

DISCOURSE AND THE HUMAN BEING DIGNITY

THE PURE BEING, LIBERTY AND DISCOURSE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEGEL

Gheorghe DĂNIȘOR*

Abstract: The absolute pure being harnesses within itself the entire development of consciousness until its ultimate emergence as the *Logos*. As a result, the absolute pure being encompasses within itself a trajectory of enlightenment regarding historical consciousness and its identification with the divine (the pure being), which means that from the perspective of the absolute pure being the logos becomes trans-substantial. From the perspective of the logos, the pure pre-reflexive being is reflected onto itself and thus we bear witness to the first separation inside the pure being itself. This primordial rupture stands as the premise of understanding and dialectic transcendence. This paper aims at exploring the connection between logos and primordial freedom as absolute negativity. The dawn of freedom appears when the being itself becomes logos.

Keywords: pure being, logos, liberty, discourse, Hegel.

The identification between the absolute pure being (the divine) and the logos (as discourse) is the result of the awareness achieved in *Phenomenology* and the ascension towards absolute knowledge, meaning that man rose to the level of the divine through the power of knowledge, a sense of knowledge that places itself at the core of the absolute pure being that stands at the basis of the *Science of Logic*. Considering the evolution of thinking in Hegel, from *Phenomenology* to the *Science of Logic* and the connection between them, we can affirm that the reflexive activity of self-consciousness (man) stems from the consubstantiality of the pure being. The original doubling of the being as a result of the reflection of consciousness onto itself is the beginning of freedom and the emphasis on the identity between being and spirit or the identity between being and freedom.

It is necessary to consider the fact that *Science of Logic* defines the being as nothing else than Parmenides' One-Being through the effort to "enlist the elaboration of the entire discourse inside the unsullied movement of the original

* 1st Degree Scientific Researcher, PhD., "C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor" Institute for Research in Social Studies and Humanities from Craiova, of the Romanian Academy; E-mail: gheorghedanisor@gmail.com

emergence of the Being in the constitutive vision of a theory of Being”¹. In other words, an authentic philosophical discourse must include Parmenides’ One-Being and expand from here on out. The ontological definition of the being coincides with “the original affirmation of inseparability of that which exists from its conceptual representation”². From this, we can deduce that an identification of the original absolute being is produced with the concept which becomes its own self. This identity bears the mark of Hegel’s steadfastness to present humanity based on a theory originating from Parmenides’ design. This high status of the human being is equivalent to the introduction of the logos (concept) to the pure being, thus securing an essential place of discourse in his ontology which ultimately accounts for the original doubling of the being and the possibility to emphasise the commencement of the dialectic pure being as a *Discourse Being*. That’s why Hegel, in the *Science of Logic* expands the presence of an ontology which at the same time presents itself as onto-theology. From this we can imply the fundamental origins of Christianity according to which “in the beginning there was the Word”.

The doubling of the original being, the ontic itself, founded on the logos, can have two subsequent connotations: a human one, which answers to ontology, and a divine one, which places emphasis on God. The first is the result of human labour accounted for in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, placing itself as pure thinking related to the *Science of Logic*. The second one can be interpreted as the manner in which pure reason begins as a revelation of the divine according to Christianity. The doubling, therefore, presents us with two connotations which ultimately unite in the concept of *onto-theology*. This may signify that, according to Hegel, the pure being can be conceived and measured as a projection of human reason on the one hand, or a revelation of God on the other hand. This approach takes us to Hegel’s attempt to rationalise the acts of revelation and faith. Through reason, man becomes active, a builder, whereas through revelation, he falls into contemplation. Uniting these prerequisites compels Hegel to say that man is a *rational – contemplative* being.

The original doubling through the logos emphasised by Hegel has the purpose to expound a better aspect of human nature. Hegel’s philosophy follows the same path as Parmenides and Plato, while at the same time bringing a strong Christian influence into the mix. It is through this very endeavour that has remained untouched for centuries, that we can identify the *Being* with the *Concept*. We will strive to correlate this conceptual framework with the ideas of Joseph Juszezak, who, in turn, follows the same path as Alexander Kojève in defining the fundamental principles of Parmenides and Plato metaphysics³.

¹ Joseph Juszezak, *Hegel et la liberté, Société d’action d’enseignement supérieur*, Paris, 1980, p. 25.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Joseph Juszezak, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32.

The premise of Parmenides and Plato metaphysics regarding the being foretells that, in fact, the future Hegelian ontology and subsequent determinations unite the Being with the Concept, as Hegelian ontology is considered the historical fulfilment of the entire Western system of metaphysics. The concept of metaphysics in the perception of Kojève is closely connected to the concept of wisdom which is approached as either discourse or silence. Metaphysics begins with Parmenides, the first philosopher who refers to the One-Being, a being about which nothing can be said, as “this is the thesis of Parmenides, who was the precursor of Plato and Hegel. The One-Being cannot be captured in its immobility and eternity unless we make use of the pure silence of contemplation”⁴. What is paradoxical in Parmenides’ thinking is that this Being stems from the fundamental of truth and discourse. In other words, the entire discourse is founded on Parmenides’ One-Being. Through discourse, however, the truth of the One-Being goes into multiplicity as the essence of discourse is spatial temporality itself. It is a passing truth that transcends immobility and eternity, meaning that if man is approached as an individual, we can communicate towards something else. This passing into discourse is in fact the alteration of the one truth. The discourse, which defines Parmenides’ One-Being, “appears as an antithesis for the Parmenides thesis: a fact made evident in Heraclitus’ thesis, explained by Cratyle, constituting the essence of contradiction themed by Hegel”⁵.

The Parmenidesian thesis is in contradiction to that of Heraclitus as “the being is the nothingness of our discourse for Parmenides while to Heraclitus, the discourse is the nothingness of the being”⁶. In either of the situation, nothing can be said about the being, which means a sentence to silence or pure contemplation, or the fugitive chase of mobility. The mistake stems from the fact that the Parmenidesian One-Being is considered as nothingness to Discourse and vice versa, when in reality they are absolutely interdependent.

The ontological presentation of the Parmenidesian One-Being in the dialectics of discourse constitutes the discursive wisdom of Plato, which is to say “the eternal silence as a method of understanding the truth of being”. One might say Plato achieves a synthesis between the Parmenidesian thesis and Heraclitus’ antithesis, when in reality, according to Kojève, he creates a para-thesis, as to him, discourse and truth are not interconnected but mutually exclusive, which leads to silence in front of the being, meaning contemplation, the ontological revelation of the One-Being. Juszezak believes that Plato uses a little of both theories, stating that “discourse places emphasis on ontological truth, essential for the development of discourse, I rightfully deny the consequence of pluralism in discourse undetermined through the unity of Being, in short, I convert the wisdom of Parmenides’ silence into discursive wisdom and Heraclitus’ universal relativity,

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

who sees in man the measure of all things (such as Protagoras) into the same discursive Wisdom that acknowledges the contemplative silence of the Truth of the One-Being, showing us how to surpass contradiction in the unifying quality of wisdom via the ontological revelation of truth”⁷.

In short, one can say that Plato does not achieve a genuine synthesis between the theses of Heraclitus and Parmenides because his synthesis is only an ideal representation categorised in a world of pure, intangible ideals. The philosophical discourse of Plato is not a reconciliation of discursive wisdom and reality with the objectivity of the world. That is why Plato’s philosophy concerns itself with Transcendence and not the human world. Because of this fact, “Plato’s wisdom (Parmenides-Heraclitus) remains God’s wisdom (theology) or the Discourse of God, but it is not yet the Wisdom of Man who lives on earth (discursive wisdom or Anthropology), Plato, of course, is concerned about man, but as a discourse, he is closer to God”⁸.

However, man itself has to become God, which means that Reason must come down from the Heavens to Earth and incarnate into the history of the world, a possible achievement if we look at Hegel’s philosophy which reconciles the Parmenidesian silence, the discourse of Heraclitus, Plato’s dialectics and anthropological history. At the same time, man has the revelation of God.

Hegel brings down the eternity of the One-Being into historical time, uniting Being and Concept as a premise of human liberty. Therefore, we can deduce that human liberty cannot be achieved unless it springs from the original unity of Being, Freedom and Concept, which might suggest that the absolute being comes to the Earth in historical time, seeing man transcend historical time towards God’s religious epiphany. Human liberty is placed in the proximity of this rift created by the identification of historic descent regarding the historical suppression of revelation. Thus, man stands no longer as a mundane being, but rather as an extra-mundane one. Only through this can history gain meaning. To regard man solely on the basis of historical being means dragging on into unilateral limitations, a fact condemned by Hegel every step of the way. Moreover, it can be said that Hegel, although casting off Reason from the Heavens to Earth, never gave up on maintaining a balance between Heaven and Earth. Hegel limits the gap between man and God, predicating that getting closer to God can also be done through reason not only faith. We are dealing, however, with pure Reason which transcends the temporal and the random, situating itself beyond the “network of petty preoccupations and daily worries, being capable of the liberty which the preoccupations of science can bring forth”⁹.

Every time he addresses pure Reason, Hegel situates himself beyond the ramblings of history and tries to capture the truth which can only be encompassed

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁹ Hegel, *Enciclopedia științelor filosofice. Logica*, Bucharest, RPR Academy Publishing, 1962, p. 35.

within the kingdom of thought that is based on itself. Hegel says: “This kingdom is the truth as it is in itself and for itself, without a husk. That is why it can be said that this content is the representation of God as He is in His eternal essence, before nature and limited spirits were created”¹⁰.

Through pure Reason, man knows God to the extent that God descends into man. In other words, you can know God as long as you have Grace, the two concepts being intertwined. It is nothing less than a historical ascension towards God forged through the absolute self-knowledge presented in *Phenomenology* which is the equivalent to divine revelation in man. Under no circumstance can it be about atheism in Hegel’s reasoning, especially considering that he states that he remains devoted to the knowledge of the divine which is only accessible through a state of philosophical Grace. Talking about man’s positioning at the crossroads between Grace and Reason, Dumitru Stăniloae states that “there are somehow two degrees or forms of Grace in man: an imprinting of it in man, as power, although here too we can find the work of the Holy Ghost, and a fully assimilated presence felt by man as work through his work”¹¹.

This way, it can be said that Hegelian philosophy achieves an anthropology which situates man between the inaccessibility of Parmenides’ One-Being and the plurality of discourse. This matrix is the kingdom of uninhibited freedom. The transcendence of God will always exist as long as there is rational thinking, and this sense of reasoning can exist only as long as it is dedicated to the transcendence of God. Through man, the Parmenidesian One-Being is submerged into reasoning (logos), thus becoming concept, as the plurality of discourse (negativity) is pierced by the concept of the One-Being. This is the privileged position that man holds in Hegelian philosophy, a status of placement never again achieved in another philosophy. This rift that situates man between transcendence and the plurality of discourse can serve as support for the One-Being as a Trinity.

If we think this way, the position of man within the Hegelian system stipulates that we are in the presence of anthropo-theology, thus excluding the claim “we must from now on (in the philosophy of Hegel) see man become God, because he writes his own discourse (anthropology), to put it in a nutshell, Reason descends onto Earth from the Heavens and becomes historically incarnate into the world, that Plato’s synthesis of Idealism and Ideal becomes a material synthesis through the materialisation of the intangible world (kosmos noetos) in the Hegelian realm”¹².

For the sake of the system according to which “Discursive wisdom will only be truly achieved within the Hegelian system of absolute knowledge”, we will bear

¹⁰ Hegel, *Enciclopedia științelor filosofice. Știința logicii*, Bucharest, Academy Publishing, 1962, p. 32.

¹¹ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. II, Bucharest, Bible Institute and Orthodox Mission Publishing, 1978, p. 304.

¹² Joseph Juszczak, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

witness to “the reconciliation of Parmenidesian silence, the discourse of Heraclitus, Plato’s dialectics and the anthropological history”¹³, omitting the standpoint which sees man reconcile anthropological history with the above mentioned concepts. According to our structuring, Hegel’s philosophy places importance on anthropological history when man is neither historical nor divine but a little bit of both. That is why man is the medium for reconciliation between the One-Being and history, man being a synthesis between the divine and the profane. Man is the only rational-contemplative being. Kant had previously parted man, a piece of him belonging to phenomenology, while the other part belonging to the intangible. Hegel unites the two sides, forging a man in which Reason pleases God, while at the same time reconciling the Discourse-Being with the plurality of discourse.

¹³ *Ibidem.*