

# more humano Manifesto.

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## INTRODUCTION

Imagine walking along a path lit by torches scattered here and there, winding between rocky cliffs and indistinct constellations. Some torches appear recent, still intact and burning brightly; others, perhaps older, have burned for a long time, blackening the nearby stones with soot. Yet every flame, even the weakest, casts a light that allows you to discern your next step.

In a sense, *more humano* is precisely this: a journey illuminated by **small lights**—insights, encounters, and reflections—that invite us to **move forward through the vast night of existence**, without denying ourselves the possibility to pause, to marvel, to question, or to share a stretch of the road with others.

These pages gather thoughts, suggestions, and perspectives that range from **rejecting dogma to constructing meaning in the technological age**, from **the power of storytelling as a tool for dialogue and unity** to **the recognition of the sacred through an esoteric lens, free from rigid doctrines**.

The *more humano* Manifesto is born from a fundamental need: **to reconnect with our extraordinary—yet often neglected—capacity to create meaning**, to interpret the world with a gaze that refuses to settle for **prepackaged formulas and explanations**.

At the heart of every chapter resonates the question:

**Why do I exist?**

This is not an inquiry reserved for **intellectual elites** or **spiritual circles**—it is a question that concerns all human beings. Throughout history, humanity has faced it through **religions, philosophies, arts, rituals, sciences, and countless narratives**, finding answers that were sometimes stable, sometimes provisional, yet always **subject to change**.

*more humano* embraces this vast plurality of voices and reinterprets it in an era **marked by rapid technological evolution, "liquid" societies**, and the **relentless call to performance and functionality**. In such a scenario, **reclaiming and cultivating the dimension of meaning** is not just an act of poetry but a **necessity for inner survival**.

The **eight chapters** of this Manifesto do not offer a single truth, nor do they seek to establish a new dogma. Instead, they **invite us to recognize our creative power**: we are **all** meaning-makers, like **artisans shaping incandescent metal**.

No interpretation, no matter how captivating, can ever fully **exhaust the complexity of an existence** that intertwines with others, with history, with nature, and with the **infinite symbolic languages** through which humanity expresses itself.

By exploring **agnosticism, the construction of meaning in the present, the power of art and storytelling, impermanence, and the esoteric dimension**, *more humano* aims to provide a **“forge”** where diverse ideas and voices can meet—**without ever attempting to absorb one another**.

This Manifesto, at its core, is **an invitation**.

An invitation to **abandon the illusion of possessing or submitting to a dogma**, and instead, **rediscover the creative power we all have** in **interpreting and narrating our own lives**.

An invitation to **recognize that plurality is not a prelude to chaos**, but rather **a garden of possible directions**.

Above all, an invitation to **embrace the awareness that meaning is a daily practice**, an **exercise** that involves ethics, philosophy, relationships, and an **openness to mystery and beauty**.

If, as you walk with this book in your hands, you find yourself **asking new questions, reassessing your values, or even imagining new rituals**, then we will have achieved our goal: **to feed that flame that, in every corner of the world and every era, has driven human beings to question both their wings and their roots**.

Welcome, then, to this journey.

The torches are lit.

The path is still long.

**It is up to us, step by step, to make the light grow and to discover the landscapes hidden beyond the next bend.**

# 1. BEYOND DOGMA: TRUTH AS AN OPEN HORIZON

*The Agnostic Assumption and the Renunciation of Certainties*

## 1.1 From Dogma to Doubt

At the heart of *more humano*, the rejection of absolute truth is much more than a mere intellectual stance: it is the spark that ignites the entire project of meaning-making. It is like opening an alchemical door—a symbolic threshold that separates us from a world of hybrid, pre-established certainties and leads us into a forge where everything is in potential: doubts, hypotheses, new languages, narratives to be forged.

When we say, “there is no single truth,” we are not claiming that “everything is equally valid” in a sterile relativistic confusion. Rather, we acknowledge the complexity of existence and the multiplicity of perspectives through which human beings can interpret reality. “Dogma” is not only religious or philosophical; often, it is a way of thinking that imposes a single key to understanding the world, relegating our creativity (and our responsibility) to the shadows.

### Breaking with Certainty and the Birth of the Creative Space

Renouncing the idea of dogma means taking on the responsibility of creating meaning: there are no longer ready-made truths to accept, but infinite possibilities to explore. This implies a crucial shift: from “believing in a pre-written script” to “feeling called” to compose one’s own existential narrative. In this perspective, agnosticism should not be understood as disengagement or cognitive apathy but rather as a methodology of openness: we do not claim to possess ultimate truths, but we remain receptive to the countless narratives that intertwine around us, aware that meaning is continuously regenerated and dissolved.

This is the emancipatory power of doubt: excluding the idea of already having the answers makes the space for personal and collective inquiry infinitely broader. It is no coincidence that in *more humano*, we speak of a “forge”: whereas the doctrinal world appears as a finite, pre-shaped monolith, the alchemical forge represents the place of transformation, where the raw material of our questions and intuitions can be heated, hammered, melted, and reshaped into new forms of meaning.

### Dialogue with the Agnostic Approach: The Example of Richard Rorty

From this perspective, a particularly relevant modern contribution comes from Richard Rorty. In his most famous work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty critiques the idea that knowledge is a faithful “mirror” of an objective and immutable reality. Instead, he argues that what we call “truth” arises largely from linguistic conventions and social practices that help us align our viewpoints, share experiences, and address problems. In essence, we do not seek an overarching Being to guarantee the validity of our theories, but rather we construct and negotiate meanings incessantly through dialogue and practical use.

This Rortyan approach deeply resonates with the philosophy of *more humano*:

- **Meaning-making as ongoing “negotiation.”** In rejecting dogma, truth becomes a space of convergence between different voices, where the creative act is not only individual but also dialogical (it thrives on exchanges, on narratives that meet and clash).
- **The responsibility of constructing one’s own horizon.** If there is no ultimate guarantor of “truth,” it is up to us to embark on narrative paths that enrich (rather than impoverish) the quality of our existence and that of others.
- **The centrality of language and narration.** In *more humano*, symbols, images, and texts are not “confirmations” of a dogma but tools for setting up new scenarios of meaning in an open and potentially infinite process.

### **An Invitation to Forge One’s Own Path**

Thus, the first step of the *more humano* manifesto claims the privilege of doubt: not knowing everything, not possessing definitive formulas, but having the freedom (and the burden) of immersing oneself in the creative process of meaning-making. It is an invitation to relinquish the certainties that constrain and to embrace the unease of “not knowing,” understanding that in this empty space, the unexpected can take root—new insights, powerful images, shared visions.

The renunciation of certainties, therefore, is not skepticism for its own sake: it is the condition that allows the inner fire—the curiosity and desire to seek—to burn more intensely. Without a script to follow, we become the custodians and creators of the drama (or comedy) of existence. It may seem like a daunting task, but it is also the highest assertion of freedom and creativity: in every act of reflection, dialogue, artistic or symbolic

expression, we shape the anvil on which our identity rests and forge the web of meanings that will give depth to our existence.

### **The Horizon as Possibility**

In *more humano*, truth is an open horizon rather than a fixed destination. There is no fear in disproving or reworking what seemed solid yesterday: the forge never ceases burning, and ideas do not crystallize into immutable formulas. Here, the renunciation of dogmatic certainty takes on the value of a liberating act, one that returns us to the flow of life with greater awareness and the desire to shape it narratively—creatively and cooperatively—on the “red-hot iron” of existence.

Thus, the *more humano* manifesto begins with this awareness: we are not merely receivers of external truths but creators of meaning. And since meaning-making is an infinite process, our task is to keep searching, experimenting, allowing ourselves to be influenced by other voices, and remaining open to the unexpected. Doubt is not a sterile void, but the crossroads where the spark of meaning-creation is born, strengthened, and leaves its mark on the collective narrative.

## **1.2 Agnosticism as a Method**

In the *more humano* movement, the first step toward making space for meaning-creation is recognizing that no ultimate truth exists to be conquered. This awareness shifts our focus from an outlook of “eternal answers” to one of ever-changing possibilities. This is where agnosticism comes in—not as resignation or disillusionment, but as a methodology that elevates doubt and curiosity while rejecting dogmas and imposed truths.

The term “agnostic” is often associated with the idea of “not taking a position,” as if it signified disengagement from life’s great questions. On the contrary, in *more humano*, agnosticism becomes an active tool for preventing our interpretations from being mistaken for universal laws, and for continuously forging meaning in the collective forge of thought.

As our manifesto states, human beings possess an innate ability to “create meaning”: our imagination, sensitivity, and narrative intelligence are not confined to a set of “finite” notions. If we accept an absolute model, we risk betraying this vitality, forcing meaning into a rigid shape that no longer evolves—like metal cooling on the anvil and losing its malleability. Agnosticism, on the other hand, keeps the heat of debate alive, pushing us to forge and reforge ideas as they come into contact with new stimuli.

## Beyond Passivity: Constructive Agnosticism

To avoid misunderstandings, it is important to distinguish between **passive agnosticism** and **constructive agnosticism**:

- **Passive agnosticism:** “We cannot know, so searching is pointless. Better to resign ourselves or delegate the quest to other authorities.”
- **Constructive agnosticism:** “There is no definitive and indisputable truth, so it is essential to search, explore, engage in dialogue, and build both personal and collective hypotheses that can evolve over time.”

In *more humano*, we embrace the second approach, which makes us participants in an inexhaustible process of discovery. Every time we encounter a vision, belief, or interpretation, we neither dismiss it outright nor accept it blindly. Instead, we observe it, subject it to the “falsifiability” of dialogue, and connect it with existing narratives.

It is like being artisans: a blacksmith does not reject a new type of metal just because “he has never used it.” Instead, he experiments with it, strikes it on his anvil, and tests its resistance and flexibility. Similarly, a constructive agnostic does not shy away from hypotheses different from his own but explores, examines, integrates, or reworks them.

## Karl Popper and Falsifiability: Keeping the Forge Open

A crucial reference for understanding agnosticism as an open-ended method is the philosopher of science **Karl Popper**. Popper argued that any theory or hypothesis should be falsifiable—meaning it should be framed in such a way that it could be disproven if contradictory data or experiences emerge.

In science, this means that a “good” theory does not shield itself from possible refutation but deliberately leaves room for correction, refinement, or replacement. Applying this principle to an existential level, *more humano* adopts a similar approach to systems of meaning: they should not be locked into dogma but conceived as hypotheses in constant dialogue with experience, imagination, and the narratives of those who wish to contribute.

- **No untouchable taboos:** If we once believed in a particular interpretation of reality, we should be willing to reconsider it when life presents us with new insights, symbols, or situations.



- **No “eternal theory”:** What satisfies us and helps us create meaning today may not suffice tomorrow. This impermanence is not a weakness but the very fuel that sustains the ongoing reconstruction of meaning.

In this sense, the symbolic anvil of *more humano* represents the commitment to remaining in a state of **creative tension**: the metal (our visions) remains molten, the hammer blows (our inquiries, debates, and doubts) can reshape it, and as long as the metal does not harden into an unchangeable form, we remain open to the unfolding of meaning.

## The Role of Imagination in Agnosticism

We have already touched on the importance of imagination as a defining trait of the human experience, a concept emphasized in the foundational text of *more humano*. In an agnostic horizon, imagination is not used to create “fairy tales” to cling to irrationally but rather to compensate for the absence of dogmas by enabling constructive freedom.

- **Narrative Construction:** In the absence of absolute truths, individuals and communities become storytellers. With the power of imagination, they craft personal and collective myths that provide a sense of meaning—provisional, yet vibrantly alive—to their existence.
- **Symbolism:** The esoteric and symbolic approach is not seen as an “occult” or mystical path but as a language that makes meaning visible. Instead of demanding a definitive “revelation,” we move within an open field of metaphors, rituals, and images—capable of bringing forth the spiritual dimension without fossilizing it into rigid belief systems.

In this way, agnosticism aligns perfectly with the search for languages and symbols that characterizes *more humano*. If we are not bound to dogmas, we can create (or rediscover) symbols that give form to our questions and intuitions, continually shaping new visions of existence.

## Agnosticism as a Spirit of Continuous Inquiry

In the *more humano* framework, agnosticism does not freeze our thirst for understanding into a passive “I don’t know and don’t want to know,” but rather ignites it with an exploratory drive. Renouncing certainties does not mean giving up on constructing

meaning; rather, it means opening the forge to countless alloys and metals, ready to be shaped under the hammer of our doubts and inner revelations.

Agnosticism as a method means not mistaking individual interpretation for universal truth, while simultaneously committing to weaving one's own interpretation—keeping it always permeable to dialogue with other narratives. It is both an attitude of intellectual humility and an act of creative courage: it prevents us from settling into dogma while pushing us to experiment relentlessly, making every meaning falsifiable and therefore alive, open to new metamorphoses.

Thus, while the world around us may offer shortcuts and conveniently prepackaged answers, the agnostic path of *more humano* invites us to rekindle the mystery and potential of existence. We are unafraid to question even our deepest convictions, approaching this task with the mindset of a blacksmith—not to destroy the metal, but to continuously transform it into something more meaningful, something that reflects our time, our history, and our collective and individual search for meaning.

### **1.3 Plurality of Spiritual Responses**

If the agnosticism embraced by *more humano* provides a method to avoid dogmatism, the next step is recognizing that the plurality of spiritual responses—religious, mystical, esoteric—is not an obstacle to understanding but rather a wealth of perspectives that testify to the many ways in which human beings have sought to make sense of existence. Every civilization, every era, has produced sacred texts, rituals, legends, and symbols that encapsulate fears, dreams, cosmic visions, and reflections on life's great questions. It is as if, before the same fire, each community had forged its own "metallic" narrative, entrusting it with the task of illuminating the mystery of life.

#### **Meaning-Making Attributed to Divine (or Human) Entities**

What *more humano* proposes is to see these traditions—whether religious, mystical, or spiritual—not as possessors of a singular Truth, but as narratives woven by humanity (at times attributing them to deities or supernatural powers) to navigate an otherwise opaque universe. When a people say that "the world was created by a particular god" or that "the soul follows a certain path after death," they are offering an interpretive model—a story that explains the meaning of birth, death, suffering, and love.

- **No single key to access meaning:** Some belief systems identify a personal God, others rely on cosmic energies, while others prioritize inner experience without reference to transcendence. In *more humano*, all these perspectives coexist like different metal alloys forged through human history. There is no claim to monopolize mystery, no exclusive ownership of final answers.
- **Humanity as the creator (or intermediary) of the divine:** It does not matter whether, on a personal level, one firmly believes in a transcendent revelation. The idea is that, at the origin of every tradition, there is always a human act of storytelling—a need to explain the unknown. In some cases, that narrative is experienced as divinely inspired; in others, it is openly the result of philosophical or poetic reflection. Either way, from our perspective, humanity is always a co-creator of meaning.

## Joseph Campbell: Myths as Symbols, Not Dogmas

One of the thinkers who best explained the symbolic nature of religions and myths is **Joseph Campbell**. In his famous work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell demonstrates how the “sacred stories” of distant cultures share similar narrative structures and common archetypes: figures such as the hero, the sage, the monster, the transition from darkness to light, sacrifice, and rebirth. According to Campbell, these similarities do not prove the existence of a single universal doctrine but rather attest to the symbolic nature of myths—each culture has “clothed” the same existential inquiries in narratives that reflect its unique needs and sensitivities.

- **Revelatory function:** Campbell emphasizes that myths should not be read as literal dogmas (or refuted with rationalist skepticism) but as mirrors of the collective psyche. Within mythological narratives, humanity projects its anxieties, desires, fears, and aspirations. The symbol, in this sense, becomes a bridge between the conscious and unconscious, between the individual and the collective heritage of the species.
- **Archetypes and human needs:** These symbols bring forth deep archetypes—figures and dynamics that recur across time and place (the journey, the initiation trial, the encounter with the supernatural). Campbell sees myths as a means of addressing fundamental themes such as death, loss, transformation, and love. In other words, myths function as tools to “make sense” of what everyday experience struggles to categorize rationally.

In *more humano*, Campbell's perspective aligns perfectly with the intention **not to reduce spirituality (or religion) to a static belief system**. If in the past, myths were often regarded as literal historical accounts, today we can read them as texts through which humanity celebrates its power to interpret the unknown—to transform fear into a narrative that includes hope, to make the incomprehensible slightly more comprehensible through figures, symbols, and stories.

The key is to remember that we are not uncovering a **“pre-packaged set of truths”** revealed once and for all, but rather a **narrative heritage through which humanity continually negotiates the meaning of its presence in the world**.

### **From Possessing Truth to Encountering Narratives**

Within *more humano*, every religion, mystical tradition, or spiritual movement can serve as a source of inspiration and symbolic material—as long as we approach them with a gaze free from dogma and open to creativity. The stories from Hindu, Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist traditions, or the shamanic tales of tribal peoples, are neither “less true” nor “more true” in absolute terms. Instead, they represent different ways in which humanity—whether or not influenced by divine intervention—has grappled with life's great mysteries: birth, death, suffering, the pursuit of happiness, and transcendence.

- **Reshaping Dogma:** If a myth or spiritual idea is presented as “the only truth,” *more humano* considers it “cooled metal”—a rigid, fixed piece of iron with a defined and unchanging form. However, if it remains like heated metal—ready to be shaped, reinterpreted, and enriched by other symbols—it becomes a valuable contribution to our ever-evolving imagination.
- **Rediscovering the Symbolic Dimension:** When we free narratives from the burden of “proving” something, we can rediscover their poetic power. This applies not only to ancient, revered texts but also to any form of contemporary spiritual expression. Every ritual, parable, or sacred image can generate new insights if we listen to it as a human voice attempting to make sense of mystery.

Thus, interreligious (or interspiritual) dialogue is not about finding a “doctrinal common denominator” but about **sharing narratives and symbols**, exploring how each perspective can enrich the others. This is an inherently creative process, one that fully realizes the motto of *more humano*:

**“We are not seekers of truth, but creators of meaning.”**

## **A Kaleidoscope of Constellations**

The plurality of spiritual responses reflects the multifaceted nature of human beings: we do not possess a single “standard” soul but rather a multitude of voices, memories, and transcendent impulses. When we recognize that each belief system is a **“constellation”** seeking to navigate the shadows of existence, we free ourselves from the competition for the monopoly on Truth. Instead of a conflict between “true faiths” and “false faiths,” we can imagine a **night sky filled with symbolic stars**—each religion, legend, or narrative illuminating part of the mystery and inviting others to do the same.

This is where **Joseph Campbell’s** lesson guides us: myths should not be mistaken for historical chronicles or rigid dogmatic impositions; they should be understood for what they truly are—**symbolic mirrors of our archetypes and deepest needs**. In *more humano*, this **mythological perspective** allows us to embrace the diversity of spiritual experiences without feeling the need to declare a winner.

On the contrary, each contribution is appreciated as an additional fragment of meaning, one that merges with our doubts, our imaginations, and our aspirations in the **eternal forge where we shape the complexity of being human**.

## 2. THE CALL OF CONTEMPORANEITY: THE NEED TO BUILD MEANING

*Technology, Liquid Society, and the Challenge of Remaining Human*

### 2.1 Toward a Human Dehumanization?

The speed that defines our era has an almost hypnotic allure. Today, we can connect, communicate, and carry out tasks at a pace that would have seemed unimaginable just a few decades ago. Technology has become an extension of our faculties, allowing us to act on a global scale with unprecedented efficiency. However, the rapid advancement of technology and the frenetic rhythms of modern society can also erode the vast inner space where human beings have traditionally asked themselves who they are, what they desire, and how to interpret the meaning of their existence.

In *more humano*, this “loss of space” is understood as a form of **dehumanization**, where the self becomes a “**functional cog**” in a system that often sacrifices creativity and personal reflection in favor of profit and speed.

### Technological Advancement as an “Extension” of Ourselves

According to **Marshall McLuhan**, media and technology are not just tools but actual “extensions” of the human body and mind. When we use a social network, we are not merely “talking” to the world—we are, in fact, extending our senses (sight, hearing, etc.) and our ability to transmit messages to a potentially unlimited audience. In this sense, technology appears almost as an enhancement of human faculties.

However, McLuhan also warned that every “**extension**” comes with an **amputation**. If we expand our communication sphere, we risk diminishing other aspects of life, such as slow reflection, silence, and the contemplation of nuance (not in a mystical sense, but in a narrative and creative one). Just as the excessive use of one limb or sense can lead to the neglect of others, the intensive use of technology and the drive for hyperconnectivity could lead us to overlook **the inner dimension of the human being**—that inner forge where meaning is built and renewed.

### The Fusion of Humans and Machines: The Risks of Standardization

In a society that moves at an ever-accelerating pace, where technological progress permeates every aspect of life (work, relationships, health, etc.), the temptation to adapt without questioning becomes strong. The risk is that, by living in a system that demands only productivity, performance, and constant availability, human beings **reduce themselves to mere functions**:

- **Automation instead of creativity:** Accepting prepackaged models, standardized procedures, and increasingly intense schedules without preserving moments for pause and introspection. The **“inner forge”** where new ideas and narratives are shaped disappears.
- **Loss of personal identity:** If the system requires us to be **constantly online and always reactive**, there is little space left to construct our own story of meaning. We become interchangeable figures, like well-oiled gears in an invisible assembly line.
- **Reduction of human complexity:** The deepest expressions of humanity—emotions, dreams, values that transcend immediate gain—risk being sacrificed to the binary logic of efficiency vs. inefficiency, purpose vs. lack of purpose.

From this arises the sensation of **“dehumanization”**: instead of remaining **artisans of our own subjectivity**, we conform to measurable rules and parameters, losing the **flexibility and mystery** that define the human condition.

## Massification and the “Liquid Society”

Linking McLuhan’s thought with more recent concepts, we could say that **“liquid society”** (a term introduced by sociologist **Zygmunt Bauman**) feeds on the fluidity of technologies: information, products, and even **identities flow rapidly**, adapting to fleeting trends. While this can be practical, it can also be disorienting: there is little time to establish solid reference points or to ask ourselves what truly **sustains** our idea of life or our vision of the future.

- **The paradox of infinite choice:** Having infinite options does not necessarily mean greater control over reality; more often, it creates anxiety and disorientation. **What is the “right choice” if I lack an internal compass of values?** Without a constructed sense, every option becomes equivalent.
- **The decline of storytelling:** In a world dominated by speed, **long and complex narratives**—those that allow a community to reflect on its roots and its

destiny—are increasingly replaced by fragments, slogans, and quick images. As “**narrative space**” shrinks, so does our ability to create shared meaning.

## The Role of *more humano*: Rediscovering the “Inner Forge”

In this context, *more humano* aims to be both a **space of resistance and experimentation**—not an anti-technological refuge, but a manifesto that asserts that the essence of being human **cannot be reduced to mechanical efficiency**. The point is not to reject technology or the benefits of modernity but to **integrate them within a vision that preserves and nurtures symbolic creativity, self-reflection, and the construction of meaning**.

- **Preserving silence and questioning:** Even in a digital world, there are moments when we must “**turn off**” the devices to listen to our questions, understand our desires, invent new stories, or rewrite old ones.
- **Valuing storytelling:** Rather than passively consuming media flows, *more humano* encourages people to produce **new meanings** (texts, images, symbols, contemporary rituals) to interpret the complexity of the present.
- **Humans as artisans of meaning:** While machines can relieve us of certain tasks, they **can never replace** our ability to **create symbols and stories**, to assign meaning to things. This is the flame that distinguishes us, and *more humano* seeks to keep it alive.

## From Automation to Awareness

The fear of “**dehumanization**” should not be viewed purely negatively—it is, above all, a **signal**—a reminder to reclaim the most authentic dimensions of human existence.

**Marshall McLuhan** warned that technological means would reshape our perception of ourselves. We have become “connectors,” perpetually in contact, but we risk no longer being **passionate thinkers** engaged in what makes us unique.

This is where *more humano* steps in with an **invitation**: among the endless opportunities of modernity, let us remember to carve out an **intimate space** to ask questions, cultivate the art of meaning-making, and keep our hands on **the anvil of our identity**.



In other words, the **21st-century human** should not be merely a consumer of technology or an obedient **executor of social algorithms** but a **co-creator of new stories and symbols**, capable of confronting the challenges of a rapidly accelerating present.

The goal is not to reject progress but to **reaffirm the centrality of the human element**—that existential fire that allows us to interpret, imagine, transform, and create meaning.

Following the path of *more humano*, **“remaining human”** means refusing to abandon the infinite **workshop of experiences, emotions, intuitions, and narratives** that define us as **creators of meaning rather than mere cogs in an alienating system**.

## 2.2 Between Functionality and Identity

Living in a society that prioritizes **functionality** carries the risk of sidelining the essence of the human being as a bearer of meaning. Instead of asking **“Who am I?”** or **“Why do I do what I do?”**, we increasingly find ourselves asking **“What am I useful for?”** or **“How can I be more efficient?”**. This shift in perspective moves the focus away from the **construction of the self**—which is complex and multi-layered—toward a constant pursuit of efficiency, practicality, and success, measured in terms of wealth, popularity, or social status.

### The Illusion of “Prepackaged” Models

In *more humano*, we emphasize how this drive to be **“useful”** or **“adequate”** often leads us to adopt **prepackaged ways of thinking**. These models may emerge from **market logic** (cosmetics, tech gadgets, standardized “self-improvement” programs), from **productivity culture** (work methodologies, efficiency routines), or from **cultural consumerism** (intellectual trends often dictated by influencers or corporate marketing strategies). If these models are not **personally reworked**, they become **mere products of consumption**—packs of meaning devoid of deep **inner grounding**.

- **The voice of the market:** *“If you want to stand out, you must dress a certain way, own specific objects, align with certain trends.”*
- **The voice of productivity:** *“Plan your day to the minute, be multitasking, work harder, don’t waste time.”*
- **The voice of cultural consumerism:** *“Follow this intellectual trend, use this hashtag, join this popular ‘movement’.”*

Every time one of these voices **dominates**, we risk **erasing or suppressing** our most intimate inclinations—the very ones that distinguish us and that, if nurtured, provide the creative spark to weave a **deeply personal narrative** of the world. In *more humano*, the human being is not a **“profile” to be updated** according to external demands but an **artisan**, continuously shaping their own identity and understanding of life.

## Bauman and the “Liquid Society”

Sociologist **Zygmunt Bauman** coined the now-famous term **“liquid society”** to describe the modern condition, in which every **reference point for identity is in constant flux**—relationships last the time of a click, jobs change every year, ideologies are continuously revised. In this context, **instability becomes the norm**, and individuals are constantly forced to redefine themselves according to **external parameters**, lest they be left behind or perceived as obsolete.

- **Fragmented identities:** In a liquid society, people are encouraged to have **“flexible”** identities, but this also leads to a **loss of stable reference points** on which to build a coherent sense of self.
- **Accelerated temporality:** Everything is consumed rapidly—including ideas and values. What is trending today is irrelevant tomorrow, leaving behind **insecurities** and voids that must be filled with **new trends**.

Bauman’s perspective helps us understand how **the obsessive pursuit of functionality and rapid adaptability** can **strip us of time for self-reflection and deep existential planning**. If **every reference point evaporates**, how can we develop **roots or a coherent narrative** of our own existence?

## Authenticity as an Act of Freedom

In *more humano*, the solution is **not to reject modernity or demonize social flexibility**, but rather to remember that **authentic meaning-making arises from a continuous dialogue with our own desires, values, and inclinations**. If social models or market-driven products serve as inspiration, that’s fine—but if we accept them **passively**, we risk **becoming mere characters in a script written by others**.

- **Critique of imposed norms:** The problem is not using technology, participating in economic systems, or having a social media profile—the issue arises when these **define us**, silencing our **personal narrative**.
- **Balance between internal and external:** When adopting a “**model of meaning**” from society, we must first **test it** on our **inner anvil**, assessing its **resonance with our true self**. Only then can it become a **useful material** for shaping our unique vision.

**Meaning-making takes time.** It requires **pauses, slow reflection, and conversations with people who challenge our perspective**. It is a process that does not align with **immediate productivity** and often clashes with the expectation of **efficiency and profit maximization**. But it is precisely in this **friction** that the strength of *more humano* is found: **reclaiming time and the freedom to shape an identity that is not reducible to a “competitor” or a “consumer.”**

## From Danger to Resource

The **liquid society** and the **global market** are not just threats—they offer **stimuli, cultural exchange, and innovation**. At the same time, they generate a **constant background noise** that makes it difficult to hear one’s **inner voice**. In *more humano*, the challenge is to **turn these threats into resources**—to welcome **plurality** while selectively **integrating** and **reworking** ideas to build a coherent, deeply personal narrative.

- **Filtering and internalizing:** Instead of blindly chasing every new trend, we should ask, “**What does this tell me about myself? How does it respond to my existential questions?**”
- **Creating new syntheses:** Market-driven or social ideas can **enrich** our identity—but only if they are **forged in our inner workshop**, mixed with **our lived experiences and imagination**.
- **Maintaining an internal compass:** In a “**liquid society**”, it is crucial to cultivate **inner reference points** (values, principles, symbols) that provide **continuity**, even as the external world shifts rapidly.

## The Challenge of Authenticity in a Liquid World

Inspired by **Zygmunt Bauman’s** reflections, *more humano* encourages **resisting the pressure** to let external paradigms entirely shape our identity. Accepting **ways of thinking**

**without first testing them on our own anvil of experience** means **giving up the creative freedom to shape meaning personally**.

In a world that demands we “**function**” according to **standardized rules**, cultivating **authenticity** becomes an **act of constructive rebellion—not to isolate oneself from modernity, but to reject the illusion that everything, including identity, is just a “service” to be provided in exchange for social validation**.

In the **forge of *more humano***, **functionality is only a tool**, but **identity and meaning-making remain the true alchemy**—the process that gives **form, depth, and warmth** to our existence, beyond the **dogmas of the market and productivity culture**.

## 2.3 Meaning-Making as an Anchor

In a hyper-technological era, where automation and the relentless pace of society risk flattening our inner world, the act of defining (and redefining) **our meanings** becomes a crucial anchor—something to hold onto so we don’t get lost in the current of conformity.

In the context of *more humano*, meaning-making is not viewed as **a mere exercise in introspection**, nor as a **meditative retreat from the world**. On the contrary, it is conceived as an **active process of interpretation**, in which individuals continuously question the **values, symbols, and narratives** that shape their lives. Rather than being passively absorbed into social or technological processes, the human being becomes the **artisan of their own horizon of meaning**.

### Beyond Instrumentalism

The **technological pervasiveness** of our time has brought undeniable advantages: greater access to information, immediate connections, and more powerful and versatile tools. However, when this **digital ecosystem** becomes the framework in which every action and interaction is guided by algorithms and automation, two major risks emerge:

- **Identity reduced to a “profile”** – We are constantly encouraged to curate our **digital image**, responding to **likes, follows, and engagement metrics** that define our worth based on the attention we receive. This phenomenon instrumentalizes our presence, pushing us to conform our desires, language, and even emotions to **external logics** (marketing, trends, statistics).

- **Addiction to efficiency** – The entire system demands that we be **fast, reactive, and productive**. This **shrinks** the space for **slow reflection**, symbolic re-elaboration, and the construction of deep narratives that don't immediately fit into a framework of **"usefulness."** As a result, creativity—the ability to design authentic meaning—is at risk of being cut out of daily life's frenetic rhythm.

This is where the **anchor of meaning-making** becomes essential: maintaining a **core of personal choice and interpretation** prevents us from being flattened by external pressures. We **define and redefine** our meanings **not to retreat into an isolated world**, but to **engage with reality more consciously**, discerning what enriches us from what depersonalizes us.

## Hannah Arendt: Thinking as Responsibility

A key perspective supporting this idea comes from philosopher **Hannah Arendt**, who devoted much of her work to examining how, in times of crisis or authoritarian rule, individuals can become **mere cogs in a system**, losing their ability to think critically and make moral choices.

In works like *The Banality of Evil* and *The Human Condition*, Arendt highlights the **fundamental role of thinking**:

- **Thinking is not an abstract practice**, but an ongoing **dialogue with oneself**, a **critical re-examination** of what society or political regimes impose as **"normal."**
- **Individual responsibility** arises precisely from the refusal to act purely out of obedience or conformity. The moment we pause the frenzy of everyday life and ask ourselves, **"Why am I doing this?"**, we enter a **space of freedom** where **personal meaning** can emerge—and often, a **form of resistance** to massification.

Bringing Arendt's ideas into today's **digital era**, we see how **socio-technological automatism**—hyperconnectivity that **urges us to react instantly**, conforming to **social media trends and success metrics**—can **erode our ability to think independently**.

Reclaiming the power to **think autonomously, to "forge" our own convictions and personal narrative of the world**, becomes an act of emancipation—a **way to reaffirm our humanity beyond the algorithm**.

## Active Interpretation as Daily Practice

In the *more humano* lexicon, “**active interpretation**” means **daily critical observation** of what is presented (or imposed) by the external world, transforming it into **raw material** for our **inner forge**.

It is **not** a passive meditative practice, but a **creative process**, where external stimuli (**technological input, social trends, cultural shifts**) are confronted with our **questions, existential needs, and emerging values**.

This process consists of three key actions:

1. **Selection** – We decide what is truly meaningful, which words, symbols, and relationships **add value** to our lives, and what is instead **sterile or toxic** to our identity.
2. **Reworking** – We allow ourselves the time and **freedom** to blend ideas from various sources, experimenting with new **narrative or symbolic forms**.
3. **Choice** – Finally, we make a **conscious decision**: we **temporarily “fix”** the meanings we find valid—knowing they will **always be provisional**—and adopt them as a **compass** for our actions.

This **meaning-making process** functions as an **anchor** in the sense that it allows us to **pause** in a **relatively stable point**—at least until we feel the need to **redefine our search**.

In a world where everything is in constant motion and **perpetually updating**, the ability to say, “**This narrative is mine. I recognize it and take care of it.**” becomes an **act of self-preservation** against complete fragmentation.

## **Avoiding the Drift into Automatic Execution**

**Hannah Arendt** demonstrated how, in the absence of autonomous reflection, human beings can slide into **automatic behavior**—even in the face of the most serious, even moral, issues. Today, this risk manifests on a **less dramatic but more pervasive scale**: every time we act “**because that’s how it’s done**” or “**because the algorithm recommends it**” without engaging in a conscious choice, we are slipping into the same **automatism**.

There is no **totalitarian regime** imposing this on us, but rather an **interwoven system of social and technological mechanisms** that shape our **behaviors and self-perceptions**.

- **Consequences:** Our day becomes an **accumulation of actions** dictated by external agents (notifications, messages, deadlines, consumption patterns), and our **identity dissolves** into a mosaic of **roles and rapid reactions**.
- **Antidote:** Consider every **input** as a “**piece of metal**” to be examined, heated, hammered, and reforged in the **inner forge**. We must **decide whether this piece is valuable** for the construction of our **personal meaning—or if it should be discarded**.

## The *more humano* Anchor: The Freedom to Narrate

From the *more humano* perspective, **the freedom to attribute meaning** is at the heart of the **resistance against depersonalization**. It is the **act of taking control**—both metaphorically and literally—by **creating stories, symbols, and interpretations** that stem from **our inner world and our ability to imagine new horizons**.

This **anchor** is not meant to **tie us to the past** or to an **immutable “truth”**; rather, it helps us **slow down the frenzy** so we can **consciously decide how to use the tools of the present—without being used by them**.

- **Narration as reclaiming oneself:** When we tell **our own stories**, in our **own language** and from **our own perspective**, we reclaim the “**thread**” of our **existence**. We are no longer **passive reactors** but **authors** who take responsibility for assigning meaning (however partial) to our experiences.
- **Sharing meaning:** *more humano* is **not an isolated refuge**—it is a **collective project** that encourages **dialogue between different narratives**. Through **exchange**, meanings are **enriched and challenged**, but they always remain **anchored to human creativity rather than passive submission**.

## Forging Meaning to Stay Alive

To conclude, in an era of **big data and automation**, the **act of constructing meaning** becomes **more vital than ever**—especially as **we risk being reduced to mere “functionaries” of a social and technological system**.

As **Hannah Arendt** highlights, “**thinking**”—in the sense of **questioning, interpreting, and making decisions**—is an **act of responsibility** that saves us from the **oblivion of automatism**. In *more humano*, this act takes **concrete form** in the **narrative forge**, where

we train ourselves to **craft personal and collective meaning**—beyond mere **operational efficiency**.

**Humanity, in this vision, is not a fixed state—it is a process to be renewed every day.**

- When we **stop searching** for and choosing our meanings, we **dehumanize ourselves**.
- When we **actively engage** in the **work of interpretation and narration**, we **anchor ourselves to a principle of creative autonomy** that keeps us **alive, present, and capable of shaping the world with awareness**.

This is why, for *more humano*, **meaning-making is not a luxury**—it is the **center of gravity** that prevents us from being swept away by the current.

It is an **invitation to remain**—with all our **questions and imagination**—the **true protagonists of our time**.

## **3. CREATING MEANING: THE ARTISTIC GESTURE OF THE HUMAN BEING**

*The Power of Questioning and Imagining*

### **3.1 The Creative Nature of Thought**

When we ask ourselves what it truly means to **“create meaning”**, in *more humano* we consider this action a **genuine artistic gesture**. The human being does not merely endure reality or passively record it; rather, they **“paint”** their meanings on the canvas of existence, giving life to interpretations and visions born from their imaginative potential.

If earlier we explored **meaning-making as an anchor** in a hyper-technological world, here we emphasize its **aesthetic quality**: it is **not just survival**, but an **act of creation**, an **exercise in expressive freedom**, comparable to the **artistic process**.

### **Thought as an Artistic Gesture**

The word **“artistic”** often evokes images of **painted canvases, composed music, or sculpted forms**. Yet, in its deepest essence, **art is the ability to shape a reality that did not previously exist—or existed only in potential**.



In the act of meaning-making, the human being does something similar:

- They **gather fragments** of experiences, emotions, and concepts,
- They **assemble them** into a **new composition**,
- Their **convictions and questions take shape** in a unique design.

This process does not simply **replicate reality**—it **transcends it**, adding **symbols, myths, allegories, or entirely new ideas**.

- **The canvas of existence:** Every **day, relationship, and journey** becomes a **color** that enriches our personal canvas. Meaning is **not given once and for all**—we take the **brushes of our reflections** and draw lines of significance according to our **desires and intuitions** at any given moment.
- **Shaping ideas and interpretations:** Just as a **classical sculptor** begins with a **raw block of marble**, the human being starts from the **chaotic flow of daily experience**. Through the **hammer of reasoning** and the **flame of imagination**, we release **forms of meaning** that can **guide and inspire us**.

## **Gaston Bachelard: Imagination as a Cognitive Tool**

One thinker who highlighted the **creative nature of intellectual activity** was **Gaston Bachelard**. The French philosopher and epistemologist emphasized that **imagination is not mere mental diversion**—it is a **true instrument for developing concepts, ideas, and even scientific theories**.

From Bachelard, we learn that **thought is not just a collection of logical deductions**—it is a **process that uses images, metaphors, and symbols to lead to new discoveries**.

- **Rêverie and the power of dreaming:** Bachelard saw **the capacity to dream (“rêverie”)** as a **gateway to the most authentic creativity**. While **analytical reason** structures and divides reality, rêverie **connects seemingly unrelated elements**, fostering the emergence of **entirely new perspectives**.
- **Imagination and concepts:** Even **science**, according to Bachelard, progresses through **creative leaps**, in which the scientist **invents metaphors and models** to explain complex phenomena.

This reminds us that human beings **do not understand the world through calculations alone**—they also need **images and narratives** to **make sense of reality**.

In *more humano*, Bachelard's insights encourage us to view meaning-making as a **laboratory of the mind**, where **images, intuitions, and concepts mix and react**, generating interpretations that **go beyond inherited structures**.

## From Emulation to Creation

One of the greatest challenges in meaning-making is **avoiding the mere reproduction of pre-existing ideas** (dogmas, norms, social models) and instead becoming a **genuinely creative subject**. If **thought is an artistic gesture**, then our task is to **take the chaos of experience** and give life to something **original**, where **our personality, sensitivity, and culture** are uniquely reflected.

- **Originality and authenticity:** This is not about **inventing unprecedented concepts** or striving to be **"brilliant"**, but about embarking on a **journey of self-exploration**, ensuring that the meanings we adopt are **truly forged** in our **inner workshop**, rather than blindly imported.
- **The power of symbols:** Just as artists rely on **symbols, colors, or sounds** to express their personal vision, we too can use **symbols** (religious, esoteric, literary, or imaginary) as **living materials to be shaped**, finding in them **emotional and intellectual resonances** that complete our personal story of meaning.

This **shift from emulation to creation** requires **courage**: it takes boldness to recognize that **who we are today could change** if we dare to **reinterpret reality differently**.

In a way, *more humano* invites us to discover that **life is not a canvas to be "colored within the lines"**, but rather **an open surface where we can trace new lines and perspectives**.

## Creating Meaning as an Act of Beauty

If we consider meaning-making **an artistic act**, it follows that this endeavor—however challenging or even conflictual—**possesses its own intrinsic beauty**.

Creating new **interpretations** is **not just necessary** for navigating **chaos**—it is also an **aesthetic impulse**: the desire to **shape existence** so that it **shines with meanings that we have consciously chosen and forged**.

Just like a **painting or a poem**, the **meanings we elaborate** can:

- **Evoke emotions,**
- **Spark enthusiasm,**
- **Inspire awe and wonder,**
- **Give depth to daily challenges,**
- **Celebrate the human capacity to create “inner worlds.”**
- **Aesthetic existence:** In this vision, **life is not mere survival, but a work in progress.** Every **relationship, task, or moment of reflection** can be **“colored”** with our **personal sense of value, direction, and possibility.**
- **Sharing beauty:** In *more humano*, meaning-making is **not just an inner monologue**—it is **a desire to share** our **narratives, symbols, and creative expressions** with others. The **final work** becomes **a collective tapestry**, woven together by **multiple authors**, each adding their own **unique colors.**

## The Art of Creating Meaning

Unlike a **painting that is completed and signed**, meaning-making in *more humano* is **an ongoing, never-ending process.**

Yet, **what unites both art and meaning-making is the artistic dimension:**

- The **desire to shape something new,**
- The **expression of a personal vision,**
- The **transformation of lived experience into organized imagination.**

Drawing from **Gaston Bachelard**, we can say that the human being, through their **powerful imagination**, has the ability to **“push reality a little further”**, populating it with:

- **Symbols,**
- **Questions,**
- **Interpretations,**

that make existence a **generative experience**, rather than something **merely endured**.

## Freedom as the Redefinition of Possibility

Ultimately, **creating meaning is an act of freedom**—an exercise in **redrawing the boundaries of what is possible**.

Through this process, we create:

- **New frameworks,**
- **New perspectives,**
- **New spaces where we can rediscover or reinvent ourselves.**

Art, in this sense, **is not confined to museums, galleries, or concerts**—it is a **mindset** that can be **applied to everyday life**.

Every **choice, encounter, and word** can become **a fragment of the immense fresco we call humanity**.

And *more humano*, in **celebrating the artistic gesture of the mind and heart**, reminds us how thrilling it is to **compose—using the colors of imagination—our own unique and unrepeatable story of meaning**.

## 3.2 Questioning as an Evolutionary Engine

When we speak of "**creating meaning**" as a creative act, we must recognize that one of the primary forces that has always driven human beings to transform the world (and themselves) is the **relentless search for "why"**. Since ancient times, humans have not been satisfied with merely fulfilling immediate needs—food, shelter, defense—but have **looked beyond**, asking about the **meaning of their presence**, the **nature of the elements around them**, and the **causes and laws behind phenomena**.

It is precisely this **questioning drive** that, in *more humano*, we consider a sort of "**evolutionary engine**", capable of pushing us beyond mere survival to generate **culture, science, art, and new visions of the world**.

## From Survival to the Creation of Meaning

It would be a mistake to think that the **desire to ask "useless" questions**—those concerning great **metaphysical, moral, or aesthetic themes**—is a luxury of advanced civilizations. On the contrary, it is likely that the earliest human communities **began seeking meaning even before developing sophisticated technologies**.

Around night fires, our ancestors told **myths of cosmic origins**, mysterious creatures, spirits, and dreams—an **embryonic attempt to interpret reality** and give it a **narrative form**.

In these stories, **hopes and fears** were condensed, along with **intuitions** that would later lay the groundwork for **scientific knowledge and religious structures**.

- **Questions that transcend the immediate:** *Why does the moon change shape? What is death? How are winds born? What is the purpose of love?* From the very beginning, these inquiries **disrupted** the routine of mere survival, pushing humanity to **create responses**—whether **symbolic, ritualistic, or philosophical**—that would shape customs and beliefs.
- **The expansion of the "inner forge":** Every question posed and every attempt at an answer, even if partial, **expands our imaginative capacity**, stimulating us to **organize new forms of knowledge**. This is how **culture, art, and science** emerge—different expressions of the same **need for understanding and invention**.

## **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Evolution as the Growth of Consciousness**

A **key reference** in this context is **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**, a paleontologist and Jesuit theologian who viewed **biological evolution** not merely as a process of **physical adaptation**, but as a **progressive development of consciousness**.

According to Teilhard de Chardin, the universe tends toward **greater complexity**, and with it grows **the capacity for reflection**. The human being, culminating this tendency, is **not merely a more "intelligent" animal**, but the only one capable of **self-awareness** and questioning the **purpose and values of existence**.

- **A qualitative leap:** With the emergence of **self-reflective thought**, **matter has found a way to become conscious of itself**. From this arises the **question: "Why do I exist?" "Why is the world the way it is?"** These are not just expressions of curiosity,

but a **shift in perspective**—from a universe that merely "**happens**" to a universe that "**knows it is happening.**"

- **The Noosphere:** Teilhard introduced the concept of the "**noosphere**", describing it as a **sphere of collective thought** surrounding the planet—an **invisible yet real network** of **ideas, images, and knowledge** that is **constantly evolving**. It is through this **shared web of meanings** that humanity progresses, both **technologically and ethically-aesthetically**.

If we apply Teilhard de Chardin's perspective to *more humano*, we see how the **insatiable search for "why"** has driven humanity to generate **myths, philosophies, natural and moral sciences, literature, and visual arts**.

Despite their diversity, all these **forms** originate from the same **questioning flame** that **prevents us from settling for mere facts**.

## Questioning as an Antidote to Stagnation

History shows that whenever a civilization has **ceased to ask radical questions**, it has ended up **crystallizing into its own dogmas** or **collapsing under the weight of outdated paradigms**.

Conversely, **epochs of great intellectual and artistic ferment** (Periclean Athens, the Italian Renaissance, the European Enlightenment) have been marked by a **continuous surge of inquiries**:

- **What is humanity's role in the universe?**
- **What is the nature of power?**
- **How can human conditions be improved?**
- **The risk of conformity:** In times of **apparent stability**, societies tend to **discourage uncomfortable questions**, labeling them as "*a waste of time*" or "*utopian.*" However, this mechanism **stifles critical thinking** and **limits innovation**.
- **Creative resurgence:** Questioning is **not a sterile act**—it is **an investment** that can lead to **new models of knowledge, social organization, and artistic**

**expression.** Even on a personal level, **engaging with "big questions"** can **reveal unexpected inner resources**, opening up new **evolutionary paths**.

In *more humano*, this **constant drive to ask "why"** is seen as a **force that reignites our inner forge** every time it risks being extinguished.

Every doubt becomes a **piece of metal** to be **hammered on the anvil**, extracting from it a **new layer of meaning or an unexplored perspective**.

Without **questioning**, the metal remains **raw and inert**.

## **Between Science, Art, and Spirituality: Humanity's Single Journey**

One of the greatest merits of the **"search for why"** is that it has driven humans not to settle for **singular answers**. This is why human culture has branched into different fields:

- **Science** investigates **mechanical causes**,
- **Art** expresses **symbolic visions**,
- **Spirituality**—whether secular or religious—seeks **ultimate meanings**.

Yet, despite the differences in **methodology and language**, the **underlying impulse is the same**: the **desire to go beyond appearances**.

- **Culture and science**: Investigating the nature of phenomena has led to **revolutionary scientific discoveries**, while also forcing us to **revise our beliefs**. Every time we find a **physical law**, a **new and deeper "why"** arises.
- **Art**: In art, the question is not **"How does the world work?"** but rather **"What is the meaning of what I experience?"** The result is an immense **variety of representations, styles, and movements**, all driven by the aspiration to **give form to the intangible**.
- **Spirituality**: Whether through **traditional religions** or **mystical philosophies**, the inquiry into **"why we exist"** has led humanity to **formulate cosmologies**, create **rituals**, and develop **symbols capable of capturing the inexhaustible dimension of the sacred**.

Teilhard de Chardin's **vision** helps us see these different paths as stages in a **single evolution of consciousness**: human culture grows and transforms as both **individuals and societies** continue to **question the deeper reasons for their existence**.

In *more humano*, we seek to celebrate precisely this **unity in diversity**: **science, art, religion, and philosophy** are, at their core, **specializations of the same fundamental human drive**—a relentless questioning that refuses to fade.

## The Limitless Horizon of "Why"

If we see meaning-making as a **continuous inquiry**, we understand why *more humano* views it as a **true evolutionary engine**. This is **not just a theoretical challenge** but a **way of living**—one that **pushes us to imagine, learn, and challenge established boundaries**.

Every "**why**" opens a **new window** onto a **broader reality**, compelling us to **integrate previously unexplored elements** and **renew our narratives**.

It is precisely this **spirit of questioning** that has led humanity:

- **From simple tribes to complex civilizations,**
- **To the founding of sciences, religions, arts, and technologies,**
- **And to the continuous redefinition of itself in the infinite forge of history.**

In an age where society often offers "**pre-packaged**" answers and **technology risks overshadowing authentic inner exploration**, *more humano* sees itself as both **guardian and innovator** of this **perpetual questioning**.

We do not seek to **silence the "why"** with **immutable truths**—rather, we strive to **fuel the fire that keeps us in constant becoming**, making us **endless creators of meaning**.

## 3.3 Beyond Mere Survival

Unlike many other species, human beings **do not settle for fulfilling physiological and security needs**—they **constantly seek a "why"** that can give **direction** to their actions.

In *more humano*, this drive is **not** seen as a **luxury for a few contemplative individuals**, but rather as a **necessity rooted in our nature**.



It is precisely when we **cultivate values, purposes, and personal visions** that **transcend immediate material gain** that we move toward a **broader understanding of who we are—and who we can become.**

## The Shift from "How to Live" to "Why to Live"

Consider this shift:

- An individual who **lives purely by instinct**, concerned **only with finding food and protection**, is responding to **immediate survival needs.**
- But **historically, humans have gone far beyond this stage:**
  - They have **developed myths**,
  - Established **rituals**,
  - Painted **rock walls**,
  - Reflected on **the afterlife**,
  - Created **ethical and moral codes.**

All of this stems from an **inner drive** to see life **not just as "how to keep going" (adaptive strategies)**, but also as **"why"—a symbolic and ideal engine that propels us beyond mere self-interest.**

- **Time, energy, and reflection:** Investing time in **questioning the meaning of an experience**, or in **creating a symbol that represents our values**, might seem **superfluous** if we have a **purely utilitarian** view of life.
  - Yet, this effort is what allows us to **make bold decisions**,
  - Establish **priorities that transcend immediate concerns**,
  - And build **deeper relationships.**
- **The role of community:** On a **collective level**, the search for **foundational meanings** has shaped **cultures and civilizations.**
  - Without a **shared value horizon**,
  - Without **stories and narratives that provide identity**,
  - Human groups would remain **mere clusters of individuals competing for survival.**

Meaning-making, instead, **unites us** around **projects and ideals that go beyond the immediate.**

## Viktor Frankl: The "Will to Meaning" as an Essential Force

One of the thinkers who most strongly emphasized the **vital function of meaning** was **Viktor Frankl**, an Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor. In his most well-known work, *Man's Search for Meaning* (originally published as *Ein Psychologe erlebt das Konzentrationslager*), Frankl describes how, even under **extreme conditions**—where food, health, and freedom were reduced to a bare minimum—it was the **"will to meaning"** that made the difference between those who succumbed to despair and those who found the strength to endure.

- **A primary need:** Frankl saw the search for meaning **not as a secondary or elite concern**, but as a **fundamental human need**, just as essential as **food or shelter**. In his view, a person can **endure almost any suffering** if they perceive **a reason, a purpose, or a direction**.
- **Inner freedom:** Even in the concentration camps, Frankl observed that **dignity and inner freedom** could survive external brutality—provided a person was able to hold onto a **"why": a loved one, a future project, or a moral or spiritual mission**.

This teaching aligns perfectly with *more humano's* philosophy: the **drive to create meaning** is **not an embellishment**, but a **force that allows us to withstand even the most adverse conditions**, shaping **day by day** the **values and purposes that define us**.

In a world often governed by **impersonal logic**, where experience is reduced to **consumption or function**, the **will to meaning** is proof that **humans refuse to be "programmed"**—instead, they assert their **symbolic and project-based dimension of life**.

### From "Superfluous" to "Fundamental"

In a society **dominated by efficiency and cost-benefit calculations**, dedicating energy to **discovering the "why" of our existence** may seem **superfluous**.

Some might argue that **a good job, a roof over one's head, and a comfortable life** should be enough to feel **"settled"**.

However, **collective experience and testimonies**—including those of **Viktor Frankl**—show us that **without a deeply rooted sense of meaning, no amount of material well-being** can fill the existential void.

- **The disorientation of an affluent society:** Paradoxically, many **inner crises** arise **in conditions of comfort and security**—where **basic needs are met**, yet **there is no core of values or purpose to believe in**. We feel lost **not because we lack something**, but because **we don't know where we are going or why we are striving at all**.
- **Meaning-making as a path to self-realization:**
  - Establishing **projects that reflect our passions and convictions**,
  - Assigning **meaning even to struggles**, rather than merely **enduring them**,
  - Building **deep and intentional relationships**—  
All of these are expressions of a **desire for fulfillment** that goes beyond simply floating through **routine existence**.

This is where **the search for meaning becomes the central axis** around which **personal and relational growth revolves**.

## **A Perspective for *More Humano***

In the context of *more humano*, recognizing the **central role of meaning-making** means affirming that **human beings are not defined solely by their biological functions or technical skills**. Instead, they are shaped by their **ability (and need) to imagine goals that transcend the immediate present**.

This **spirit** fuels all the **initiatives and narratives** of the project:

- **Identity and transformation:** Every time we **open a space for reflection or storytelling**, we invite people to explore the **"why" behind their actions**. Discovering a **broader meaning** allows us to **reshape our identity and grow beyond inherited conditioning**.
- **Shared values:** The **will to meaning** is **not just individual**—it can also serve as **the glue of a community**, where, despite a **diversity of voices**, shared values offer **collective inspiration**.
- **Giving purpose to technology:** In an era **dominated by technological systems**, remembering that **we are not merely users of digital platforms, but bearers of an existential project**, helps us **approach technology as a tool, not as an end in itself**.

## **Living Is Not Enough**

**Survival is only the starting point—but living is much more than simply staying alive.**

In *more humano*, we advocate for the idea that the **drive to create meaning is not a secondary or superfluous aspect of existence**—it is the **engine that makes humanity an ever-evolving reality**.

As **Viktor Frankl demonstrated in both a dramatic and illuminating way**, even in **the most extreme situations**, human beings can access **almost inexhaustible inner resources**—as long as they perceive a **purpose beyond mere self-preservation**.

Thus, **creating meaning** becomes an **act of both responsibility and freedom**—it means:

- **Taking a stance in the world,**
- **Choosing a horizon of meaning,**
- **And, in doing so, shaping the direction in which we want to move.**

We are **more than well-adapted animals**—we are **beings who, through our struggles and hopes, rework the raw fact of life and transform it into a narrative**—a **dense, shareable story**, open to **collaboration with others**.

From this perspective, the **will to meaning** is the **thread that unites us**—it **pushes us beyond mere survival** and **reminds us that, as humanity, we still have so much to imagine and create**.

## **4. EXISTENTIAL CATEGORIES: WEAVING MEANING**

*From Identity to Transcendence: A Mosaic in Evolution*

### **4.1 List and Presentation of Categories**

When we speak of "**existential categories**" in *more humano*, we refer to **those fundamental themes that transcend cultures and eras**, touching the deepest dimensions of human existence. Themes such as **identity, freedom, love, death, and transcendence**—among many others—give rise to radical questions:

*"Who am I?"*

*"How should I live?"*

*"Why does love both attract and frighten me?"*

*"What happens after death?"*

*"Is there a broader meaning beyond my individuality?"*

These questions do not offer **definitive answers**; instead, they require **a continuous process of meaning-making**, both at a **personal** and **collective** level.

## Categories as Nodes of Meaning

We can imagine our existence as **a complex tapestry**, where the threads that weave it together are **not only our daily events and relationships**, but also the **existential themes that permeate human experience**.

Identity, freedom, love, death, suffering, transcendence, and other fundamental themes act as **knots in this network**, where meanings **accumulate, dissolve, and recombine**.

- **Identity:** The question *"Who am I?"* reflects our need for **stability or fluidity** in our sense of self. In a world where **roles change frequently**, the quest for **authentic identity** becomes a necessary challenge.
- **Freedom:** Often seen as an **absolute value**, freedom also brings **anxiety**: *"Am I truly free to choose?" "What responsibilities come with my choices?"*
- **Love:** A **powerful force of union and transformation**, love raises dilemmas and expectations: *"Why do I desire the other?" "What does it mean to love in a mature way?"*
- **Death:** The **inevitability of death** forces us to reflect on **what truly matters**. Confronting death reminds us of **life's fragility** but can also **urge us to cherish every moment**.
- **Transcendence:** *"Is there something beyond the tangible?"* Whether understood as **a personal God, cosmic energy, or a collective ideal**, this question pushes humans to **look beyond their immediate selves**.

Each of these categories **acts as a catalyst** for doubt and exploration. Throughout history, **human communities have sought answers**—sometimes **dogmatic**, sometimes **poetic or philosophical**—yet the question **reopens** with each new generation, and indeed, with every individual.

## The Need for Personal and Collective Meaning-Making

The fact that these categories **exist across all cultures** does not mean that the **answers must be the same for everyone**. In fact, **the richness of the human condition lies precisely in the multiplicity of possible interpretations**.

In *more humano*, we **do not seek to standardize answers** but rather to provide **narrative tools**—symbols, reflections, spaces for dialogue—so that **each person can shape their own interpretation**.

- **Personal:** Each of us, depending on our **history and sensibility**, feels **some categories more intensely than others**. A person who has **suffered deep trauma** may find themselves repeatedly confronting **suffering and transformation**, while another may be more drawn to **themes of solitude and belonging**.
- **Collective:** Individual answers do not exist **in isolation**—they intertwine with those of others, forming **traditions, schools of thought, artistic movements, and shared values**. It is through **dialogue and exchange** that **existential categories** reveal the **depth of their meaning** and **the need for continuous reflection**.

From this **tension between the personal and the collective** arises the **creative dynamic** that animates *more humano*:

*"How do we integrate a plurality of voices without imposing a dogma?"*

The **collective forge** of the project welcomes and reshapes these reflections, allowing **each existential node to be illuminated** by different perspectives and sensibilities over time.

## **Carl Gustav Jung and Archetypes as Universal Themes**

In defining these **existential categories**, we can draw on the work of **Carl Gustav Jung**, the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who introduced the concept of **archetypes**.

According to Jung, the **human psyche contains an unconscious "collective memory"** (*the collective unconscious*) that manifests through **recurring figures and motifs** found **in every culture and era**:

- The **hero**,
- The **wise old man**,
- The **mother**,
- The **shadow**,

- The **cycle of death and rebirth**, and many others.
- **Universality and differences:** These **archetypes do not appear identical in every culture**, but they **embody deep themes** that remain **recognizable despite symbolic variations**.
  - Death, for example, **takes on different forms**—from **dark deities** to **figures of transition**—yet ultimately points to the same **event of ending and potential transformation**.
- **Seeing ourselves in stories:** Jung believed that **recognizing archetypes** allows us to **better understand ourselves**, as we find echoes of our own experiences in **myths and dreams that tell archetypal stories**.

In *more humano*, we also view **narratives—whether myths, fairy tales, legends, or personal stories**—as powerful vehicles for understanding **how existential categories live within us**.

Jung's idea of archetypes **reinforces the depth of these universal themes**, showing us that **humans everywhere**—from ancient civilizations to the digital age—grapple with the same fundamental questions:

**Who am I?**

**What is love?**

**What is the meaning of death and rebirth?**

**How do we confront power and our own shadows?**

**Is there something beyond ourselves?**

Though the **expressions of these themes vary infinitely**, their **shared root** reveals that, **beneath superficial differences, we all participate in a symbolic structure that is constantly evolving**.

## **From Chaos to a Mosaic in Evolution**

Speaking of "**existential categories**" does not mean **imposing a rigid or exhaustive list**.

In fact, in *more humano*, we acknowledge that **any attempt to catalog the core experiences of human life will always be provisional and open-ended**.

Instead, our goal is to highlight that there are "**thematic areas**" toward which our **questions, doubts, and hopes naturally gravitate**:

- **The chaos of experience:** Each person's life is **fragmented and ever-changing**, often appearing **chaotic without a guiding thread**.
- **Categories as compasses:** Grouping **existential nodes** into **core themes—identity, freedom, love, suffering, death, spirituality, etc.—** helps us **navigate our experiences and weave them into a coherent narrative**.
- **The evolving mosaic:** Like an **artist assembling a mosaic**, every **culture and individual** composes their **own existential "painting"**, arranging the **universal themes** into a **personalized framework**.

And just as in a **mosaic, new pieces and new patterns** can be **added or reshaped over time**.

### The **Horizon of Endless Dialogue**

In *more humano*, **existential categories** are not a **closed body of knowledge** but rather a **horizon of dialogue**—a space where each person can contribute their **voice, experience, and creativity**. By drawing on **Carl Gustav Jung's theories**, we emphasize the importance of **archetypal structures**: while there is something profoundly **shared** in how humanity confronts **life's great challenges and questions**, each individual, with their **culture and sensitivity**, enriches this **collective heritage** with new **symbols and narratives**.

Thus, when we reflect on **identity, freedom, love, death, suffering, transcendence**—and all the other categories that make up the "**pantheon**" of **human experience**—we do not seek **definitive solutions**. Instead, we open **gateways** to an **ongoing conversation**.

Each theme functions like an **archetype**, leading us back to **ancient yet ever-new questions**:

**Who are we?**

**What is our relationship with the Other, with life, and with the unknown?**

Through **individual and collective meaning-making**, we attempt to answer these questions, knowing that **meanings evolve**—like a **mosaic in perpetual transformation**, shaped by the **furnaces of entire generations**.



## The Role of Meaning in Self-Definition

Existential categories—**love, freedom, death, transcendence**—are not merely **abstract philosophical themes**. They **deeply influence** how we perceive **ourselves**.

"*Who am I?*" is not defined **solely** by **biological traits or social circumstances**. Rather, it emerges from **the meanings we assign to our experiences**, values, and relationships.

If we **change our understanding** of:

- **Good and evil,**
- **Love and relationships,**
- **Suffering and transformation—**

Then, **our actions, choices, and sense of self will also change**.

## 4.2 The Self as a "Node" of Meanings

In *more humano*, **personal identity** is seen as a **"node" where multiple elements intertwine**:

- **Lived experiences,**
- **Symbols we use,**
- **Personal and societal expectations,**
- **Great existential categories.**

We are **not fixed entities**, but **ongoing processes** of **meaning construction and deconstruction**.

Every shift in **perspective** (on **love, morality, suffering, etc.**) **reverberates through our identity**, reshaping our sense of self.

- **Identity in evolution:** Where we once saw **suffering as punishment**, we may come to see it as **an opportunity for growth**. This shift affects **not only how we react to pain** but also how we perceive **ourselves as beings capable of learning and transforming**.
- **Values as coordinates:** Our interpretation of **"good" and "justice"** provides **moral coordinates** that shape our **choices and sense of responsibility**. If we **redefine**

**these categories, our priorities, relationships, and personal commitments** will also shift.

In this sense, **self-definition is not merely about "discovering" a pre-existing essence**, but rather a **creative act**—an ongoing **process of interpretation and reinterpretation** of the **great questions that surround us**.

## **Erich Fromm: Love and Freedom as Paths to Self-Realization**

A thinker who strongly emphasized the **connection between values and identity formation** was **Erich Fromm**.

The German **psychoanalyst and sociologist** proposed a vision of human existence centered on **freedom and love** as the **fundamental axes of self-realization**.

In his renowned work *The Art of Loving*, Fromm argues that **love is not merely a romantic feeling or a spontaneous impulse**, but a **practice that involves responsibility, respect, knowledge, and care**.

- **Love as choice and action:** For Fromm, **love goes beyond instinct or passion**—it is *"the ability to care for another, to accept and respect them for who they are."*

Seeing **love in these terms** leads to a **different self-definition**: we are **not isolated beings**, but **relational beings** who define ourselves through **reciprocity and commitment**.

- **Freedom vs. conformism:** In *Escape from Freedom*, Fromm explains how **freedom can feel like a burden**, an **existential anxiety** that some people try to **escape** by adhering to **ideologies and dogmas** that provide comfort and certainty.

True **freedom, instead, is responsibility**—a path toward **self-realization**, where individuals **actively choose their values and life direction**, accepting the **risks and uncertainties** that come with it.

Fromm's insights reveal how our **understanding of "love" or "freedom"** influences **the entire structure of the self**.

- If we view **love as an active practice of care**, this changes how we approach **relationships, emotional investments, and even our self-perception as beings capable of giving and receiving support**.
- If we see **freedom as mere individual autonomy**, our **identity** may lean toward **isolation**. But if we see **freedom as shared responsibility**, our **sense of self** becomes more **interwoven with the stories and needs of others**.

## The Metamorphosis of the Self: When Meanings Change

In *more humano*, **meaning-making is dynamic**.

There is no "**crystallized self**" that permanently adheres to a **fixed definition of good and evil, love, or relationships**.

Instead, as our **experiential landscape expands**, the **meanings we attach to these concepts shift**, and **our identity reshapes itself in response**.

- **Crisis and rebirth:**
  - A **personal crisis** (*loss, separation, job displacement*) can lead us to **question our previous definitions** of *love or identity*.
  - This **moment of rupture** can give rise to a **new self**, with **revised values and expanded perspectives**.
- **Encountering the Other:**
  - Discovering **different cultures, religions, or artistic and philosophical traditions** can challenge our **established meanings**.
  - For instance, if we come across a **tradition that views freedom not as independence but as "harmony with the community,"** we might **reconsider our individualistic perspective**, altering how we engage with the world.
- **Collective evolution:**
  - Societies, throughout history, have radically transformed their **conceptions of justice, beauty, and morality**—
  - And these **shifts in meaning** reshape **individual identities** as well.
  - Consider the **changing perspectives** on **human rights, gender equality, and cultural inclusion**—these **collective transformations** impact **personal self-conceptions**.

Thus, the **self** is not a **fixed entity** but a **living intersection of evolving meanings**, shaped by **experience, dialogue, and the continuous reinterpretation of fundamental questions**.

## Meaning-Making as an Individual Responsibility

Our identity is not solely the result of biology or social conditioning—it is shaped in the realm of meanings that we choose or construct. If we seek growth, we must engage in an "inner labor" that involves reflection, dialogue, and experimentation within existential categories.

Which values do I consider fundamental?

What does it truly mean to me to be free, to love, to act justly, to live in harmony with nature?

- **Autonomy vs. Alienation:** When we adopt conceptual frameworks passively, without critically reshaping them, we risk alienation—losing the opportunity to authentically claim these categories as our own. Meaning-making, instead, requires an act of personal and conscious "forging."
- **The Courage to Interpret:** As Erich Fromm suggests, freedom often frightens us because the ability to define our own meanings means leaving behind comforting certainties. However, it is precisely in this effort that we find the opportunity for self-realization and a fullness of life that cannot be reduced to mechanisms of habit or external coercion.

## A Self in Constant Becoming

In the *more humano* project, the self is not a static entity but a creative process: every time we reexamine concepts such as good and evil, love and relationships, freedom and belonging, we touch the very structure of our identity and, potentially, redesign it. In this sense, the great existential categories serve as the pivots around which we reinterpret our experience of the world, seeking direction, a core of values, and inspiration for action.

Erich Fromm's perspective on love and freedom teaches us that the meanings we assign to these dimensions can radically influence our "being" and our "acting." If we wish to avoid

remaining prisoners of inherited or superficial definitions, we must actively engage with them and critically rework them. Thus, in the *more humano* forge, everyone is invited to shape new shades of "good," "evil," "love," "relationship," "justice," and "responsibility," leading to a transformation that affects not only thought but also the quality of our existence.

### 4.3 Comparison and Relativism

On the path to assigning meaning to existential categories—such as love, death, freedom, identity, and transcendence—we encounter a fundamental truth: there is no single interpretation that applies to everyone. Even though this may evoke fears of disorientation or "moral chaos," it is important to recognize that this plurality of responses—often in conflict with one another—represents a source of richness, as it pushes both society and individuals to reflect, negotiate meanings, and discover new, unexpected solutions. In *more humano*, we emphasize this tension: on one hand, we seek coherence and points of reference; on the other, we acknowledge that the fabric of existence is complex and that it is precisely from this complexity that the most fertile opportunities for meaning-making arise.

#### Plurality and Conflict: A Field for Growth

The "plurality of responses" manifests in every aspect of cultural life: different philosophies, different religions, different artistic movements, different moral frameworks. Even within a single tradition, contrasting schools of thought can coexist. Rather than being a problem in itself, this divergence forces us to share our approaches, engage in dialogue, and sometimes even clash with others in search of common ground or mutual enrichment.

- **Enrichment vs. Simplification:** If only one doctrine or "truth" were valid, we might have more certainty, but we would risk oversimplification. Instead, the variety of interpretations introduces doubt, curiosity, and the question "How do you see it?"—and it is precisely here that collective thought evolves.
- **Complicating the Narrative:** We often complain that plurality "complicates" the world, taking away absolute reference points. Yet, this "complication" is also the cradle of all human creativity: only by encountering responses different from our own can we recalibrate our questions and generate new syntheses.

In *more humano*, we do not seek to absorb all interpretations into a single homogeneous whole but rather to bring them into resonance with one another. It is through dialogue that we discover, case by case, profound affinities or irreconcilable divergences, forcing us into a continuous redefinition of what we believe.

## Relativism as a Threat and a Resource

The plurality of interpretations inevitably brings with it relativism—the awareness that many of the truths we embrace are relative to a historical, social, and cultural context. Many fear that such relativism leads to the idea that “everything is equally valid,” creating moral anarchy where no criteria hold any weight. In *more humano*, we prefer to see relativism as a starting point: we are beings immersed in evolving discourses, and we do not possess absolute truth. From this position of epistemological humility, however, we can take a creative step: negotiating, intertwining, and constructing stable (but never eternal) meanings that help us live and collaborate.

- **The Risk of Anomie:** If “everything is equally valid,” we might lose all ethical direction. But acknowledging relativism does not force us into radical nihilism; instead, we can define *working truths* that we trust while remaining open to further revisions and the perspectives of others.
- **Narrative Responsibility:** In a relativistic context, our responsibility in *telling* and *shaping* meanings becomes even more significant. No “higher order” dictates what is good or evil, what the foundations of love or freedom should be; it is up to us and our communities to shape a shared code of values.

## Michel Foucault: Discourses and Regimes of Truth

A key reference for understanding how our interpretations are contingent and historically situated is Michel Foucault. The French philosopher demonstrated how *discourses* (cultural, medical, political, etc.) create *regimes of truth*—contexts in which certain statements become acceptable while others are marginalized or deemed “mad.” Throughout history, these regimes shift, altering our perception of what is just, rational, sane, or deviant.

- **Genealogy of Knowledge:** Foucault conducts a genealogical analysis, highlighting how what we consider “true” today results from power struggles, ideological shifts,

and social conventions that have solidified over time.

- **Power and Knowledge:** Regimes of truth are not neutral but deeply intertwined with mechanisms of power. Whoever controls the dominant discourse partially controls the imagination and perceived reality of a community.
- **Historical Evolution:** What was once plausible (consider past views on mental illness, sexuality, or human rights) may become unthinkable or unacceptable in another era. This illustrates how values and meanings are inherently relative and subject to transformation.

Applying this insight to the existential categories of *more humano*, we recognize that concepts like freedom, love, good, evil, and transcendence take on different nuances depending on the dominant *discourse*. What matters is never crystallizing these concepts into an absolute truth but understanding them as an ongoing interplay of forces and historical interpretations, open to continuous reconsideration.

## The Wealth of a Conflictual Narrative

In *more humano*, affirming the plurality of responses does not mean denying the possibility of a shared ethical foundation or common principles. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that our existential framework remains alive precisely when it is conflictual and evolving. If inner or social reality were a *block* of eternal truth, there would be no room for creative freedom or collective growth.

- **Transformative Dynamics:** When two worldviews meet (or clash), the outcome can be enrichment, a reflection that generates new syntheses, or the strengthening of certain identities around radical differences. Even conflicts, when approached through dialogue, can lead to surprising evolutions in meaning.
- **A Listening Posture:** For *more humano*, the exchange between different “truth discourses” requires mutual listening—the ability to ask questions rather than merely defend one’s assumptions. Here, relativism becomes an invitation to nurture communication and shared storytelling, not an excuse for resignation or moral indifference.

## The Human Mosaic and the Responsibility of Dialogue

Ultimately, the confrontation between multiple, sometimes irreconcilable perspectives turns existence into a polyphonic mosaic, where each piece—each interpretation—adds colors and patterns to our understanding of the world. The so-called “relativism,” far from being an absolute evil, can become a space of creative responsibility, where we recognize that our existential categories (good, evil, love, death, freedom, the meaning of life...) are not handed down from above but are historically and culturally constructed, requiring us to reinterpret and share them.

Following Michel Foucault, we understand that *discourses* and *regimes of truth* are not static—they change, sometimes overturning completely. And it is precisely within this constant transformation that *more humano* finds the opportunity to forge new meanings, to challenge established ones, and to embark on a journey of collective meaning-making, where every voice, even in disagreement, can contribute to a broader, richer narrative—one that more accurately reflects the complexity of the human experience.

## 5. THE IMPERMANENCE OF MEANINGS: NARRATIVE AS A CONNECTION TO BECOMING

*Telling Stories to Share Uncertainty*

### 5.1 The Absence of Absolute Stability

It is a fact: every act of meaning-making, no matter how solid or comforting it may seem at a given moment, does not last forever. The values, ideas, and symbols that guide our lives evolve alongside our personal experiences and the historical context in which we exist. In *more humano*, this impermanence is not seen as a failure but as a natural condition that holds immense potential for renewal. Uncertainty, far from being an enemy, becomes a resource: it is precisely through the awareness that *nothing is set in stone forever* that we can continue to forge new meanings and reassess past ones.

### No Construction Is Definitive

Often, when we talk about “creating meaning,” there is an expectation that once we find the *Truth*—whether religious, moral, or scientific—it should remain unchanged, providing



us with stability. However, human history contradicts this vision: even the most rigid theological, metaphysical, and scientific certainties have been revised or surpassed over time. This does not mean that every idea was “wrong” or useless; rather, it shows that the process of meaning-making never reaches a final point where we can say, “*We are done interpreting.*”

- **Transformation of the Individual:** As we age and gain experience, our priorities and desires change, as do the meanings we attach to fundamental concepts such as love, friendship, death, and freedom. What made sense to us at 20 may seem limiting or naive at 40—and vice versa.
- **Socio-Cultural Shifts:** A society undergoing technological or political revolutions will reinterpret authority, family, and justice in light of new conditions. In just a few decades, an established value system can undergo profound change, demonstrating the inherent instability of what we consider *collective identity*.

Recognizing the absence of absolute stability protects us from dogmatism and encourages us to keep the work of storytelling alive—the act of narrating and re-narrating what we consider true, just, or desirable at a given historical and existential moment.

## Uncertainty as a Natural Condition

It is normal for the idea of impermanence to create a sense of disorientation. We often crave a fixed, unchanging anchor. However, in *more humano*, we see uncertainty as a fundamental characteristic of our existence, not an obstacle to be eliminated at all costs.

- **Space for Creativity:** Whereas an “eternalized” truth closes the door to questioning, uncertainty invites us to experiment, build hypotheses, and revise them in response to life’s transformations.
- **The Dialectic of Becoming:** Accepting the transience of thoughts, values, and meanings forces us to maintain a dialogical attitude with ourselves and others, preventing us from clinging to immutable positions. Fluidity may feel uncomfortable, but it also fuels inquiry and metamorphosis.

This *openness* to uncertainty is not an invitation to passivity or absolute relativism. Rather, it is a call to responsibility—to understand that our meanings are not set in stone and that every belief or choice must stand the test of time and experience.

## Zhuangzi: Reality in Constant Transformation

One of the oldest and most fascinating reflections on impermanence and metamorphosis comes from **Zhuangzi** (circa 4th century BCE), a Taoist thinker whose parables and stories present a vision of the world as an ever-changing flow. In his work, numerous passages highlight the fragility of rigid judgments and the idea that every situation is subject to reversal.

- **The Relativity of Perspectives:** In one of his most famous passages, Zhuangzi dreams that he is a butterfly. Upon waking, he wonders whether he is a man who dreamed of being a butterfly or a butterfly now dreaming of being a man. This parable illustrates the ambiguity of all certainty: we can never fully know whether what we experience is a definitive state or just another *dream* about to change.
- **The Reversal of Judgments:** Other stories in *Zhuangzi* depict situations that initially seem unfortunate but later turn out to be blessings (and vice versa). The lesson is that reality is not composed of eternal categories like *good/bad* or *success/failure*, but of ever-changing relationships and processes.

Applying Zhuangzi's insights to *more humano*, we realize that the meanings we construct today may be overturned or reshaped by future experiences or societal changes. This does not mean avoiding commitment or refusing to take a stance—it means understanding that every stance exists within an eternal process of becoming.

## Narrative as a Connection to Becoming

In a Universe Where Nothing Is Fixed, How Do We “Fix” Something to Guide Us?

This is where **narrative** emerges: shared storytelling, the act of shaping interpretation into words, images, and rituals. It does not serve to crystallize truth but to share meanings that, in a given historical or personal phase, feel vital and compelling.

- **Telling Stories to Embrace Uncertainty:** When we narrate our worldview, we temporarily give form to something that would otherwise remain undefined. It is an act of clarification that allows us to “grasp the ephemeral” and communicate it to others.
- **Narration and Transformation:** Stories do not block change; they can be rewritten, reinterpreted, enriched. Every narrative anchors us to a *present* that

understands it may change in the future—just as a navigator traces provisional routes on an ever-moving sea.

In *more humano*, narrative becomes **a bond**: it allows us to traverse impermanence together, intertwining our stories with those of others. Through this process, **uncertainty becomes solidarity**—each of us recognizes in others the same dance with becoming, and together, we build a shared lexicon that does not erase differences but connects them in a collective story.

## Embracing Change, Creating the Trace

The recognition of impermanence is not a condemnation to perpetual confusion but an invitation to **continually renew meanings**. **Zhuangzi** offers us the image of a world where *“even Heaven and Earth move with the seasons, and yin and yang transform.”* In this vision, we cannot treat concepts like good, evil, identity, love, death, or freedom as crystallized entities; instead, we must accept that they **reconfigure** depending on context, experience, and the narratives in which they are embedded.

In *more humano*, this is precisely why **we value storytelling**—it becomes our *trace* in the flow of events, a way to give form to the moment, even knowing that this form will dissolve and reform differently over time. There is no need to fight uncertainty or instability; rather, we learn to **“narrate” even our provisional discoveries and moments of doubt**. This allows us to **not fear change, but inhabit it**—and, as much as possible, to guide it with the **creativity and responsibility** that define human nature.

## Narrative as a Bridge

Recognizing a world in constant motion, where meanings resist definitive fixation, **narration emerges as a crucial tool for mediating between what we experience internally and the need to communicate it to others**.

In *more humano*, stories, myths, and both personal and collective narratives serve as a **“bridge”**—a way to connect our fluid interpretations of reality with the necessity of expressing them. It is an **act that is both creative and social**, one that temporarily “freezes” meanings to make them shareable but never imprisons them in a rigid, final form.

## 5.2 Stories as the “Temporary Freezing” of Meaning

Narratives—ranging from grand mythological traditions to the intimate confidences we share with friends—have the **power to capture fleeting thoughts, emotions, and intuitions** and transform them into a **story** that can be heard, read, and interpreted. A story functions like a **photograph** that freezes an instant: meanings that were previously nebulous take the shape of *words* and *images*, acquiring a **consistency** that allows us to reflect on them and engage with others.

- **Interpretations That Take Shape:** Without narration, many meanings would remain latent or implicit. By telling stories, we *bring them to light*, turning them into objects we can observe with a slightly more detached perspective.
- **Sharability:** A narrative allows us to offer our worldview—even if provisional—to those around us. Our meaning-making process does not remain locked in an individual experience but becomes part of a **collective narrative fabric**.

However, this **"freezing" of meaning is only temporary**. Stories live through **re-readings and reinterpretations**—once told, they continue to evolve with the passage of time, cultural shifts, and dialogue with other narratives.

## Italo Calvino: Worlds Within Stories

A significant reference for understanding the value of stories as **"bridges" of meaning** is *Italo Calvino*. In his works, Calvino constructs fantastic worlds that metaphorically—and often surreally—reflect the **deeper structures of reality**. The imaginary city, the parallel universe, the linguistic labyrinth all become mirrors where readers can recognize fragments of their own experiences and, at the same time, reorganize them into new configurations.

- **The "Invisible Cities":** In this celebrated book, Marco Polo describes to Kublai Khan incredible cities, each of which "freezes" a particular aspect of urban life, memory, or human relationships. Each city is a **narrative space** that encapsulates a meaning—identity, encounter, nostalgia—and renders it observable, open to commentary. Yet, every description remains open to multiple interpretations, never arriving at a single, definitive truth.
- **Recognizing Ourselves in Fiction:** Calvino suggests that literary *fiction* is paradoxically a vehicle for *reality*: through imagined stories, we recognize deep emotional truths, giving shape (even temporarily) to feelings and intuitions that might otherwise remain unexpressed.

Similarly, *more humano* sees **stories as parallel worlds** where each of us can find reflections, face contradictions, and refine our **vision of reality**. **Telling and reading stories is not idle entertainment—it is an exercise in self-interpretation and a way of making sense of the world.**

## The Bridge Between the Individual and the Collective

The “bridge” that narrative creates is not just between our **inner world and others**, but also **between the personal and the collective**. When we share a personal story—whether an anecdote from life or a reimagined myth—we offer a **piece of meaning** to those who listen. If others or the community recognize something significant in that story, a **process of exchange and reformulation** begins, enriching both sides.

- **Sharing Perspectives:** A personal story, if it touches on universal themes (such as self-discovery, loss, the search for love), can become a catalyst for collective reflection. What was once *mine* becomes *ours* in a shared narrative.
- **Cultural Memory:** Many cultures have passed down myths and legends orally, shaping a people’s identity over time. Even in the **digital age**, stories spread and evolve, giving rise to **new myths and legends of the internet**. This transition from a personal story to a **collective narrative** is one of the ways in which **communities create points of recognition**—shared symbols that help define belonging.

Thus, storytelling functions as **a bridge not only between individuals but also across time**, linking generations that pass on meaning from one to the next, with all the rewritings and reinterpretations that time entails. And once again, we see how the “freezing” of meaning in a story is always **temporary**: myths are rewritten, novels are reinterpreted, and their significance can change radically depending on the reader and the historical context.

## Freezing Without Imprisonment

In *more humano*, it is crucial to avoid mistaking **the sharing of a story** for a form of **rigidity**. In narrating, we **fix** a certain meaning into a communicable *form*, but we do not **imprison** it forever. Just as wrought iron can be **reshaped multiple times** under the forge’s heat, the meanings embedded in a story **can shift every time someone “reads” or “listens” in a new context.**

- **Circulating Meanings:** When we tell stories, we **release meanings into the shared space of imagination**. Those who receive them may **transform, enrich, or critique** them, creating a flow of **circulation and growth**.
- **Avoiding Dogma:** If we consider our own story to be the **only possible interpretation of reality**, we risk falling into dogmatism. A story, instead, is most powerful when it **invites further interpretations**.

In this sense, **narrative is truly a dynamic “bridge”**—not a drawbridge that isolates us. It is a **structure that remains open**, always **available for new crossings, new journeys** between the shores of **a meaning in perpetual transformation**.

## Recognizing Oneself and Reinterpreting

Building on the legacy of **Italo Calvino**, we can say that every story is a **world we can step into**, see ourselves reflected in, and emerge from transformed. This applies to **grand narratives** (myths, fairy tales, novels) as well as our **everyday storytelling** (recounting a dream, an encounter, a dramatic event). Each time, we **momentarily freeze** the relentless flow of meanings, giving them a **communicable form**: this is where storytelling becomes a **bridge**—between our inner world and the collective, between today and tomorrow, between who we are and who we can become.

Thus, in *more humano*, **the value of storytelling aligns with the awareness of impermanence**: narrating is an act that **temporarily fixes** meanings but simultaneously **exposes them to dialogue and transformation**. In this **tension between “fixing” and “freeing,” between “freezing” and “flowing,”** lies the richness of human experience, always suspended between the **desire to understand** and the **need to evolve**.

## Cognitive Dissonance and Transformation

Changes in **ideas or meanings**—regarding values, beliefs, or interpretations of reality—often generate **internal tensions**. We naturally seek **coherence** between what we think and what we do, between our past convictions and those we have just acquired. However, life, with its **unpredictability, encounters, and turning points**, sometimes **forces us to deeply reassess what we once thought was certain**.

In *more humano*, we embrace these moments of **rupture as opportunities for growth**: the “**narrative of self**” becomes an essential tool for **accepting changes and integrating them into an ongoing process of identity transformation**.

### 5.3 Leon Festinger and the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

One of the key concepts in understanding how we react to shifts in meaning is **the theory of cognitive dissonance**, formulated by psychologist **Leon Festinger**. According to Festinger, when an individual experiences a **conflict between two beliefs** (or between beliefs and actions), they feel **psychological discomfort**, which pushes them to “resolve” the inconsistency in some way:

- **Modifying one of the beliefs:** For example, if we realize that a value we profess (e.g., **honesty**) conflicts with a behavior we have engaged in, we might **change our view of that value**, minimize its importance, or “adjust” our interpretation to reduce discomfort.
- **Rationalization:** Alternatively, we justify our behavior with new reasoning, aligning **what we did** with **what we believe**.
- **Increasing consonance:** Often, to resolve dissonance, we **surround ourselves with people, texts, or situations that reinforce the belief** that causes us the least discomfort.

When applied to **shifts in meaning**, Festinger’s theory helps us understand **how difficult it can be to reassess fundamental concepts** (good, evil, love, identity) because doing so forces us to **question part of our internal coherence**. It is often easier to **defend old ideas** or **ignore contradictions** rather than admit that we have evolved.

#### Narration as a Tool for Integration

In *more humano*, we believe that **the “story of the self”**—the personal narrative each of us constructs about our journey—has the power to **ease cognitive dissonance**, providing us with a **cohesive narrative framework** in which **shifts in perspective are not betrayals or fractures but steps in an ongoing evolution**.

- **Reducing internal conflict:** If we simply **acknowledge** that we have changed our minds, we might feel **disoriented or guilty**. But if we integrate this change into a story (“**I had an experience that opened my eyes to a new aspect of life**” or “**At**

a certain point, I realized I was acting against my values”), we give **narrative meaning** to what would otherwise seem like a sudden contradiction.

- **Creating continuity:** Narration allows us to say, **“I once believed X, then I discovered Y, and now I understand Z.”** Even if X and Y seem contradictory, the story creates a **cohesive progression**, explaining **how and why** we arrived at our new interpretation. The **narrating self** is not fragmented but has undergone a **journey through different stages**.

The transition from one phase to another may be described as a **“crisis”** or a **“turning point,”** but always with the understanding that **it is part of a maturation process**. The **art of storytelling** transforms **fracture into transformation**, helping us to **tolerate uncertainty**.

## **A Continuous Process of Revision**

In *more humano*, we do not simply encourage the **acceptance of shifts in meaning as occasional events**. Rather, we suggest **normalizing the idea that our inner life and values are not static**. Just as **human history is constantly rewritten**, our **convictions, emotions, and interpretations** are **subject to renewal** as a result of **new experiences, relationships, and perspectives**.

- **Courage to acknowledge incongruence:** Instead of taking shortcuts (e.g., **denying conflict or demonizing the “new”**), we should **face cognitive dissonance head-on**, recognizing that **absolute coherence is an illusion** and that **internal friction can drive progress**.
- **Seeing oneself as the “protagonist”:** If we view our **self** as a **character in a developing narrative**, every **shift in perspective becomes part of an unfolding story**. Seeing ourselves as protagonists **helps us reclaim our narrative** and **interpret crucial turning points not as inexplicable fractures but as meaningful course corrections**.

## **Festinger and more humano: Merging Psychology and Narrative**

Festinger’s theory helps illustrate the **psychological roots of our resistance to changes in meaning**. In *more humano*, we add the **narrative dimension**, arguing that although **cognitive dissonance causes discomfort**, it can also serve as a **catalyst for expanding**



**our sense-making horizons. Narration is the vehicle** through which we integrate new beliefs, **transforming distress into awareness.**

- **Inner dialogue:** The strategies we use to **reduce dissonance (modifying old beliefs, rationalizing, etc.)** should not be demonized—they are natural defense mechanisms of the self. However, **cultivating a mindful and open “story of the self”** allows us to bring these mechanisms to light and manage them creatively, **without self-deception.**
- **The fluid self:** From the perspective of a self **unafraid of transformation,** dissonance becomes a **signal** that we are **on the verge of an evolutionary leap.** If we can integrate this moment into **a narrative framework**—perhaps even sharing it within a community, as *more humano* encourages—this **leap can lead to new levels of understanding and dynamic, rather than monolithic, coherence.**

## **A Narrative Journey Through Tensions and Discoveries**

Ultimately, **cognitive dissonance is an unavoidable phenomenon** whenever we engage with **ideas, values, and interpretations that challenge our previous beliefs.** Instead of trapping ourselves in the anxiety of an **unchanging coherence,** *more humano* suggests **embracing these moments of internal tension,** using **self-narration as both a compass and a tool for processing change.**

In this way, **shifts in meaning are no longer seen as betrayals of a “fixed” identity** but as **steps in an ongoing journey**—a journey where the human being, both **narrator and protagonist,** continuously experiences **their own adaptability and ability to rewrite themselves along the way.**

## **6. ESOTERIC AND SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE: OPEN DOORS TO MYSTERY**

*The evocative power between history and modernity*

### **6.1 Symbols and Rituals as Universal Codes**

When discussing **esoteric or symbolic language,** people often associate it with **secret practices, encrypted texts, or incomprehensible rituals.** However, these codes have almost always emerged from the **need to name and describe aspects of human reality**

that escape ordinary language: death, rebirth, transcendence, the relationship with the sacred.

In mystical and spiritual movements, **symbols and rituals function as genuine “alphabets”**—not rigid dogmas—through which human beings attempt to **engage with the unknown and the most complex themes of existence.**

## Symbolism as a "Translation" of Profound Experiences

In *more humano*, we recognize that **humanity, in its attempt to make sense of the invisible or the inexpressible, has always relied on images, metaphors, and rituals.** These elements do not merely **“decorate”** a religion or an esoteric tradition; they serve as **communicative structures** that **convey, in a suggestive way, concepts that are difficult to explain through logical-rational language alone.**

Consider, for example:

- **Symbols of death and rebirth** (from the seed that dies to bear fruit, to the snake shedding its skin).
- **Rites of passage** (initiations, funerals, weddings), which "translate" profound experiences into **visible forms and shared gestures.**
- **Access to the sacred:** In some cultures, **symbols act as "windows"** that allow us to perceive the sacred within a reality that might otherwise seem purely material or profane.
- **Explaining the inexplicable:** When facing concepts such as **eternity, the soul, or the afterlife**, rational argumentation alone is often insufficient; **images and rituals provide an emotional terrain** in which we can approach the mystery rather than attempting to dominate it.

**Esotericism, in this sense, is not about “hiding” knowledge from the uninitiated but rather about manifesting the invisible through codes that, while carrying an aura of mystery, remain accessible to anyone willing to approach them with an open and respectful spirit.**

## Mircea Eliade and the Foundational Structure of the Sacred

A **central figure** in understanding the value of **symbols and rituals** is **Mircea Eliade**, the Romanian historian of religions. **Eliade saw the sacred as a "foundational structure" of cultures:** humans, in their attempt to understand reality, tend to **symbolically separate what is "sacred" (charged with power, intensity, and meaning) from what is "profane" (ordinary, lacking transcendence).**

This explains why, across civilizations, we find **places, gestures, and stories that embody divine otherness and mystery.**

- **Myth as true history:** According to Eliade, for **traditional societies**, myth is not a **fiction** but a "**true story**" that explains **how the world was created** and how **transcendent forces** act upon the present. Consequently, **rituals symbolically reenact** those **primordial acts**, renewing the connection with **"sacred time."**
- **The architecture of the sacred:** Many cultures designate **objects, places, or ceremonies** as **structural pillars of collective perception: altars, cathedrals, stone circles, ritual masks.** Each of these elements carries symbolic value, opening a **"gateway" to mystery** and reinforcing communal cohesion around shared meaning.

Applying **Eliade's categories**, we can understand **esoteric and symbolic languages** as attempts to **delimit a sacred space** (physical or internal), where **higher meanings and transformative experiences** can take shape.

## Alphabets for Life's Great Themes: Death, Rebirth, Transcendence

These **symbolic alphabets**, present in all cultures, revolve around some of the **most fundamental human themes:**

- **Death** as an **inevitable limit.**
- **The possibility of spiritual or moral rebirth.**
- **The desire to transcend ordinary existence** and connect with a broader dimension of reality.

Every mystical or spiritual tradition—**from Sufism to alchemy, from Tantric Buddhism to Christian brotherhoods**—has developed **its own codes** to visually and narratively represent these themes.

- **Death and rebirth:** In both **Western esotericism** (e.g., **Alchemy**) and **Eastern traditions** (e.g., various Indian and Tibetan rites), **symbolic death is a crucial passage** for **abandoning the old self** and accessing a **higher state of awareness**. **Symbols of this process**—the **black crow, the phoenix rising from ashes, the buried seed**—act as **poetic maps** for understanding **inner transformation**.
- **Transcendence:** **Rituals such as ascension, shamanic flight, and ecstatic meditation** are rarely explained with **rigid conceptual language** but rather through **evocative images and myths: Jacob’s Ladder, the World Tree, the ship or chariot transporting the soul elsewhere**.

In *more humano*, we **acknowledge the power of these languages** to evoke **emotional resonance** and to **lead us, through suggestive imagery, to reflect on how our own lives might include moments of “symbolic transition” and openness to broader horizons**, without necessarily adhering to a rigid doctrine.

## **Not Dogmas, but Languages of Mystery**

In *more humano*, we do not see the use of **symbols and rituals** as a **new dogma**, but rather as a set of **“languages”** that allow us to evoke **inexhaustible themes**. Where **ordinary rational thought** reaches its limits—unable to fully explain **the ultimate meaning of death or the experience of the sacred**—**symbols and rituals** provide access to a **poetic, imaginative realm** that does not claim **absolute truths** but instead **opens doors to mystery**.

- **Openness and inclusivity:** Every **esoteric tradition**, no matter how “closed” it may seem, actually **offers symbolic elements** that anyone can interpret **according to their own sensitivity**. The key is to approach these codes **with curiosity and respect**, without prejudice and without fearing contamination.
- **Layered meanings:** A **symbol is never definitively decoded**—a **cross, a mandala, the tree of life, the winged serpent** often carry **multiple layers of meaning**, shifting **through time, cultures, or even personal interpretation**.

Thus, **esoteric codes do not merely “teach” doctrine** but provide a **palette of forms and stories** that can be **recreated and reimagined**. And it is in this **ongoing recreation** that **humanity expresses its immense creative richness**.

## **Open Doors to Mystery**

Ultimately, **the symbols and rituals developed by mystical and spiritual traditions** constitute a **universal language**—one that transcends **linguistic and cultural barriers**, offering **tools to engage with death, rebirth, transcendence, and many other existential challenges**.

As **Mircea Eliade** suggests, these **“doors”**—deeply **rooted in history and the sacred traditions of civilizations**—remain open even today, ready to host **new interpretations**.

In the *more humano* perspective, we approach these **“alphabets”** with a **spirit of exploration**: we do not claim to **own them**, but to **engage in dialogue with them**, integrating them into a worldview that remains **agnostic and open to multiple meanings**.

**Mystery is not something to be solved once and for all, but rather something to be inhabited creatively**—allowing ourselves to be inspired by **the evocative power of symbols and ancient rituals**.

And so, even in the **21st century**, we can discover that **the esoteric dimension is not a relic of the past** but a **living language** through which contemporary humans can still engage in a **deep dialogue with themselves and the unknown**.

## **6.2 The Evocative Function of the Sacred**

In the vast realm of **esotericism and symbolic systems**, there exists a **poetic and evocative** quality that can **inspire meaning-making** without falling into the **dogmatic claim** of holding the "one true" interpretation. When freed from the intent to define **immutable laws** or **rigid doctrines**, the **esoteric approach** becomes a **metaphorical language** capable of **expressing the inexpressible**: transcendence, the experience of the sacred, and communication with dimensions that escape pure reasoning.

In *more humano*, this **dimension** is embraced as an **opportunity** to access a **sensitive understanding** of otherwise nebulous concepts, offering **creative stimuli** that enrich the construction of meanings.

### **Beyond the Claim of Truth: Esotericism as "Poetic Revelation"**

When we think of **esoteric texts** or **initiatic traditions**, we often imagine **intricate systems of symbols and correspondences** that may seem **indecipherable or abstract**. However, if we approach these **systems** without the conviction that they are **"the only**

**channel"** to Truth, we can **discover their poetic power**. Like **fantasy literature** or **visionary art**, **esoteric content** creates **suggestive imagery** that "alludes" to **inner truths**, rather than imposing a **fixed paradigm**.

- **Evocation rather than definition:** A **symbol** (such as the **all-seeing eye**, the **labyrinth**, the **staircase**, or the **mystical rose**) does not serve to "explain" a mystery in logical terms but to **evoke it**, connecting us to a **sense of reverence or exploration**.
- **Universality and openness:** Many **esoteric symbols** appear across **different cultures and historical periods** (for example, **the serpent as an emblem of primordial energy** or **the cross as an intersection between heaven and earth**). Their recurrence in **diverse contexts** highlights their **universal nature and inclusive potential**.

In this sense, **esotericism offers an "imaginal grammar"**—a set of expressive tools that allow us to articulate that which **escapes scientific or discursive language**.

## **René Guénon: Symbol and Ritual as Pathways Beyond Rationality**

René Guénon is a **key figure** in the **modern study of esotericism and spiritual traditions**. Although often regarded as a **strict** interpreter of **metaphysical doctrines**, Guénon **recognized** that **symbols and rituals** act as "**vehicles**" for a form of understanding that **goes beyond pure rationality**.

- **Vehicles of transcendence:** In his writings, Guénon emphasizes that **symbols** serve as **bridges** between **the material world and metaphysical truths**. Consider the "**verticality**" of certain symbols (such as **the tree**, **the mountain**, or the **staircase**): these are not merely **static representations** but rather "**pointers**" to a **connection between different planes of existence**.
- **Ritual as transformation:** According to Guénon, **an esoteric ritual** is never a **mere external ceremony** but rather a **transformative process** that involves the practitioner. He describes it as "**operative**" because, through **symbolic gestures and words**, it induces a **shift in consciousness**.

By **moving beyond a dogmatic reading** of Guénon's work, we can **extract its most profound insight**: the **evocative power** of **symbols and rituals** lies in their **ability to**

transcend intellectual categories, awakening **deep dimensions of the mind** and eliciting a form of **intuitive recognition** that is not fully verbalizable.

## A Comprehension That Engages Emotion and Imagination

In *more humano*, the idea that the **sacred and the esoteric** can contribute to **meaning-making** is rooted precisely in their ability to **move emotion and imagination**, rather than merely formulating abstract theses. **Symbolic language:**

- **Frees us from strictly logical frameworks:** It allows us to "see" the world from a different perspective, enriching concepts such as life, death, love, and transformation with poetic nuances.
- **Encourages personal experience:** A **ritual** or **symbol** does not impose a rigid **belief**; instead, it invites the individual to **experience** the symbolic content and **find their own emotional or spiritual resonance**.

This **interpretative freedom**, sometimes criticized as vague, is **actually an asset**: it allows us to **personalize meaning**, integrating it into our growth journey without having to **blindly adhere to a dogmatic framework**.

## From Hermeticism to Everyday Life: A Poetic Language for the Ordinary

One of the most fascinating aspects of **esotericism**, when freed from **claims of exclusivity**, is its **applicability to daily life**. **Esoteric symbols and rituals** can teach us to:

- **Reinterpret the ordinary:** **Alchemy**, for instance, speaks of "**nigredo**" (**darkness**) as the first stage of a transformation process. We can apply this metaphor to our **personal crises**, recognizing a **phase of inner "death"** that precedes **renewal**.
- **Observe natural cycles:** Many **esoteric traditions** celebrate **solstices, equinoxes, and lunar phases**. Understanding them as **symbols and rituals** reconnects us to the **rhythms of nature**, offering a sense of **participation in a living, ever-changing cosmos**.

This is **not about embracing mystical certainties**, but about tapping into the **hidden poetry of tangible realities**, seeing them as **mirrors of inner processes**. In other words,

it's about **speaking a "dialect of the soul"**, capable of making us feel **less alienated** and more **connected to a dimension of mystery** pulsing within everyday life.

## **Esotericism as a Creative Perspective**

Ultimately, the **esoteric and symbolic approach** in *more humano* is **not a doctrinal path**, but a **perspective** that **ignites our poetic vision of existence**. By **rejecting the idea of possessing absolute truths**, the **esoteric dimension** becomes a **reservoir of suggestions and metaphors**, a **poetic code** from which to draw in order to **shape elusive concepts**.

As **René Guénon** emphasized, **symbols and rituals** convey a **knowledge that transcends words**, inviting **inner experience**, a **perception of the sacred** that requires **neither dogmas nor rigid structures**.

For *more humano*, this "**evocative function of the sacred**" means keeping **the door to mystery slightly ajar**—not to **evade rational inquiry**, but to **enrich our meaning-making** with a **language capable of interpreting**—rather than **reducing**—the **great existential questions**.

The essential element is to **experience it as a tool for creative exploration**, rather than an **authoritative imposition**: a **journey through the imagination**, where **poetic freedom** serves as a guide toward **new understandings of ourselves and the world**.

## **Respect for Diversity of Expression**

When we discuss **esoteric paths**—ranging from **Western alchemy** to **Sufism, Kabbalah, and countless other traditions worldwide**—we encounter a **galaxy of symbols, practices, texts, and perspectives** that, despite their **significant differences**, share **one fundamental aspiration**:

To **connect the human being** with a **deeper reality**, one **rooted in the sacred or the mysterious**.

Rather than viewing these **paths as conflicting**, we can see them as **multiple roads leading to a broader understanding of existence**.



## 6.3 Different Paths, the Same Thirst for Transcendence

Every **esoteric or mystical path**—whether **alchemy, Sufism, Kabbalah, Advaita Vedanta, shamanism**, and so on—originates within a **specific cultural context**, shaped by its own **languages, rituals, and symbolic imagery**.

- **Alchemy** developed in the **Mediterranean and medieval European cultures**, merging the transformation of metals with that of the soul.
- **Sufism**, the mystical branch of Islam, uses **love and poetry** to describe the **soul's journey toward the Absolute**.
- **Kabbalah**, the esoteric heart of Judaism, **deconstructs reality into Sefirot**—divine emanations that illuminate the relationship between **the Creator and creation**.

Despite their **distinct origins**, these **spiritual traditions share archetypal themes**:

- The awareness that **visible reality is only part of existence**, behind which lies a **deeper principle**.
- The pursuit of **inner transformation**, often depicted through **symbols of death and rebirth**, or **purification and illumination**.
- An emphasis on **practices (rituals, prayers, meditations, symbolic exercises)** that **allow for direct experience**, rather than just **intellectual adherence** to a doctrine.

In *more humano*, we see these paths as **plural manifestations of the same "thirst for transcendence"**—an aspiration that **pushes humanity beyond the limits of the mundane**, seeking **broader horizons of meaning**.

### Frithjof Schuon and the Transcendent Unity

The reflections of **Frithjof Schuon** help us understand how this **diversity of spiritual paths** can **coexist** and even **enrich one another**. Schuon spoke of the **"transcendent unity" of religions**, noting that at their **deepest level**, beyond historical and cultural variations, **all major metaphysical traditions** point toward **a single Absolute reality or ultimate truth**.

Although **each tradition expresses this reality** through **specific symbols, rituals, and narratives**, they all **aim to reunite the human soul** with this **Principle or Absolute**.

## Diversity of Forms, Unity of Purpose

Schuon acknowledged that **ritual, theological, and doctrinal differences are significant**, yet he emphasized that their **underlying intentions—sanctifying existence, discovering a sacred foundation, achieving redemption or liberation**—are fundamentally similar.

- **Esotericism as a Common Core**

According to Schuon, **each religion** contains an **esoteric core** that focuses on:

- **Unity**
- **The vision of the Absolute**
- **Symbolic resonance**
- **Inner transformation**

Thus, a **Sufi chanting divine beauty** and a **Kabbalist studying the divine emanations** may seem worlds apart in practice but share a **deep spiritual kinship**.

This perspective **does not promote superficial syncretism**—the mere **blending of symbols into a single melting pot**—but rather a **mutual recognition**:

Different traditions express a **shared longing** that is **deeply rooted in the human experience**.

## Recognizing Plurality Without Exclusivism

Despite these **underlying affinities**, it is undeniable that **some esoteric traditions claim exclusive authority**. Some **alchemical orders** might consider themselves **the sole keepers of the true arcane**, just as some **Sufi groups** may claim to possess **the purest, most direct path to God**.

In *more humano*, we **distance ourselves from any form of exclusivism**, whether **theological or esoteric**. Instead, we **embrace the value of each path**, appreciating the **symbolic and transformative elements they offer**, without setting up a **hierarchy of privileged paths**.

- **Dialogue Instead of Competition**

An **alchemist from the Middle Ages** and a **Sufi mystic** might **discover surprising parallels** between "**refining inner lead**" and "**purifying the ego**", even if their

symbolic frameworks differ.

- **An Experimental Approach**

Encountering **diverse traditions** can spark **individual creativity**. A modern seeker, with **humility and a spirit of inquiry**, might integrate **practices or insights from various sources, reinterpreting them in a coherent, personal way**—not as a **chaotic patchwork**, but as a **thoughtful synthesis**.

This **does not mean erasing identities or randomly mixing methods**, but rather **welcoming the opportunity for cultural and spiritual enrichment**.

## **An Esoteric Pluralism for Meaning-Making**

Within the framework of *more humano*, the **multiplicity of esoteric paths** highlights the human **freedom to construct** their own horizon of meaning. For some, **alchemy** may serve as a **powerful metaphor for inner transformation**, while for others, the **poetic language of Sufism** may feel more resonant. In either case, **truth is not conceived as a monolith**, but as a **creative tension toward the divine (or the absolute, or transcendence)**, manifesting in **diverse forms**.

- **A Shared Mystery** – All **esoteric traditions** acknowledge an **"invisible" or "ineffable"** dimension of life, one that **cannot be easily enclosed within theories**. This **common awareness** provides **fertile ground** for inter-traditional dialogue.
- **Epistemological Humility** – Accepting that **our own path is not the only valid one**, but that **others are equally legitimate**, helps us remain **open-minded and free from sectarian attitudes**. This ensures that **spiritual exploration** remains **dynamic**, rather than stagnating in rigid formulas.

## **An Invitation to Openness and Encounter**

The **various esoteric traditions**—from **alchemy to Sufism, from Kabbalah to Advaita Vedanta**—are nothing more than **different languages humanity has adopted to speak of the same mystery**: the **profound nature of existence** and the **desire to transcend the limits of the human condition**.

Following in the footsteps of **Frithjof Schuon** and his concept of "**transcendent unity,**" *more humano* encourages us to see these **different paths not as competitors, but as expressions of the same quest—a quest as multifaceted as human cultures and individuals themselves.**

Without **exclusivism**, each person can **draw from the symbols, practices, and insights** that resonate most with their personal journey, contributing to a **meaning-making process that is both deeply individual and enriched by centuries of shared human experience.**

This perspective **celebrates esoteric pluralism:**

**Many paths, many symbols, many rituals—yet the same thirst for transcendence, the same desire to move beyond surface reality to encounter, in ever-changing forms, the sacred essence that binds us all.**

## **7. HARMONY IN PLURALITY: SHARING MEANING WITHOUT ERASING DIFFERENCES**

*Between Individuality and Collectivity*

### **7.1 The Need for Collective Survival**

Since the dawn of humanity, social beings have faced a crucial challenge: **how to hold together diverse visions, autonomous individuals, and centrifugal forces while ensuring group cohesion and continuity.** This need has taken different forms over millennia, but its core remains unchanged: people, despite having sometimes conflicting interests, values, and ideas, must find **common ground to survive and thrive as a collective.**

#### **A Destiny Bound to Plurality**

From a strictly evolutionary perspective, humans owe their **dominant position**—or at least their success as a species—not only to their **technological adaptability** but also to their **ability to cooperate and connect individual minds.** This **social element is not an accessory but the very foundation of survival:**

- **Division of labor and exchange of ideas** – Prehistoric tribes that could rely on **differentiated skills** (hunters, gatherers, tool makers, storytellers/transmitters of myths) had a greater chance of surviving crises, innovating, and adapting to environmental changes.
- **The construction of shared meaning** – Every group has developed **narratives, rituals, moral codes, and value systems** to provide identity and internal coherence. However, true **strength emerged when these narratives allowed for some level of evolution and adaptability**, rather than suppressing plurality altogether.

History demonstrates that **overly rigid communities, incapable of tolerating difference, often faced evolutionary dead ends**. In contrast, **plurality of ideas and cultural exchange have fueled progress and enriched perspectives**.

## The Exchange of Ideas as Enrichment

In *more humano*, we **embrace the diversity of thought as an essential driver of meaning-making and revision**. This is not just an **ethical ideal or an abstract discourse on "tolerance and freedom"** but a **practical principle**: when ideas **interact constructively**, they generate **new syntheses or creative tensions** that stimulate imagination and **problem-solving skills**.

- **Avoiding Uniformity** – If we all simply repeated the **same values and ideas** without ever questioning them, we would **lose the ability to find creative solutions to new problems** or to correct **structural errors** that could, over time, lead to **stagnation**.
- **Mutual Enrichment** – When **different worldviews interact** (religious, philosophical, political, etc.), each side has the potential to **learn from the other**, fostering a **more flexible and resilient shared meaning** than any monolithic system.
- **Expanding Horizons** – In the **spiritual or philosophical realm**, encounters between different schools of thought can **reveal surprising similarities** (similar rituals, shared values, recurring symbols) while also highlighting the richness of perspectives that, despite appearing distant, are **often fundamentally compatible**.

## The Contribution of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Convergence and Plurality

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, paleontologist and theologian, offers us a compelling vision of **humanity as a diverse yet progressively converging entity**, moving toward broader forms of consciousness. In this process, **plurality does not disappear but becomes increasingly interwoven in a dense network of exchanges**:

- **Point Omega** – Teilhard envisioned a **future point**—which he called the *Omega Point*—where individual consciousnesses would reach such a level of **integration** that they would form a kind of **global super-consciousness**. This metaphor strongly resonates with today's increasing interconnection, made tangible by technology, economic relationships, and shared knowledge.
- **The Evolution of Human Essence** – Teilhard's perspective goes beyond biology; it involves the **gradual transformation of mental and spiritual structures**, where the variety of **cultural and ideological contributions** does not vanish but takes on a complementary role, like pieces of a cosmic mosaic.

If we look at the present, with **globalization and digital connectivity**, it is evident that cultures are becoming more intertwined than ever. This raises **fears of homogenization**, but **if properly managed, this interconnectedness can foster mutual understanding, the discovery of shared values, and the preservation of cultural richness**.

### Individuality vs. Collectivity: A Dynamic Balance

The concept of **plurality** inherently involves **tension between the individual, who demands to express their uniqueness, and the group, which requires common norms and values**. However, this tension **does not have to lead to an irreconcilable conflict**; many societies—especially democratic and pluralistic ones—seek a **balance**:

- **Room for Dissent** – This **allows new models to emerge** and old frameworks to be questioned. It functions like a **release valve**, preventing ideas from becoming stagnant.
- **A Shared Foundation** – Despite differences, there remain **core principles** (respect, solidarity, fundamental rights) **without which coexistence would collapse**. In the spiritual realm, many traditions honor **an intangible sacred dimension**, beyond specific interpretations.

In this vision, **harmony is not about eliminating contrasts but about dynamically integrating them**: multiple voices remain distinct, yet they **create a polyphony** that allows the group to evolve rather than collapse into monotony.

## **A Possible Convergence Without Flattening Differences**

Following Teilhard's vision, we can see humanity as **a collection of individuals and cultures in continuous convergence**. This **does not mean dreaming of a completely homogeneous world**—a scenario that rightly raises concerns about the loss of diversity's richness. Instead, it means **recognizing that certain pillars genuinely unite all people**:

- **The Need for Cooperation** – Whether facing **environmental, social, or existential challenges**, people **realize that survival and quality of life depend on a form of collaboration**—even minimal—that respects **differences**.
- **The Desire to Create Meaning** – Beyond specific **faiths or belief systems**, every human group **questions the "why" of existence** and finds in collective narratives **an anchor that provides identity and inspiration**. Here, too, **diversity fuels the continuous renewal of meaning**.

## **Plurality as an Evolutionary Driver**

Collective survival is **not just a biological fact**—it is also **cultural and spiritual**. In *more humano*, we emphasize that **the plurality of visions, values, and identities is not an obstacle but a form of wealth**: even the act of **engaging with divergent perspectives expands horizons and generates new responses to existential dilemmas**.

As Teilhard de Chardin teaches, **humanity can move toward a convergence that preserves variety within a common framework of growth and awareness**. **Harmony is not achieved by sacrificing differences but by allowing them to meet within a network that, through dialogue, becomes richer and more deeply human**.

Ultimately, **plurality is essential for the evolution of groups and ideas**—a factor of vitality, without which meaning would risk becoming impoverished, losing the **creative dynamism** that has always driven our species toward new frontiers.

## 7.2 The Risk of Fragmentation

In the pursuit of "**harmony in plurality**," one of the most insidious dangers is the **dispersion of all voices into a kind of "extreme relativism,"** where each position becomes incomprehensible to the others. In such a scenario, **the lack of constructive dialogue or a shared narrative can lead to the dissolution of collective meaning,** leaving individual groups—or even individuals—trapped in self-referential bubbles.

In *more humano*, **plurality does not imply extreme individualism,** but rather the **possibility of dialogue,** where differences are maintained while seeking common ground to prevent the disintegration of community identity.

### Extreme Relativism and Loss of Cohesion

When the **affirmation of differences becomes absolute,** devoid of a common space for discussion or connection, it can lead to **extreme relativism.** In this situation:

- **No Meeting Points** – All values and ideas become equivalent, **there are no shared criteria** for choice or evaluation, and each person carves out a **private space** that does not communicate with others. The **"I" and the "we"** can no longer find equilibrium.
- **Social Fragmentation** – Without a **minimum level of shared narrative—a set of symbols, goals, and values**—group cohesion breaks down. On a micro level, this leads to **a lack of communication between individuals;** on a macro level, it creates **a crisis in the social fabric,** with **conflicts and irreconcilable tensions.**

Relativism, initially embraced as a **symbol of freedom** ("*you have your truth, I have mine*"), **ends up generating mutual indifference** and, ultimately, the **rupture of social bonds** when no space for exchange is provided.

### The Importance of Constructive Dialogue

To **prevent plurality from devolving into fragmentation,** efforts must be made to foster **communication** and **collective meaning-making.** The goal is **not to create a single way of thinking** but rather to establish **a public space where differences and convergences can emerge and interact constructively.** This dialogue:



- **Creates a "space" for listening** – Different perspectives—**religious or secular, conservative or progressive, local or global**—can be expressed, debated, criticized, and reconsidered.
- **Builds new shared narratives** – Through **exchange**, seemingly **irreconcilable worldviews** can **find common ground** (e.g., human rights, environmental protection, human dignity).
- **Mediates conflicts** – When discussion spaces are lacking, **conflicts escalate into violence or silent resentment**. Constructive dialogue, on the other hand, **channels tensions and fosters creative solutions**.

## The Contribution of Jürgen Habermas: Public Space for Discussion

A key thinker on the role of **debate and discourse** in forming a **shared ethical framework** is **Jürgen Habermas**. The German philosopher and sociologist argues that **the "agora" (public space)—where citizens, groups, and institutions come together to discuss common issues—is essential** to prevent societies from descending into **relativistic chaos** or, conversely, into **silent authoritarianism**.

### Key Ideas from Habermas

- **Theory of Communicative Action** – Habermas views **communication as a fundamental human rational act**: in dialogue, people aim for **mutual understanding**, and through **arguments that are open to scrutiny**, a **reasonable consensus** can be reached, even while respecting differences.
- **The Public Sphere** – In a **democracy, debate must not be confined to elites**; there must be **a space (physical or digital) where diverse ideas can emerge, be debated, and—if validated—help shape collective norms and principles**.
- **Discourse Ethics** – Habermas emphasizes the need for **rules that ensure equal opportunity to speak, transparency in positions, and the absence of coercion**. This way, even **minority perspectives, if well-founded, can influence collective values**.

This insight is **crucial to more humano**, as it shows how **plurality of opinions and meanings requires a dialogical framework** to avoid **both total incommunicability and mere relativism**.

## Balancing Difference and Convergence

The true **richness of plurality** emerges when **differences are not erased but placed in a context of mutual understanding**. However, for this to happen, a few **key conditions** must be met:

- **A Minimum of Shared Values** – The idea that **freedom of speech, human dignity, and the ability to question and critique** are fundamental rights. Without this foundation, there can be no **fair space for discussion**.
- **Recognition of the Other** – **Dialogue cannot be constructive if one side delegitimizes the other outright**. This means that **even strongly divergent positions deserve an initial hearing and respectful engagement**, while remaining open to rational critique.
- **Willingness for Synthesis** – No one should expect to **impose their vision in a tyrannical way**. **Synthesis is not always a middle-ground compromise**; it can also be **a new idea that emerges from the clash of opposing perspectives**.

## **A Shared Narrative Against Fragmentation**

If **plurality can be a source of richness and innovation**, its "dark side" is the risk of **fragmentation**. Without **constructive dialogue and a shared narrative (or set of narratives)** acting as a bridge between differences, ideas remain isolated, unable to **engage with others**.

*more humano* rejects both **the imposition of a monolithic truth** and **the kind of relativism that abandons all attempts at dialogue**. From this perspective, **Habermas' work reminds us that a public sphere—both symbolic and real—is indispensable for building a shared ethical foundation**. The goal is not to **erase differences** but to **equip them with a common grammar** that allows for **coexistence and mutual enrichment**.

Only in this way can **fragmentation be avoided**, transforming **many voices into a polyphonic chorus**, where **plurality never becomes chaotic**. Instead, **it integrates into a connective fabric that makes mutual understanding, solidarity, and collective meaning-making possible**.

## **7.3 Narration as a Tool for Dialogue**

In a context where **plurality is embraced as a value**, yet the **risk of fragmentation is acknowledged**, **narration emerges as a bridge—a means to connect diverse**

worldviews without imposing a single truth. The **exchange of stories, personal interpretations, anecdotes, and collective myths** allows us to "**see through the eyes of the other**", creating openings for **mutual understanding**, even where fundamental differences remain.

At *more humano*, we emphasize **this dialogical dynamic**, where **storytelling becomes a space for shared meaning-making** and co-creation.

## Storytelling and Listening: A Circulation of Perspectives

In daily life, we often **underestimate the power of storytelling**—whether a **family story, an autobiographical example, or a cultural myth**—to **reshape how we perceive situations, values, and people**. When we **share our story** with someone else, we are **not just delivering information**, but **offering a lens through which to view the world**.

If the listener **pays attention without prejudice**, they can **momentarily step into our shoes, see reality from our perspective**, and **understand the fears, hopes, and reasons** that shape our worldview.

- **Empathy and Imagination** – Storytelling **leverages emotion and narrative structure**, sparking **empathy**. Through **images, characters, and plotlines**, the listener is invited to **imagine** what the speaker has **experienced or thought**, potentially leading to **unexpected resonance**.
- **Redefining Boundaries** – Every time we **incorporate another person's story into our mental map**, we **slightly shift the boundaries** between "us" and "them," between what seemed foreign and what we now understand. This **does not require abandoning one's individuality**, but rather **expanding it by embracing additional perspectives**.

## Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Multiplying Stories to Dismantle Stereotypes

A powerful example of **how storytelling can break down cultural barriers and stereotypes** comes from **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, a Nigerian writer who, in her novels and famous talks, highlights the importance of **multiplying stories**.

In her **renowned speech**, *The Danger of a Single Story*, **Adichie warns against reducing entire populations, cultures, or identities to a single narrative**. When we have **only**

**one version of Africans, Asians, or any other reality, we end up trapping people in clichés and oversimplifications.**

Instead, she argues for:

- **Narrative Plurality** – Adichie emphasizes the need to promote a diversity of stories—various authors, perspectives, and experiences—so that our understanding of a place or a people is not reduced to a rigid stereotype.
- **Reciprocity** – If every human group had access to countless stories from other contexts, they would discover both shared traits and enriching differences. This mutual “mental reconfiguration” helps break down the invisible barriers that sustain prejudice and misunderstanding.

From the perspective of *more humano*, Adichie’s example is crucial: plural storytelling does not create confusion—rather, it reveals the complexity of existence, dismantling monolithic views that fuel distrust and isolation.

## Creating New Shared Meanings

The exchange of stories is not just an exercise in empathy, but also a generative process: when two individuals or communities share their narratives, symbols, and thought models, their interpretations begin to intertwine. From this weaving together, new elements emerge:

- **Narrative Syntheses** – One group may adopt symbolic elements from another to better express nuances of its own experience, and vice versa. This can lead to new versions of myths, fresh interpretations of key concepts, and “foundational stories” that transcend divisions.
- **Recognition of Shared Humanity** – The more stories we listen to, the more we realize that beneath surface-level differences, universal themes persist: fear, hope, the desire for fulfillment, love, suffering. This recognition can form the basis of a shared ethical foundation while still preserving the underlying pluralism.

This is why narration becomes a means of creating shared meaning—not by erasing individual voices, but by weaving them together, placing them in constant relation.

Like the interlacing of two threads, new patterns emerge, generating stories that neither participant could have conceived alone.

## Preserving Individuality

A core principle of *more humano* is that **narrative dialogue does not require anyone to abandon their identity or merge into a singular way of thinking**. On the contrary, **each person's individuality—shaped by personal stories, values, and unique experiences—is what enriches the network of collective narratives**. The **true value does not lie in homogeneity**, but in **the continuous exchange of perspectives**:

- **Personal Stories** – Everyone **carries a narrative** about their past, **their roots, and their beliefs**. Sharing it in a **space of mutual exchange** allows others to **see themselves reflected in it**, expanding their own horizons.
- **Safeguarding Individuality** – Even when we **discover unexpected similarities** with others, this **does not mean we must dissolve into a single narrative**. Instead, **each person retains their uniqueness**, enriched by **encountering different perspectives**. Identity becomes an **“identity in relation”—not an isolated island, but a dynamic presence within a broader network**.

## Stories That Connect Without Conforming

As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie suggests, **narrative exchange multiplies stories**, expanding **worldviews, breaking stereotypes, and fostering both empathy and understanding**.

At *more humano*, **storytelling is the primary tool of dialogue**, the **thread that stitches together individuality and plurality without erasing differences**. Every **shared narrative** can **spark unexpected resonances, reshape ways of thinking, provoke new questions**, and, most importantly, **allow us to “see through the eyes of another.”**

Thus, **storytelling becomes a springboard for the construction of a shared sense of meaning**—one that **does not suppress the individual** but instead **includes them in a mosaic of coexisting interpretations**. It is **this dialogue between personal storytelling and active listening** that prevents **plurality from dissolving into fragmentation**, instead **turning it into the foundation for a rich and creative coexistence**.

This is why, at *more humano*, the **invitation to tell one's story and to listen to others' narratives** is **one of the pillars of our approach** to meaning-making in an **open and complex society**.

## 8. Cultivating Meaning: A Continuous Practice of "Spirituality"

*Beyond the Labels of Religion and Secularism*

### 8.1 Meaning as a Fundamental Dimension

In our daily lives, we prioritize **proper nutrition, exercise, sleep**, and increasingly recognize **mental health** as a vital aspect of well-being. However, **meaning-making** often remains on the margins of public discourse, almost as if it were a **"niche interest"** or an **"intellectual pastime."** *At more humano*, we consider it an **existential necessity**, just as essential as caring for the body and mind—an **invisible yet fundamental nourishment** that provides direction and coherence to life.

#### Not a Luxury, but a Basic Need

The notion that **the search for meaning** is a **secondary concern** or **reserved for intellectual elites** is, upon closer examination, a misconception. Every human being, consciously or unconsciously, **grapples with questions about the purpose of their existence, the value of their actions, and their ultimate goals.** When this **dimension is ignored or suppressed**, it can lead to an **inner void**—often described as **alienation, existential boredom, or deep dissatisfaction**—that **material wealth or external achievements alone cannot fill.**

- **A Root of Motivation** – Our **career choices, relationships, and even leisure activities** often **draw from a deeper sense of purpose.** Without this underlying framework, **our actions become mechanical and devoid of fulfillment**, like an organism that moves without vitality.
- **A Layer of Meaning** – Across **religions, philosophies, and secular traditions**, it is widely acknowledged that **human beings constantly seek purpose.** Whether we call it the **"meaning of life," "vocation," "mission," or "telos"**, it remains a **foundational need**, comparable to the need for **breathing or seeking safety.**

#### Abraham Maslow and Higher Needs

A key figure in legitimizing **self-actualization and transcendence** within psychology was **Abraham Maslow**. Through his **hierarchy of needs**, he demonstrated that, beyond **physiological and security needs**, humans aspire to **higher-level needs** such as **belonging, self-esteem, and personal fulfillment**.

- **Self-Actualization** – At the **top of Maslow’s pyramid**, individuals **strive to fully express their creative, intellectual, and relational potential**. However, this effort **is not just about personal success**—it includes **discovering one’s true self and integrating one’s abilities into a meaningful vision of life**.
- **Transcendence** – In later stages of his work, Maslow discussed **peak experiences and transcendence**, acknowledging that many people seek **connection with something greater**—whether that be **community, nature, humanity, or even the divine**. If left unaddressed, **this aspiration can result in a deep existential unease, a kind of “spiritual distress.”**

From this perspective, **meaning serves as an inner compass**, guiding **our needs toward fulfillment**. It does not require us to **reject material or security needs**, but rather to recognize that **beyond them lies an essential drive toward meaning-making**—a drive that **gives color and direction to all other aspects of life**.

## **The Care of Meaning as a Practice of Secular "Spirituality"**

*At more humano*, **meaning-making does not necessarily require adherence to a traditional religion or a formal doctrine**. Instead, it can be understood as a **form of “spirituality”**—not in a **dogmatic or prescriptive sense**, but as an **ongoing practice that requires dedication and consistency**, much like **physical health requires exercise and balanced nutrition**.

Speaking of **“spirituality” in a secular context** means:

- **Cultivating Awareness** – **Creating space and time to reflect on deep motivations, values, and connections** with others and the world. This can happen through **meditation, introspection, dialogue, writing, art, or even quiet contemplation of nature**.
- **Avoiding Dogma** – While **secular spirituality acknowledges the importance of purpose**, it does **not impose rigid rules or absolute truths**. Instead, it is an

**ongoing discipline of meaning-making**, enriched by **philosophical, artistic, and scientific insights**, among others.

Just as we **care for our bodies regularly**, we should also **engage in a “care for meaning”**—preventing existential emptiness and the dull automatism of routine.

## **A Fundamental Need for Human Well-Being**

When **Maslow** spoke of **self-actualization** and **transcendence**, he placed them at **the peak of his pyramid**, leading to the assumption that they were **“luxury needs”**, accessible only after satisfying more basic survival requirements. However, later studies and **philosophical reflections** have shown that **meaning often operates in parallel** with more fundamental needs, influencing and reorganizing them.

For many individuals, **the drive to find meaning or a guiding principle** may even **precede** material security, as evidenced by countless stories of people who **leave high-paying jobs to pursue a vocation that feels more meaningful**.

- **Synergy Between Levels** – In extreme poverty, **physical survival naturally takes priority**. However, the hope for a **higher purpose**—expressed through **religion, ethical activism, or collective projects**—often becomes **crucial for resilience** and prevents emotional despair.
- **Dissonance When Ignored** – If **the need for meaning is consistently neglected**, even a life of **material comfort** can lead to **inner distress**: individuals may feel **purposeless**, falling into **apathy** or experiencing **“spiritual impoverishment”**, which can manifest in various **psychological struggles**.

## **Beyond the Labels of Religion and Secularism**

The term **“spirituality”** often carries ambiguity, as it is frequently **mistaken for religious practice**. However, *at more humano*, we **move beyond rigid definitions**: **meaning-making** can draw from **both religious traditions and secular philosophies**, including **poetry, meditation, humanistic reflection, and scientific wonder at the complexity of the cosmos**.

- **Spirituality as a Daily Practice** – **No fixed rituals or formulas are required** to cultivate meaning—rather, what matters is **a spirit of inquiry, deep questioning, and attentiveness to what motivates us and gives us direction**.



- **Respect for Personal Beliefs** – Some may find fulfillment **in prayer**, others in **contemplating nature, creative expression, or social service**. Each path, **if pursued authentically**, contributes to meaning and can **engage in dialogue with other paths**, fostering **mutual enrichment without imposing a singular truth**.

## The Practice of a “Living” Sense

As this final chapter highlights, **the construction of meaning is not an elitist intellectual pursuit**—it is a **core necessity**, as vital as **physical and psychological well-being**. The key lies in **cultivating it intentionally**, much like tending a garden, recognizing that **existential depth is an integral part of human fulfillment**.

- **Maslow reminds us** that beyond the **body and mind**, there exists a **higher layer that requires attention**—without it, **self-transcendence** and a **deeper sense of purpose** remain absent.
- In *more humano*, this **continuous spiritual practice** does not require choosing **between religion and secularism**; instead, it represents **an ongoing search** that can take **diverse forms**, each of which **enriches both individual identity and relationships with others**.

In a world that often **races toward external achievements and material success**, remembering to **cultivate meaning** is an act of **self-care**—one that nurtures our **ability to make sense of our experiences, interpret our existence on a deeper level, and open ourselves to transcendence and self-actualization**, completing the **holistic picture of human well-being**.

## 8.2 Defusing the Dogmas of Language

After highlighting the need to move beyond the **traditional divisions between religion and secularism** in the cultivation of meaning, another crucial issue arises: **the language we use to describe these dimensions**.

Words like **"spirituality"** or **"religion"** are **loaded with history, worldviews, past controversies, and deep-seated biases**. The moment they are spoken, they often **trigger ambivalent reactions**—some people immediately resonate with them, finding them familiar and comforting, while others reject them, associating them with **dogmatic impositions or rigid institutions**.

At *more humano*, we propose **"defusing"** the **divisive potential of these terms**, rediscovering them as **elements of a "language of meaning"**—one that is **free from rigid doctrinal constraints**.

## The Weight of Words: "Spirituality" and "Religion"

In **Western culture** (but not only there), the terms **spirituality** and **religion** carry a **complex web of beliefs, rituals, moral prescriptions, sacred narratives, ecclesiastical authorities, and hierarchical structures**.

It is undeniable that **these concepts have been—and in some cases still are—vehicles of power or exclusion**. In **secularized societies**, many people struggle to **engage with these terms without hesitation**, seeing them as tied to **negative experiences or ideological conflicts**.

- **Historical Layers** – The word **"religion"** is often associated with **institutions, dogmas, and an absolute "truth" that cannot be questioned**. Meanwhile, **"spirituality"** seems more fluid, yet its meaning can feel **vague or ambiguous** in relation to **rational thought**.
- **Secular vs. Religious Debate** – Beneath the surface, there exists a **binary opposition** between **"reason" and "faith," "matter" and "spirit,"** leading many to view **spirituality and religion as fundamentally opposed to science and secular perspectives**. However, this **dualistic reading is limiting**, as it ignores **the cross-pollination and complex history of these categories**.

## Beyond Language Barriers: Rediscovering the "Sacred" as a Practice of Meaning

If we recognize that **meaning-making is a fundamental human need**, we can **reframe** the terms **"spirituality"** and **"religion"** by **freeing them from past dogmas and rigid hierarchies**.

At *more humano*, we interpret them as:

- **Practices of Meaning** – **Ways in which individuals and communities structure a symbolic and emotional framework** to process **fundamental existential questions**:
  - *Who are we?*

- *What role does death play in our lives?*
- *How do we connect to the whole?*

Every tradition offers **different responses**, but the **underlying impulse remains universal**.

- **Modes of Expression** – Rather than being purely **intellectual** constructs, **spirituality and religion engage gestures, rituals, poetic and narrative languages, and artistic creation**. They manifest in **dance, music, sacred architecture, meditation, and storytelling**—where meaning becomes **"embodied"** in **aesthetic and ritualistic forms**, powerfully resonating with the **emotional sphere**.

Rather than **rejecting** terms like **"spirituality"** or **"religion"**, we can **reinterpret** them as **semantic spaces** where the **"sacred"**—understood as a **dimension of depth, mystery, or awe**—takes form.

## **Alan Watts: The Sacred Beyond Doctrines**

One thinker who sought to **demystify and revitalize the concept of the "sacred,"** **freeing it from doctrinal barriers**, was **Alan Watts**. A British philosopher and writer, Watts played a crucial role in introducing **Eastern philosophies** to Western audiences, bridging **science, psychology, and contemplative practices**. He believed that **the sacred should not be confined to dogmas but experienced directly—through wonder and a sense of unity with the world**.

- **The Sacred as an Expressive Dimension** – Watts argued that religion should not "trap" the sacred within **exclusive truths**, but rather cultivate a **sense of communion with life itself, in all its aspects**. Instead of a rigid doctrine, he envisioned it as a **"rhythm," a "dance" of the cosmos** in which we are immersed.
- **A Philosophical Rediscovery** – Watts sought to harmonize **secular perspectives with an intuition of transcendence**. He emphasized that terms like **"spirit" or "God"** should not be taken as **literal dogmas**, but as **metaphors for the human experience of a larger order, or a mystery beyond logical categories**.

*At more humano,* **Watts' legacy is invaluable** because it offers a way to **"coexist" with words laden with religious tradition**, revitalizing them in a **more dynamic and expressive sense**, without reducing them to rigid formulas.

## Reframing Terms, Liberating Language

"Defusing" the dogmas of language requires a **deliberate reframing**:

- We continue using words like "**spirituality**," but we clarify that, in *more humano*, it **does not equate to being "confessional" or "religious" in the traditional sense**.
- Similarly, "**religion**" can be **reinterpreted as a symbolic and communal phenomenon**, which, when detached from absolute truth claims, remains a **powerful tool for collective storytelling**.
- **Choosing Words Carefully** – Many terms carry a **heavy history of impositions and orthodoxies**. Our goal is **not to erase them** but to **reclaim and recontextualize them in an open, dialogic framework**, filling them with the idea of a **continuously evolving practice of meaning**.
- **Exploring New Lexicons** – For those who find words like "**religion**" or "**spirit**" unbearable due to **traumatic experiences or ideological conflicts**, alternative expressions can be explored:
  - *"The poetics of existence"*
  - *"The dimension of depth"*
  - *"A path of awareness"*
  - *"Inner resonance"*What matters is avoiding **sterile taboos** that prevent engagement with **the rich semantic history of these concepts**.

The goal is **not to erase ancient vocabulary**, but **to transform its meaning within an inclusive and non-dogmatic horizon**, where **everyone can draw from it in their own way**.

## A Language of Meaning: Beyond Labels and Prejudices

At *more humano*, "**defusing**" the dogmas of language aligns with a broader vision: to create a space where **spiritual expression is neither confined to exclusive orthodoxies nor denied in the name of rigid secularism**. Inspired by **Alan Watts**, we see the "**sacred**"

as a dimension that any human being can inhabit—without needing to adhere to a specific belief system or imposed doctrine.

By **relinquishing rigid definitions** and **reinterpreting language as a tool for meaning-making**, we allow anyone—**believer, secular thinker, agnostic, or otherwise**—to participate in a **common discourse on depth, mystery, and the wonder of existence**.

In this way, words like "**spirituality**" and "**religion**" **stop dividing people and instead become meeting places**—spaces where **personal and collective narratives can coexist**, where **each individual contributes to a shared semantic mosaic**.

It is within **this metamorphosis of language** that a **living experience of the sacred emerges**—one that can **dialogue with science, philosophy, art, and all human expressions**. Instead of demanding **doctrinal obedience**, it offers **inspiration and possibilities for meaning**.

### **8.3 A Constant Exercise**

After outlining the various aspects of "**cultivating meaning**" as an essential practice for human life, it remains crucial to emphasize that this path **is not a one-time achievement**. Instead, it is **an ongoing process**, a **daily exercise** in which meanings are **continuously redefined** based on experiences and the contexts we face.

*At more humano*, **meaning-making is not seen as a fixed state or an ultimate goal**, but rather as a **continuous process**—one that requires:

- **Ongoing attention** to shifts in understanding
- **Openness to the new**
- **Courage to question and revise established positions**

### **The Dynamic Nature of Meaning**

Many people assume that once they **find an answer** to the question "*Why do I live?*" or establish a **strong set of values**, everything remains stable. However, **personal history itself proves how fragile certainty can be** when confronted with **significant life events**—a **loss, failure, career shift, or transformative encounter**.

Each of these moments, despite their **difficulty or pain**, can become **an opportunity to renew our perspective on reality**:

- **Facing the Unexpected** – External circumstances **constantly change** (illness, crisis, new opportunities), requiring us to **"reposition" our meanings**, testing whether they still hold or if new, more fitting interpretations emerge.
- **Personal Evolution** – As we **mature**, our **priorities and desires evolve**. What once seemed like our **greatest mission at twenty** may appear **too limited at forty**, prompting us to **redefine our goals and values**.

This **dynamic** aspect of meaning should **not be seen as a weakness** but as a **sign of vitality**:

**The ability to revise our interpretations** allows us to **stay in tune with the complexity of existence**.

## **Viktor Frankl: Meaning Must Be Sought and Renewed**

A key reference on this theme is **Viktor Frankl**. In his famous book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl argued that **the "will to meaning" sustains human beings even in the most extreme conditions**. However, in other works and lectures, he also emphasized that this "meaning" **is not something fixed**—it is **an ongoing search that must be adapted to life's circumstances**:

- **Situational Change** – In a life-threatening scenario, **meaning may center around survival or preserving one's moral dignity**. In times of **stability**, however, **motivations may shift toward creativity, altruism, or deepening relationships**.
- **Daily Discovery** – Frankl suggested that **every day we can find "micro-meanings"**—immediate, contextual purposes that, when combined, shape a **broader vision** of our lives. Meaning **is not a single monolithic truth** but a series of **small signals**, each carrying **greater or lesser weight** depending on our current phase in life.

By recognizing that **meaning is "circular" and always evolving**, we understand why it must remain a **constant practice**. There is **no point** at which we can say:

*"I have finished searching—now I have all the answers."*

## A Daily Practice of Redefinition

Speaking of a **"daily practice" to keep meaning alive** means acknowledging some **practical aspects**:

- **Creating Space and Time** – Just as we take breaks for physical activity, we should regularly **set aside moments** to reflect on our path, **our satisfactions and dissatisfactions**, and **possible evolutions**.
- **Dialogue with Others** – Conversations with **friends, family, colleagues, or a broader community** help us **illuminate blind spots**: sometimes, through a simple discussion, we realize that **a goal no longer motivates us** or that **a new interest is emerging**.
- **Adaptability and Fluidity** – Being **willing to let go** of meanings that **no longer resonate with us**, avoiding the stubbornness of **clinging to outdated narratives**. This is **an act of humility and growth**, which, when well-managed, **generates less anxiety than we might expect**.

For those who embrace this perspective, **there is no single moment of completion**. Instead, we learn to **stay attuned**, recognize **signs of change**, and **adjust our mosaic of meanings** accordingly.

## Between Individuality and Sociality

While the **search for meaning** is **deeply personal**—each individual must **face their own interiority**—it becomes even more powerful **when integrated into a collective dimension**.

At *more humano*, this **continuous practice of meaning-making** is enriched through:

- **Shared Stories and Symbols** – By engaging with **other narratives**, we may **discover insights** that resonate with our experiences, **new metaphors**, or **rituals** that aid transformation.
- **Mutual Encouragement** – Cultivating **a sense of community** that **validates** the need to **redefine meaning**. Instead of viewing **changing goals as "failure,"** we recognize that **this flow of transformation** is part of the **normal course of human experience**.

Thus, the **"work on meaning"** is no longer a **solitary struggle** but a **journey supported and enriched** by the presence of **fellow travelers** who, despite their **different paths**, recognize the **value of inner exploration**.

## **A Journey That Renews Itself at Every Step**

Viktor Frankl's perspective—that **life's meaning is not fixed but something that must be "sought" and continually renewed**—reminds us that the **existential dimension is not a rigid set of rules and theories**, but a **living process**.

Every **life situation**, every **stage of life**, every **encounter invites us to redefine** what we are and what we do.

*At more humano*, this **continuous search** becomes a **constant practice**, a **training in flexibility and discovery**.

Far from being a **burdensome obligation**, it **emerges as a practice of vitality and creativity**, keeping us:

- **Connected to the complexity of the present**
- **Open to future transformations**

With the awareness that **meaning is not attained once and for all**, but **must be reclaimed and reinvented daily**, we prepare for a **journey where every step brings new surprises and revelations**, weaving **our personal story into the fabric of the collective human narrative**.



## Conclusion

Like an artisan standing before a block of incandescent metal, human beings feel the need to **forge meanings** that make their experience vibrant and profound: this is the essence of *more humano*. We have explored the historical tension between **individual and collective dimensions**, the **creative nature of thought**, the **impermanence of meanings**, the **power of narrative**, and the **openness to symbolic languages**. Together, these elements sketch a path **beyond dogma**, embracing **the plurality of existence**—a journey where each person is invited to reclaim **the power to construct (and reconstruct) the meaning of their own life**.

This Manifesto is an **"open" map**, a work **in constant evolution**, capable of integrating **new ideas, encounters, and perspectives**. It does not seek to offer definitive formulas but to **stimulate ongoing exploration**: from **agnosticism to esotericism**, from **the challenges of contemporary technology** to the **daily necessity of seeking meaning**. These pages outline **a broad and inclusive vision**, where every voice—from **great thinkers of the past** to anyone wishing to express themselves in new forms—finds **a space to engage in dialogue, to merge without erasing its uniqueness**.

At the core of *more humano* lies the awareness that **what makes us most fully human is not passive adherence to predefined certainties**, but **the active search for meaning**, the **act of weaving new interpretations**, and the **willingness to embrace change**. We have traced **a dynamic path** through **existential categories** such as **the meaning of life, love, death, freedom, and transcendence**—each **in constant dialogue** with the **cultures, symbols, and narratives** that humanity has produced and continues to produce.

This work does not conclude with **definitive answers**, but with **an invitation**:

To **keep the flame of meaning-making alive**, remembering that **every experience, every doubt, and every critical reflection** can become **raw material for forging new insights**.

In a world often driven by **functional logics and external pressures**, **reclaiming our ability to create meaning** means **reviving the fire of imagination and self-determination**.

For this reason, *more humano* presents itself as **a narrative and symbolic space**, far from **hierarchies and impositions**, where the **anvil** becomes **a metaphor for the creative process**—an **invitation** to:

- **Cultivate meaning collaboratively**
- **Explore existential categories without fear of redefining one's certainties**
- **Build a communal fabric where differences become sources of mutual enrichment**

Ultimately, it is about **reclaiming the question, "Why do I exist?"**, not by surrendering to **prepackaged answers**, but by **embracing the adventure of an ongoing inner and collective dialogue**.

Anyone who feels the **call of the "incandescent metal"** is welcome to step across this threshold.

No credentials are required—only:

- **The curiosity to experiment**
- **The desire to share**
- **The openness to evolve one's vision of the world**

The door, after all, **is always open**—because **the story of *more humano* does not end on these pages**. It continues to **grow, to be shaped by the questions and narratives** of all those who choose to participate in its **spirit of exploration**.

Together, we can continue to **forge the meaning of our existence**, renewing—**step by step**—our **responsibility** and **enthusiasm** for being, **in an ever more conscious way, truly human**.

# Bibliography

Below is an **essential bibliography** featuring the key authors (explicitly mentioned or implicitly referenced) throughout the chapters. The listed dates correspond to the original editions or publications whenever possible, along with any notable subsequent translations.

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— Philosopher and sociologist who argued that a **public sphere for discussion** is essential for an **ethical and functional society**.

## Final Notes

This **bibliography** serves as a **map**—not a **canon**—offering a **plurality of perspectives** that align with the themes of *more humano*. Each work represents a **thread** in the vast tapestry of **existential exploration, symbolic thought, and meaning-making**.

While some authors provide **rigorous theories**, others offer **poetic or intuitive visions**, demonstrating how **the search for meaning transcends disciplines, cultures, and epochs**.

Like the torches illuminating the path in the **Introduction**, these books and ideas **cast light**—not final answers.

The journey, as always, remains **open-ended**.