acquired, about what we have done: meaning that our consciousness have a form and a content with a certain historical character (*impress*), and to the historical consciousness there consequently belongs a collective inheritance which we carry with us, whether or not we want to. Of one thing we can be sure, that even if life consists of many things it is in itself nothing, for it is the stage and way we human beings have to lay behind if we are at all to get into connection with the things.

In another perspective modern *times*, and generally speaking all which is modern – in one word modernity – in the global and secularized orientation of values, meaning what I describe and interpret in terms of “value creation” or, straightforward: the worship of mammon and the dance around the gold calf. And in a third perspective, it is about relating oneself to the false idea that “all ideas and all values are compatible with all other ideas and values” (as if values like freedom, equality and solidarity (brotherhood) in any possible sense are compatible with each other), or that there exists some kind of “higher synthesis, in which it all evens out”:

this is rationalism of the very worst class, possible to trace out if one returns to Plato, or to an interpretation of his philosophy.

What I have said about rationalism, or a purely theoretical purpose of the study of man, life and the world, is about untenable ontology rather than a far more realistic view of what we human beings can obtain understanding of: that not only our attempts at getting an absolute hold of what we try to express by the idea of *reality per se* has been shipwrecked, but that our very insight fails when it comes to what is really true about ourselves as human beings.

Contrary to such a model, or theory, of what should be considered the best imaginable life to human beings, which seems to emerge from certain interpretations and descriptions of what human nature is like, what human beings need, or what they require, together with the technology which could possibly fulfill the different needs, what they might more precisely mean, there exists a totally different conception of life, meaning a typical idea which can be traced back to Romanticism and i.a. is found at the German philosopher Fichte, where the idea of volition and acting play central roles: what it is about is to follow one's own voice, which is found within yourself, in the depth of yourself. The ideals of life are not anymore something existing outside the thinker himself but something which from the very first moment comes into existence through the creative lifework of man, starting with living in a creative way. "Follow the light burning within yourself", the call sounds, "in this meaning the only reason you have for thinking and feeling, acting and living". Thus I think that there exists a thinking and thoughtful basic attitude to life, which is also creative: if a human being writes poetry, or studies philosophy, it performs creative acts, for what it shows is that the upbringing has brought fruits, or that one does not only waste life by trivial things like spending much of the time before the tv-set, or by reading newspapers.

Earlier philosophic systems of thought took their starting points in the system of thought being able to exist outside the persons who forwarded them, or like some sort of universal or cosmic order; the main point seeming to be that to the degree or the extent the separate individuals could agree on its existence, or at least in principle could let itself be constructed, or of some continuous structure in some way reflecting world or manhood, even life would exist, in a theoretical as well as a practical respect, both as concerns understanding itself and what one had to do to live up to such an order, whatever it might be. Romanticism is indeed opposed to such a supposition: from now on it is about what expressive

power man might possess: it is the potentials of man which should be brought to unfold, or be manifested in words and deeds. Thus Romanticism and its basic ideas can be expressed through certain ideas, like the one that no song exists to me before I have sung it, and no walks before I have performed them, so none of my books exists before I have written it and my life is nothing before I have lived it. For these reasons the thinking of and talking about life in two of the time dimensions are indeed a seductive and deceitful way of thinking, for it looks away from future, or what does not yet exist but shall come into existence, meaning that I tell a story of what has been or that I make a tale of the story I tell while still being alive, and that life is ebbing as I let time or life be consumed by it: I also need to imagine how it can be in the future, at least an idea of how it can be like when time and place and circumstances around what I do and perform are quite different from the life I live *hic et nunc*. So it is not the fact that it is *the act of telling itself* which establishes and constitutes ourselves and our lives, but on the contrary: it is ourselves as human beings who build and make or construct stories which we tell and tell again to ourselves and to some (relevant) other people, and when the factual circumstances we live in change, we even have to change the tales we have told, for what we are and who we are merge through a dialectic interaction between our general conditions and our unique life situation, demanding from us that we relate to our conditions by taking up our situation.

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