An alternative anthropology: the free human subject in inter-subjectivity

There are many views of humankind both popular and theoretical. People may have positive and idealistic or very pessimistic and critical views of human nature. Regardless, such popular views express basic convictions about humanity, about our origin and destiny, good and evil, health and sickness, birth and death, causality and fate, determinism and free will, and so on. There are as many views about human nature as there are general convictions about life, from religious ideas to existential, humanistic, political, economic, psychological, and biological. These competing viewpoints and anthropological models seek to give an answer to the core questions about the human condition.

From the point of view of a critical philosophical anthropology, **we want to assert a form of critical intervention and** examine the underlying positions these models exhibit. Such a core understanding and evaluation allows us to engage in a critical retrieval of what is most helpful in any anthropological theory. Our intention is not to add yet another theoretical model to the many philosophical conceptions or to develop a variation of an existing model. Instead we want to present the *parameters* within which we want to think about the human person and relationships.

No doubt such parameters will reflect our basic conviction about humanity and what contributes to human freedom and flourishing. Yet within those boundaries, we want to present a non-metaphysical, non-essentialist, non-ontological, non-utopian view that is open-ended, dynamic, unfolding, and complex.

Historically our view of human nature presents a changing, developing picture as J.H. van den Berg (1961, 1974) has illustrated in his *The Changing Nature of Man*. This changing nature is readily evident in the view of childhood in Western society during the course of centuries (Mook, B. 1977, 1984, 1999, 2015; Aries, P. 1960; Kruger, D. 1984; Postman, N. 1982). We want to present a view that can serve as a basic *touchstone* for the great variety of questions and issues that can arise with regard to the human person, human relations and praxis. Anthropological conceptions are of a compelling nature because they reflect a particular worldview. In that respect they are paradigmatic and prescriptive, which requires a critical evaluation and retrieval in order to reclaim what is valuable for today's society.

The underlying issues in philosophical anthropological models; a brief summary

Historically, there have been numerous views of the human person. These can be analyzed and categorized in several different ways. Instead of critically reviewing a number of representative anthropological models, we will focus on some basic underlying issues. There are two important questions that each anthropological theory struggles with and seeks to answer. One question is whether we are basically one, unified, integral whole or whether we exist as a

twofold unity like body and soul, spirit and matter or mind and body. These are usually described as 'monisms' and 'dualisms'. The second question closely related is whether we are always developing and unfolding ('*geneticism*'), or whether we have an abiding nature that we always need to live up to ('*structuralism*'). What is abiding in life and what changes? How much are we conditioned and to what extent are we free? How can we account for constancy in relation to change and development? The answer to these questions makes a profound difference in how we approach life and theorize about human nature and relationships.

Throughout we have used the phrase 'the multi-dimensional unity' of life, including human life. That phrase accounts for the *coherence in the diversity of our experience* (Smith, 2015e). **A more thorough treatment of this notion of coherence can be found in Smith (2015e) and De Graaff (2016). In short:** we live in the *awareness that we are the centre of our experience in the midst of all our different ways of functioning, relating and developing.* In this 'monistic' view priority can still be given to 'higher' functions in the divergence of 'higher' and 'lower' that arises out of a basic unity ('*priority models*'), like in Bergson, Piaget, Frankle and others. For example, the 'higher' function (will, reason, spirit) must integrate the 'lower' functions (physical, emotional). The various human ways of functioning can also be conceived as developing in interaction with each other, unfolding in increasingly complex ways (*interaction models*), like in Rogers, Husserl, Merleau Ponty, Dewey, Buytendijk, van Peursen, and others. However conceived, the drive is to actualize the basic unity in diverse human experiences; it is a *differentiating oneness*. 'Monisms' seek to realize the unity that exists. Very practically that means, especially in today's society, that we are constantly challenged to integrate our bodily and sensory awareness, our feelings, thoughts, creativity, relations, work, relaxation, use of time, and find a harmony that does justice to the integrality of all dimensions of our life.

This view is quite the opposite of the conception that there is an inherent tension between opposing dimensions that can never be fully resolved. Body, sexuality and matter remain just that and all we can hope for is a measure of harmony and union with our higher functions. We need to hold down and overcome the 'lower' tendencies the best we can. **We also learn, on this view,** that life is about harmony and disintegration, the ideal and reality, good and evil. The mandate in any 'structuralist' anthropologies is to live up to our given nature. These are age-old traditions in the history of western philosophical anthropologies.

From previous sections and the above it is clear that our interest is with the 'monistic', 'geneticistic' type of anthropologies. It is a vision about the integrality of the human subject and freedom that was re-awakened and given strong expression during the Enlightenment, especially with regard to the implications for political life and the rule of law. **But there is still more to be added to the incredibly complex picture we have so far addressed, and it comes by way of the advent of humanistic psychology, a movement which, it can be argued, can be traced back all the way to the core humanistic values of the Enlightenment.**

Carl Rogers' anthropology and view of psychotherapy: An example

We can clarify this somewhat abstract discussion with an overview of Carl Rogers' anthropological vision and the implications for psychotherapy and education. Rogers' humanistic viewpoint and approach to psychotherapy is a part of the 'third force' psychology - next to psychoanalysis and behaviourism. In the contradiction between freedom and control, Rogers clearly stands on the side of freedom over against all forms of conditioning of the human person. For this reason it is crucial that we engage in a retrieval of Rogers' views. His conviction about the human personality and approach to psychotherapy remains an inspiring example for today's practice, **not only in the field of psychology but more broadly in the field of alternative interpersonal relations.** Although certain points are overstated, they touch on all the core issues of the individual person and human relationships. In today's society they are in danger of being lost or overshadowed by approaches that tend to instrumentalize, formalize and commodify psychiatric and psychological practice as well as medical care, education and many other inter-personal and social relationships. In retrieving Rogers' basic insights, his therapeutic practice itself provides us with the givens for extrapolation, additions and changes.

In this brief summary of Rogers' theory of personality, psychotherapy and interpersonal relations we will leave aside the development of his thought. Although he kept refining and elaborating his theories, his basic conception remained the same. Nor will we highlight the influence of his evangelical upbringing and his journey of liberating himself from its constrictions and distortions of human nature. Nor will we analyse the strong influence of Dewey's pragmatism on his theories during his early academic development. He soon developed his own distinctive viewpoint that was significantly different from Dewey's basic position. Finally, as an American he absorbed the cultural emphasis on the 'primacy of the individual over society' and the conviction that 'all men ought to be treated as equal' – however distorted those views became after the frontier times. Instead of these different influences, we will focus on his underlying conviction about the human personality, relationships and psychotherapy.

Rogers saw the human person basically as an "organismic actualizing process". Thus the most basic thing that can be said about the individual is that man is an actualization process. All forms of life exhibit this basic actualization tendency. As one species of life, man is one instance of an ever-changing process of actualization. Man can't be defined as an entity by itself nor as an organism that does the actualizing. The organism itself is nothing; it is wholly defined by its actualizing activity; matter in motion. Man is a process, a becoming, not an entity, being or substance (Rogers, C.R. 1942, 1951, 1959, 1961, 1963 1969, 1970, 1977; Evans, 1975; Wijngaarden, H.R. 1965, Kirschenbaum, H. 1979). In this way, Rogers' view is very close to that of Sartre (1972) and other influential existential thinkers.

From the very beginning and at every stage the human organism actualizes itself as a totality, as an organized whole or gestalt. Man is always a becoming unity or a forever changing and fluid gestalt, **a notion which reminds one of Camus' famous phenomenological account of friendship and of the developing self** (Smith, 2015e). Originally, **for Rogers,** there is *inorganic matter potential with life and growth and tending toward organization or gestalt.* Through a

process of differentiation and assimilation, the originally undifferentiated, unified organism continually actualizes its potentialities. Out of this original unity as a first level of complexity, the *physical organism* differentiates itself. In *interaction* with the *ground* of physical, chemical and biotic processes and stimuli a new *gestalt* or *figure* differentiates itself. To fulfill its physical-organic needs, the organism selects and takes from the environment what it needs to actualize itself. As a dynamic actualizing gestalt the physical organism actively selects and uses whatever it needs to realize its potential.

At the next level of actualization the physical organism differentiates itself into an *experiential or psychical organism*. The physical and sensory need fulfillment of the first level of differentiation which now serves as the ground out of which the psychic organism comes to stand out as a new gestalt. The potential of physical events for being felt or experienced is now, **according to Rogers**, actualized. Physical functioning is experienced as sensation, feeling and emotion. Psychic experience puts a person in touch with his or her own original physical reality and functioning.

As soon as physical events are experienced as psychic events they potentially become the perceptual ground for the person's conscious awareness and symbolization. In this new interaction between ground and gestalt affective experience becomes conscious, perceived and symbolized awareness. Some of all the psychic events realize their potential for being discerned and represented in words or symbols. In awareness a person grasps affective experience as something identifiable and understandable, which allows them to be compared to past perceptions. Persons tend to become aware and understand only those sensation, feelings and emotions that have special meaning for them in the present and the past. In this way perceptual and symbolic functioning have a gestalt character with regard to the total field of psychic experiencing. A *self-conscious organism* actualizes itself. For good or ill, in conscious awareness persons tend to incorporate certain sensations and feelings and ignore others.

Among all perceptions, a person's *self-perception* stands out in a special way. Self-perceptions form the most important and stable group of perceptions and as a *self-concept* tends to play a regulatory and selective role. In their self-image or self-concept individuals have a more or less stable and consistent awareness of themselves as a separate gestalt. As a distinct gestalt, persons' self-images tend to regulate their entire perceptual field by determining which affective experiences will become conscious and which not. In this way a person's self-concept plays a key role in the actualization process *or in its interruption*. At this level the organismic actualization process becomes *self-realization*, in which persons experience themselves as the centre of their own sensations and perceptions and the meaning they have for them. The entire actualization process is now channeled as it were through the person's self-image as a fluid, dynamic self-enhancing or interrupting gestalt.

The next level of differentiation and assimilation requires that persons further realize their self-image in the context of inter-personal interaction. To actualize themselves in a social context requires that persons can take up a position outside of themselves as their own alter-ego or in

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the actual other self and from that position be able to value themselves positively and ascribe intrinsic worth to their experiences. To value themselves positively they need to be able to assimilate their personal functioning at the inter-personal level. At this social level persons are dependent on the unconditional regard of others to become the unique persons they are. To value themselves positively they must be able to assimilate their personal functioning at the inter-personal level. Such unconditional positive regard is growth facilitating. It indicates the development of the *self-regarding and self-valuing organism*.

When persons are regarded by others and themselves as having unconditional worth they can genuinely communicate the unique persons they are to others. When two people regard each other as persons with their own unique perceptions and experiences, their communication is mutually enhancing and growth facilitating. That is why, for Rogers, inter-personal communication indicates a further stage in the organismic self-realization process; the development of the *transparent organism*. The communication level is not the end of the differentiation process. Although Rogers' description of the actualization process stops at this point, his conception of man as a forever fluid, actualizing becoming demands an open-ended process **of subject development**.

This finishes our account of Rogers' theory of the organismic self-actualization process and the development of the human personality. We have followed his description of actualization from the physical, psychic, self-perception, self-regarding, to the transparent organism and beyond. However, to complete this summary we also need a brief account of his theory of psychological malfunctioning and therapy. Together they will allow us to engage in a critical retrieval of Rogers' contribution to psychotherapy and to human interaction in general.

For Rogers, emotional malfunctioning results when the naturally occurring interaction between the different levels of functioning is interrupted. When our perceptions and self concept are no longer in touch with or consistent with our physical sensations and feelings, we tend to experience and manifest tension, disharmony, rigidity, fragmentation and a loss of wholeness. The incongruence between our perceptual experience and our felt experience means that there are large blocks of our affective experience we are no longer aware of, have distorted and cannot integrate in our self-image. As a result of this lack of awareness there is an equal lack of organic need fulfillment. Thus the whole organismic actualization or growth process is arrested.

The inability to integrate our affective and bodily experiences in our self-conscious awareness and self-concept results in finding the locus of valuation or regard outside of ourselves. When we begin to see ourselves as others see us or think as others see us, we tend to deny and distort those experiences we think are not acceptable to others. Instead of developing our unique self-image that is congruent with and expressive of our physical, organic and sensitive functioning, we develop *a socially acceptable self*. **This theory of subject (de)formation, of the production of a socially acceptable self, is certainly not incompatible with the general view of the subject share by Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm and others. As both Sherman (2007) and Smith (2016) highlight in their development of a progressive, critically retrieved and advanced view**

of the subject, the process of subject (de)formation almost always results, directly or in-directly, in repression and in the production of a socially acceptable self. Instead of self-regard we develop social regard and begin to live by the valuations of others, taking them as indications of our total self-worth. To fully actualize our own potential we need to be received fully and unconditionally by others. If not, we develop a rigid, static self concept instead of a fluid, changing, open self image. **This is, as Smith (2016) argues, one pillar of pathological society due to its many complex outcomes.**

In keeping with this understanding of malfunctioning, the core of therapy for Rogers consists of genuine communication of unconditional positive regard and trust in the client's self-actualization process. Conveying regard and trust helps the client to become aware again and give expression to previously threatening and suppressed feelings. This enlarged perception enables the client to realize that there are basic needs that require fulfillment. Instead of telling his self perception what he ought to feel, he is letting his experience tell him what he is actually feeling. Clients must let go of their present perceptions so that they can once more live and express their feelings and bodily sensations (*catharsis*) and thereby assimilate them again on the level of conscious awareness (*insight*). Diagnosis and interpretation are therapeutically significant only if they occur within the client. In this setting of unconditional positive regard, genuineness, warmth, empathy, trust and non-judging acceptance, the client learns once again to value positively and trust his own organismic needs and affective experiences. As a result of this therapeutic process, the client's self-image changes back again from a social, rigid self to a self awareness that is totally congruent with his own unique functioning. When the client can think what he feels and can say what he thinks, he is most fully himself and totally transparent. Thus the goal of therapy is that the client becomes the organismic experience he is and surrenders his self to the wisdom of the actualizing organism.

Understood in this way the therapeutic process requires that the therapist be non-directive, client-centered and totally genuine and transparent in the relationship. Only the client himself can achieve the clarity and insight that comes from becoming aware of previously suppressed feelings. The client needs to be given the freedom to become himself again by means of the communication of unconditional positive regard and empathy. Again and again Rogers makes the point that it is the safe and free relationship, the warmth and understanding of a facilitating relation that allows the client to get behind his mask and drop his false front. In other words, complete openness, non-possessive caring and empathic understanding is Rogers 'technique' for helping the client drop his defenses. The therapist needs to fully trust the client's own capacity for growth and his own organismic actualization process. Such regard and trust can only be conveyed if the therapist himself is utterly congruent with his own experience.

Critical retrieval of Rogers' anthropology and view of psychotherapy: A core view of the healing aspect of societal transformation

These two brief summaries of Rogers' theory of personality development and the process of therapy are sufficient to engage in an appreciation and critical retrieval of his insights. With the

retreat and decline of humanistic psychology and the advance of the instrumentalization of all forms of guidance and education, it is crucial to retrieve Rogers' humanistic vision for the healing of individuals and society. Although Rogers' view of therapy and education is just one example of a humanistic approach, the radicalness and consistency of his vision stands as a paradigm of an alternative approach to human relations. As Rogers himself expressed it in an article in 1962:

> It is evident that the kinds of attitudes I have described are not likely to be experienced by a counselor unless he holds a philosophy regarding people in which such attitudes are congenial. The attitudes pictured make no sense except in a context of great respect for the person and his potentialities. Unless the primary element in the counselor's value system is the worth of the individual, he is not apt to find himself experiencing a real caring, or a desire to understand, and perhaps he will not respect himself enough to be real.

> Certainly the professional person who holds the view that individuals are essentially objects to be manipulated for the welfare of the state, or the good of the educational institution, or "for their own good," or to satisfy his own need for power and control, would not experience the attitudinal elements I have described as constituting growth-promoting relationships, So these conditions are congenial and natural in certain philosophical contexts, but not in others.

> These elements [congruence, genuineness, empathy, positive regard, unconditional regard, transparency] are not constituted of technical knowledge or ideological sophistication. They are personal human qualities – something the counselor experiences, not something he knows. Constructive personal growth is associated with the counselor's realness, with his sensitive understanding of his client's private world, and with his ability to communicate these qualities in himself to his client.

Therapy and all forms of guidance and helping are relationships that can easily lead to dependency, inequality and foster control and reliance on authority. In contrast, Rogers maintains a truly egalitarian and transparent vision. He genuinely trusts his clients' ability to heal themselves and break through their own defenses. He tends to minimize his own contribution to the healing process, his positive regard and transparency, which is consistent with his view of the 'organismic self actualizing process'. These attitudes 'merely' help to set the client's own healing process in motion. He likes to use the image of a midwife for this role, in which the mother giving birth does all the work. Although there may be an inconsistency or contradiction here, these attitudes of regard and transparency on the part of the therapist offer a connection for further elaboration and critical retrieval. Whatever other approaches or 'techniques' a therapist may use, they are to serve the person's own self-healing. No one can do the healing for the person. Only clients themselves can drop their masks and break through their roles. The counselor can only create a favorable emotional climate. His emphasis on unconditional positive regard and empathy remains as the essential – if not sufficient –

condition for all forms of therapy. With his emphasis on empathy and positive regard Rogers has made a lasting contribution to psychotherapy and all forms of positive guidance.

The therapist as a facilitator of the organismic growth process applies equally to teachers in Rogers' view. No matter how intensely teachers are involved, genuine learning remains a personal process. Neill's *Summerhill: A Radical Approach To Childrearing* (1960) is perhaps the most radical and important example of this approach to learning. Teachers can 'only' provide a free, inviting and safe climate in which students, each in their own way and according to their own interests and needs can explore and incorporate new materials, relationships and ideas (Kohn, 1999, 2011; DeGraaff, 2000, 2011). Children's learning involves the total involvement of the child and the total involvement of teachers in order to facilitate their learning. Teachers' genuine involvement and transparency is to serve the students' exploration and incorporation of new experiences. From this perspective, the purpose of any kind of forming is to lead to children's self-forming. Here, too, there need not be a contradiction between teachers' attitudes of genuine warmth, positive regard and transparency as the *essential* prerequisites – if not sufficient - for students' self-learning *and* making use of different educational approaches or 'methods'. **This core view is evidenced by and can be found within numerous positive alternative educational approaches (Titchiner, 2016).**

One important limitation of Rogers' viewpoint is that to some extent clients are seen as *a-historical, individual persons without a social context.* The person's life situation and cultural setting are not considered on their own merits. An acknowledgement and affirmation of the clients' reality with all its perplexities, injustices and suffering is itself a liberating experience. The touchstones of life - justice, stewardship, commitment, caring, communication, sensitive openness, space for living, etc. - can be tremendously confirming of what *ought to be* and an acknowledgement of clients' rightful needs and experiences of injustice, exploitation, suffering, etc. If clients are restored to self-awareness, injustice invariably gives rise to anger, fear, disgust or sorrow and calls for protest and rectification. In encountering injustice and prejudice clients need more than a genuine person to person relationship. They do need *a healing relation* (Smith, 2016), but also an affirmation of their experience with injustice and a new direction.

In spite of this limitation in Rogers' perspective, his later development of inter-personal relations provides an important point of contact for further development of the communal and societal dimension for growth and the situations that block growth. Rogers' consistent geneticistic vision does not allow for such an extension. However, his view of the therapist and teacher as the regarding and transparent other provides an important point of contact. They play a crucial role in setting the self-actualizing process in motion (again). These fundamental attitudes of empathy and non-judgemental acceptance remain an essential prerequisite in extending Rogers' viewpoint to incorporate the relational and communal dimension. They can be seen as an essential component and fundamental commitment to an egalitarian, inclusive, equal, participatory approach and praxis.

In this extension of Rogers' views the interaction and reinforcement between social pathology and individual pathology requires extensive and separate attention, as has been demonstrated by Smith (2016). Awareness of the broader social context will have a profound effect on the way we approach individual therapy calling for radical forms of psychotherapy and critical social work (Carniol, B. 1990). **This point will be expanded on in the following section.**

Meanwhile, we could wish that early on in his career Rogers would have encountered some alternative anthropologies and views of therapy. His background in the Judea-Christian tradition mostly provided a faith answer to the core questions of human nature with an appeal to revelation coming from outside our human experience. The pragmatism, positivism and cultural climate he was confronted by during his formative academic years did not provide him with any alternatives either. Neither Skinner nor Freud could answer his basic questions about healing relations. It's a shame he seems to have had no direct exposure to European existential phenomenology, as it is more than likely he would have found great affirmation in the movement. However, if he had not found his way to a consistent 'growth' model, we would not have had the benefit of his unique insight into the depth and extent of empathy.

In conclusion, why a retrieval of Rogers is fundamentally important at this time, is because we can say that Rogers' so-called 'monistic, geneticistic' model does significant justice to – and offers significant **clinical affirmation of** – the Enlightenment view of the free flourishing human subject in inter-relation, even though we may not want to emphasize 'change' at the expense of 'structure' the way Rogers does.

In a previous section we have presented a view of 'structure within change' that honors the abiding and changing 'givens of life'. We can only endorse the unfolding unity of the person in the midst of the diversity of experience (Smith, 2015e; De Graaff, 2016) as an example of an anthropological model that highlights the Enlightenment project for the human subject (Bronner, 2004). There is nothing in Rogers' view that stands in the way of a critical retrieval of his core contributions. The changes we have proposed in summary form are entirely in keeping with the spirit of his view of the human person and therapy.

Likewise with regard to Rogers' particular view of 'interactionism', we can conceive of an alternative conception that is in keeping with his basic intent. Rather than a *sequential* view of development – an increasingly complex figure/ground mechanism – a *unified simultaneous* unfolding of all core ways of functioning may do greater justice to the givens, as Daniel Stern has illustrated in his *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (1985), which has provided a significant and timely contribution to the advancement of psychoanalysis along very similar philosophical lines as this paper. It seems that from the beginning babies experience themselves as distinct in relation to their caregivers. It is from this inter-relational experience that the sense of self-in-relation and the different ways of functioning unfold through various phases of development **(for more see also R.C. Smith, 2016, *The Ticklish Subject? A critique of Zizek's Lacanian theory of subjectivity, with emphasis on an alternative*).** This alternative understanding underscores once more the multi-dimensional unity and inter-subjectivity of the

human person that seems to be present from the beginning. It highlights how we need to acknowledge the uniqueness and individuality of each person in inter-relation in therapy, education and all forms of helping and guidance. **This also becomes all the more vital with regards to on-going social struggle and the need for a revival of critically retrieved Enlightenment political theory – that is, a broader engaged social philosophy as a foundation of guidance for social movements.**

The human subject in inter-subjectivity: Toward egalitarian relations

In building on the above, and in turning our focus toward the concluding sections of this paper, it is important that we continue to draw out a few more issues in relation to the subject, society and social pathology (Smith, 2016). In particular, the focus to begin is on what we have identified as another core antinomy.

Consider, for instance, Manenschijn's (1996) study where he asserts that 'liberal morality' has an inherent antinomy: 'economic liberalism' always accompanies 'personality ideal liberalism' but in reality the former is always in conflict with the latter. We can of course expand on this point by noting how the labour market, for example, functions according to the principles of the 'free market', but is unable to realize the value of the personality ideal, according to which all people are equal and ought to be able to care for their own livelihood. Instead there is a structural built-in chronic reality of unemployment, discrimination, inequality, oppression and coercion. As Thomas Piketty (2014) has illustrated, and as can be readily observed on an everyday empirical level within the neoliberal era, inequality is growing and this growth is a structural failure of the market to realize a more equal division of income, which violates the fundamental principles of liberalism (Manenschijn, 1996). Additionally, there are countless examples and countless books which highlight such examples where politicians, executives, business leaders, etc. talk about freedom, democracy, equality, and so on but are unable to realize those 'personality ideals' of the free-flourishing person. What's more: similar examples can be provided regarding tolerance and solidarity (Manenschijn, 1996).

For Manenschijn (1996), this can be explained in how the 'personality ideal' of liberalism is stuck in the antinomy with the 'market idealism' (freedom over against control) and has no adequate foundation in a deeper conviction or anthropological vision about the human person. Human dignity and worth need to be primary and all economic activities as well as any other ones ought to serve this primary value. On this understanding, it is strikingly clear that capitalism – and modern market idealism – really have no roots in the Enlightenment, in spite of the claims of otherwise made by neo-classical economists. Neoliberalism gives priority to the market in organizing social-economic life, which creates inequality on every level. Contemporary economics not only violates but runs directly against fundamental enlightenment values.

But we can also expand this line of study. Manenschijn (1996, p. 15) distinguishes 'political liberalism' – which talks about how the state ought to functions and the limits of its power over the individual (civil liberty) – and a 'liberal individualism' - which talks about the dignity of each individual. Individualism belongs to the core of liberal morality, but it can be conceived both in a very individualistic way and in a communitarian way. In this way we can explain how there can be red tories and free market tories, neo-liberal, conservative republicans and communitarian republicans. They are forever in an unresolvable conflict with each other; the same is true for the Democratic Party or in Canada the Liberal Party and the Labour Party in the UK. In all of these cases, there is the lack of an adequate and deeper alternative anthropological vision about the individual: what we have described, in light of the Enlightenment, as the human subject in inter-subjectivity.

The intersubjective here also implies the social, the interpersonal, and thus also the structural (Smith, 2016). This is what popular libertarian movements completely miss. Consider, for example, the emergence of liberal-capitalist libertarianism and right-wing libertarianism. Here there is an attempt to preserve the notion of the free-flourishing person, and yet what is also preserved is a structurally antagonistic social-political, economic system. Without the social-systemic, structural fostering of the *mediating subject* (Sherman, 2007; Smith, 2016) which runs against the colonization of the ego and the socially engendered closed, repressed subject that Freud once described, most every attempt to realize the Enlightenment notion of the free-flourishing person runs against its opposite. There is a much wider list of issues when it comes to the idea of right-wing libertarianism – not least the internal authoritarianism which undermines any positive notion of libertarianism. Finally, libertarian in this sense is used in the contradictory context of capitalism as the principle of social organization. And while we could dedicate an entire book to a critique of right-wing movements, there is significant room for a critique of certain left-wing movements. Consider, for instance, failed communists efforts, as Erich Fromm (1955) highlighted, which violated the notion of the free-flourishing individual in quite a different way than capitalism.

> Thus, we might say: "Although subjectivity is plainly mediated by the existing sociohistorical structures, it also has the capacity to affect these very structures in turn, and therefore the self-identities that they engender" (Sherman, 2007, p.6). Just as I argued in my critique of the Zizek's Lacanian theory of the subject (2013a), with emphasis on an interdisciplinary analysis of subject formation which includes several significant contemporary bodies of research: "subjectivity is active and mediating. And, ethically speaking, the notion that we are mediating subjects is basic to our self-constitution, both collectively and individually" (Sherman, 2007, p. 6). Thus, in addition to Zizek by way of Lacan, a number of other philosophers have sought to revivify the subject (Sherman, 2007, p. 3) – the issue, however, is that their project cannot bear the weight of their endeavours (Sherman, 2007; Smith, 2013a). They more often than not "confuse genesis and validity" (Sherman, 2007, p. 6) and even, along political lines, end up reproducing the very bad social conditions they seek to overcome (Sherman, 2007, p. 6; Smith, 2013a). For these reasons, as I have alluded and as I will reiterate several times

over, it is not Lacan that is closest to Adorno's radical theory of the subject, it is an altogether more radical interdisciplinary approach which does the most justice to the "mediating subject" Adorno works toward (Sherman, 2007). (Smith, 2016)

This is a point of understanding that seems present in Bronner's (2004) *Reclaiming the Enlightenment*, even if such discussion of the subject is not always explicit. He speaks, for example, of democracy, freedom and the rule of law in a way which operates within and seeks to further strengthen actual egalitarian relations. Here, we might seek to strengthen and affirm Bronner's account by inserting the notion of the human subject in intersubjectivity – a notion formulated, as we have indicated, on the basis of an alternative anthropology as a vital part of the foundation to ground any renewed calls for a positive enlightenment project.

> It is no coincidence, moreover, that contemporary social movements often put an emphasis on radical collective space and, even if only implicitly, a reclaiming of the self, of one's subjectivity in the midst of that alternative social space (Smith, 2014). For this reason – and certainly in line with my own theoretical and empirical analysis of movements – I share Sherman's (2007) position that it is a terrible mistake to "reduce the standpoint of embodied, intentional consciousness, which obliges us to recognize ourselves as free, efficacious agents in the world, to the sociohistorical standpoint" (p. 6). (Smith, 2016)

The most important point here is that such an alternative anthropology is not posited on the basis of abstract theory; in fact, it can be formulated along quite apparent empirical and experiential grounds. Progressive movements throughout the world (see Heathwood's research series on contemporary social movements) evidence, in one way or another, prefigurative attempts at fostering the mediating – indeed, the free-flourishing – subject within more reconciled forms of mutually-recognitive collectivity (Gunn and Wilding, 2013). Occupy-style movements are one particularly illuminating example.