

**THE ME-OTHER “DIALECTICAL TENSION”:
An Existential-Developmental Understanding of Human Existence.**

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When I first read the title of the conference immediately I thought of the global situation building bridges what is happening to our world right now are we building bridges or are we burning bridges? Nations are fighting nations, there is a lot of tension and conflict all over the world but even within nations we see an increase in domestic violence. At least in Greece we see more and more violence. There are more men killing their wives there is more abuse sexual and physical towards children but there is even more violence among children in schools. Bullying has become a common phenomenon and there is also violence of students and parents towards their teachers. What can we really do? Human beings seem to be increasingly more destructive towards themselves and others as well as other beings in the world.

I tried to look at the microcosm instead of the macrocosm how do we as individuals relate with one another and can we learn something from developmental psychology about what is needed for a less turbulent time a time where people can live together in more harmony and have better relationships?

When born the human infant is utterly dependent for survival on the presence of another. Humans have the longest period of dependency from all other mammals. During these early formative years, the attachment to a care giver is of outmost significance not only for physical survival but also for emotional well-being; for the building of neural pathways and for the development of the brain as a whole, as well as for the ability for affective self-regulation (ANS functioning). Furthermore, the emotional attachment formed in these early years serves as a significant prototype for the way we relate to others in later life and for the creation of one's self-concept and worldview (Georganda, 2019, 2020).

The process of development and maturation of human beings from childhood to adulthood is a long process, involving many separations and of individuation, i.e. of 'becoming one's own self'. Although constantly connected with others and the world human beings also need to fulfill their distinct characteristics. To develop and unfold their unique potentialities. In this process of “standing-out” (existere) as the separate and unique being one is, one often betrays and is betrayed by others. The dilemma attachment-authenticity is a significant one and we all constantly re-negotiate our position in these “dialectical tensions” between: me-other, autonomy-connectedness, freedom-security, self-esteem-self-doubt (Georganda, 2022).

We often struggle with the tension between Me—Other. Whose needs are we to please and satisfy? Our needs and wants or the other's? This tension is in a constant dialectic and we are always asked to reply with regards to our position in this dilemma. In this Existential-Developmental understanding of human growth and suffering it is

believed that as part of our maturation the human infant starts from a symbiotic position necessary for survival, moves to a narcissistic phase where the development of a strong sense of self is important for the creation of an identity and for building resilience and then hopefully moves beyond the egocentric phase to a genuine care for, and connectedness with, others (Georganda, 2007, 2016a, 2016b). The letting go of an egoistic attitude in later life is an important development that can lead to both a satisfying inner, spiritual life, as well as to deeper and more sincere connection with others. Building bridges with others and the world is a long process of understanding human suffering and making a choice not to be the cause of more suffering than is necessarily created by life's hardships.

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