

MEMORY & MIMESIS

Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Enquiry Based Pedagogy

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The father was well dressed in slacks and sport linen jacket donned over a white cotton shirt opened at the collar. He was a black haired man with a copper tone complexion — not from sport tanning — but from that part of the world where melanin has been seeping into the blood stream for thousands of years.

But his worn out prematurely ageing features betrayed the new brand name suit. His wife was soon to join him at the bistro's counter with their little infant girl — beautifully coiffed in a white dress and a red bow in her hair. Daddy played with his little girl above his head (as if she was a model air plane) seemingly oblivious to his surroundings, while mommy also dressed in white (pants and sweater) looked on.

The child was too young for speech, still at that tender age where time has yet to tear memory away from mind. An age where spontaneous generation is the reason for everyone's timeless existence, which should not be confused with eternal existence — (and especially not be confused with temporal existence).

The infant will soon learn that mother and father are not spontaneously generated every time they re-appear in her field of vision, but have a continuous independent existence (over time) — rightly or wrongly!

The "learning" that makes this possible relies on a metamorphosis of consciousness of sorts that begins to unravel, like string from a ball of yarn, memory from mind. So that the world, in due time will cease to be generated at all. Creation will eventually go out of it as the child's adolescent mind turns "the world" into a static block universe amenable to loco-motion in the same way that static frames are turned into "motion" by a film projector in a cinema. And if the child, for some nostalgic reason, doubts the veracity of mechanism over creationism, a panoply of highly trained doctors are ready, at every turn towards a hospital, a university or any other social service, to set him or her on the straight and narrow solution to those paradoxes of motion and atomism first noticed by ancient philosophers, who thought that the "world of multiplicity" was either non-existent or illusory — according to us.

The unraveling of memory from mind not only inaugurates mechanism as the correct explanatory paradigm for motion and division, but also the correct one for explaining all mental faculties (such as intelligence and amnesia). This correctness has been a long time in the making by theologians and scientists alike (most of whom wore both hats in the early years: Aquinas, Newton,

Copernicus, Galileo....) and of which the last nail in the coffin of creationism was hammered in by mathematicians (Cantor, Dedekind) who turned the problem of the paradoxes from one of epistemology to one of measurement. (But more about this later.)

However, no one now is quite sure where this projector responsible for "motion-without-creation" is located. Obviously at first it would have been in the bottom of the ocean....later in the center of the earth...then in the center of the solar system...galaxy....(but once time in the form of light got factored in — since this is all about time over eternity — and Jules Verne got re-filed as entertainment instead of psycho-archaeology) the projector got filed as the "Big Bang" (which produced mostly dark matter).

However, as measurement is formal, the poets claim that it can never account for a change of substance, let alone essence. The sum of all the measurements can never account for a change (not of degree but) of kind! Unless of course, one can show that numbers themselves exist and that they are amenable to change across the frames of "kinematic" field of vision. But we would still be plagued by the paradox of whether the numbers changed themselves — an act of creation rather than a party to mechanism.¹

Now we can divide the world into two sets of human beings: those who can "see" anima and those who cannot. The patron saint of the former is the African bushman who "worships" the bull fight; the patron saint of the latter is the computer geek who "worships" the day we will all be uploaded to a distant planet in another solar system millions of light years away.² (The juxtaposition of these two worlds on the same page of a recent issue of International Herald Tribune underscores the extraordinary irony of how the human race already inhabits different 'planets'.)

2.

¹ See Plato's *Pythagoras* or my own story "Memory and Mimesis" appended hereafter...

² See attached article(s) "On the quest for a new Earth" from the International Herald Tribune.

As mind wanes radically after puberty and memory is charged with all the faculties of the "brain," amnesia is redefined as a loss of contents produced by memory (and the loss of 'contents' producible by mind are no longer recognized so that no appropriate word even exists to denote this type of amnesia). Further, as memory can only produce 'copies' (images in Latin), the positive contents produced by memory must contain their contradiction on the flip side — an analogous set of amnesiac 'copies,' to which we unwittingly refer to now in English by terms like 'moral hazard.'

The higher form of amnesia (let's call it Magnesia) produces its own concomitant form of (semantic) illiteracy whose existence, it is the job of this magnesia to deny, so that it is now assumed that the language of ancient myth was about the attempt by primitive peoples to explain meteorological phenomena with cute fairy tales.

As this is a condition rather than a (philosophical) position, it applies to everyone who is a product of western d-evolution or progress, since the philosophical position contradicts the embodied condition in the West; meaning that fundamentalist theologians share the same bath water with technoscientists, hence the same illiteracy.

By this account, both parties in their reading of the book of Genesis miss both the "creation" in it and the "evolution." The 'six or seven thousand year old universe' is the product of memory (only) and therefore a 'copy,' bearing on its flip side its am(mag)-nesiac double: a black out on the Bible's mythopoesis that contains the theory of evolution.

Nowhere does it say that God created something out of nothing. Yes, in the beginning (which must needs include all of time) some negatives are present: a void, darkness and the deep; but the deep has a face, it is the face (or surface) of the waters (so something is "in" the deep, or this latter is made from it) upon which the Spirit of God moves.

Hence, deep waters and God's Spirit are already there, so the void cannot be an absolute privative. But already it "appears" that some sort of binary opposition is being set up between depth and surface, and Spirit and waters. Then God introduces speech invoking light and presto! There is light to discriminate (itself) from darkness.

Then God "sees" and "judges" the light to be good. Then he divides the light from the darkness and names them Day and Night respectively, as if the light cannot divide, or discriminate itself from darkness in some implicit way. This also means that God is not the "darkness" — or at least not fully. (However, God may have produced this by self-imposed mitosis, thereby in "becoming" light he may have divided himself from darkness.)

So the Spirit of God moves, invokes, judges, divides and names. Hence, God is an intelligent anima. The void, the darkness and the deep are something akin to water bearing a primordial dimensionality (perhaps of a point a circle and a sphere which are the three dimensions of the same thing). A drop? A singularity?

"And the evening and the morning were the first day" ends verse 5, so some form of time has come into being as a concomitant to all of this. But notice, star light has yet to be created; likewise with sidereal time...Neither have the seas nor dry land. In fact, space has yet to be created even though, in day one Genesis is talking about water, depth, (sur)faces and light...

To and from where is light "traveling" if space (the firmament) has yet to be created. In the depth of the waters? Through God's Spirit, illuminating it? Space is ushered into being by invocation again in day two dividing the "waters above (itself) from the waters below" (itself) under the agency of God. He 'baptises' the firmament Heaven since it's obviously surrounded by 'water.' But these waters are not the seas, the seas arrive on the third day by 'gathering.'

Notice, that it is only the waters below that God gathers into the seas. Nothing is said about the waters above the firmament. Now on the third day the dry earth

and the seas are created along with 'dry goods' vegetation and their seed. He baptizes them Earth and Seas. It is somewhere around here that the reader begins to cross over from poetic metaphor to real time journalism. In other words, it is only on day three that we begin to suspect that something like a "material universe" is being created. The categories of day one and two read more like ideal prototypes — a kind of blue print before incarnation begins.

Further, if one reads the Bible story carefully, one discerns a tacit template very different from that of modern expository writing. The Bible does not unfold by Aristotelian syllogism. Nor is it a technical manual built on algorithms. Its template is organic and cyclical. It does not begin with a thesis or an introduction, but rather with the conclusion, because the conclusion contains the entire "revelation" in *précis*.

The prophet already understands the entire matter to be disclosed in hieratic poetry. Unlike the essay or the journal, hieratic literature is "written" in the golden years of the prophet's life when the entire matter has already been "gathered." Hence, he begins with the summary of everything that will unfold (in time). The summary contains all spaces and territories as well — both abstract and incarnate. Then the "myth" unfolds cyclically, with the same themes returning for further elucidation as if the chapters are repeated every third cycle : Day 0 — The Beginning; Day 1, Day 2, Day 3; Day 1.1, Day 2.1, Day 3.1; Day of Rest...

Hence, on Day 1 God creates light and on Day 4 (1.1) he creates starlight and sidereal time; on Day 2 he creates space / heaven to divide the waters above from the waters below, and on Day 5 (2.1) he creates the water fowl which also fly in the heavens; on Day 3 he creates the dry earth and grass and gathers the waters into seas, and on Day 6 (3.1) he creates the land animals including man and the serpent.

Further all progression in the story is by division and copying: Adam is a copy (image) of God; he becomes spirit(ual) like God through the breath; he names things like God does; he gets divided into a woman in his sleep (the way God was self-divided into waters above and waters below — more about this later). Further, the poetic copy (icon in Greek) is by virtue of emanation, hence it is informed by the prototype of which it is a copy. In this sense, the summary is really one unit the way an acorn is one seed (which gives birth to a tree). So all

days are present in Day 0 or the Beginning. This is the deeper meaning of Eternity, which has nothing to do with sidereal time.

Moreover, all meaning is encapsulated this way as well, so the eternal prototypes of spirit, void, darkness, speech (invocation), waters (intelligence) and movement (by God) are so integral to this primal "soup," that it would be surprising if they were not all represented by one and the same word, inflections granted, from the primal language in which it was conceived (be it Indo-European or Proto-Nostratic).

Is it not natural then that God would say that his creation 'light' is good, if it issues from himself, who by virtue of his name 'god' is also, by etymology, good. Likewise, Adam needs not be formally named as his very name issues from the 'dust' of which he is made. However, is he an exact 'copy' of God? Dust included? Or does the word 'eikona' denote a lesser copy from the original? Is a cathedral a lesser or a greater copy from its blueprint? Or do our metaphors fall short of the matter being probed?

Eikona (icon), which is similar to Kineo (Kinematic or Cinematic in Latin derivitate), is a passive 'mystery' while the latter word denotes something active. Hence, was Adam first an 'inert' copy who came 'alive' when infused with the active principle in God — his breath? (And by inert we not only refer to external movement, but to the whole motion of his constitution, which would include the 'potential' for intelligence.)

In this sense then, all poetic symbols in the book of Genesis should be understood to inhabit both time and eternity and to partake of both *potentia* (creative rest) and extension (animation); hence, they both are and are becoming (as God confirms of himself (by name) to Moses later: "I am what I will be" (usually poorly translated in English as "I am that I am")³— thereby not only giving Moses the law, but also the poetry for the exegesis of the 'law.'

³ Exodus 3:14; King James Version.

2. Evolution

Genesis 3:13:

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.

14: And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This seemingly innocuous statement has been overlooked by all those who would have us believe that the Bible denies (theories of) evolution. It is quite clear, from the side of the poetic paradox that involves 'time,' that the serpent, by virtue of a punishment from God, suffers a change, henceforth condemned to crawl on his belly and eat 'dust' instead of the game he was able to catch when he had — yes — legs! The serpent, as if God had evolutionary biologists in mind from the time his prophet (Moses) 'wrote' this book, got his legs amputated and d-evolved (-from the side of religion) from a reptile to a snake.

A couple of people who did not miss the connection between biology and theology (they were after all the same discipline in 'paradise', *ergo* Jesus and Asclepius), was the Dutch painter, Hugo van der Goes ("The Temptation", 1470) and the amateur naturalist Frank Buckland (*Curiosities of Natural History*, 1858). I have juxtaposed a copy/eikona of the former's painting with an excerpt of the latter's reflection on the topic:



"The Temptation" by Hugo van der Goes, 1470

"Supposing, then, the pre-Adamite [i.e. pre-cursed] snake to have gone on four legs, we might explain the passage by saying that after the curse the legs were struck off, but that the undeveloped legs were left (concealed, however, from casual observers) as evidence of what it formerly had been, and a type of its fallen condition."⁴

In the painting above we have a likeness of this pre-Adamite (pre-cursed) snake with four reptilian limbs and a tail to boot. By the time evolution had returned to pre-occupy the thoughts of our intellectuals in Victorian England the serpent had lost its hind legs and had morphed into a female from the waist up resembling more a lovely mermaid than a reviled devil; And the loss of the poetics that could bridge the gap between scientific and theological discourse coupled with the politics of the scientific community which was more interested in discrediting religion altogether for its own benefit, left little chance for a mythopoetic Biblical evolution to be reconciled with the one being proffered by the new consciousness-free science — bringing to prophetic fruition another version of the same biblical story from St-Barnabas who claimed in his apocryphal gospel that God also took away the serpent's power of speech by splitting its tongue, so that it could only hiss thereafter.

⁴ Francis T. Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 4 vols., Cosimo Classics, New York (1858; 2013).

APPENDIX —

by James N. Bardis

The first of the siblings Memory had lost a vast collection of names that went missing when Adam named all the animals. It would not have been so bad if Adam had been content to name only the animals, but he did not stop there...he continued naming other things as well such as plants, insects, stones, flowers, waters, scents, colours, lights and many other things. In this way, he emptied out Memory's repository of names because, as everybody knows, things like names do not come in infinite numbers, like say...sunlight, for example.

Yes, sunlight is not exhaustible by its sunbathers because it comes in infinite supply – or as some say it is a non-countable noun (even though, the source of the light, the sun, and their number in the universe is indeed countable).

Names are definitely countable, and even though they can be shared by many “place holders” – or referents, as highly knowledgeable people call them – they are exhaustible by virtue of being useful only if they name a limited number of things. If everything is named by them, then the name becomes useless. Sunlight on the other hand does not become useless if everyone is sun bathing and for two reasons:

- a) The word sunlight can name other things participating in sunlight than just bathers.
- b) The word sun bather is not rendered useless if everyone and everything in the universe is sunbathing because the word names an “activity” that has a limit in time. i.e. Things will not always be bathing in sunlight. They will also be hibernating in darkness.
- c) Countable names – or proper names – are more of a fixed label so they continue to name the thing until it expires. In this way the name does not exist autonomously forever. It needs something to attach itself to and in this way when Adam named everything countable he emptied Memory’s collection.

I know what you’re thinking, dear Reader. What about verbs? Are verbs like countable names or are they like uncountable names? On one hand, “a man walking for five minutes” seems to define the walking in time and space and make it countable. But what about the abstraction “to walk”? Isn’t that like “sunlight”? That depends on whether the verb “walking” come into being from people doing it or whether it was always “somewhere” by itself and when people “saw it,” they went to participate in it. The former would empty Memory’s collection of names, the latter would not.

But before we continue with this line of reasoning, dear Reader, you may want to ask, so what? So what if Adam emptied out Memory’s repository of some names. She still has the memory of many other things like light, sky, milk, and high and low. Now high and low may not be much company owing to their rarified nature. But “things” like light, sky, milk, blue, fun and happiness are nothing to sneeze at.

In fact, they are much better company than countable things like cups, cows, stones and plants. Or so it would seem, but alas, Adam also named “memory” and removed this word from Memory’s memory so that now Memory was left with nothing but amnesia.

Oh, I know what you’re thinking dear Reader, if Adam named “amnesia” would Memory have amnesia or not? And conversely, if “Memory” is uncountable, could Adam really separate her from herself? And even if he could separate or divide “Memory,” could not Happiness or Fun or even Blue step in to replace and replenish Memory?

These are very deep questions which require a considerable amount of time to consider but time’s father named “Father-Time” with a capital “T” is motioning us to continue with our tale of the two siblings by discussing what happened to Mimesis.

This second sibling lost his prototype and became a shadow. How did this happen, you ask? Well you see, Mimesis lived in a still “glassy” lake where he reflected perfectly his beloved named Mimi – a beautiful boy who descended from Narcissus. So happy was Mimesis to see the joy in Mimi’s face who would come to the lake to admire (his and) Mimesis’s beauty...

Then one day a great storm created turbulent waters that flooded the plains and sent Mimi scampering away. No longer would Mimesis see Mimi or any other boy for that matter. Mimesis searched every lake there was to find Mimi, but nothing turned up. This catastrophe endured for so long that Mimesis forgot what Mimi looked like. He tried mimicking other creatures to assuage his loneliness: tigers, lions, hippos, rhinoceroses, etc. ; But he was out of step with these creatures. Nothing could replace Mimi. For a while, he was consoled by a lover with a similar problem named Echo, but since two negatives can never make a positive, they each parted even more sorrowful than before.

Mimesis degenerated over the years, his skin turning into a dark bluish colour. He got a new job working for the sun as a “shadow” where nobody paid any attention to him, let alone admire his beauty. His name, for lack of use, also morphed from Mimesis to Imago.