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# Between Monologue and Dialogue in Social Life – the Philosophies of Martin Buber and Józef Tischner

## Abstract

Monologue and dialogue are contextual categories. They can be analysed from many different viewpoints, revealing their multiple meanings and their axiological-anthropological-social character. Both communication structures can refer to important social and individual problems.

The article examines the meaning and importance of monologue and dialogue in social life. Martin Buber and Józef Tischner explain the real meaning of true (honest) dialogue, by pitting it against the monological way of living. They see dialogue as residing on the plane of life itself (Buber) and affecting the space “between” I and You (Buber, Tischner). Monologue seems to be not only the opposite of dialogue but also to be an incomplete structure that requires complementation. Buber and Tischner present dialogue as an essential human experience. The individual is described as an entity “invited to a conversation” (turned to the other and towards the other). Through this, they crystallise the essence of dialogue, in which freedom and responsibility play the key roles. Facing each other, the subjects must free themselves from prejudice and remove the armor of pretense. The answer to a question coming from another human being creates a dialogical bond of participation in values. Dialogue transcends the monological “being for oneself” of the subject, towards “being for others”. As a result, social reality gains a new meaning, becoming the space for reciprocity, solidarity and social life.

**Keywords:** monologue, dialogue, freedom, responsibility.

**JEL Classification:** Z10.

## 1. Introduction

Monologue and dialogue are communication structures, though they bind an individual with the world and with other individuals in a different manner. Both monologue and dialogue indicate the distinctive way in which one expresses thoughts, and serve different roles in the social context. Their function gains significance in various sets of events, by influencing them and increasing their dynamics. It is through these structures that an individual can develop oneself and the surrounding environment. Thinking alone can be stimulated by monologue and dialogue. It is the dialogue, though, that provides the basis for resolving conflicts, alleviating disputes, and coordinating actions.

The activation of an individual through both monologue and dialogue happens on different levels and may lead to a variety of conclusions, but it always has a creative impact on self-development, on the deeper understanding of events, and on a thorough perception of reality. Depending on the context, one can defend both dialogue and monologue as legitimate ways to broaden one's perception or establish optimal solutions. On the other hand, they can as well both be used to destabilise, manipulate, abuse or persuade in a destructive way. One can also experience a monologue with the characteristics of a dialogue, a dialogue with the qualities of a monologue, a monologue embedded in a dialogue (pseudo-dialogue), or a dialogue included in a monologue (e.g. a dialogue of an individual with oneself). Therefore, a simplification of both categories would lead to a multitude of misunderstandings. Being in a monologue structure does not necessarily have to be a negative process. In the same fashion, carrying out a dialogue does not have to lead to a deeper understanding of others. This poses a question of the function of monologue and dialogue in the socio-economic system, as well as their contribution to the changes and transformations of the system itself.

Experts in the philosophy of dialogue, one of the significant notions in modern reflection on the individual, society and state, as well as various participants in social, economic and political life agree that dialogue is the foundation of numerous positive values, such as justice and the common good<sup>1</sup>. Despite that

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<sup>1</sup> A number of strands in the philosophy of dialogue analyse the I–You relationship. There is a tendency to accentuate the constitutive nature of dialogue for the existence of every human being (Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner). The relationship with another person's You is rooted in dialogical freedom, responsibility and reciprocity. The second direction points at the ethical and epiphanic nature of relationships between I and the face of the Other (Emmanuel

fact, the multi-layered, multi-level and multi-form nature of dialogue creates an impression of a complex structure, which requires further definition and precise understanding.

At present, dialogue is a very “successful” term, used both in everyday language and in philosophical, ethics, sociological, psychological and economic literature. It is put forward as the basic tool for interpersonal communication in business, politics, science, culture and society. Overusing dialogue for marketing or populist reasons, however, can impact the society in a negative way, or even create bunkum, which brings no value to the community. Paradoxically, dialogue used as a keyword may diminish its significance and turn any communication into a swarm of individuals engaged in their own monologues, playing an imaginary game. Indeed, in a pseudo-dialogue, the idea of truth becomes an empty reference. Dialogue is often used as a catch phrase in marketing, political debates, business negotiations and public debates, used to gain profit.

Can it also be used as a keyword for building common good, a civil society and for fulfilling various social and economic goals? That is an open question. I believe that the philosophical aspect of dialogue as a term is definitely worth revisiting, to show a broader picture of entering the space for important and serious debates on the contemporary world and socio-economic phenomena. The question of whether the transition from monologue to dialogue is necessary when societies develop should be posed. What is beneath the claims advocating the rule of dialogue in socio-economic life and how to understand the rule itself?

With the entire tradition of dialogue-advocating thinking in mind, it is worth mentioning that a philosophical debate on the significance, role and fundamental core of dialogue and dialogicality is ongoing. It is important not only for theoretical thinking, but also for the socio-economic practice, in which the main characters interact, depend, cooperate with each other and solve a multitude of problems. Dialogue not only defines and becomes the foundation of this coexistence, but also becomes an indispensable rule of the mutual agreement of parties, in which prejudices and stereotypes can be purified. As highlighted by Charles Taylor, dialogicality is a common feature of human existence, a foundation for the culture of authenticity. The individual can recognise and understand himself/herself better by extending dialogical interaction with others. The road to awareness of one’s own identity leads through the act of reaching out to others, which proves the inadequacy of the monological ideal. Among many conditions for authenticity,

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Levinas) and reveals the asymmetry of the relationship. The Other’s You assumes responsibility for the Other. The third direction introduces the optics of the dramatic encounter between I and You (Józef Tischner), in which one can observe a constant exchange of questions and answers in the agathological and axiological sense. All the directions describe dialogue as a foundation for implementing values such as love, goodness, freedom and responsibility.

Taylor describes self-definition in dialogue as a constitutive factor for the proper understanding of authenticity (Taylor 1992, p. 33–35, 66).

## 2. On Monologue and Dialogue with Reference to Responsibility

Defined as ways of communicating, both monologue and dialogue face ethical, axiological, anthropological and social problems. Therefore, ranking one above the other definitively is difficult. Many philosophers favour dialogue as a form that liberates the subject from the shackles of its monological self-attachment, self-awareness and “being for oneself” in favour of a relationship, which becomes a source of exchange, answers and reaching out to others. To justify this form of dialogue, thinkers search for a certain vision of a human being to assume. The Buber’s idea of I–You and I–It (Buber 1958, p. 4–12), Tischner’s philosophy of drama (Tischner 2006) and Levinas’ ethics of responsibility (Levinas 1985, p. 94–97) all define dialogue differently. The common element in these visions oscillates around the idea of freedom and responsibility, in which one exposes oneself as committed not only to one’s existence, but also to the existence of the Other. The subject does not exist for one’s own sake, but through and for the other. Commitment constantly changes I and You. Dialogue implies freedom, because I and You choose and confirm each other when they enter a conversation. In monologue, the participant’s relational ability diminishes. A person “treats everything, including oneself, as a subject to one’s actions. People in a monologue do not talk with themselves. They do not listen to anyone, themselves included. They do not see anything or anyone, except themselves. They do not answer anyone’s questions or requests. They live irresponsibly. To them, everything in the world is pure matter, which can be shaped in any way they like” (Grygiel 2012, p. 30).

If one is to be responsible in the philosophical, ethical, and socio-economic sense, the responsiveness implied by being responsible calls for dialogue and dialogicality. Dialogue elevates the participants to a realm which facilitates a different kind of interaction and functions in the orbit of a new, different paradigm. In dialogue, although we all “exist” in a particular way, everyone else “exists” as a separate entity. We also “exist” as people who are beginning to bond with each other. The objective and subjective paradigms are becoming insufficient, as it turns out that in dialogue, we are experiencing a shift to a paradigm based on responsibility, in which the person asking the question and the one replying exists in relation to values, in a symbiotic movement of freedom. It also turns out that another person may reveal new meanings, new dimensions for existence and understanding, and new ways of perceiving the world, by asking and answering questions. Jacek Filek describes this phenomenon as a new, not fully understood

thought paradigm of “contemporary” times (Filek 2003, p. 6). As we know, the phrase “you are” plays a key role in the “You” paradigm and serves as an invitation to “we are”. This is where the dialogical concept of community begins.

Dialogue is inherently inscribed in human existence. Being in a dialogue with another human being, nature, God or even with oneself proves this. A human being turns out to be “invited to a conversation” in one’s existence, and is therefore also asked to provide answers. Dialogue reveals the nature of man. It is dialogue, not monologue, in which a person is born and reborn. In other words, in dialogue, a person „appears as someone who is still to be born, who has a Future. Dialogue is the human nature of a human being” (Grygiel 2012, p. 38). On the other hand, monologue is the thinking that guides lonely people attached to their own opinions or scientific proof.

In the context of the dialogue advocates’ thinking, an invitation to a conversation becomes a correlate of encountering a particular type of I and You. The dispute between the philosophers of dialogue is fueled by the lack of common understanding of the essence of the invitation and the answer. Some emphasise the symmetry of responsibility (Ferdinand Ebner, Martin Buber) while others highlight its asymmetry (Franz Rosenzweig, Emmanuel Levinas, Józef Tischner). Nevertheless, the philosophers of dialogue “connect the responsibility of the participant, with the readiness to defend all that is beyond one’s perception” (Rotengruber 2011, p. 76). The other introduces a perspective of deep understanding of the truth about ourselves, how we perceive our own identity and what lies on the basic axis of one’s life with others. One can remain passive when invited to a conversation, but is it the right thing to do? An invitation from “You” wakes “I” from a state of unconsciousness, absence, numbness, indifference and loneliness. The event of a question is the prelude to the Tischnerian concept of coming out of “one’s own hideout” (Tischner 2006, p. 74), the Buberian “being towards others” (Buber 1958, p. 28) or the Levinasian ethical imperative emerging from the face of another human being (Levinas 1979, p. 187–197).

To be invited to a conversation means to be awake. The Other sheds a new, different light on the world. Tischner defines the event as “an intrusive invitation to reciprocity” (Tischner 2017, p. 54). The invitation to a conversation resides in a dimension of speech, which forces us to transcend ourselves, and give ourselves to another human being. It is an invitation to reciprocity, not a necessity. In the invitation, freedom remains and “egoism is faced with its own limitations”.

### 3. Superiority of the Dialogical and Monological Perspectives in the Works of Martin Buber and Józef Tischner

Martin Buber contributed significantly to the clarification of dialogue as a term, with his “I and You”, where he describes real dialogue, technical dialogue and monologue imitating dialogue (false dialogue). In contrast to the latter two, real dialogue is carried out in the plane of life itself. Life encompasses both dialogue and monologue, but also transcends them. To live in a dialogical way does not imply living inside a dialogue or a monologue. Buber claims that there are dialogues, which have the form of a dialogue but lack the essence; and conversely, there are aspects of dialogical life which do not have the surface form of a dialogue, but contain its essence (comp. M. Buber 2002, p. 22). Only in real dialogue, which means living in a dialogical way with others, is a “witness (...) born on behalf of the continuance of the organic substance of the human spirit” (Buber 2002, p. 22). To live in a dialogical way, is to accept another person as a human being and reply to his invitations and questions. To live in a monological way, though, is not to live alone but rather in an anti-social manner, confining relationships in one’s own psychological space and in the feelings happening inside it. As Buber highlighted, “being, lived in monologue, will not, even in the tenderest intimacy, grope out over the outlines of the self” (Buber 2002, p. 24) (which does not imply the egoism of an individual). To enter the space of dialogical life, one must be in possession of oneself, hold one’s own ground. But the transformation of the relationship between individuals into living in a relationship between two people happens in a real dialogue, in which “I” and “You” exist in a dynamic and active motion towards one another (Zank & Braiterman 2014). The world in their eyes ceases to be “an insignificant multiplicity of points” (Buber 2002, p. 26). At the same time, Buber strays away from the implied sentimentalism and abstract nature of such a motion. He highlights that the motion is the main dialogical movement, in which “I” and “You” are headed towards one another. In a monological movement, they do not just turn away but they move away from each other. Buber defines that motion “when a man withdraws from accepting with his essential being another person in his particularity” (Buber 2002, p. 27). This leads to pseudo-dialogue, or even the interplay between, as he calls them, “all the manifold monologists with their mirrors, in the apartment of the most intimate dialogue!” (Buber 2002, p. 35).

One of the key terms revealing the unique and resonating aspects of dialogue is the Buberian “between”, which can assume an infinite number of meanings and transform a relation in constant motion. The “between” can house both good and evil. Participants in a dialogue can actually shape reality and themselves. „Between” is the axis of events, on which anything can happen and which allows

us to discover that we are not alone, we are not monologues, though we often engage in monologue with ourselves or with others.

“Between” is not neutral or passive in its structure. It blends with values and the freedom movement of “I” and “You”. Movement, on the other hand, implies that an event takes place in a certain time, in which “I” and “You” are in a decisive relationship of preference, which favours one value over another. Tischner connects this experience with the agathological and axiological roots of hierarchical moral space. Subjects to a relationship are related to values, which touch upon tangible things and enter the space of here and now. These values need to be “read”, recognised, assimilated and decided upon. The demanding nature of the values defines the kind of invitation they send. They are all-encompassing. Running away from them would mean running away from oneself, for being “at home” with oneself. Tischner identifies the values as the anchor point of a human being in the world. An inhabitant of the world also needs to live inside the values, feel at home with them.

While an invitation may be sent from the values, one does not have to accept it. On the contrary, it leaves the subject with a choice. A value, which has been chosen and brought to life, leaves a deep mark on the individual, one which cannot be erased by making a different choice. The key to Tischner’s axiology is the process of meeting, in which “I” and “You” exist as “axiological I”, facing each other. This is the moment, when the drama of meeting begins, the relationship between the face of “I” and the face of the other. Truth, lie, revealing, concealing, freedom or imprisonment all constitute the relationship. Therefore “the dialogical view of the world (in which we live together with other people) reveals the lie behind monologue, rather than indicating the fact that it is insufficient” (Rotengruber 2011, p. 83). There is a discrepancy between the „monological” and „dialogical” way of living, and walking the territory occupied by monologue would question the truth of being among others.

Assuming that the manner of monologue is characterised by the monadic nature of an individual (his or her individual nature, unique characteristics), it turns out that the event of a question breaks it, but does not invalidate it. According to Tischner, after meeting another human being, “I” and “You” have changed, although they remain the same. One leaves a mark on the other. It is the moment in which the shackles of monologue are broken in a radical way. A question demands an answer, although it does not have to generate reciprocity. The sheer occurrence of a question places the human being not beside, above or under, but rather in front of the answer, which puts “I” and “You” in an ethical context. What role does the question play for Tischner? It is a kind of an answer. A question is asked not for one’s surprise, or amazement, but to indicate one’s own mishaps, problems and issues. If there were no problems, nobody would ask questions. An answer must be given, regardless of who is asking. If we forget about others and stick to our

monological world of goals, we forfeit our ethical commitments towards others, who are among us, next to us, or even inside us (Levinas 1979, 1985).

Dialogue opens up the space for a completely different kind of social living, which is an expression of the people's drive towards one another. Dialogue empowers us to live for others, reach out to others. It raises questions, which in turn may lead to a broader moral, strategic, and intellectual perspective. It broadens one's horizons in search of a solution. Thanks to dialogue, reality is no longer bound to well-established ideas. A dialogue may reveal flaws and errors but may also point out similarities and common principles (e.g. moral). Furthermore, dialogue may free the participant from cognitive errors, stereotypes and mental anchors. It also determines the nature of new things. In dialogue "the new" is born, transformed and ready to be executed. Dialogue implies a broader spectrum of questions asked, which in turn stimulates answers, creating responsibility in its real shape. Moving around the dialogue paradigm, participants share the space for exchange: both on the axiological-ethical-psychological and social-spiritual-transactional levels. Thanks to dialogue, one can identify the values, attitudes and hierarchies related to the participants. Finally, with interests and goals in mind, a dialogue carried out in a discourse can lead to a number of interesting and important conclusions and actions.

Can a dialogue lead to the inner transformation of its participants? Is that always the basic goal of a dialogue? Dialogue always creates an inner motion in the participant and evokes different feelings, desires and thoughts. There is always some kind of change (positive or negative). Nevertheless, a change on a deeper level occurs when we participate in a dialogue and realise that the other person causes a change in us. We change thanks to that person, or the interaction leads to a higher sense of connection, which changes us. Dialogue offers a unique opportunity for change on many levels. Otherwise, this change would remain a "static" possibility. Thanks to dialogue, this possibility becomes a real one, which is carried out and handled by the participants. This has a major impact on shaping reality (e.g. social, economic, financial, political) but the impact is even greater with regard to the reality of the "I" which takes shape in a dialogue.

It seems that „the micro-relationship of a dialogue is constantly submerged in social macro-dependencies" (Rotengruber 2011, p. 87), which reveals a number of axiological and ethical problems. No dialogue exists without consequences. Resulting from the change, both "I" and "You" change themselves and shape reality. One cannot detach dialogue from freedom, which is a constant movement towards certain values, a process of adopting these values, and bringing them to life or destroying them. The dialectic of values in freedom and the dialectic of values in dialogue, both result in real consequences for the internal and external reality, which they influence with their unshackled free will.

The words participants use in a dialogue are important. Words possess power and resonate. The words people use, the way they use them and how consciously these words come out of one's mouth, is not without significance. Why is the weight of each word in a dialogue so significant? The word penetrates and blends with the world. It also shapes relationships, which have consequences in the world around. Words are not only about exchanging information, but also about communication, reaching a point of understanding and agreement. They are used to shape one's moral values. Words "bring people together and bind the new world" (Tischner 2011, p. 247). They are used to create "the new". How a word is spoken influences the relationship between the participants in a dialogue, thus shaping reality, which the participants influence.

Here it is worth mentioning Józef Tischner, who put forward a few basic ideas on understanding dialogue in his work *The Ethics of Solidarity*. These ideas were further developed in *The Philosophy of Drama*, which became the foundation for Tischner's philosophy of dialogue.

Tischner highlighted that in every community, the transition from monologue to dialogue is a remarkable event, which transforms the community from inside, towards completely different values. These values are the foundation of social bonds, allowing for different and common ideas to flow in an atmosphere of respect and understanding. According to Tischner a society cannot develop as well based on monologue, as it would have in dialogue. It is only by complementing the relationship with this second dimension that one brings about new values which bring people together. Tischner points out that "a successful dialogue revolutionises the lives of people and society. It is like bringing light to the darkness of the basement" (Tischner 1992, p. 19).

To begin a dialogue, one must "come out of hiding". But to do so, one must also be willing to come out of it and risk entering the space of dialogue with the Other, who is also leaving his or her hideout. The act of coming out of hiding can only be based on authenticity and truth about ourselves. The drama of participating in values unfolds on the border, where two hideouts intersect. Tischner treats this moment in a Platonian way, as a decisive point for any relationship. One must "exit" oneself, abandon the intellectual comfort, the conformity, the submission, the easy way out, which means fighting egoism, fears and prejudice. In order to successfully enter a dialogue, one must step out of monologue, which can prove difficult but groundbreaking for the participant. Tischner identifies the risk of leaving the comfort zone and entering a dialogue, but when searching for the truth "one must reach out and find a common place for conversation" (Tischner 1992, p. 19).

Bringing the light to the darkness of the basement can occur not only because of the subject's inner freedom but also thanks to the other person, addressed by the subject. A relationship of freedom and responsibility is established and

becomes the stage for the drama “between” I and You, in which the truth may triumph. The mind and the inner world of „I” and „You” is illuminated not only by truth but by the dialogue itself, which reveals the truth (comp. Tischner 1992, p. 19). Dialogue „impacts” the truth about „I” and You. It allows the truth to fully resonate. Dialogue is also determined by the participants moving towards each other, that is their open attitude to who they are in relation to others. Tischner highlights that “as long as I am looking at myself only with my own eyes, I only know part of the truth. As long as you are looking at yourself with your own eyes, you only know part of the truth. Conversely, when I look at you and consider only the things I see and when you look at me and do the same, we both fall victim to a partial illusion. Truth is the effect of shared experiences concerning you and me. Common beliefs are the fruit of the transformation of different beliefs. That is why honest dialogue is considered not only as a way people behave, but also as a means to achieving social truth” (Tischner 1992, p. 20).

In Tischner’s analysis, the idea of an honest dialogue which fulfills certain criteria leads to the social context. The first criterion of dialogue is “the ability to assume the point of view of another person”. An honest dialogue should “name things using appropriate words”. Only then does it become the way to truth and agreement. Dialogue and words should be “a bridge to things”. Dialogue is about assuming partnership, when “I” and “You” can voice our own opinions (in speaking) and voice ourselves (in their existence). To accept another person’s views is to take a step towards understanding and entering that person’s cognitive state and therefore, taking a step towards coming out of our “hideout”, in which and from which it is hard to find the truth. Dialogue seen as a space for exchange may lead to the participants discovering that they want to find the truth and accepting that their own understanding of reality is incomplete, limited, or even false. Leaving the safe hideout of “I” could happen only after the subject realises that one “loses” a part of oneself without another person, one is incomplete without getting to know the other. Truth is key to an authentic relationship. One can listen to the other in such a way as to create an illusion of dialogue. The illusion is in fact a monologue, which invalidates the whole relationship because it does not allow one to answer “for” another person. Living alone, while surrounded by other people, is irresponsible, as it leaves the ones we are responsible for without an answer, or with a partial answer, which means they are on their own. This is why a human being is “free to an extent, to which his or her «You» is free. To be free is to resolve oneself on the Opposite, only against «You», only by accepting the invitation to answer, to be responsible” (Filek 2014, p. 224).

## 4. Conclusion

It seems that dialogue is the root of something more appropriate for a relationship. It is connected to movement, the flow of information, and the relationship between certain bonds. In monologue, the relationship melts away or is illusive in nature. Monological thinking implies a single point of view. In dialogue, the standpoint of each participant is taken into consideration. In monologue, the subject claims that he or she sees everything and the other person has to follow. A particular point of view is used to present the truth, as it is understood by the subject, and it is assumed that the other person is unable to grasp it. Dialogue is about abandoning one's monological eyes and ears, and listening to the other person. In dialogue, social dialogue included, "there are no privileged viewpoints on social life" (Tischner 1992, p. 132). No point of view and no social experience can be rejected, which does not mean it has to be binding for everyone. "Resulting from this is a dialogue in which the truth of particular members of society is expressed. It is not just a mere ornament but the essence of social life. The ultimate truth about social life does not fall from the sky like rain, but grows up from the bottom of individual experience, from the awareness and understanding of other people" (Tischner 1992, p. 133).

The conversion of monologue into dialogue should be at the core of all social and economic relationships. In a dialogical society, a lie cannot be used as *modus operandi* or as a political rule. Such a society is based upon a mutual agreement not to lie to one another. Tischner states that the lack of such an agreement not only destroys the hope for dialogue, but also ruins the chance for true freedom. A person living in a lie becomes a victim to it. Entangled in a lie, one can only pretend to be in a dialogue, while in fact one is playing a game with oneself. Tischner highlights that "Dialogue needs to be preceded by a moral decision not to lie to the other" (Tischner 2013, p. 284). Truth reveals all that is authentic. The increase in authenticity paves way to a society of dialogue, solidarity and agreement. The transformation to this kind of society happens on the I-You-He-We axis, while "the transformation towards a radical change happens on the I-You-He-not-We axis" (Tischner 2017, p. 17), representing a particular kind of monologue.

What does dialogue bring to social life? Why is the ethos of dialogue seen as an opportunity for societies to develop? Among many arguments promulgating the need to introduce dialogue into the social-economic world, those which integrate and crystallise certain solutions are definitely worth mentioning.

First, dialogue is relational in nature, reaching beyond monologue, indicating a broader perspective, complementing and being used as a counterweight. Dialogue is a defining feature for societies and networks of economic relationships, which could not function without it. Furthermore, dialogue carries words, signs and

meanings of a given reality, therefore it can generate a constant movement of ideas on both sides, provoke the search for truth and initiate change. In dialogue, the participants stand in front of each other, always different, with different horizons, knowledge and understandings. This allows them to communicate, come closer, unite or reach a common goal. Dialogue can be both an opportunity and a challenge for all parties involved, as well as a chance to solve a number of problems. It can be a space for “cleansing” our illusions, lies, prejudices, attitudes, habits and mindsets. True dialogue builds reciprocity, trust and bonds. It validates our beliefs, and can reinforce or break them. Sometimes a dialogue becomes an opportunity to establish one’s state of mind, verify one’s perception of reality and the way in which a person communicates with others. It becomes a necessity and one of the key factors in confronting reality and realising many things.

If one accepts certain generalisations and fundamental conclusions coming from the philosophy of dialogue, one can indicate that dialogue, defined as a “modus of speech”, as a relationship of freedom and responsibility, as reciprocity and participation, as the readiness to react to events, constitutes social life in many contexts. Dialogue can initiate a number of changes and transformations, leaving room for debate and finding common solutions. The “You” perspective in dialogue may ultimately lead not only to exiting one’s “I”, but it can also bring the subject closer to “We”, which may promote the building of community and achievement of common good.

In order to be transferred to the social ground and to avoid utopian communication, dialogue leads to anthropological-ethical, meta-ethical, economic, psychological and political arguments (Rotengruber 2011, p. 98).

In an anthropological-ethical argument, the participants in a dialogue are present in a given context and environment. They can mutually integrate their own monological action. They have a real chance to shape themselves from the inside but also to shape the community. Caring about another human being and the responsibility for the other both require us to enter a dialogical perspective, which can become the axis for creating common good. To reject the invitation to dialogue means to degrade oneself and to forfeit the possibility of achieving common goals.

In the meta-ethical argument, the paradox of abandoning dialogue becomes prominent. If one strays away from social life, a reluctance to enter a dialogue with others is confirmed. On a social level, it is impossible for subjects to avoid relationships. They are submerged in the dialogical horizon of freedom and responsibility. Staying on the monological level and excluding oneself from relationships violates social rules. The subject remains attached to particular ideas.

In the economic perspective, the advantages coming from dialogue create a win-win scenario, in which all parties to the supply-demand game win and achieve profit, provided that its effect is based on a stable axiological-ethical foundation.

The political argument addresses communities debating the shape of the social norms to be created based for the common good. Although this does not protect community members from making a collective mistake, it somehow prevents communicational violence (Rotengruber 2011, p. 101).

Monologues can lead to violence. Dialogue, on the other hand, can help avert it. Monologue is characterised by a single point of truth. In dialogue, an open attitude and the will to reach a compromise may turn into solidarity and conscious agreement. A human being can assume a monological position and reinforce oneself in it, but one can also assume the dialogical stance, which implies listening to others, or even participating in one's thoughts. Listening may lead to a fuller understanding and cooperation, exchange and reciprocity.

Martin Buber and Józef Tischner seem to emphasise the basic features of a dialogical relationship, in which "You" stands in front of my "I" and my "I" stands in front of a particular "You". For Buber "You is an impression, which escapes the hegemony of thought" (Rotengruber 2011, p. 80). In Tischner's line of thinking, "You" changes the status quo of "I" because of the drama of dialogue, which cannot be defined in a single formula. The fact that drama lies at the core of the relationship results in the inability to differentiate paths. The subjects establish these paths, being faced with values and with themselves as values. Therefore dialogical life (Buber) and the life of drama (Tischner) are deeply connected with participating in the values and with the freedom and responsibility of man.

Finally, dialogue is not a standalone concept. At its heart lies the rule of human dignity and the respect for one's basic rights. It also assumes a set of ethical values, especially those which are connected with responsibility. If something is to be changed for the better with dialogue, it must be connected with other tenets of social life (being helpful, righteous, honest, tolerant). Together with them, it can be used to build an axis for the coexistence of subjects in the social plane. Not every mode of communication is connected with dialogue. Nevertheless, if dialogue is abandoned, responsibility will be foresaken, both in individual and collective socio-economic life.

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## Między monologiem a dialogiem w życiu społecznym – rozważania na gruncie myśli filozoficznej Martina Bubera i Józefa Tischnera

(Streszczenie)

Monolog i dialog są kategoriami kontekstualnymi. Można je rozpatrywać w rozmaitych odniesieniach, ukazywać ich wielorakie znaczenia oraz odsłaniać etyczno-aksjologiczno-antropologiczno-społeczny charakter. Obie struktury komunikacyjne mogą odsyłać zarówno do ważnych problemów społecznych, jak i tych, które dotyczą konkretnej jednostki.

Celem artykułu jest filozoficzna próba namysłu nad znaczeniem i rolą monologu i dialogu w życiu społecznym. Martin Buber i Józef Tischner przybliżają sens prawdziwego (rzetelnego) dialogu, przeciwstawiając go monologicznemu sposobowi bycia jednostki. Dla tych myślicieli dialog rozgrywa się na płaszczyźnie samego życia (Buber) i dotyczy zawsze swoistej przestrzeni „pomiędzy” Ja i Ty (Buber, Tischner). Monolog zatem jawi się nie tyle jako przeciwieństwo dialogu, ale też jako struktura domagająca się uzupełnienia. Przywołani filozofowie ukazują dialog jako źródłowe doświadczenie człowieka, a samą jednostkę pojmują jako byt „zaadresowany” (skierowany „do” drugiego i „ku” drugiemu). Przez to dookreślają oni istotę dialogu, w którym naczelną rolę odgrywa wolność i odpowiedzialność. By się wybrać nawzajem i dojść do prawdziwej relacji, stające naprzeciw siebie podmioty muszą się wyzbyć wszelkich uprzedzeń czy predeterminacji, muszą zrzucić pancierz pozoru. Odpowiedź na pytanie płynące od drugiego rodzi dialogiczną więź uczestnictwa w wartościach. Dialog przekracza monologiczne „bycie dla siebie” podmiotu w stronę „bycia dla innego”, a sama rzeczywistość społeczna wówczas nabiera nowego sensu, stając się przestrzenią wzajemności, solidarności i życia wspólnotowego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** monolog, dialog, wolność, odpowiedzialność.