



THE (UN) BEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

Dr. Nayden (Nick) NICKOLOFF

Head Assistant Professor in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculties of
Philosophy

Abstract

Milan Kundera is the author of the exciting short story "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (Kundera, 2014). At the associative level, there is a good opportunity for metaphorical use of the title of his most popular text. We can focus our attention on the question: I wondered what the difference between the two worlds, was the two ontologies of human existence, separated by a small text game of letters and words: "The Unbearable" or "The Bearable" lightness of Being? And another metaphor with ontological dimensions - "Pandemic world", which dominates the mass consciousness now and determines the focus of attention, as well as individual societies, their political, religious, and business leaders, and globally. To accept the pandemic as an ontological metaphor - a mass contagion, with many victims and placing the social system in a crisis of human survival in all senses of the term.

Keywords: The (un) bearable lightness of being, Anthropocene, Deification of the Human, Authentic and Unconditional Connection with God, Covid - 19, Pandemic, Theistic Co-Creation, Existence, Meaning of Life..

1. ABOUT THE METAPHORS

Milan Kundera is the author of the exciting short story "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (Kundera, 2014). At the associative level, there is a good opportunity for metaphorical use of the title of his most popular text. We can focus our attention on the question: I wondered what the difference between the two worlds, was the two ontologies of human existence, separated by a small text game of letters and words: "The Unbearable" or "The Bearable" lightness of Being?

And another metaphor with ontological dimensions - "Pandemic world", which dominates the mass consciousness now and determines the focus of attention, as well as individual societies, their political, religious, and business leaders, and globally. To accept the pandemic as an ontological metaphor - a mass contagion, with many victims and placing the social system in a crisis of human survival in all senses of the term. In addition to the direct use of the term for viral, bacterial, and other infections, its wider use may reveal unsuspected research possibilities and add a definite touch to the emerging and dominant image of Man in an era called the Anthropocene. What is this force that has such a massively devastating character? Covid-19 and the severe consequences of biological, viral infection can recede into the background if we defocus and look at the same problem from another angle, but in-depth. Probably redefining the problem will allow us to look for authentic rather than superficial solutions that will contribute to solving the "pandemic contagion", currently defined as global? My research is focused on and interprets exactly these two possibilities that the creative and scientific imagination provides us now.

2. HUMANITY AT CROSSROADS, IN FATEFUL CHOICE

What exactly is the problem in-depth, and what are its dimensions?

"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" - what sense, in interpreting Kundera's title, can we find in a possible hermeneutics of the unspoken, lying underneath and hidden from ordinary consciousness, for public understanding and sharing. The "Lightness of Being" is the unbearable for the Modern Person, for their daily attempt to personally bear the "punishment of Sisyphus" (Camus, 1942). Is this insurmountability not a sentence of the Modern Person's attempt to purposefully look away from God's gaze, from a deep and intimate empathy with the sacred, from a collective subject with ontological identity and historicity, rooted in the millennial tradition of creation, the authentic connection between God and Man?

Michel Foucault concludes "The Order of Things. An archaeology of the human sciences" (Foucault, 1966/2005) with the almost intrusive presence of a metaphor - the emerging and disappearing Image of Man on the coastal sand. Why does the Image disappear after it has briefly appeared in the Discourse of the Western Humanities, and what exactly comes in its place?

The problem, in short, is the tendency for forced secularization of modern civilization (Bigovich, 2013: 9-27), generated in the bosom of modern times, the consequences of which determine the dominant trends within modernity - the time

after modernity. The "pandemic" that is not being talked about now, is purposely depriving people of an intimate relationship with God, so that we can all exist in the Procrustean bed of the modern "pandemic world".

We can add Foucault, and leave a mark on the "coastal sand" - after the "Image of Man", comes the deification of the Machine and its creators, the political-ideological mechanics, including social engineering, scientism - the scientific ideology of mass manipulation (Nikolov, 2016: 934 - 943), of the most subtle and discreet mechanisms of human life and life in general, with anonymous academic bureaucracies, without moral or religious boundaries, and on this basis - without a sense of conscience, coming from authentic communion with God. Theirs on a large-scale, unprecedented in human history abuse of a few, with all others - erected in the status of "mass human material". In the claim of Man to be a Superman and God, in his cruel psychopathic and necrophiliac pathology - to consume infinitely his sense of power over the dehumanized crowds.

Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed and initiated within the framework of philosophy and Western civilization this state of deification of the human: "The Gods are dead, and Man is left to himself," and "I teach you about the Superman: Man is something that must be overcome"... from "Thus Spake Zarathustra" (Nietzsche, 1909/2021) and the ease of Being for Man became unbearable.

One of these historical examples, we studied as a socio-clinical case in which the literary image of Dr. Lecter from "The Silence of the Lambs" (Harris, 2002) fades. This is the text "Stalin or the terrifying attempt to be the Beginning and the End" (Nikolov, 2018: 162-166).

Joseph Stalin's sadistic desire for control over Life and Death ("like God"), of the people and nations he subjugated, prompted him to sacrifice the life of his son, Vasily, regardless of the opportunities he had to save him from death. Stalin did not understand in depth the biblical situation of Abraham, who was ready to sacrifice the life of his son Isaac in the Name of the Lord but received the mercy of God. In this regard, we can accept the personality of Stalin as reverse, a regressive example of the biblical archetype of the father (Abraham) - without mercy to life.

We can also recall the crimes against humanity of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis - in the development of an automatic, mechanized mechanism for mass murder, depriving the perpetrators of a sense of conscience and guilt. The idea of "racial hygiene" (Reichsführer SS, 1940), in German: "Die rassenmässige Hygiene", a term of eugenics in the Third Reich, for the gross scientific intervention in the delicate genetic mechanisms, embedded in the "mystery of creation" of life, and Man in the image and likeness of God.

Laying the "scientific foundations" on which we probably now see tangible results in the Covid-19 pandemic and others, for the development of thousands of genetically modified strains with potential for mass biological weapons (see Patent EP3172319A1, European Patent Office, for Coronavirus, Bikerton, Keep, Brighton, 2014-2015) and the ideological preparation for rough genetic manipulation and intervention in Man as a biological being and life in general, taking place in some non-democratic societies, actions that are justified by the preparation for a "new type of war" and the need for "Human development" at a new level. There are secret data that such attempts have been a fact since the beginning of the 21st century, the aspiration of

the totalitarian society for the "making of the Superman" - a weapon in the battle for ideological, political, and economic supremacy.

This is the attempt to massively dominate the tendency of Man's life without God and all the possible "pandemic" consequences of this choice. These thoughts and the formation of this Discourse of issues were impulses after a discussion at the "Bulgarian Forum for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation" in February 2020. The conference "Religions in a Pandemic World - Challenges and Opportunities" proved in practice that a movement arises in our thought, proved in practice, that a movement arises in our thought - every person in their own way, and in general as a Forum, in defense of the theistic creation and the freedom of Man to seek and find the way, to communicate with God.

Then the hidden horror of the malignant forms of attitude towards the world, towards oneself and others crept in. Then, with a certain timidity, we began this difficult Discourse, full of traumatic traces of the past and fears for the future.

We talked about machines and religious belief in them, about hidden attempts to manipulate "science", the most delicate genetic and biological mechanisms of living beings and especially of Man, to accelerate malignant consumption, control, and dependence of a destructive nature, domination in the power struggle.

We also talked about Greta Thunberg, whose message and activism are a good illustration - as a young person, she allowed herself, in her emotional way of protest, to bring to the forefront human intervention in climate change, which has long been scientifically supported and proven by dozens of thousands of scientific studies. Her goal, and the goal of other young people, part of the Global Climate Strike, is precisely this - world political and economic leaders and global public opinion, to hear the facts, to hear a youthful and emotional voice, behind which, however, stands a mass movement with several million participants and a serious scientific justification. "What is the key to continuing to live in the same irresponsible way we have done so far?" She asks. And the way She communicates, even if She is criticized in terms of style and political correctness, is much more "polite" than what is to come (Global Climate Strike, 2018).

But what we need to critically note is that on masse, that the fighters for the environment, against climate change, for social change and social inclusion, for animal rights, for the conservation of species, and many other movements for change, the fighters against the Covid-19 pandemic and the reasons for its occurrence, do not understand the root, social and civilizational ontology (or rather pathology), underlying these problems. And when the cause is not clearly defined, the problem cannot be solved. The patterns that provoke the phenomena that the social sciences and the humanities, the science of climate, species, and life established as facts are still hidden from ordinary consciousness. Behind these facts, changes, and trends, there is a movement of modern human civilization, towards a crisis and cataclysm of unprecedented proportions in the history of the Earth. We face the greatest historical challenge on a planetary scale, involving the impact of modern man on the planetary ecosystem, comparable to global, cosmic, and geological crises and cataclysms that led to the radical step of designating the modern era in 1980 by ecologist Eugene Stormer as "Anthropocene." (Revkin, 2011). And the basic question before us is: Why?

At the heart of this process is an already learned lesson from the development of mankind, which we can take as an example from the Bible - Noah and his history, as the keeper of people and life: "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; he walked in God" (Genesis 6, ESV).

3. ABOUT THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE AUTHENTICALLY WITH GOD

Prohibitions, manipulations, all kinds of criticism and negativism, destroying the freedom of conscience and the most important connection of Man, creating the world daily and caring for its semantic center - God as a principle of eternal existence, love, and evolution. There is no talk of guaranteeing this right.

St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and her organization are prime examples of care and mercy, especially for those who have the greatest and most urgent need for it. We can hear the prayer of St. Teresa; she is a source of inspiration and an example of "a bearable lightness of being:" Dearest God. I will see You today, in the faces of Your sick, and every day, while I take care of them, I will endure Your pain. If you hide under the coat of the hurt, of the seeker, of the foolish, I will be able to know You and say, "Jesus, my patient, how good it is to serve you." Regardless of the criticism and negativism towards her and her Order of Missionaries of Charity, which focuses on caring for the body, the most important message of St. Teresa's work is caring for the soul at a critical time for people, for the opportunity to restore authentic relationship with God (Vatican News Service, 2002).

Martin Buber, this intimate, deeply religious, and existentially oriented philosopher, dialogues about the mass notions of the so-called "religious man." In his most famous work, "I and Thou" (Buber, 1996: 123-169), we can note his arguments against a superficial and meaningless understanding of religiosity and the relationship between God and Man: "You cannot divide your life between a real relationship with God and a real I-It attitude to the world, to pray to God and to use the world. He, who knows the world as something to use, does not know God otherwise. His prayer is a procedure of relief; it passes through the ears of emptiness ... he is ungodly." Regarding the immortality and the infinity of the potential for creation in dialogue, Buber adds: "Man must interpret the eternal words with his own life as well."

For Soren Kierkegaard, the "religious" is the highest level of human existence. "The ethical is the general and as such the divine in turn. Therefore, we have the right to claim that every duty is in principle duty to God. However, if we cannot say more, we must add that I do not have any duty to God... The paradox of faith is therefore that the single individual stands above the general, that he - let us recall one rarely today's dogmatic difference - determines its attitude to the general through its attitude to the absolute ..." (Kierkegaard, 1987).

This deeply personal aspect, in Kierkegaard's ideas of the meaning of existence, finds its complete form here - the truly essential overcoming of temporality and extremity is achieved through an act of paradoxical and even absurd courage - and that is faith. Kierkegaard gives an example of Abraham's behavior before God. Faith (the religious) is the essential laying of the personality with the absolute, the general (the ethical) is subsequent. Kierkegaard's theses set out a perspective for reflecting on relationships and levels of significance in the structure of the social ontology.

Here is the place to share the words of Billy Graham in his lecture at the TED Conference, recalling the "Pascal Bet": "If you bet that God exists and believe in His love, you will not lose anything, even if you are wrong, But if you bet that God does not exist, then you will lose everything in the present and the next life." For Pascal, scientific knowledge pales in comparison to the knowledge of God. The knowledge of God is far above anything that has ever occurred to him. He was ready to meet God when he died at the age of 39. King David lived to the age of seventy, a long life during that time. But he also met death and wrote these words: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." (Billy Graham, 1998).

Together we can take care of the overcoming the Covid-19 crisis and the challenges of human life and health now, with solidarity, with prayer, and actions in support of physicians and health systems, with an example of discipline and ethics, sparing both personal and public health. But trust in common sense and faith are also important - expressed in real-time as spiritual and emotional support. A great example at the time of global quarantine was "TOGETHER: A Night of Hope" by one of the most popular Christian pop groups - for KING & COUNTRY, an event shared by over 300,000 people in real-time and initiated by a religious community and leadership, which are close to my attitude - Willow Creek Community Church (KING & COUNTRY, 2020)

Together we can take care of restoring the climate, the world's oceans, normalizing carbon dioxide levels, stopping the extinction of species, and caring for them with the love and responsibility that God gave to Noah at the time of the total extinction of life. This is the answer we can find as meaning in traditions that are heartfelt to us. Probably, everyone in their authentic "God-Man" communication and existence.

And we in the "Bulgarian Forum for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation" know this feeling of care, acceptance, trust, enriched with what Jesus is talking about, "And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39 ESV). We can add, as a possible treatment for the "pandemic" we talked about, that people are set up and divided against each other: "Love the distant one like yourself." This is a possible principle for building a world outside the "pandemic" of Modernity, a civilization based on the inalienable and unconditional right to an authentic connection with God, with others, with the environment, and the world at large.

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