



The Movement of Transcendental Humanism and some of its Key Perspectives

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This paper is an introduction to the work of drs. Frédéric Antonious as a school of thought as it has developed into the present time. The configuration is called Transcendental Humanism and leads in practice to Transcendental Living, with a focus on managing Dimensions of Experience, through the application of Resonance Ethics. A phenomenological approach being used here, to investigate this movement is a triple-P consistency of Principle, Purpose and Practise (PPP).

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Introducing Movement

Transcendental Humanism is a movement which has evolved in the late Twentieth century in Western Europe through the work of Frédéric Antonious, who is a modern-day mystic and author of eleven books on the practise of spirituality within contemporary modern culture, society and psychology. Transcendental Humanism is the most common denominator for referring to his work. In order to understand this movement of thought and spiritual practise, it is essential to understand its principle, its purpose and its practise.

Transcendental Humanism is a perspective focused on the primacy of experience and highlights that the nature of being human is transcendental. We are experience and we are a larger whole. This means that human existence takes place within a wider whole of reality, which is human existence itself, as well as beyond that. The reality we live in is not limited to human experience, is a continuous wider process than we can imagine, yet are part of. At the same time we can only approach that reality through our human perspective, our subjective or inter-subjective experience.

This type of humanism does not place human existence above any other form of existence in evolution. It merely accepts that the human experience is all we can ever know in our state of humans. We can even not say that we are the most intelligent, because really we cannot know. Neither is it really relevant, we exist in the way we do and are both intelligent and ignorant in the way that we are.

Even though affirmed, whatever the Beyond is, in Transcendental Humanism is not really spoken of. It is recognised as influencing us - and in more poetical moments, maybe whispering to us - as we are part of that process and field. However it is not defined, other than that it is a certain psychological state to which it relates, that is we are the beyond.

Antonious also refers to this aspect as the vertical nature of experience, distinguishing it from what is obviously the horizontal experience, the experience we can perceive and conceive of through the motions of daily life. This means we are experience, which has both a horizontal and a vertical aspect.

We can manage the motions of living by applying specific ethics, being aware of the dimensions of our experience and the way we resonate in them. Although the vertical is what we are, we cannot manage it the way we can the horizontal field. While we are able to manage the horizontal aspect of experience, we are not able to manage the vertical aspect. It is entirely unconscious; however it reflects back on us and codetermines experience and therefore our being. We can allow it to influence its way into the horizontal field and have its effect felt. We can, if we will, attune ourselves to a wider field, than just of ordinary experience and that of thought, feeling or belief.

Transcendental Humanism does not have a direct relation to earlier forms of humanism, as they have developed in Europe, beginning in the works of Erasmus (1467-1536)¹, or manifest in that of Spinoza (1632-1677)², although coincidentally Frédéric Antonious is from the same country as these figures in the history of thought.

This early humanism came as a reaction to the then predominant Churches in Europe; more precisely, the tendency towards dogmatism in practises of Christian religion and the need of a humanist ethic, including freedom of thought and tolerance.

Partly having become dogmatic and political institutions, along with the rise of science and enlightenment, churches evoked some counter movements in the course of time. Here humanism might be seen to constitute particular movements within a Judeo-Christian context, as well as initiation of alternatives to it. Alternatives, which have arisen, are also entirely atheistic forms of human thought, where the presence of any transcendental nature is denied, or in milder ways, it is simply denied that anything could be said about it.

Transcendental Humanism is not a reaction to a kind of dogmatic element, but it stands on its own and places human experience as the central point of consideration. It has arisen as a need in the social and cultural environment dominated by a secular form of society, based in the belief in scientific knowledge, the rule of law, the art of reasoning and of man as a self-psychological being. Transcendental Humanism may take a middle position between

¹ Erasmus, Praise of Folly (1512); The Complaint of Peace (1521)

² Spinoza, Ethics (1677)

transcendental religion and atheistic humanism. The problem of atheistic humanism is that it lives in denial of the inherent transcendental nature of human living.

While the secular and individualised life form has left behind the primacy of religious symbols, prescribed dogma or ethics and old customs - in the intent and experience of setting itself free - it has also suffered from spiritual disintegration.

It is the price it has had to pay for a rationalisation and materialisation of the universe - the disenchantment of the world. It may even have gone through the loss of a common sense of ethics, now that everyone could go out to find out individually for her and him self. That vertical dimension just got lost out of sight.

That rational insight and material wealth can all be real nice and beneficial in a utilitarian way, but tend not to serve as existential forces for deep-felt Wellbeing, has become a common feeling in more developed secular individualised societies. We are transcendental beings and with or without referring to God, a god or realm of Deities, this needs to be attended to, just along with everything else in living, in order to realise fulfilment. This is the vantage point of Transcendental Humanism. It is an embrace of both the secular and of the religious outlook on life and reality, in the power of binding forces and bridging gaps. Not being a paradigm of exclusion, but a paradigm of embrace.

I - The One Principle

The principle of Transcendental Humanism is that the ultimate nature of the reality we live in is One. All existence, every moment, springs from a single source and this is Oneness. In case as a movement, one can reach back as far as Plotinus (204-270 AD), then Transcendental Humanism is certainly a continuation of that school of thought.³ This is also the ancient mystical precept. We do not need to know the Ultimate while it be for us a principle.

Along with this, in the later stages, has come contemporary science, with its discoveries that all physical and non-physical reality relates back to a Unified Field, where nothing is fixed as it is, but resonates in a unified vibration yet to become: Unlimited potentiality.

³ Plotinus elaborated on the unspeakable one, in line with Neo-Platonist thinkers of that period. The question here is how one can speak about something, which is beyond concept and yet relate it towards the reality of daily living.

The secret has even been seen to be, that one can stir unshaped vibration into shapes and that this is actually what we do every moment, all the time in all situations, through our thinking, feeling, believing and focusing. We are all interconnected into everything, in being and in becoming - while we deny it, or while we don't.

The transcendental in Transcendental Humanism, refers to this principle and implies that as humans we live our lives within this Oneness, all and everything interconnected. Our lives are an expression of One. In present times, this interconnectedness has become more and more manifest, even in the sense of an objective world - with water, air, cables and ether connecting us all. For this type of humanism, the relevance of this principle is essentially in how we will *apply* it, primarily subjectively and in second effect collectively, in how we experience and approach our lives in shared living.

Important to the movement of Transcendental Humanism, is that this principle need not be conceived as if belief therein will be 'the truth', of the way it is. In all modesty as well as humility, it is merely presumed that way, as a working-hypothesis. For the truth of which, one leaves it up to experience and maybe indeed, to whatever works. It is about living one's Life. As far as the truth question is concerned, while taking into account the interconnectedness of all as scientifically given, the ultimate nature or intent of the transcendental principle - of the sun and moon - is really beyond us and our comprehension. It is Unknowable and now one can stand only in *Awe* and *Wonder* in reference to it.

To the religious truths perspective, in the end Transcendental Humanism might say, it is not so much about the belief one has in one's God, or about concerning oneself with Gods others belief. It is about the quality and intimacy of the relationship one has oneself with It - as that relationship is part of you, being One. It is certainly true that the strongest relationship humans can have is a Love relationship, relating and resonating as one.

It is not the principle, which really matters, but its effect on living, the consequence for approaching life and its *application*. This asks for a perspective on the purpose.

II - The Human Purpose

In the outlook on life of Transcendental Humanism, the ultimate purpose of life needs to be Wellbeing, as a continuous state in a primary experience of Everyday life. The kind of Wellbeing aimed at here, is not of feeling good or the enjoyment of physical things, it is an existential state of contentment, a psychologically harmonious and free state of mind.

Except for in time, this purpose is not far remote from the view Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) had, highlighting Happiness as the primary focus of human life, taking this as a starting point for his Nicomachean Ethics.

Wellbeing is a state of experience, which is firmly rooted even beyond experience and is supported by the proper management of one's primary life of experience as a human subject, a human being. Relevant to realising this state of Wellbeing, is how one practises living and its *energy management*.

In the view of Transcendental Humanism, Wellbeing can only be achieved most optimally when one's way of living is in alignment with Oneness. Its practise is meant to support this. True Wellbeing can only emerge in the realisation that one is both the individual life and the larger whole. Individual Wellbeing therefore cannot be found without taking the Wellbeing of the larger whole as it is perceived, into consideration. Ethics based on compassion is a direct consequence of the search for Wellbeing.

III - The Ethical Practise

While the principle denotes the transcendental and the purpose its humanism, Transcendental Humanism comes to realisation only in its application, integrating these two in practise. Only one rule needs to be employed therein and this is to remain consistent with the principle, while continuing focus on the purpose - it is all about *consistency*.

In a reality where everything is related, thus everything and everyone consists by its relations, what becomes essential is how one manages these relations. Everything is vibration, everything a unified field and all is in resonance. We are not simply what we are, as if we are fixed units of existence, we resonate in what we are and we resonate along within a wider

field. We are resonance and everything that we do gives shape and direction to this resonance, like a *causal* field, creating and recreating itself.

Managing one's relations as well as one's state of mind is what Ethics are meant to do.

Therefore ethics are at the centre stage of Transcendental Humanism and with its focus on the resonance of living, we are speaking of *Resonance Ethics*.

Starting off from its principle, these ethics are focused on developing and maintaining an optimal state of resonance in one's existence and suggest tools for living. These are tools through which one can guide and manage one's experience and perception in phenomenal life, in a way that contributes to Wellbeing.

This is Ethics, not in the morality sense of should and should not. An ethical environment like a beautiful garden one needs to take care of, an Ethos instead, appearing in the sight only and lived through in, the existence of the beholder. It is focused on harmonious behavioural conduct, sustainability in energy maintenance and the quality of relations.

Furthermore it is focused on the way one deals with thoughts and emotions, how one regards other beings as well as oneself, how one approaches, communicates, thinks and ascertains.

The environment of all existence is at play. Resonance ethics is not a philosophical principle, theory or outline; it is living attentively and if you will organically and dynamically.

The approach is like continuous adapting in sensitivity to resonance and is really quite simple. Once its principle is posed and poised, all required further is consistency in the practise of that principle all is one, being attentive to that; living the practise of everyday life in transparent alignment with the principle. There is no judge around, only effects of the actual practise in ones own experience. One's inner life - that voice from within which can be listened to - energetic condition, sustainability of wellbeing, are the real judges. The beholder subject is the only one who is accountable and who is in charge of that, to measure whether that result-experience is what is sought for or not. If it is not, it is an axiom of Transcendental Humanism, that one can change one's approach to living to a more beneficial effect for Wellbeing.

IV - Transcendental Living

Resonance Ethics

Resonance is the key to Transcendental Humanism and its application in Ethics is the key to Transcendental Living. Resonance is in our constant vibrating as waves. Resonance implies all reflects back on us. In our being as energies, we are not fixed selves, but fluent and fluctuating conglomerations, water crystals of energy reflecting endless light. We are all liquid, like particles of water, like flows in a river, waves of an ocean or sea.

We resonate with our environment, with other people, with our thoughts and our feelings, with projections and rejections, with our happiness and our openness, in all with living.

As water goes and fire burns, we carry all our actions with us in our being and becoming. In consequence, everything we do creates resonance and by that resonance, we create and recreate the environment we live in.

Patterns evolve this way. It is the real meaning of what makes the world we perceive, the mirror of ourselves. Transcendental living means being aware of the waves we create and recreate, it implies focus on our nonmaterial essence, our soul and mind and tuning into Resonance. This is also a way in which one will let Living do some of its living by itself.

Resonance is a key to being and to becoming. Many may speak of Oneness, there-being all one, all interconnected, whole. Resonance Ethics practically means Oneness *implementation*. It is to an extent about understanding how it comes to be that all is one and that you are one in that One. Moreover, it is about the implications were you to deal with life as if it is One. As if you were to resonate in this reality of oneness, treating every single smallest particle as if you were one with it, as if it was you, as if it were just Oneness reflecting in you.

In this understanding and perceiving of events, one will come to resonance and see that it is all about the way one resonates along with everything else. One is able to do some of your own creating here, to influence your own resonance and that of your environment. The Ethics are oriented to reaching the most optimal resonance for Wellbeing in a sustainable way, for the subject as well as his relations.

Quality of Relations

Transcendental Living involves awareness of the necessity of the harmony of relations. Every relation attaches to you, so you are in control of how you manage that, what as energy will attach to you. The most optimal way to treat this for the purpose of wellbeing is to be in harmonious conduct in relations. Such an attitude will make kindness and respect its prime values to live by. It involves attitudes of giving and of discretion, diligence in relation to the condition of the other.

The basic rule is that one's intent is never to do any harm to another being, whether this is in matter, thought, feeling or intent. You do not make someone lose his face, because you will attach as a relationship to yourself, losing one's face. You will have lost face and you will start noticing that, as it resonates.

Even disturbing contact with someone you may never have contact with again, the quality of the relation will attach to you and you will carry it with you, again helping to create a causal field of actions and reactions. Living in this awareness, of focus, one will need to treat one's relations with care and in intent of optimal resonance.

One can practise this kind of ethics individually, but in the end a social system, which integrates attitudes and habitats of respect, care and giving will be strengthening for this kind of awareness, a focus in support of wellbeing.

Interesting to point out is that research has shown that in the human brain those parts which generate the experience of happiness, are more influenced in the situation of giving, than they are in that of receiving. A giving attitude, inherently related to kindness and respect, obviously has a beneficial effect on Wellbeing.

Dimensions of Experience

Managing relations and oneself in this way, makes it useful to understand some more about the dimensions of experience that the human being is made of. Within Transcendental Humanism, the instrument of the Web of Dimensions highlights a number of dimensions of experience at disposal to the human subject, via existence in them. Spirit is the one of Intent.

Feeling and Imagination is of Soul. Thought and Becoming Conscious is of Mind. Physically you have Body. The question becomes what resonance to create in those dimensions and how to use them. They are not only dimensions, but can be applied as instruments for living in the same moment. Other papers perform a deeper study into these dimensions of experience.



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