

From *Homo sapiens faber* to *Homo in tempore*

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If we wish to comprehend distinctly how weak and powerless our reason is, we have a sure way to proceed: we may try to recognize the future as far as we please, either our own individual future, or the common one, the future of mankind. From our earliest childhood we have learned to live as if our life is potentially infinite. It's accepted as quite proper for a man of any age to throw away his past and look for something better in his future, to set a goal for himself and to achieve it. We are accustomed, so to speak, never to notice the fact that for each one of us this future will one day cease to exist. In any human culture we find a set of beliefs, serving to orientate its members in relation to death, no matter what its interpretation: be it an absence of reality (nothingness), an afterlife or a series of reincarnations. Indeed, a permanent awareness that "a darkness is coming" would be sufficient to make "a stranger" in the sense of Albert Camus from any human being. But while each of us is familiar with the sense of horror and disgust which steals upon us when we think about the finiteness of our existence, a lack of imagination happily prevents most of us from realizing what an infinitely long life is, lest we should feel no less horror and disgust. Belief in an afterlife doesn't mean that we have answered any questions about the future world's inhabitants or know what their expectations will be, what goals they will set, what their hopes will be, and an existence deprived of any common spiritual activity is almost impossible to imagine. Neither does an aimless flow of reincarnations lead to an existence having any sense, and if the reincarnations are made in a certain direction, so that we arrive to another, better state (nirvana, for example), then neither is it clear to where the soul must tend when the desired state is reached. As much as this holds for a distinct individual life, the same remains true on the scale of the whole of mankind, and it doesn't

matter what we are waiting for: the Kingdom of God, the forthcoming destruction of the Universe or an infinite series of its repeated history. One may say that in order to describe properly the very distant future it is indispensable to have models as singular as those commonly used to describe a very distant past when the Universe supposedly was born.

Any system of views of the kind described above is implicitly based on the hypothesis that our perception of time is the only one possible and unchangeable one. While constantly making attempts to transform space, and to master it, man has never set himself the task of transforming time or, at least of transforming his own relation to time: both things are considered to be impossible, the first one as well as the second. Nevertheless, a re-comprehension of time related with an essential changing of the human psyche is neither more nor less unlikely than the fact of existence of our world (which is absolutely incredible from a scientific point of view), of the arising of life or the emergence of sense and soul in a conglomerate of protein molecules, and it doesn't matter what is required for this: whether a Divine impulse ("proto-push") or a kind of bifurcation. This re-comprehension of time may imply that another kind of human being will appear. We agree to call this form of living and sensible matter "*Homo in tempore*".

It may occur that potential *Homines in tempore*, that is, people that are capable of another perception of time, already exist. A baby born to be *Homo in tempore* differs from common people neither anatomically nor intellectually, but from his very childhood he often puzzles surrounding folk with the fact that he never wishes to become irreversibly adult, to change irreversibly. *Homo in tempore* would prefer to live through his life at random, mixing infancy and grown-up life, youth and old ages. This is the way with books, which, after becoming lit-

¹ Translated from Russian by V. V. Shulikovskaya; edited by I. Marshall.

erate, he reads and reads many times, looking through the book in different directions, watching the series of events from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning. This is the way with video films, which he likes to watch mixing the episodes. These children like to examine pictures and paintings enjoying the fact that it's always possible to come back from one part of the canvas to another, that their eyes may run through the picture in an arbitrary order. The thought that it is impossible to manage their own life in the same way makes them protest, instinctively.

A bit later, when puberty comes, *Homo in tempore* begins to experience various altered states of consciousness, momentary and spontaneous, which are characterized by an unusual awareness of himself in relation to time. If we imagine a human consciousness in a picture (fig. 1), we see that at any moment the absolute maximum is obtained at the state "now", an incommensurably smaller part of consciousness is distributed over the past (memory), and an even smaller part is connected with the future (foreknowing). Sometimes, maybe at sleep or in a trance, it turns out to be possible to reduce these gaps, these hiatuses between the unique present moment and all others, to make a man re-live through some of the pictures of his past or — much more rarely and with less saturation — of his future.

For *Homo in tempore*, the gaps are inherently smaller than for an ordinary man. His consciousness is a little "blurred" across time, even in relation to "now", though habit and human up-bringing help him to concentrate himself

easily on a unique moment of time as well as do all people around him. While an infant, having the sum of his reminiscences below a certain "critical mass", he hasn't other qualities that would differ him from surrounding folk. But there comes a day when *Homo in tempore* suddenly feels himself under the power of some spiritual state from his past; he is perceiving this past, not physically, but purely speculatively, so close to his consciousness that it seems to him that the smallest effort of will should be sufficient to transfer this past-state into reality. A reminiscence about one moment from the past implies a whole series of reminiscences, just as any single musical sound implies a set of overtones. The level of saturation changes so that the picture of life sometimes becomes continuous (fig. 2). (Is this the ability that comes to a dying man when, as common mythology has it, the whole his life appears in front of his eyes in a single moment, though no near-death experience survivors can explain how this happens?) It is much rarer when he finds himself governed by a poorly-defined picture from the future: the memory retains its usual priority over the foreknowledge. (However, the thing depends on individual characteristics because it may occur that *Homo in tempore* has the ability to be a prophet, singular as that is, as well as he has the ability to be aware of himself in several moments at once.)

As usual, these states of consciousness are accompanied by a powerful emotion, an excitement, when the bitter pain of the impossibility to transfer physically into a precious moment of the past, close as it seems, prevails. At these mo-

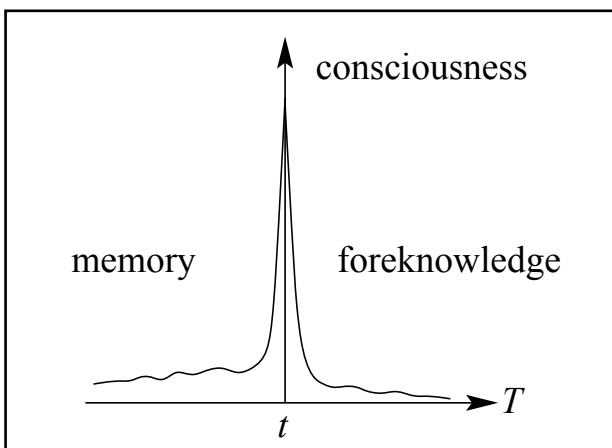


Figure 1

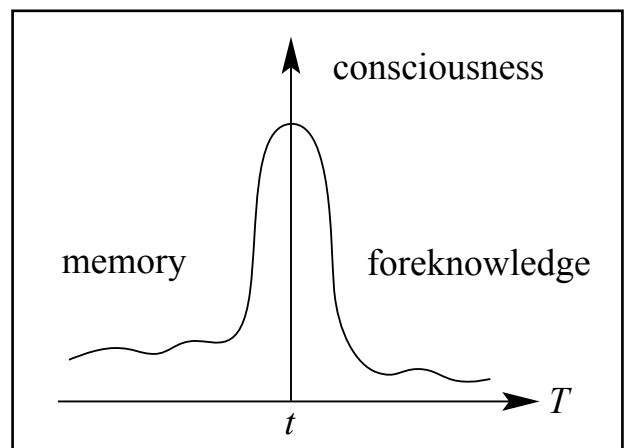


Figure 2

ments of spiritual pain *Homo in tempore* feels like a lover, who understands how simple and comfortable his life would be without love, but never renounces his love, for all the gold in the world. Sometimes *Homo in tempore* feels that the burden of his reminiscences is too heavy for him to be able to acquire any new ones. Then he swears to himself that he'll throw off this burden, destroy his singular talent, and become an ordinary man. I don't exclude that, after a series of persistent attempts, he succeeds. Though, in fact, he would prefer to find another way: to stop the accumulation of new reminiscences and to stay surrounded with the already existing ones for ever. "Retire into dreams", as Australian aboriginal myths say. Abdicating as well from the mystery of the undiscovered country waiting for him out of the limits of this world. And what of it? While living through available life again and again, *Homo in tempore* doesn't know that he lives this life not for the first time.

As we have already said, singular states of consciousness come to him spontaneously. From this point of view they are similar to the awakening of conscience in a baby. Sometimes, from the blackness of non-being, all of a sudden, a picture of the surrounding world arises only to fall down into the blackness some moments later. However, every human baby lives among sensual adults and, step by step, it acquires the capability to be aware of itself as long as you please. *Homo in tempore* is deprived of the society of his own kind, and his singular states of consciousness, which may be defined as flashes of *temporal consciousness*, remain fleeting and spontaneous, like the flashes of human conscience in a baby nursed by beasts. Maybe, the whole spiritual development of *Homo in tempore* is impossible now, for the lack of a special signal system playing the same role as language plays in our society. And only in a distant future, when the amount of people capable of this singular perception of time will exceed some limiting number, *Homines in tempore* will be able to transfer their consciences to this new state forever. For the present they are obliged to live entirely imitating the life of common people, though they differ from the inside. In the best case, *Homo in tempore* may try to

explore his peculiarities somehow and learn to manage them, at least, partly.

There exist reminiscences that return only rarely into the consciousness of *Homo in tempore*, and there exist moments that are to be relived very often. While ageing, he learns to determine future saturation, future frequency of his reminiscences of every given moment of life by the feelings during his "real", physical living through these moments.

Gradually he accumulates a "collection" of necessary states of consciousness, each of which becomes a symbol of a certain age. Periods of time symbolizing an ideal health, a perfect beauty, or a tender loving are exhibits from this collection. The result is that *Homo in tempore* tends not to achieve these states of himself forever, but only for a limited period of time. When these states of consciousness have been created, he will be able to return to them at will. However, moments of grief, pain, and horror are precious part of his collection as well. These reminiscences, which differ from common ones with the order of saturation, give *Homo in tempore* a special comprehension of history of his life where he looks for an inner logic. We may say that he learns intuitively to sense the "*longue durée*" of every epoch (in the sense of F. Braudel), but on the scale of the history of one soul. He'll try to manage this talent as well, keeping in his consciousness feelings from one epoch, evoking with his free will the reminiscences he longs for. That's why a scrupulous memory for all events from his life is a determining sign of *Homo in tempore*.

To tell the truth, *Homo in tempore* often isn't fond of peculiarities of his spiritual life and tries to disguise them, so, at least on the face of it, the attitude of *Homo in tempore* as an adult rather often doesn't allow to set him apart from the mass of common people. Though one could note that in the first part of his life, he looks older spiritually than he really is. This is because of an inner observer of very different ages, who wakes inside of him too often and looks at his childish pranks and errors of youth with pity and mercy. So the apathy of old age overcomes him suddenly in the middle of a childish game. When the second part of life arrives, *Homo*

in tempore begins to seem younger than he is, even not so much intellectually, as spiritually. At will, he can sustain the gaze of a surprised baby, a childish interest before the undiscovered world, the extreme opinions of youth.

This capability brings some sense into his emotional life, especially because the common state of happiness is almost unattainable for *Homo in tempore*. When trying to seek a spiritual support in already existing religious or philosophical systems, *Homo in tempore* will throw them off one after another, because in none of these systems the perception of time coincides with the one which is immanent in him. Having found love, understanding, friendship, he can't abdicate from former moments of his life when he had no knowledge of such things. The same reasons prevent him from any special emotion when acquiring new material goods, all the more so because at the very moment of acquisition the inner eye of *Homo in tempore* makes him see their future history. On the whole, he tends as far as possible, not to change the external scenery of his life: the changes become a source of additional spiritual pain for him, being an indicator of the irreversibility of the past. In the consciousness of *Homo in tempore*, the instantaneous indicators of happiness are often replaced with integrated ones. For example, he will never sacrifice his youth to some project that will yield fruit only in his mature years; he knows that his sacrifice, that is, enduring of the burdensome and painful emotional state suffered during his youth, will never leave him completely, so that the average integral value of happiness of his life will be decreased or "spoiled". Moreover, *Homo in tempore* feels neither horror nor disgust, thinking that his life must be ceased in time, in order to preserve the high level of average indicators of this life (even if he doesn't end his life because the ethic principles that are characteristic for the society contemporary to him prohibit this action). The ending of his life does not change the fact that he has been living during a certain period of time.

To be more precise, *Homo in tempore* will demonstrate the same attitude to pains and sufferings of other people, to their life and their death. The fact that one of his friends couldn't

live till the year 2000 is for *Homo in tempore* a phenomenon of the same kind as the fact that his friend has never been to Australia. To his mind, both events should excite the same sad emotion in surrounding folk. A man who couldn't attain the age of 30 is similar to a sightseer who failed to inspect a part of an exposition; maybe not the best one. A desire to get rid of a suffering makes *Homo in tempore* perplexed for nobody can abolish the fact that the suffering had been existing during a certain period of time. But externally *Homo in tempore* tries to observe the ethic existing in his society: out of regard for surrounding people, because of sympathy to these mutilated persons who never can understand the things so clear to him. However, he realizes how necessary is the common attitude to the flow of time, for the histories of human lives, which were lived with the common method of living, create for *Homo in tempore* a canvas on which he is going to embroider the patterns of his reminiscences. These patterns, beautiful as they are, can't exist without a canvas, or they should be transformed into a chaos, a snarl of multicolored threads. Besides, *Homo in tempore* looks at the culture contemporary to him as at the source of the heroic-and-romantic component of his existence, because his own attitude to the time makes heroism as well as romanticism no more than an element of decoration. *Homo in tempore* himself has another ethic, a "stationary" one, which is much more strict in many respects. Indeed, he is obliged to avoid shameful and mean situations, for his memory can't be distorted, he has no oblivion - that special cosmetic of the soul. *Homo in tempore* knows that he will relive his meanest deeds again and again, and the only thing available to him is the possibility, not of oblivion, but of re-comprehension, though in a very limited degree. He can't solve his problems by destroying the source of irritation: the source will be always remain existing in the past.

All these things reduce in many respects the activity of *Homo in tempore*. He is as careful as a painter who knows that he will have no opportunity to correct a bad touch of the brush. Add here a reluctance to change the external scenery of his life and an absence of the common moti-

vation of human deeds. At the same time, *Homo in tempore*, along with his very good memory, has an ability to perceive very different world outlooks, since he is obliged to combine his own picture of the world with the common one from childhood. In this respect he is akin to a man who speaks two different languages from infancy and, therefore, easily becomes a polyglot. Consequently, *Homo in tempore* rather often is capable of some spiritual, creative activity, enjoying it in the framework of “common pastime”, or for the sake of somebody, or “for the love of the game”. While amusing himself, he would look at the real world with the eyes of a caveman, or a visitor from the distant future, marking some features hidden from the common contemporary eye.

Therefore, *Homo in tempore* lives as a strange, whimsical amalgam of a protoman (a beast), a man in the proper sense, and an afterman, adding something new to the double biological and social nature of human kind. Nevertheless, nothing prevents *Homo in tempore* living a common human life, varying it a little

with his peculiarities and nourishing a dream that one day an epoch will come when there will emerge more and more men similar to himself, so that they will be able to find each other uniting in special communities. Now it's impossible to imagine a society consisting solely of such people, since preliminarily it's necessary to create quite other social institutions, to transform all already existing forms of world outlook. The process will be long and complicated, which allows us to compare it with the process of developing of our human society from savage tribes to the modern state. However, the process seems to be unavoidable, for the alternative, which is an infinite movement forward in time or cycles without sense and without end, seems to be hopeless to a much greater degree. By the way, supposing that there came a stage (a closing stage!) when any civilization stops “organizing the future infinitely” and looks at the existing period of its history more attentively, we will be able to solve a contradiction known as “the main paradox of xenology” or “the silence of space”.