

Some Reflections on the Freedom of Being Who We Are

Professor Victor Voicu, PhD
Danubius University of Galati, Romania
voicuvictor@univ-danubius.ro

Love and do what you want. But the paradox is that when a person really loves, he no longer does what he wants, at his linking, but he does what he must to always remain in the mysterious horizon of love.

(Aurelius Augustinus)

Apart from the existentialist acceptance (Heideggerian in this case) of the terms (by putting it between brackets) in order to be *what you are* it is not enough *to exist*. The nature and the position in which you are get you out of the amorphous and impersonal mass of the individual, it individualizes you, it guarantees your personality.

You do not suddenly become *what you are*. The ontogenetic road of evolution from "*was to be*" and "*would be*" to "*ment to be*" through it "*is to be*" (to put it in the language of Noica), that is the *way of becoming oneself* is a road strewn with many possibilities, but it is not without windings, setbacks, disappointments or ephemeral stagnation. And the talent is knowing how to overcome them. Moreover, sometimes it is necessary to reemerge the existential journey on a different direction!

And yet, the joy of being is the metaphysical essence of the existence specific to human being. To simply be, whatever the concrete position that one takes, means overcoming the status of a "thinking reed" and the involvement in the great game of the world.

The joy of being appears to be as a fundamental human existential situation, a situation not devoid of contradictions, but generating satisfaction. And when we

have the intuition that we live and act in accordance with what represents our existential authenticity, we feel truly free.

Unquestionably, the way you are (or what you become) is the result of your choice. You have chosen your path, you have restricted your destiny, you wanted to be what you are. From the many virtual ways of being, you have freely chosen to bring up to date the way you present yourself.

But are we really totally free in our choice? Clearly the personal choice overrides, but the choice itself is "directed." The free will is not an indefinite will, but it is a will which chooses in a determined manner. That "something" that directs the free will is called by Kant law ("Freedom under the law"), and by Hegel and Engels necessity.

What is the "law" that guided us in that choice? It is, firstly, the correlation between what we want to be and our skills. There is an "invisible terrorist" that is the native propensity (sometimes referred to as gifted) which defines the boundaries of competence and removes everything that opposes it. This explains the fact that when a person tends to exceed its competence, he fails miserably. The human nature was designed by the space architect (no matter how you call it) so that each of us participates in one of the various ways of being of general human existence. And this is for not remaining an unfinished existence! Then, the choice was and is conditioned by the context, the circumstances. Nobody has proposed or intends to be something or someone that the socio-cultural model of the epoch does not need.

So, the freedom to be what you want fits into the area of relativity, ever since the stage of sketching.

As long as you exist as a biological being, self becoming is a nonstop process. However, when you became what you wanted to be, there is another big problem: keeping the position, the social status and role that you have achieved. And here comes the role of accountability and responsibility. The magnitude of freedom brings the volume of responsibility, and the feeling of responsibility must occur not as an external constraint, but as consent necessary to achieve the freedom which the spirit imposes, from its own initiative, in order to enjoy more of a creative freedom.

The greater the consciousness responsibility is, the greater the freedom is. You are free to do what you want, but you have to realize the action in terms of its

implications on others. It is about respecting the Kantian categorical imperative which demands to always consider humanity as a purpose and never as a means. So the freedom to be what you should be must be connected with the freedom of others. This is another aspect of freedom relativization, generated by the fact that the free man always bears the responsibility for what he does.

The mentioned “keeping” is dependent on other acts. Among them we would like to mention the encouragement of Neagoe Basarab to be "perfect and whole man" and keep your "good name", considered the most precious gift of the wise man. And the “complete, whole” man is the one that filters everything through reason in order to discern between what is primary and secondary in life.

Naturally, self becoming involves unconditionally and self-exceeding which is the path that leads to the ultimate purpose of human existence, that is excellence. This means that man is the demiurge of its own way of being. The constant effort towards self-improvement or perfection is the ultimate goal, but the novelty of being human is the element that distances him from the world of the non speaking living things.

We are people as far as we can get into the world of Good, Beauty and Truth and also to the extent that we can grow them through various channels. And that cultivation cannot occur without communication, the most effective form in this context is engaging in the dialogue that leads to the expansion of our spiritual life. The whole process of knowledge is a dialogue between us and the objective world; moreover, our whole life, even the moments of loneliness, as noted by the philosopher and essayist Grigore Popa, is a dialogue (with our thoughts or with others).

The communication is the process that allows the man to be aware and to scale his existential status, the communication is what makes possible the preservation of the reputation (the "good name") only communication allows the perception of the way you relate others to you. In its absence everything becomes void.

Otherwise, self-exceeding is encroached finally by the need for balancing. On the one hand, we balance our way of being with ourselves, with our potentialities, and on the other hand, we are in balance with our peers and (why not?) in relation with other forms of life. Only in relation to the man Paul, said Engels, Peter man realizes of his own existence. And the tendency or trying to subclass defiantly the way of being of others can trigger trauma that can even affect your own way of being.

So the joy of being what we are increases in direct proportion with our involvement in the range of all opportunities and experiences (beneficial or evil) which the new contemporary world goes through and the satisfaction of synchronizing our interests with those of others.

And the freedom to be who you are is inextricably linked to accountability and responsibility, being ultimately dependent of your way of being, as well as the way in which you are concerned about others. Only then you can obtain the accreditation of the position that you acquired.