

## **“School of Origin” and “School of Existence” in the Area of Human Metaphysics: from Opposition to Union**

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**Abstract:** There are two fundamentally different schools of limit search for the all, named the “School of Origin” and the “School of Existence”, on the surface. Rooting of the human metaphysics predominantly in the “School of Origin” has caused the emergence of the phenomenon of the repressive man, who is unable to perceive the voice of Existence. We have recognized the need of “ontological vaccination” to the human metaphysics for promotion of building not a disjunctive but a conjunctive link between the social and the human.

**Key words:** “School of Origin” • “School of Existence” • Human metaphysics • “metaphysical robinsonade”  
• Existential thinking • The social • The moral

### **INTRODUCTION**

The modern age is defined as the era of “post-metaphysical thinking”: classes of metaphysics have become a kind of theoretical taboo. Metaphysics are understood as the imposing of power of the all and the universalistic claims of the man. As reported, the dominance of philosophic metaphysics was recognized as a source of the “crash and desolation of the world” and the fall of humanity into the abyss of the “global night” (M. Heidegger). In an interview with Heidegger the reporters make an expressive generalization of the philosopher’s approach to the issue of interrelation between the metaphysics and global catastrophe: “in a sense, the nuclear bomb has already been exploded in the poem of Parmenides” [1, p. 148]. Sadly, but the metaphysics was recognized as the root for all the problems of the mankind. With that, the ontology, rooted in the idea of self-sufficiency of the man and uniqueness of existence, in general, is not able to overcome the metaphysics of the subject, determining the role of the man as the “subject of things”.

One should not forget that, under the human metaphysics is understood as not only a speculative thought on the profound foundations of human existence, but a real way to get the person approved as a

meta-physical (super-natural) being in free acts beyond empiricism. However, in the era of the “anthropological catastrophe”, according to M.K. Mamardashvili, who has introduced this concept [2] to denote the human barbarism, we receive a special type of “human beings”: “zombie-people”, who are marked by the refusal from a metaphysical measurement of life, atrophy of the metaphysical ability, resulting in the absence of meaningful assessments and independent decisions, causing the mechanical way of existence outside of the civilizational foundations of life. Under conditions of metaphysical subtraction, the contemporary fragmented man confuses a metaphysical birth with a transgressive game with his own limits, thereby leading against the man: one may destroy his human face in that game.

We are impressed through the introduction by V.A. Kutyrev in the philosophical language of a comprehensive, profound concept: “ecology of existence”. An important perspective of reflection is given to its content: the ecology of existence is defined as the “condition for preservation of the human identity” [3, pp. 78-90]. Kutyrev is concerned that people get away from the fundamental purpose of any existence: “to be”. He is sincerely concerned with the fact that without a protection of existence people become “advocates for their own death” [3, p. 80].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is subordinated to the principle of understanding the constructive nature of the human metaphysics: through the man is created through the above principle. The paper applies the principles of existential thinking in order to justify the lameness of the dominant understanding of the human metaphysics as a model of “metaphysical robinsonade”. In some sense, the method is metaphysics itself, understood in this context as a way to raise and solve the marginal issues, the principle of critical self-reflection.

**Main Part:** In history of philosophy there has been domination of the approach underscoring the essential kinship of metaphysics and ontology. Even in determining the status of ontology as the “general metaphysics”, core of the “first philosophy”, in the best case they are correlated according to the principle of the whole and the part.

However, in our opinion, there are fundamental differences between metaphysics and ontology. We believe that in history of philosophy there has been a distortion of the original ontological conception of Parmenides, who was the first to introduce in the philosophical language such a complex and specific for comprehension category, as existence and laid the foundations of ontology. Unlike the first ancient Greek natural philosophers, Parmenides noticed the content in the “existence” which was extremely abstract from the subject, thereby making the reversal of philosophy from the “essence” to the “being” and the abandonment of essentialism. The existence, strictly speaking, grasps the “naked” being, *detached from the essence*: it is not what and who acts, whether the corporeal world, ideas, people or the world as a whole, but the fact itself that it *acts*, so it is “*being*”. Existence is not a generic definition of the forms of reality, not a special subject reality or some kind of, let it be comprehensive, subject, but the being implicitly contained in all the things, *the being*. The “verb form”, as subsequently noted by E. Levinas is inherent to existence.

The core thing is that Parmenides set a very special principle of seeking the all: existence is not an alpha, not a fundamental principle and not a primary element. Nothing happens or occurs from existence, nothing fails forming any element. It is not transcendent to the whole world, however it does not coincide with it. Existence in the concept of Parmenides appears as the

whole-aggregate, complete, stationary, self-equal. It is eternal (it should “either be ever, or not be at all”, [4, p. 296]), “without a beginning and an end” [4, p. 296].

Let us highlight that the Parmenides defended *unorigination of existence*. Indeed, the being does not have and cannot have any beginning: beginnings are peculiar only to the matter. But the existence itself in relation to matter *is not a beginning*. Obviously, Parmenides stands aloof from the idea of a “priority” or any kind of the Origin: the problem of existence does not fit into the question “what comes first?” However, the problem of alphas and the problem of being were traditionally regarded as identical by the form of statement and, as a rule, they did not distinguish between them. There has been a hazardous semantic shift: the theming of Alpha of the World was safely drawn under the ontological promises.

We believe that theming of the problem of existence and the problem of alphas can be defined in two different “camps”, which we call the “School of Origin” and “School of Existence”. In our opinion, ontological thoughts of Parmenides, rejecting actually any “*origins*”, gives a rise to every contempt for hierarchy and power: existence is homogenous and indivisible. It *brings together* everything: unites to a certain degree through its *neutrality*, there are no preferred places. And it doesn't cancel the differences (of which the poststructuralists are so scared of). Unlike the being, the alpha brings the world together in the ultimate sense only through a common origin (genesis, in a sense, imposing the physis thinking), literally only at the beginning and later the world can live in the fall and war. Existence also aims to keep the matter in unity constantly, permanently. Picture of the world in the “School of Origin” is necessarily heterogeneous and hierarchical: the Origin is always the “first thing”, so it is the dominant one; it generates the power system of relations between the domination and subordination.

No matter how strong the “School of Existence” is, it is obvious that in Western-European intellectual history has been generally predominated by the “School of Origin”, within the bounds of which the semantic field of metaphysics was established in the first line. The search for “*origins*” of the matter was inherent particularly to metaphysics. Not by accident the issue about the ultimate matter rested on the issue of alphas in the thoughts of Aristotle. Thus, in essence the “metaphysics of identity” has been formed, which is criticized by post-structuralists, to approve the common origin of the matter.

Genuinely ontological way of thinking was pushed onto the background; in terms of the mixed positions, the "School of Origin" and "School of Existence" were primarily conceptualized as an entity that gives existence<sup>1</sup>. Prevailing of the "School of Origin" contributed to the fact that existence was secondary, derived from the Origin (thus, it got its Origin as well). Consequently the ontology really became a part of metaphysics and was subordinated to the logic of the "School of Origin".

The lack of understanding of the essential differences between metaphysics and ontology does not have such tangible consequences, when it comes only to the tasks of abstract theorizing on the matter, meanwhile in the "human metaphysics" ignoring of such conceptual shift is dangerous as it may cause that an implementation by the man of metaphysical origin will take place in isolation from the existential essences and tasks. These are no empty statements. The development of metaphysics in accordance with the principles of the "School of Origin" meant the approval of the Origin of matter status in regard to the man. A good theoretical basis for the above was anthropologism, in accordance with which the theory of human metaphysics was being generally structured person during the period of anthropological turn in the 20th century. Nevertheless, putting himself in the Origin, the man opposes the world (or the worlds: natural, transcendental, social), breaks with the history. He acts as if there were no other origins. One may not state that he is torn away from the Other: he becomes the Other for the whole world.

Priority of the Origin in the anthropological plane degenerates into ontological human egocentrism, objectively forms the ontological "metaphysical robinsonade." It is always the same Origin. Besides, the Origin, as noted, expansively becomes the manager, so it dissociates the matter. Eventually the man ceases to be the core of the matter.

It is vital to bear in mind one more point. Due to its commitment to anthropologism, the human metaphysics was actually isolated from the subject field of the social theory and, moreover, was developed in opposition to it. It positioned itself as a way of achieving the human condition by rising above the sociality and overcoming subtraction produced by it, but not in order to fit into the society again, but for the ultimate resignation therefrom. As a result metaphysically the living man was alone not only towards the being, but towards the social elements. The model of a "metaphysical robinsonade" was developed, according to which the metaphysical birth of

a person was understood as the one taking place alone. As a consequence, metaphysics was outside axiological sphere and normativity.

In a situation where everything is subordinated to the principles of *undivided origination*, the man ceases to hear both the voice of the universe and the voices of other persons and therefore he may detach from the existential principles and social values. Usually one claims on a repressiveness of the social attitude to the man. However, it is legitimately to speak about the *repressiveness* particularly of the man, who has put himself in the Origin and detached from existential roots. This trend is only growing in the "individualized society" (Z. Bauman [5]), in the culture called by C. Lasch as the "culture of narcissism" [6].

By the way, this metaphysics cannot know the error of "oblivion of being", as it is not familiar with the principles thereof. However, it seems impossible to leave the principle of the Origin in the metaphysics completely. And it's not only that it is more habitual, natural for the man to think through use of the category "Origin" (this category operates in us as a priori), but that the metaphysical acts are free and are not possible without the man's setting of himself in the origin of his actions. Therefore, a full departure from the theming of the Origin will not be justified. Metaphysical ability of the man to self-creation allows him to be a kind of "alpha" in respect to himself and hence - to the world as a whole, thereby creating a possibility of his realization as a meta-physical being. Metaphysics of the man is essentially a structure out of himself by acts on initiatives as for his own order.

So, the origin in the anthropological perspective serves as a metaphor of the human freedom, but at the same time as the man's determination only by himself, without the influence of any external authorities. Therefore, the Origin's principle in the area of human metaphysics is characterized by the ambivalent consequences. On the one hand, it may encourage excessive ontological aggrandizement of the man, but, on the other, only in the event that the man is free on putting himself at the beginning of all his actions, he can fully be liable for them. So that it will be impossible for the man to take the first scenario, we need, in our opinion, the union of metaphysics and ontology. To get rid of the excesses of the "School of Origin", the human metaphysics requires the "ontological vaccination".

Let us emphasize that it is namely the human ability to constitute the horizon of being and to live in existential mode that composes the man's meta-physical dimension,

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<sup>1</sup>the most brilliant sample of the "School of Origin" principle can be seen in the religious metaphysics of the world creation.

uplifting him over nature: a thought of the Origin reveals specific human ability to look beyond the visible and live in the space of sense. Therefore, it is impossible to establish oneself as a metaphysical being contrary to the principles of the "School of Existence". Moreover, without the existential structure, the human metaphysics (with emphasis on the uniqueness and identity of the person) leads to dissociation of people. The "School of Existence" avoids extremes of "metaphysical robinsonade" and closure of the person on the *ultimate* goals since it contributes a strong social potential in the human metaphysics through its own social resources- *principles of compatibility, eventuality and absolute ontological responsibility*.

Heeding the logos of being one can understand the falsity of "anthropomorphizing" thoughts about the being. Often we mindlessly say, "we must fit into the existence, find a place in it", then we think of the existence as of something that is "parallel" to us, not essentially coinciding with us. The man replaces existence with the matter. Existential thinking also recalls that the existence has no parts, degrees or allotted places. It is integral and single by definition. So, if you "come true", you are existence, i.e. you have become one with the world. To be means to fall into a state where I can see the *world and myself* in it as something *single, indivisible*. Alongside, despite the being possesses no parts, the existence is kept by our obliteration. Of course, such condition is difficult to be reached: it requires a change of thinking and way of life.

Thus, one may understand the principles of the "School of Existence" only in terms of the being itself, without staying aside from it, but *being it, totally coinciding with it*. Knowledge is secondary to the main goal: to be. It is manifested in the "school of life". Thus, J. Derrida, thinking about some paradoxical nature of desire to "learn to live" [7, p. XVI-XVII], believed that the "school of life" is not provided remotely, from outside (as teaching turns to be violent). In his opinion, there is no other way to live, but "to learn to live oneself, from oneself" [7, p. XVII]. It can be done by living the life. It is vital that such "possible but necessary" task was called by Derrida as "ethics". However, the ethical area may not be constituted alone. Perhaps, everything will appear in a different light, if we give ear to the words of J.L. Nancy, whose opinion lies that using of a third person in respect to the being is inappropriate: "Existence could speak about itself only in a sole way: 'we are'" [8, p. 33].

Nancy suggests putting the right question of being: to enquire about the "*community of being*" and not about "being of the community" [8, 9]. In his opinion, ontology neglects a simple statement, namely, that the actual existence is what we have *in common* with others and what we *share* with them: existence together. Moreover, the non-existing things cannot be split. Meanwhile, the existence should not be understood as something in common, as a kind of "common property".

Nancy believes that the very fact of compatibility of the being is ignored by ontology at the most, which still lives in the Cartesian logic of self-evidence and has not comprehended radically the "Mitsein" concept of Heidegger. Still Nancy distinguishes his position from the Heidegger's one, where the *no*-existence is only a definition of Dasein: "None, however, tried to radically thematize 'with' ('together') as the essential trait of being and as his own elementary plural matter" [8, p. 34]. The essence of existence means "together" (the community). In addition, "with" does not qualify Sein and Dasein, but only constitutes. Nancy says that "with" must not be understood in the sense of row-positioning, because it is in the logics of the "inner-outer" (as an example of such logics, he calls love).

Nancy makes a conceptual clarification: in view that existence is not a predicate, but only a *position*, the *community* (co-existence) is also only the real position of existence, "a position of the position", "a way to assert the position". It is connected with the fact that the position is always the "*ex-position*", "existence-thrown-in-the-world", which means at the same time an *active* position among others. The existence does not happen otherwise: what does not show itself, fails to exist. Nancy is convinced that ontology is the "existence--to-oneself-to-the-other", that actually makes the equality sign between the "existence-to-oneself" and the "existence-to-the-other". So, existence cannot be given in itself, it is always given in the modality "of being turned towards": the community is the very mode of existence of the being. We believe that the community is inherent to being to the extent (to such an extreme extent) that is not broken free onto the level of a predicate. Not accidentally Heidegger said that "mit" could not be understood in a categorical way, but only in the existential one.

In general, Nancy builds a special ontological concept of the "elementary multiple essence of the being", where the existence, community, consistency, essence (and even philosophy) are in fact identical. Nancy says: "Existence has no essence, but the existence

itself, the phenomenon of being is the essence" [9, p.2]. Whereupon the essence is achieved particularly in the *community* when it is shared with others (in "compatibility"). The community in its turn is born as the result of separation of essence.

So one can state that the human presence, being the "existence-out-of-onself", display of oneself to the outside, already contains the *basis of social* (community). Given that the world, according to Nancy, is its own externality of Dasein, we guess that by analogy one can define the social (community) as one's *own externality of the man*. Such a definition allows us reflecting their contradictory unity: meanwhile without a completely identity or detachment one against the other.

We think that the community is valid when there is a man living in existential mode. Co-existence in itself is the establishment of unity. In accordance with the consistency principle, the co-existence is not what has happened personally to me, but rather what has happened to *us* in the "community of being". Therefore, being on the ground of ontology, it is already impossible to think of metaphysics on basis of the principle of "metaphysical robinsonade".

Understanding of the being as a consistency highlights the special view of the man's obligations arrangement of existence. In the logics of consistency, in our opinion, the unity does not cancel the differences. Fundamentally, we are different not from each other, but "between" ourselves, in the space "between", where the essence is constituted. It is namely from the position of the Other that the man keeps himself in his identity. Only in the mode of "We", the man is able to comprehend the essences and be transcend above the randomness of empirical existence. The very issue of non-randomness of my being can be given to me (found) only in the community of Others. With that, to survive in the world of variable differences is possible when "every distinction recognizes another distinction as a necessary condition of self-preservation" [10, p. 256]. And there are already the requirements of morality, arising precisely because we live together and not alone.

We assume that existence through its equalizing substance (in contrast to the "School of Origin") performs many ethical functions. It does not allow for envy, pride, hatred. In the face of existence one cannot lie, cannot justify oneself. Existence is the truth: everything was done in the being, including the trial over every each human being was accomplished.

"School of Existence" varies the perception of the man's responsibility. The human metaphysics as deployed only on basis of the principles of the "School of Origin, may lead to responsibility, in a strict sense, only for the man himself. Ontology implements the responsibility on basis of the involved presence, therefore it contributes the social scale to the human metaphysics. Ontological responsibility is the marginal responsibility: responsibility not only for oneself, but also for others and at the utmost-for the existence. An example of ontological responsibility is the religious model of the Last Judgment, where the trial is accomplished against the whole human race as against a single ontological unit (unity). It must be fate; we have one fate for all of us. In fact, the bearer of absolute responsibility is the humanity "in its own person and in the person of every other" (pursuant to the "categorical imperative" of I. Kant). However, particularly the humanity as a unity (as existence)!

One may not be in the being, one may only take place therein. Existence directs to the pure forms of life, authenticity, completeness and wholeness. One can reach it through recognition of one's special ontological essence. It is important to remember: "The man is the only creature who not simply lives, not just gets the pleasure of life, but seeks to its *extremely perfect* form, to the *superlative* degree of existence" [11, p. 137-138]. O.D. Agapov introduces a vital concept of "sojourn" and defines it as "an existence on the line of creation of being" [12, p. 113], in the mode of "larger than life". Indeed, joining the being can only be productive and never destructive.

**Summary:** Ignorance of differences between the "School of Origin" and the "School of Existence", in our view, has determined not only the development of philosophy, but ultimately the development of the whole human history. Actually, the nuclear bomb, metaphorically speaking, exploded not in the poem by Parmenides, where the "community of being" was stated, but in the works of thinkers who absolutized the principles of the "School of Origin".

As far as we see, the existential thinking can be a cure for ontological "egocentrism" of the man. It requires one to think of oneself not outside or along with the existence, but through it. Awareness of oneself as a full-fledged *bearer* of existential essences and *participant* of existential processes is a vital objective of the person. To live means to merge with existence, to be a thought of

existence, that is to think about holding oneself back in the being, to be concerned with the sense of existence and to live it to the limit. Only thanks to existential thinking, imposing specific duties on a person, he will be able to overcome the “anthropological catastrophe”, where he plunged the whole world.

In this regard it should be noted that it is very important to tightly close the human metaphysics with the ontology: so that the metaphysical acts, based on self-basicality of the man, will be reinforced by a marginal responsible thinking.

### CONCLUSIONS

- The new approach to the distinction between metaphysics and ontology by virtue of detection of two fundamentally different schools searching for the ultimate unity is justified: “School of Origin” (with the principle of unconditional priority of the Origin in regard to the matter and hierarchical perception of reality) and “School of Existence” (with the principle of unorigination of being and permanent holding of the matter in unity). In the history of philosophy, the essential identification of metaphysics and ontology has been present from behind, whereas the principles of the “School of Origin” and “School of Existence” are fundamentally different. It has made it possible to identify the underlying cause of crisis of metaphysics in its rooting back to the tradition of the “School of Origin”.
- In the human metaphysics the principles of the “School of Origin” were realized through anthropologism that contributed to the creation of a prejudiced model of metaphysical event in the logics of “metaphysical robinsonade” (“rotten” self-deliberation and autonomy). Rooting of the human metaphysics primarily within the bounds of the “School of Origin”, beyond the existential principles of compatibility, must have produced a hierarchical perception of reality, authoritarian, repressive nature of the Origin in respect to the matter and ultimately formed the objective “metaphysical robinsonade”.
- Overcoming the “metaphysical robinsonade” is possible through the “ontological vaccination” to the human metaphysics that will encourage a disclosure of the social potential of the human metaphysics. Ontology itself has powerful social resources: existence, understood as a unity, is in fact realized under the principles of social (relations and

communications). Resources of the “School of Existence” that are the principles of *consistency*, *eventuality*, *ontological responsibility* can be defined as the *ultimate social grounds*. As a matter of fact, the existence itself is the opportunity of establishing the interpersonal ties and relationships, the foundation of genuine social things.

Metaphysical realization requires our ability to be engaged in the Origin, to participate and not just to exist. Alongside, the participation in the common fate of the world, in the shared fate is always *eventual* and *joint*. We are convinced that existential thinking permits us to insure the human metaphysics man against anti-sociality and irresponsibility: in the ultimate sense, the laws of being are the laws of morality.

- Genuine implementation of human metaphysical origin according to the existential participation principles creates the image of a “warm” (live) being in contrast to the image of a “cold” (dead) existence, where everyone is “face-to-face” with existence.

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