

# Being and mind

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## Editorial

Being is the ontological and functional essence of the real identity of the human person. The self-identification, which is a continuous process starting from the very beginning of the life and continuing to the end, aims at knowing and understanding the real Being. The concept of being has been formulated and displayed in various ways in the literature, through the centuries as a crucial issue in Philosophy from the Pre-Socratic Era to our times. According to encephalocentric theory of the human being, introduced by Alcmaeon from Croton and supported by the Pythagoreans, Anaxagoras, Hippon from Samos, Philolaos, Hippocrates, Erasistratus, Herophilus and Galen, the brain is the “hegemonicon”, the principal organ which rules and controls all the mental functions and the activities of the human being.<sup>1</sup> Brain is the organ of consciousness, sensation, perception, cognition, volition, memory, fantasy, emotion, thinking, meditation, understanding, learning, the seat of the intelligence, the organ of the manifestation of psychic processes.<sup>2</sup> Being and Mind are closely interrelated in the brain, expressing each other in a harmonious co-existence and cooperation.

The search for the knowledge of the individual authentic Being was the ultimate purpose of life for a considerable number of philosophers. Heraclitus was stating that he was endeavoring to discover his authentic Being, during his life “ἐδιζήσάμην ἐμεωυτόν”, (I searched myself). Heraclitus attempting to enter in the depths of his soul realized that the psychic boundaries are indefinite “ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει”. (It is impossible to find the boundaries of soul by following any pathway, so deep and immeasurable is its existence. *Fragm. B45*). In the Heracleitean philosophy, the Being was associated with the Word (λόγος) and the self-realization.<sup>3,4</sup> Thus the authentic expression of the Being is the Reason, the Word, the Mind.

Parmenides from Elea in his Poem on Nature attempted to find the identity of the Being in the Mind and the mental activity «...τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι. (For is the same to think and to be)”.<sup>3,5</sup> According to Parmenides the concept of Being is very positive and dynamic, searching always for the truth. Being as equivalent to Becoming follows a continuous upward process to the light, the truth, the virtue, the eternity.<sup>6,7</sup>

According to Empedocles, whose central issue is the cosmic cycle of life, the soul is imperishable and Mind and Soul are essentially the same. Being becomes a homogeneous, concrete global entity (sphere) by Love, and it is the “real whole”, always compact, without any emptiness.<sup>3,8</sup>

According to Plato the Being has eternal self-identity.<sup>9</sup>

In Stoic philosophy the Being was associated with the self-knowledge, the self-control and the inner peace and harmony. In Neo-Platonism, the Being was involved in the continuous struggle between soul and flesh and in addition Plotinus proclaims the eventual victory of the spirit over the carnal body of the human being.<sup>10</sup>

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Descartes identified “Being” with “Thinking” (*Cogito ergo sum*), considering thinking as fundamental element of the Existence (*substantia, res cogitans*).<sup>11</sup>

According to Heidegger<sup>12</sup> the Being is substantially distinguished in to “authentic” Being and in to “Being in the world” (*Dasein*), which, as objective Being, participates in the activity and performance of the human person in the society. The essence of the human Being is his existence.<sup>12,13</sup>

In Kierkegaard’s philosophy, the human being is an existing infinite spirit.<sup>14</sup> Being is the essence of the existence, related to the existential anxiety and the genuine endeavors for spiritual purification and perfection.<sup>15</sup> The human being has to search always for the truth. Objective and subjective truth are only different perspectives in which truth manifests itself. Thinking and understanding, may have either an aesthetic-intellectual character or an ethico-religious one, depending on the intelligence, wisdom, spiritual culture and elevation of the individual.<sup>16</sup> Buber underlined the importance of the inter personal interaction of the human Being, who develops the direct subjective communication between Me and You and the objective one between Me and It.<sup>17</sup>

According to Nikolai Berdyaev, the Being in the world acts and performs inside the society, where the man realizes his self-verification. The absolute isolation of the personal Being from the society may induce the self-devastation in the desert of immense solitude.<sup>18</sup>

According to Sartre the Being is “*enscausa sui*” (a self-caused being), planted inside the material reality of the body and activated in a material universe. Being itself is determinedly nothingness. Thus, the struggle for the personal freedom is basically the struggle against the nothingness.<sup>19</sup>

Jaspers emphasizes that the human Being must develop and retain a continuous dialog with the society participating in the social interactions, playing in the proper time his own substantial role. Jaspers underlined that “man always becomes man by devoting himself to this other. Only through his absorption in the world of

Being... does he become real to himself». He stated also that “the ultimate objective is to work out a methodology, which arises from the ground of a universal consciousness of Being and points up and illuminates Being” and in addition underlined that no being known as an object is the Being.<sup>20</sup>

Following the wisdom of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Jaspers claimed on the soul that «each single part is a whole and at the same time it is in the whole» and stated that «Being is something total and universal at the same time».<sup>21</sup> On the freedom of Being, Jaspers<sup>20</sup> insisted that each new existence ought to attain freedom by his own source, and the freedom exists only if it is attained by oneself.

The expression of the soul in the society and the world is mostly related with the inner power of the soul,<sup>22</sup> the culture of the individual, the time, the social environment, the historical and cultural conditions, as well as the social structure. The main problem, that becomes crucial in our Era, concerns the authenticity of Being and his capacity for harmonious incorporation in the society, without any deviation from his principles and moral standards, avoiding at the same time any contradiction and social contrast, which might cause any inhibition or annihilation of his beneficial contribution to others, resulting furthermore in his social delimitation.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the search for the authentic Being, which is related with the knowledge of the self, has a substantial validity for the harmonious incorporation of the individual in the society, retaining at the same time his own values, principles, ideals, wisdom and spiritual freedom.<sup>24</sup> Heraclitus said: «Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom is to perform and tell what is true, perceiving things according to their real nature” (Fragm.B112).

The human being, performing in the society, must liberate himself from the depression, the anxiety, the agony, the fear, the despair, the feeling of insecurity, the pain and the suffering. The man undergoing an interior regeneration and self-transformation must feel the freedom of his authenticity and the hope for a better horizon of life.

de Unamuno claimed that “..From the bottom of the despair and misery a new life springs and under the sediment of the despair we would discover the honey on the bottom of the glass of the life. The agony of the despair is followed by the consolation”.<sup>25</sup>

Helliwell emphasized that the members of societies, who are based on justice, confidences, honesty and solidarity have the feelings of self-esteem, social security and well-being, which are unrelated to their economic status.<sup>26</sup>

The most pure and concrete realization of the social responsibility consists in personal purification, moral perfection and spiritual regeneration of the members of the society in peace, simplicity, genuine human dignity, free will, kindness, truth, freedom, self-esteem, and genuine love to each other, which is uninhibited by any external force, dictated by the mental purity, inner beauty and brightness of the Being and Mind.

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## Conflicts of interest

None.

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