

## Openness to the Other: ethical dimensions of freedom in wartime conditions

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This article explores the concept of “Openness to the Other” within the intersection of individual freedom and contemporary political realities at both national and global levels. Drawing upon the philosophical anthropology of M. Scheler and H. Plessner, the existential phenomenology of M. Merleau-Ponty, and M. Buber’s philosophy of dialogue, the study posits that Openness to the Other is not merely a secondary attribute of the subject, but a fundamental ontological condition of “being-in-the-world”. This ontological and ethical dimension serves as a theoretical basis for analyzing the existential mode of Ukrainian society and its relational dynamics with other political actors.

The discourse reveals an ethical paradox: the possibility of remaining open toward an entity that fundamentally repudiates the principle of openness itself. The Russian-Ukrainian war is examined as a collision between the inherent openness of the liberal order and the radical closure of the Russian imperial project. The author contends that the framework of “New Humanism” enables a re-interpretation of freedom as intrinsically bound to humanistic intentionality – specifically, mutuality and ethical responsibility.

Ultimately, the article proposes a reformulated vision of contemporary freedom and agency within the paradigm of New Humanism.

### KEYWORDS

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### Introduction

Freedom constitutes one of the most multidimensional and conceptually intricate phenomena of human existence. Within the frameworks of both Ukrainian and global philosophical thought, it manifests in diverse forms; nevertheless, the comprehension of its ontic and ontological dimensions remains a subject of ongoing debate. This discourse acquires particular exigency in the context of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, as value-based rationality, the universality of norms governing human coexistence, and the essence of freedom itself are fundamentally challenged. Under the conditions of warfare, freedom transcends the status of an abstract philosophical category, assuming a concrete and existential significance. War exposes the limits of human autonomy, compels a re-evaluation of the nexus between personal and collective will, and raises the pivotal question of whether freedom can be sustained where violence prevails. Consequently, there is an imperative not only to define freedom as a value but to comprehend it as a praxis – a mode of being and acting within a world undergoing simultaneous destruction and reconstruction. The current struggle for freedom as a supreme human value acts as a dual catalyst, instigating both a humanistic revival and a profound humanistic crisis on a global scale.

Against the backdrop of intensifying totalitarian tendencies within global political systems, alongside hybrid warfare and the escalation of informational and military terror, humanity is once again confronted with the urgent necessity to re-examine a fundamental

philosophical inquiry: what it means “to be human” and how this essence is manifested through one’s orientation toward the “Other”.

These questions have been addressed by thinkers across various schools throughout the history of European philosophy. In particular, M. Scheler, a prominent representative of philosophical anthropology, posited that while humanity possesses a biological, animalistic nature, its true essence resides in spirituality (Geist). This spiritual dimension is destined to transcend and transform biological impulses by orienting toward higher values (Scheler, 1994:53-59). Scheler asserts that the defining characteristic of a spiritual being is its independence, freedom, or existential autonomy (Scheler, 1994: 48). By virtue of this nature – and in contrast to other living beings – the human person is no longer a slave to instinctive drives but possesses genuine subjecthood.

New Humanism proposes to examine human subjecthood through the lenses of inherent value, dignity, and creative potential; however, it repudiates the notion of the “autonomous individual dominating the world”, advocating instead for a reformulated model of freedom. In this paradigm, the human being is perceived not in isolation, but as a subject embedded within a complex network of relations – possessing agency that manifests through interaction with society, the state, and global processes.

The **purpose of the article** is to provide an ethical conceptualization of Openness to the Other amidst contemporary political challenges. It seeks to investigate

freedom within the framework of liberal values – spanning the dimensions of individual existence and intersubjective coexistence – and to examine Openness to the Other as a foundational maxim of humanity. Furthermore, this study aims to demonstrate how constructive freedom, driven by the humanistic intentionality of the individual, facilitates the actualization of dialogue as a profound ethical act.

### Research methods

The methodological foundation of this study is grounded in M. Merleau-Ponty's idea of knowing the world through "inhabitation" as well as M. Buber's philosophy of dialogue, specifically his distinction between "I-Thou" and "I-It" relations. The research's anthropological vector is further informed by M. Scheler's conception of the spiritual essence of the human as person and H. Plessner's theory of "eccentric positionality". Such a multi-perspectival synthesis facilitates an investigation into Openness to the Other from an anthropological-communicative-phenomenological standpoint. Within this framework, the Other is perceived paradoxically: as an integral part of the world, yet possessing an autonomous existence that necessitates a dialogical approach for genuine apprehension.

Furthermore, the study employs the meta-anthropology of freedom as a heuristic framework. This approach enables the conceptualization of freedom through its immanent and transcendent dimensions within human existence, while establishing that freedom's manifestation – whether destructive or constructive – is fundamentally contingent upon the specific dimension of being.

### Results and Discussion

Within the philosophical tradition, freedom is predominantly conceptualized as an interior phenomenon, fundamentally linked to the autonomy of the will and the capacity for moral agency. Conversely, from a legal perspective, freedom is defined as the capacity to act within established normative frameworks and constraints that regulate social interaction to ensure the common good within the realm of possibility. These two paradigms are intrinsically interconnected, coalescing into a maxim of freedom: it posits that the human will and moral choice must constructively inform relations with the Other without infringing upon the boundaries of their respective autonomy.

Another significant trajectory in the philosophical conceptualization of freedom is the assertion that human liberty can be sustained even under conditions of external subjugation and the attendant suffering. This motif is prominently articulated by V. Frankl, who posited that an individual – endowed with a profound interiority and unconditional meaning – retains a fundamental freedom even within the confines of a concentration camp. According to Frankl, even amidst severe deprivation of liberty, individuals preserve a twofold agency: first, they retain the capacity to determine the moral character of their conduct toward others and the mode of their interpersonal interaction; and second, they possess an internal sanctuary of memory and subjective experience that remains beyond the reach of external bondage (Frankl, 2006: 41-44; 65). This conceptualization resonates with the Stoic tradition of intellectual detachment, which has acquired renewed exigency in contemporary discourse.

It may be posited that the communicative and ethical phenomenon of Openness to the Other serves as a fundamental precondition for all human interaction and

mutual influence. This phenomenon elucidates the relational and dialogical nature of human existence, encompassing both its axiological and existential dimensions. By analyzing this conception of freedom through the lens of humanistic psychoanalysis – a highly pertinent contemporary framework – the inquiry is situated within E. Fromm's distinction between "freedom from" and "freedom for" (Fromm, 1994: 31). Consequently, it can be argued that once an individual achieves "freedom from" (specifically, in this context, liberation from the constraints of absolute biological determinism), their consciousness is redirected toward the mastery of social norms and the internalisation of collective values.

According to the meta-anthropology of freedom, this form of freedom is immanent but does not necessitate its qualitative realization. In contrast, the freedom articulated by M. Scheler is both immanent and transcendent. Its immanence resides in its intrinsic connection with the concept of humanity; however, achieving the status of "human-as-person" requires transcendence. The Spirit (Geist) serves as the condition and the catalyst for actualizing the personal essence within human existence and realizing one's freedom. In other words, the Spirit is what constitutes an individual as a Person, and the Person is what distinguishes the human being from all other representatives of the biosphere. Crucially, Scheler interpreted the Spirit as the ontological core of the Person, which subordinates other dimensions of human existence: the physical, mental, and intellectual (Scheler, 1994: 58-59). Thus, the human-as-person emerges as the bearer of the Spirit, liberated from the constraints of biological determinism. Simultaneously, the person manifests their freedom through the capacity to orient toward higher values, elevating their existence to a superior axiological level.

However, within the framework of the meta-anthropology of freedom, the Spirit can manifest both constructively and destructively. While the Spirit, according to Scheler, is capable of apprehending higher values – such as beauty, truth, and justice – these values may be suppressed rather than cultivated, often being substituted by metanarratives generated by totalitarian ideologies of the post-truth era. This raises a critical question: should such "axiologically void" freedom be regarded as a value in itself?

H. Plessner's concept of eccentric positionality as a defining characteristic of human nature is foundational for the conceptualization of the ontology of freedom (Plessner, 2019: 267-272). Plessner argued that all living beings exhibit a certain "positionality" – a structural mode of relating to their environment. Plants have open positionality: they do not demarcate themselves from the environment. Animals, conversely, possess centric positionality: they experience and orient themselves through instincts and sensory-organic perception. However, while the centric animal operates from a center, it – unlike the eccentric human – does not experience itself as a center. This distinction implies that animals lack the capacity for self-reflection and self-consciousness (Plessner, 2019: 272). Consequently, the human being emerges as a subject who is conscious of their own experiences, perceptions, and initiatives (Plessner, 2019: 272). Within the framework of this study, these three layers of positionality correspond to the corporeal, psychic, and spiritual dimensions.

Eccentric positionality serves as the foundation of self-consciousness, which is a prerequisite for self-

comprehension and, inherently, for spirituality. In turn, these spiritual and reflexive capacities are essential for recognition of the Other within the shared domain that H. Plessner terms the "common world of the Spirit" (Plessner, 2019: 281) and, more specifically, for the actualization of Openness to the Other. Plessner posits that this common world, which unifies individuals, does not merely surround them as a natural environment does; rather, it constitutes and, in a sense, orients them (Plessner, 2019: 281). This "common world" is not an abstract construct but functions as a tangible sphere of interaction arising from human eccentricity – a realm in which individuals perceive, realize, and engage with others. It can be said that the Spirit pervades and unites all those who possess eccentric positionality – that is, all human beings.

This perspective aligns closely with the phenomenological approach of M. Merleau-Ponty, who conceptualized the modalities of human existence and co-existence within the world. Prioritizing the corporeal dimension of being, he observes:

Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are encrusted in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1993: 3).

In this context, Openness to the Other is interpreted as an intrinsic facet of "Openness to the world", which, in turn, finds expression in our primordial dwelling and the inextricable intertwining of the self and the body within the world. As constituents of the world's integral fabric, we do not merely inhabit the world but embody it, as the environment functions as a prolongation of our body schema. This perspective reflects not only the ontological integrity of the world but also our fundamental unity with it and with Others, who share this existential ground. As Merleau-Ponty articulates:

I have the world as an incomplete individual, through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world, and I have the positing of objects through that of my body, or conversely the positing of my body through that of objects ... because my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body's point of support (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 408).

Simultaneously, Merleau-Ponty underscores a distinct specificity in the perception of other people as opposed to inanimate objects. The Other does not appear merely as an object among objects, but as an undeniable modality of co-existence: "The other can be evident to me because I am not transparent for myself, and because my subjectivity draws its body in its wake" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 410). This implies that others cannot be reduced to external phenomena or mere constructs of our own consciousness, as they possess an ontological presence independent of our perception. Unlike objects, which are subject to detached observation, people are perceived through the entirety of our affective and sensory capacities. Merleau-Ponty notes: "... this alien life, like mine with which it is in communication, is an open life. It is not entirely accounted for by a certain number of biological or sensory functions" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 412). Elaborating on the mechanism of apprehending the Other, Merleau-Ponty suggests:

I perceive the other as a piece of behaviour, for example, I perceive the grief or the anger of the other in his conduct, in his face or his hands, without recourse to any 'inner' experience of suffering or anger... But then, the behaviour of

another, and even his words, are not that other (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 414-415).

Conversely, a fundamental asymmetry persists: one cannot directly experience the "Self" of the Other in the same manner as one experiences their own interiority. Conversely, the agency of the Other is not as self-evident as one's own, for the Other dwells within the world, and one can never conceive of their Ego in the same manner as one's own. This gives rise to a constitutive paradox: to conceptualize the Other as a genuine Self, one must inevitably perceive oneself as an object for them – a shift that remains fundamentally problematic given the irreducible nature of one's own subjecthood (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 410). Consequently, the ontological status of the Other must be redefined. The Other unequivocally transcends the category of mere objects, simultaneously co-existing with us and independently within an intersubjective world that can be defined by co-being: "... each other person does exist for me as an unchallengeable style or setting of co-existence, and my life has a social atmosphere just as it has a flavour of mortality" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 424-425).

The condition of possibility for our Openness to the Other – perceiving them as an entity existing beyond our own subjective boundaries – is rooted in the human capacity for transcendence. This thesis is reinforced by M. Merleau-Ponty's argument that, alongside the natural and social worlds, one must discover the "truly transcendental", which inevitably and directly draws the subject into communication with Others while simultaneously rendering their complete comprehension unattainable; as an alternative transcendence, the Other remains fundamentally mysterious (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 425).

This implies that human existence is fundamentally ambiguous: one is neither entirely subsumed by the world and Others, nor entirely alienated from them. Engagement with the Other transcends mere detached observation or intellectual analysis of their attributes; rather, it is mediated through corporeal and affective interaction. In this sense, the Other is apprehended and felt through a "bodily resonance". This distinctive mode of human cognition, defined by its inherent dialectic, embodies both the possibility of recognizing the Other and the inevitable incompleteness of such understanding.

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty identifies language as a pivotal cultural phenomenon that fundamentally reshapes the perception of the Other. He posits that linguistic mediation facilitates a unique ontological shift:

In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field... our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 413).

This intersubjective synergy serves as the foundational condition for authentic unity, transcending individual isolation to establish a shared existence within a cohesive, common world.

It is plausible to assert that dialogue constitutes an ethical space wherein the subjecthood of the Other is fundamentally recognized. Within this sphere, one neither constitutes nor merely interprets the Other's thoughts

through a reductive decoding of signals or purely empathic projection based on personal experience – even if one finds internal resonance or anticipates the trajectory of the Other's logic. On the contrary, through the articulation of thought, the Other asserts their authorship – or, more precisely, their co-authorship – within the dialogical process. Consequently, dialogue facilitates a unique reciprocal exchange of insights, a synergistic encounter that generates novel meanings and conceptual horizons for both the self and the Other.

However, upon the cessation of dialogue, a sense of estrangement often re-emerges as the Other reverts to the status of an "alien" to one's own subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty highlights this transition:

It is only retrospectively, when I have withdrawn from the dialogue and am recalling it that I am able to reintegrate it into my life and make of it an episode in my private history, and that the other... is felt as a threat (*Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 413*).

Consequently, one may conclude that dialogue functions as a privileged temporal moment – an existential event that actively reveals and foregrounds the subjecthood of the Other within a shared, intersubjective space. Outside of this communicative encounter, the Other risks being reduced once again to a mere object or a potential threat to the autonomy of the self.

Openness to the Other underscores the inherently interpersonal nature of human existence, challenging purely individualistic paradigms. This reveals a fundamental anthropological constant: the human being is a creature constituted through dialogue. Such an inquiry necessitates an engagement with the dialogical philosophy of M. Buber, specifically his conceptualization of the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relations – distinct modalities that differentiate subject-subject from subject-object interactions. Buber posits that relation is the primordial foundation of existence, preceding both reflection and the conscious conceptualization of social bonds. For Buber, the "Thou" represents an innate ontological necessity for connection that precedes and defines all subsequent interaction:

... the longing for relation is primary... the relation... comes second... in the beginning is the relation – as the category of being, as readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled, as a model of the soul; the a priori of relation; the innate You (*Buber, 1923: 39*).

Furthermore, it is precisely through the actualization of this relational drive that the self is discovered and fully realized.

According to this philosophical framework, the human being engages with the world through two integral and distinct modalities, both of which are existentially necessary. The first involves the objective apprehension of entities and processes – a mode characterized by the "I-It" relationship, defined by detachment and categorization. The second is realized through a subjective encounter, wherein these same entities transcend their instrumental value to acquire profound significance through the relational bond – the "I-Thou" relationship (*Buber, 1923: 40*). Crucially, the latter is not governed by the restrictive categories of space, time, or causality; consequently, the "I-Thou" encounter eludes exhaustive analysis through purely objective or empirical criteria.

According to Buber, the "I-Thou" relationship is fundamental to our humanity: one who lives purely in the "I-It" relationship fails to actualize themselves as a human being: "... without It a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human" (*Buber, 1923: 42*). In the "I-It" mode, the individual positions themselves

as the single pole of subjecthood within the relationship: an observer, user, and manipulator of objects. Drawing on M. Scheler's definition of the human-as-person, it can be argued that an individual incapable of transcending their own boundaries – and who thus cannot perceive the Other as a subject, or consciously engages in their objectification – fails to achieve authentic humanity.

Such a perception allows the individual to maintain complete control, but robs them of the potential for genuine, mutual connection. This is because, according to M. Buber, a person who treats the Other as the It establishes a position of superiority and negates the Other's status as an equal (*Buber, 1923: 40*).

In order for the "It" to become the "Thou", the "I" must renounce perceiving something or someone merely as an instrument or an object, and instead enter into a living, intentional, and mutual encounter with them. This is where we acknowledge the Other's presence and our shared being with them. It is then that mutuality emerges (*Buber, 1923: 41*). This intentionality, which serves as a necessary prerequisite for dialogue, is the primary essential component of Openness to the Other in the existence of the human-as-person.

Yet, this encounter is not eternal; it is transient. Following the act of dialogue, when the relationship between individuals is completed, what was initially the subject (the "Thou") inevitably reverts to being the "It" for the "I", re-emerging as a cognitive object – a subject for reflection, description, comprehension, and potential instrumental analysis: "The individual You must become an It when the event of relation has run its course" (*Buber, 1923: 41*). This underscores both the dynamism of the "I-Thou" relationship and its inherent ambivalence. Paradoxically, it is precisely this distance between the subjects and the necessity of intentional address toward the Other that enables authentic communion.

The second essential component of Openness to the Other is the encounter as an ethical act. A genuine encounter becomes possible when an individual, first and foremost, approaches the Other with respect and love, maintaining an appropriate ethical disposition. As established by M. Buber, the encounter signifies an openness to the world at large and to the specific world of the Other, serving as a possible mode of interaction. When we engage in this encounter and recognize the Other as our equal, we enter into a dialogue where, according to M. Merleau-Ponty, genuine co-authorship occurs – an exchange of ideas and the authentic recognition of the Other. Moreover, it is under these circumstances that profound understanding of the Other becomes possible. All of this constitutes the necessary preconditions for the formation of a friendly disposition and, subsequently, friendly relationships. It is crucial to distinguish between a friendly disposition and friendly relationships: the former represents the internal, a priori ethical stance of the subjects, existing before the encounter. The latter, conversely, develops within the process of dialogue and is the potential result of the former.

Since, according to M. Merleau-Ponty, this encounter as an act has a definite beginning and end, it can be defined as a crucial intersubjective moment for the development of any relationship. When we are in a populated space, other people initially appear as a crowd – something that is at once undifferentiated, undefined, and impersonal, resembling an abstract world. In this state, we are in an I-It relationship with this world and assign it impersonal labels: the collective, participants, the mass,

etc. However, sooner or later, the Other can emerge from the crowd – either through their own manifestation or through our conscious attention – it is our consciousness that can clarify and reveal them to us. This process, resulting from transcending our own boundaries and being open to the Other, gives rise to a humanistic attitude and respect, which are not immanent to us. This is, rather, an ethical disposition we must actively maintain in order to grasp the true depth of interpersonal relationships.

In accordance with the meta-anthropology of freedom – a framework situated within philosophical anthropology as meta-anthropology (*Khamitov, 2023a: 15-19*) – human being is structured across three distinct dimensions: the ordinary, the boundary, and the meta-boundary. In the dimension of ordinary being, where the individual is driven by the will to self-preservation and procreation, the personal principle, spirituality, and freedom remain absent. Conversely, the individual within boundary being is characterized solely by immanent freedom (*Khamitov, Ponuliak, 2025: 59*). In its incompleteness, this freedom may manifest not only constructively but also destructively. Driven by the will to knowledge, creativity, and power, the individual of boundary being may consciously “inhabit” the Other through possession or the acquisition of knowledge, thereby reducing them to the status of an object. In such instances, there exists a clear, deliberate motive underlying this action.

Despite being open to the world, the individual of boundary being experiences an inherent sense of solitude; in exercising their immanent freedom, they favor competition over cooperation, striving to position themselves as the singular subject amidst a world of objectified Others. Yet, being constrained by the boundaries of their own cognition and the existential conditions that surround them, such an individual remains vulnerable to objectification themselves. In this state, a deliberate absorption of one's identity by the identity of another takes place.

Beyond the paradigms of dominance and submission, the scenario of identity fusion presents an alternative trajectory. This mode of interaction is no less destructive than the former, as this collective identity arises from a reciprocal reduction of the Other to an object for the sake of possession. Ultimately, their distinct identities fuse into a singular whole, resulting in the dissolution of the individual persona.

In light of these tendencies, it is essential to analyze the specific impact of war, as a quintessential boundary situation, upon Ukrainian society. Primarily, it is argued that society at large has adopted a “compelled urgency to live”, driven by an intensified need to fulfill its existential purpose. This phenomenon manifests through several ontological vectors: the procreation and continuation of the lineage; self-actualization and creative expression; and spiritual development.

Specifically, it is worth exploring the impact of the boundary situation – namely, war – on procreation as a primary strategy for actualizing life's meaning amidst existential peril. Procreation fulfills a biological imperative, revealing itself through a “compelled instinct” to ensure progeny and, consequently, through the act of childbirth. Furthermore, it manifests in the rise of “hookup culture”, which can be interpreted as a profound immersion in corporeality.

From one perspective, this intensification arises naturally within the ordinary dimension of human being; essentially, it constitutes an escalation of the behaviors

intrinsic to the individual of ordinary being. Yet, from another perspective, the individual of boundary being, in their state of incompleteness, is susceptible to a regression into the ordinary dimension of being. It can be posited that this occurs when a boundary situation breaks the individual, creating circumstances where spiritual development is supplanted by the values of the ordinary individual – namely, procreation and self-preservation. In such cases, “instincts” displace the will to knowledge, creativity, and power, leading the individual to seek solace in corporeal groundedness.

An alternative scenario involves self-actualization and creativity as they emerge from the crucible of war, acting as a boundary situation within ordinary being. In this context, the individual of ordinary being transcends the view of life as mere biological subsistence, recognizing it instead as a unique horizon for self-actualization. This shift enables a profound immersion into the realms of knowledge and creative inquiry, as the individual actively seeks out modalities for their existential fulfillment.

To illustrate the profound divergence between the aforementioned scenarios – specifically the retreat into corporeality versus the drive toward self-actualization – one may analyze the bifurcated vectors of Ukrainian wartime emigration.

The former is exemplified by those who sought refuge primarily to preserve physical safety but, despite years abroad, have failed to integrate into the host society, acquire the language, or find fulfilling employment. For such individuals, the overarching goal remains the mere maintenance of existence, while their lived experience appears to have stalled at the onset of the war. Conversely, the latter scenario is embodied by those who have expanded their horizons: mastering new languages and engaging in creative or professional pursuits that align with their authentic aspirations.

Furthermore, self-actualization and creativity may manifest as a drive to exert power over others through the medium of knowledge. This has led to the emergence of numerous authorities, public speakers, and influencers who rose to prominence following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Such individuals command public attention by mobilizing not merely like-minded peers, but devoted followers, often employing manipulative techniques to maintain their influence.

Ultimately, the third scenario is defined by spiritual development, signifying the actualization of the personal principle within human existence. This trajectory marks an ontological breakthrough from boundary being to the meta-boundary realm, a dimension governed by the will to freedom and love. In the framework of the meta-anthropology of freedom, it is within this dimension that transcendental freedom finds its expression, manifesting through constructive and generative modalities of being (*Khamitov, Ponuliak, 2025: 60*). Only upon recognizing the intrinsic value of the “Other's” life and their unconditional subjecthood do humanistic values become actualized within an individual's existence – values that are then embraced through a free existential choice. It is precisely within the meta-boundary dimension of being that one becomes capable of forging authentic social bonds, experiencing profound love, and achieving self-actualization in true being. Furthermore, the meta-boundary dimension serves as the locus for the unfolding potential of New Humanism. Analyzing the context of the war in Ukraine, the contemporary philosopher N. Khamitov posits that the fundamental task of New Humanism is the

humanization of the opponent (*Khamitov, 2023b: 29*). However, a crucial distinction must be made: this concept pertains not to an enemy actively perpetrating violence, but to the “Other” as an opponent with whom the possibility of dialogue remains preserved.

Nevertheless, to conceptualize humanism as an ideal not only for the individual but for humanity as a whole, the discourse must be shifted from the personal to the political sphere. The aforementioned scenarios of war’s impact on the individual are equally applicable to the state level. This war serves as a potential catalyst, compelling the liberal “collective West” to redefine the Other to whom openness is both necessary and vital. The Enemy, as the “Radically Other”, cannot be viewed as a valid subject for practices of openness if they consistently disregard such efforts. Analyzing the position of J. Habermas, the Ukrainian philosopher A. Yermolenko notes: “...there are moments when the infinite horizon of communication reaches its limits: you cannot engage in dialogue with a murderer and a rapist; you must resist them” (*Yermolenko, 2022: 63*). Openness to the Other constitutes an ethical act of freedom; however, the precondition for dialogue does not guarantee its actual formation. Dialogue is a manifestation of mutual openness; in circumstances where an opponent adopts the position of a singular subject – seeking to dominate and subjugate objectified Others – dialogue becomes fundamentally impossible. Consequently, it is imperative to prioritize openness toward those who belong to the democratic world and defend its principles at the cost of their own ontic status. Thus, the liberal world must embrace a framework of responsibility, aligning international relations with the ethics of the Other and demonstrating how the devaluation of certain Others can undermine the very foundations of the humanistic order.

Within the framework of the meta-anthropology of freedom, the meta-boundary dimension of a state’s being unfolds through its interaction with the Other, that is represented by other nations or international alliances. Conversely, the boundary being of a state manifests through charismatic yet manipulative leaders who rely on totalitarian ideologies or populist narratives. In such polities, society typically remains submerged in ordinaryness, devoid of critical reflection and the intention toward Openness to the Other. Consequently, the populace becomes highly susceptible to political manipulation, enabling leaders to forge aggressive policies rooted in isolationism, the exploitation of fear, and the systematic cultivation of the “enemy image”.

In other words, states characterized by boundary being are essentially polities of ordinaryness, albeit in a state of war which they themselves initiate. Such entities seek alliances among the weaker or typologically similar regimes, potentially forming anti-democratic blocs. Their subjecthood is guided by a drive for dominance within the international geopolitical arena rather than a commitment to constructive co-existence.

Countries compelled to survive – specifically as a result of a colonial past or economic instability – exist within the ordinary dimension. For such states, the primary objective is the preservation of sovereignty and physical existence; consequently, there is often limited space for moral evolution or openness toward the Other. It is noteworthy that these nations frequently exhibit high birth rates alongside high mortality rates. Nevertheless, it is precisely within these contexts that the humanistic paradigm may prove to be most essential.

Within the paradigm of New Humanism, Ukraine is conceptualized as an authentic political and cultural subject. It is perceived not merely as a territory or an administrative structure, but primarily as a community endowed with its own voice, history, and vision for the future. To transcend the boundary situation of war – which threatens to become a permanent state of being – and enter the meta-boundary dimension, contemporary Ukraine must achieve victory. This victory encompasses not only territorial integrity but also the establishment of the humanistic foundations of state subjecthood: the capacity for the nation not just to survive, but to live, create, and remain open to the Other without losing its essence. It can be posited that cultivating the ideals of respect and openness toward the Other within society actualizes the personal principle within the individual. Simultaneously, this actualization serves as an expression of freedom, leading to the formation of a humanistic axiology for the nation.

### Conclusion

Consequently, human subjecthood is understood as a state of intersubjective interdependence rather than isolated selfhood. The individual emerges as a responsible participant in the shared world, forging their identity through dialogue with the Other. The concept of Openness to the Other is examined through the lens of philosophical anthropology, existential phenomenology, and the philosophy of dialogue. A review of the anthropological concepts and methodological approaches of M. Scheler, H. Plessner, M. Merleau-Ponty, and M. Buber has revealed that Openness to the Other is not a secondary characteristic of the subject, but appears as an ontological condition of its being-in-the-world. This fundamental ontological and ethical dimension of openness lays the groundwork for further analysis of the realities of Ukrainian society, the formation of freedom at personal and national levels. The relationships between subjects are always constructed through an encounter with the Other, which presupposes a primary ethical attitude, respect, love, and openness to them. An encounter, according to M. Buber and M. Merleau-Ponty, is a process of interaction between subjects, where they act as co-authors through dialogue. It is determined that immanent freedom, from the perspective of meta-anthropology of freedom, is actualized in the boundary dimension of being and in boundary situations. In the ordinary being, there can only be an illusion of freedom. Instead, true freedom, as the unity of immanent and transcendent freedom, is inherent in the meta-boundary dimension. In boundary situations and in boundary being, a person consciously “inhabits” the Other through possession of them. Finally, the person of meta-boundary being is capable of actualizing their personal principle through the cultivation of the spirit, producing constructive manifestations of freedom. In New Humanism, freedom can be interpreted as responsible, ethical participation in a shared world, rather than as sovereign autonomy. It is realized in co-creation, the possibility to create meanings and the future, and to resist the enemy together with Others.

It is analyzed how the boundary situation of war has influenced Ukrainian society. To exit from this boundary situation, which manifests the danger of becoming a state of being, into the meta-boundary dimension, Ukraine must preserve its subjecthood within the political space of the democratic world. This includes not only territorial integrity but also the assertion of the humanistic foundations of state subjecthood, where the country is capable not only of



surviving but also of living and creating, being open to the Other without losing itself. Three main scenarios are considered, according to which people of ordinary, boundary, and meta-boundary being live under these conditions. These scenarios are applied for analytical socio-philosophical conclusions regarding the development of Ukrainian society. The idea of freedom is articulated as leading on the path to the civilizational subjecthood of Ukraine. A vision of modern dimensions of freedom and subjecthood within the context of the concept of New Humanism is proposed.

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## Відкритість Іншому: етичні виміри свободи в умовах війни

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У статті осмислено концепт відкритості Іншому в контексті свободи особистості та політичних реалій національного і глобального рівнів. Залучено філософську антропологію М. Шелера та Г. Плеснера, екзистенційну феноменологію М. Мерло-Понті, філософію діалогу М. Бубера. Аналіз концептуальної спадщини цих мислителів дав змогу виявити, що відкритість до Іншого не є вторинною характеристикою суб'єкта, а радше – онтологічною умовою його буття у світі. Цей фундаментальний онтологічний і етичний вимір відкритості закладає підвалини для подальшого аналізу способу буття українського суспільства та його відносин з іншими політичними суб'єктами.

Тема відкритості до Іншого проявляється як етичний парадокс: чи можна бути відкритими до того, хто заперечує сам принцип відкритості? Російсько-українська війна демонструє зіткнення відкритості ліберального ладу і радикальної закритості російського імперського проєкту. Підкреслено, що звернення до ідей нового гуманізму дозволяє по-новому осмислити свободу як таку, що невід'ємно пов'язана з гуманістичними інтенціями – взаємності та етичної відповідальності. Запропоновано бачення сучасних вимірів свободи й суб'єктності у контексті концепту нового гуманізму.

**Ключові слова:** свобода особистості, Інший, відкритість до Іншого, метаантропологія свободи, суб'єктність України, новий гуманізм

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