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On the Actuality of Integrative Intellect-Mystical Asceticism as Self-Realization in View of Nicolaus de Cusa, Ibn Sīnā, and Others

David Bartosch

Institute of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai 519087, China; david.bartosch@bnu.edu.cn

Abstract: I argue for a transformative revival or actualization of the very core of an integrative, methodologically secured form of intellect-mystical asceticism. This approach draws on traditional sources that are re-examined from a systematic—synthetic and transcultural—philosophical perspective and in light of the multi-civilizational global environment of the 21st century. The main traditional points of reference in this paper are provided by Nicolaus de Cusa and Ibn Sīnā, and I refer to a few others, such as Attar of Nishapur, in passing. In the beginning, I develop a basic concept of intellect-mystical asceticism. It is distinguished from mystification, science, scientism, and modes of everyday communication and cognition. After that, I make the case for an updated, transcultural approach to intellect-mysticism that can foster the internal (social) and external (environmental) reintegration of the human noosphere and technosphere in future planetary development. In this context, a modern intellect-mystical philosophical notion of “knowing non-knowing” (*wissendes Nichtwissen, docta ignorantia*) is developed. It is inspired by Nicolaus de Cusa and contextualized from a systematic transcultural angle at the same time. Finally, I discuss the problem of the practical, or rather, ascetic realization of the related possibilities of intellect-mystical self-enfolding. Here, the preceding steps of the reflection are mapped onto an outline regarding distinct developmental stages of such a transformative intellect-mystical practice in Ibn Sīnā’s *Remarks and Admonitions (al-Ishārāt wa-t-Tanbihāt)*.



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Without my lover,
Were my chamber Heaven’s horizon,
It were closer than an ant’s eye,
And the ant’s eye wider were
Than Heaven, my lover with me there!
—Nur ad-Dīn Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī

1. Introduction

What kind of *general function* can intellect-mystical asceticism fulfill in the complex and transculturally interlinked human environments of our times? My thesis is that an updated *transcultural philosophical* approach towards a practice of intellect mysticism can play its part in reversing the obviously accelerating and increasing trend of *ecological and social disintegration of contemporary humanity* in the (self-)conscious dimensions of reality, at least of those who are willing to redirect their cognitive processes towards the immanent *source* of cognition and experience in and for itself.¹ Such an attempt at the cultivation and self-actualization of “spiritual intelligence” (Vaughan 2002) concerns the *creative source* of the planetary human (biological) and human-initiated (artificial) “noosphere” (e.g., Vernadsky 1997)² that emerges as a planetary phenomenon of increasing chemical, energetic, and structural human-originated change. While all of this is based upon, to apply a traditional



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Arabic term in the present-day sense, ‘transmitted’ (*naqlī*) knowledge that “is acquired from society, teachers, books, study, and the media[,] [i]ntellec[tive] [‘aqlī] knowledge is found when intelligence awakens to its own nature” (Chittick 2008, p. 282, insertions DB). This self-enfolding of intelligence in relation to its absolute source is referred to as *intellect*. Terminological equivalents are ‘aql’ in Arabic and ‘*intellectus*’ in medieval Latin-speaking traditions.³ The practical “self-unveiling” and continuous cultivation of this intellectual foundation of consciousness (also in the sense of a further developed and adapted contemporary concept) is the concern of intellect-mystical asceticism. The main thesis of this paper is that without such a deeper self-understanding of the source of mind and conscious existence, a coherent developmental process of our species cannot be initiated today. Furthermore, this is also to say that, unfortunately, modern science does not suffice to reintegrate humanity into the process of its systemic cosmic environment.⁴ Science is “merely” an aspect of the collective self-unfolding of human cognition: it is the permanent creation of what intellect-mystical practice allows to self-enfold in the sense of an integrated and expanded form of self-knowing—namely as the emergence of a more encompassing implicate “dimension” of source-directed self-recognition. I would like to add that, in my view, modern technology will only be able to play its relevant part after humanity (maybe in a more extended sense than the word ‘humanity’ is understood as today) has managed to reintegrate and coordinate its ways on such a basis.

The postulate of such a function of intellect mysticism (including its historical traditions) for the general development and the rebalancing of the planetary human process in its cosmic environment might sound unusual at first. After all, “mysticism” is often confused with escapism, the fusion of transcendental ideals with a rapturous figurative imagination, or outright *mystification*. In opposition to such incorrect interpretations of the term, I argue that *intellect-mystical asceticism*—including its historical traditions at various times and in different regions that provide useful inspiration—can play an important role in the *necessary advancement* of human consciousness in the more and more human-decoupled “second nature”⁵ that our species has “projected”⁶ out of itself and for itself in the sense of its growingly automated⁷ *technological medium*. The current visions of *neo-gnostic transhumanism* that have been introduced to the public over the past years (e.g., Pugh 2017; Hughes 2018) in the context of this obvious development cannot lead to the desired end of long-term sustainability (through comprehensive species reintegration). Based on a philosophical perspective, I propose to follow and evolve upon a different path: It is the awareness of the immanent-transcendent source of all cognition—which is the self-referential incentive of intellect mysticism—that can fulfill an important function to achieve long-term sustainability for our species (in correlation with its own technosphere) in the unceasing process of “cosmic life” (Cobb 2023) in which we are all embedded.⁸

This argument is developed as follows: In the following section, “Intellect-Mystical Asceticism”, I clarify the present use of the formulation ‘intellect mysticism’ and also the meaning of ‘asceticism’ in relation to the former. In the subsequent section, “Intellect-Mystical Asceticism as a Path to Human Reintegration”, the aforesaid problem of human disintegration as a core problem of the *conditio humana* in the 21st century is examined from the point of view of intellect-mystical asceticism. I refer to Nicolaus de Cusa’s (1401–1464, also: Nicolaus Cusanus, Nicholas of Cusa) inspiring understanding of *knowing non-knowing* (*docta ignoratia*, German: *wissendes Nichtwissen*), which is shown to be systematically related to intellect-mystical, that is, source-directed and, thus, self-referential forms of *thinking of thinking*—not only in earlier Greek and European but, in a systematically extended transcultural sense, also in non-Western traditions, of course.⁹ Knowing non-knowing is the representation of that which is being “worded” (*verbatur*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1959a, p. 54) in each and every word without the potential to express it in the form of words that represent finite concepts, because there is no particular point of reference to it. This transculturally extended and “updating” discussion leads to the last section, “The Effort and Stages of Practical Realization: An Outline”. Here, a systematic intellect-mystical outline of transformative holistic reintegration is discussed that is presented by Ibn Sīnā

(980–1037, Farsi/Arabic: ابن سينا, Latin: Avicenna) in the fourth part of his *Remarks and Admonitions (al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt)*. In this section, I am relying on the translation of this work by Shams Inati (Ibn Sīnā 1996).¹⁰ Under the background of the preceding transcultural and systematic reflection (present day-related), I comment and read Ibn Sīnā’s outline of self-transformative intellect-mystical asceticism in an updated systematic fashion and in derogation from its original rendering of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian cosmological contexts. In referring to the relevant text passages in this way, it is my intention to present a further example of how to absorb and transform useful approaches in various traditions of intellect mysticism with regard to present and looming problems of individual consciousness and the rebalancing of the human planetary “noosphere” as a whole. Herein also lies *the future of the cultural memories of intellect-mystical traditions*.¹¹

2. Intellect-Mystical Asceticism

One has to pay attention to the semantic “pointing rod” (“Zeigestab”, Max Scheler (1921, p. 546)) of ‘mysticism’¹² itself right from the start. In English, *the noun ‘mysticism’ is often used indiscriminately* for what the German *philosophical* discourse distinguishes in the form of the nouns ‘*die Mystik*’ and ‘*der Mystizismus*’.¹³ In discussions on the intellect-mystical approaches of thinkers such as Meister Eckhart or Nicolaus de Cusa, the former stands for a feasible form of *methodologically secured (intellect) mysticism*. It is related to philosophical reasoning in the superordinate sense that it is directed towards the creative intellectual foundation of thought itself. This source has a (meta-)logical priority compared to concepts as cognitive products or manifestations of this foundation (Bartosch 2022a). *Authentic* historical appearances of intellect mysticism in this regard have been connoted in a *positive* and welcoming sense in this discourse. The German term ‘*Mystizismus*’, on the other hand, stands for philosophically invalid, *false* approaches towards mysticism that have been rejected for valid reasons (in philosophical discourse). In nuce, the fallacy here is that a mental picture—emerging on the basis of the consciousness-immanent (in Kantian terminology: transcendental) *ability* to form symbolic or personified representations of (transcendental) ideals that inherit a priori “practical force” (*praktische Kraft*) (Kant 1968, p. 513, tr. DB; Bartosch 2019a)—is a posteriori charged with emotional and imaginary content until the real, *intellective* source that makes also this aberrant *projection*¹⁴ possible is completely lost from view.¹⁵ Here, the adept is internally carried away by a torrent of imaginative visions, emotions, and the inherent sublimity in the reflection of the transcendental ideal of perfection. This may fulfil an individual need, leading to a particular way of life, but it does not lead to the trans-personal consciousness-constituting source level of this private “torrent”. In English, the term ‘mysticism’ is also used in this pejorative sense, but, for the sake of clarity and to avoid confusion, it would be better to use the word ‘*mystification*’ instead of ‘mysticism’ here. One can add the abbreviations ‘M’ in the sense of intellect mysticism and ‘fM’ for wrong uses of the word ‘mysticism’ (in the sense of ‘mystification’ or ‘*Mystizismus*’).

Intellect mysticism (M) is directed at the foundational logic (“*Grundlogik*” (Bartosch 2015)) or, alternatively speaking, the “implicate logic” (Bartosch 2022a) of the deeper understanding of the *Unity of unity and difference*. This formula, which has gained prominence in the context of German Idealism, represents a more profound foundation than what Hegel derived from it in terms of his two-valued dialectical progressions. I call it the *meta-logikon* of mysticism.¹⁶ All-encompassing, boundless *Unity*, if not mistaken for the general concept of the immanent unity of a unit (as a unit besides other units in their respective immanent *delimited* self-identity), is to be *realized*¹⁷ in the sense of a *coincidentia oppositorum* (infinite Unity) in relation to the concept of (the finite unity of) a unit and the concept of difference in relation to the concept of such units. Put differently: The *archetypical* difference (the cognitive process of differentiation as such) that “draws” itself to set everything apart from everything else (in the sense of non-identical (self-identical) units of cognition) represents at the very same time the boundless Unity (infinite connectedness, relatedness, relationality, *sameness*) of everything—because difference (as such), manifesting

itself in the form of autopoietic processes of cognitive differentiation (in the species-related forms of experience of living beings¹⁸), *is in itself difference-free and boundless*.

In a mystical sense, namely, *as the difference is itself without difference*, it therefore counts as the all-creative, most foundational manifestation of infinite Unity (in relation to itself). This *meta-logikon*¹⁹ can be participated in the form of being conscious of the inherent and underlying foundation of all forms of reasoning that derive from it in the sense of the process of cognition. It is the foundation of all distinction and reasoning.²⁰

In (intellective) view²¹ of this, Nicolaus de Cusa has introduced the philosophical *aenigma* of the “wall of paradise” (*muris paradisi*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 2000, pp. 43, 71, 79) to hint at the “groundbreaking” self-referential intellective experience that is *enfolded* in the semantic “pointing rod” that ‘the difference is without difference’. “Paradise”, namely, *boundless* or infinite integration, is actually *not* to be *found* inside the walled circumference that separates (conceptual) ‘paradise’ from (conceptual) ‘non-paradise’, namely, unit A from its distinctive other, unit B—but by “walking” on or alongside the top of the wall that distinguishes or separates both. It is this intellective “*muris coincidentiae complicationis et applicationis*” (2000, 40) itself that (1) sets the “lost”—that is, now merely finitely conceptual—‘paradise’ by means of and in the process of its distinguishing function, *but is* (2) *in itself not set apart from anything*; it does not only represent the difference *but also the connection* and Unity (boundless self-enfolding and absolute sameness) of that which it differentiates (see also Bartosch 2015, pp. 447–48, 467, 518, fn. 300; 2022a, pp. 116–17). Or more bluntly speaking: It is also the wall of paradise in the sense that the *true* (meta-logical or intellective) “paradise” is actually to be found *by walking on the wall, along the “battlements” of the wall*. This infinite way (*via*) (see also Nicolaus de Cusa 1959a, p. 15) leads along and through the self-processing *confinium* of all.

To point towards the horizon of intellect mysticism, one can also work with an older Neoplatonic motif: For Plotinus, the highest possible form of *theōria* (θεωρία) is represented by the *Unity of the unity and difference* of the knower and the known in the event of the (self-)awareness of thinking of thinking (*nóēsis noēseōs* [νόησις νοήσεως]) (Plotinus 2018, sct. 3.8.6, p. 361; see also Bartosch 2023a, pp. 96, 102). It is the cognitive *differentiation* “between” the knower and the known that enables reflection. Due to this, one (unit of) thought is set apart from another (unit of) thought in the process of this differentiating and yet thereby correlating/unifying cognitive activity or “walk” of thoughts along the *confinium* of identity and non-identity. This is only possible on the foundation of the *Unity*, the non-differentiable *Oneness* of in-betweenness, that the *difference* “between” ‘knower’ and ‘known’ implies.

Now, to proceed a step further here, *intellect-mystical asceticism* means the permanent practice of focusing on and following that thread of indistinguishable Oneness (within the permanent “cutting” of recognition-enabling differentiation) in all of one’s ongoing cognitive processes and experiences and decisions and actions (which represent acts of differentiation within this Oneness), namely in the sense of the Unity of the unity and difference of one’s ‘thought processes’ and ‘actions’. I would like to add that, in this sense, one finds that, on the medieval European side, John Scotus Erigena (c.800–c.877) and Nicolaus de Cusa (1401–1464) both derived the word ‘*theōria*’ (θεωρία) from a meaning of ‘I see’ and ‘I walk fastly’ (Moran 1990, p. 280). “Consequently, the seeker must walk through (his) seeing, so that he may extend himself towards the [*theōn θεόν* (acc. singular of θεός ‘God’)] who sees all (things). Thus, the vision shows a parable of *the path along which the seeker must walk*” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1959b, p. 15, tr. and italics DB). This path is the path of intellect-mystical asceticism that is “seen” and realized in the processual self-awareness along the “omni-relational” (Unity-) *confinium* of unity and difference.²²

This intellect-mystical view of *theōria* is not to be confused with modern notions of theory in science, of course. The paths of intellect mysticism (M) and science (S) represent different modes of cognition: Mysticism (M) represents the self-referentiality of the unbound *foundation* of the differentiating activity that we call cognition; science (S) is trying to render the *products* of cognition (concepts and logical progressions) as precisely as possi-

ble to advance an understanding towards an unbound horizon of possible natural/cosmic phenomena and object contexts of possible experience.²³

One can work with the philosophical *aenigma* (or rather, semantic “pointing rod”) of the mirror surface here: In the transferred sense, we can think of our experiences as objective processes that appear on a mirror surface (see also [Bartosch 2019b](#)). In the “unawakened” state, we are not yet aware of the mirror surface that stands for the intellect here. A further partial analogy for this is the lack of possible (self-)consciousness²⁴ of objective processes and realities that others experience in the waking state while we are (literally) sleeping. The analogy is only partial because, at present, a majority of people never experiences an “awakening” or initial “aha experience” (Karl Bühler) in relation to the true foundational level of their consciousness in the sense of intellect mysticism, and, secondly, the process of “ordinary” cognition and object-setting does not cease while being “awake”, that is, while experiencing the implicit or immanently transcendent source of thoughts and cognition.²⁵

This example of an unrecognized “mirror surface” here can be related to Ibn Sīnā’s idea of a primary primitive self-awareness that is *ever-present*, that is, *also when we are not conscious of it* ([Black 2008](#), pp. 65–67). Although, as Black further elaborates, the

“claim that we can be *unconsciously* aware of ourselves at first glance seems like an oxymoron [...] the property of being an object of awareness even in the absence of conscious thought is a basic feature of all innate or primary knowledge for Avicenna [Ibn Sīnā], and primitive self-awareness too possesses this property in virtue of being innate”. (68, insertion DB)

Regarding objects to be consciously perceived on this “mirror surface”, “we cannot think of any object unless we are at the same time aware of our selves as the underlying subject of the thought. *But in neither of these cases need we be conscious of the role played by our innate knowledge in our knowledge of other things*” (68, italics DB). Black states that it seems indeed unusual for Ibn Sīnā to rise to the level of full consciousness (68), namely, to refer to my example here, for the mirror surface to fold back onto itself and to become its own in(de)finite object of, as Nicolaus de Cusa would have called it, *visio intellectualis*.

In general, the scientist (S) focuses on the objects and processes in the “mirror”, but he/she is not concerned with (and does *not even need to be conscious of*) the “mirror” itself—which is also to say *that the permanence of the reflexivity of the intellect is in any case unceasing*, even in the most predominant situation of not being self-consciously perceived as such, or to put it another way, “even if the self-referential eye of the intellect is asleep” ([Bartosch 2019b](#), p. 56, tr. DB). The scientist then continuously tries to render his/her understanding of the objects of his/her cognitive concern *more precise*. He/she mostly works with the difference by excluding the inherent Unity from view, such as in non-dialectical two-valued (Aristotelian) logic.²⁶

In this sense, (authentic) science (S) means the unhindered *further unfolding of the preceding outcome of a particular knowledge interest (Erkenntnisinteresse) at any given point*. In the context of science, particular data points or measurements are summarized in a formula, a mathematical generalization, or a theory (as a consistent complex of mathematical generalizations) and these generalizations *have to be changed and adjusted as soon as they are falsified by proven data or phenomena* ([Korzybski 2000](#), p. Iv; [Popper 2002](#), p. 18).²⁷

“Therefore, the truth in the mind is, as it were, *an invisible mirror in which the mind observes everything visible through it*. But this simplicity of the mirror is so great that it exceeds the power and sharpness of the [rational, self-unfolding conceptual dimension of the] mind. But the more the power of the spirit is increased and sharpened, the more certain and clearer everything is seen in the mirror of truth”. ([Nicolaus de Cusa 1994](#), pp. 9–10, tr. and italics DB)

The intellect mystic (M) has realized that his experiences and observations of objects and processes, whether they are reflected in a scientific manner or not, represent finite reflections in themselves. He/she therefore directs the attention towards the “mirror surface”

itself and exercises himself/herself to *persistently* keep his/her awareness focused on this “surface”. It is the foundation of all possible experience of a personal human “microcosmos” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1972, p. 143) and human “elevation of a world into form” (Cassirer 1985, p. 52, tr. DB). This intellect-mystical exercise,²⁸ which is the core of this form of intellect-mystical asceticism, reflects the “mirror surface” as the “actuality of actual infinity. In the duration of this reflexivity, which *as the principle of comparison itself* [the meta-logical Unity that is manifested through the process of differentiation] is resplendent in everything, all rational, that is, temporal/finite, conceptualizations unfold from it” (Bartosch 2019b), p. 56, tr., italics, and insertion DB).²⁹

Despite this difference between science (S) and intellect mysticism (M), one can say that both refer to *ideals of realization*: Science (S) means the unhindered realization of human beings’ urge to know as “truth-like” (*verisimile*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1972, p. 113) as possible. It is what Cusanus calls *explicatio* (unfolding). Mysticism (M) relates to the *personal realization of the infinite or non-definable* foundation that underlies all finite scientific reasoning and even general experience and yet cannot be defined in terms of finite (scientific or non-scientific) concepts—for *that very reason*. In this intellect-mystical sense, we are dealing with (higher, intellective) Truth (*veritas*) as such in this context. It is to be realized in the mode of awareness that Cusanus calls *complicatio* (self-unfolding). Representing the focus on the “mirror surface”, it includes the awareness of the derived process of the *explicatio* (self-unfolding) of finite reasoning *at the same time*. Remember that the intellect-mystical ascetic is walking in complete Unity along the “battlements” of the “*murus coincidentiae complicationis et explicationis*” (Nicolaus de Cusa 2000, p. 40).

In this perspective, I would like to add that the difference between mysticism as intellect mysticism (M) and as pseudo-mysticism, or rather, mystification (fM) might be partly comparable to the difference between science (S) and scientism (fS). Scientism (fS) confuses itself or disguises itself as science (S), gives itself the methodological veneer of science (S), *but actually prevents* real scientific progress. It is actually anti-scientific. It works counter to the aforesaid (transcendental) ideal of permanent realization of truth-approximation, because in the context of scientism (fS), a questionable theory, a falsified paradigm, or even a worldview that should be overcome (also in the sense of “taboos”) is maintained to serve interests that are not included in the conceptual extension of science (S) itself, hindering the progress of the latter. Such interests can be personal or collective, even if only in the sense of the convenience factor of not having to rock prior academic conditioning or professional socialization.³⁰ In analogy, forms of non-intellective *mystification* (fM) represent a misunderstanding, or “atrophy”, or even *inversion* of intellect mysticism (M), namely in the sense of a delusional *worship* of a merely imagined “veil” —for non-mystical “reasons”. Such forms of mystification (fM) run counter to the possible realization of mysticism (M) itself. Against the background of his context and time, Ibn Sīnā (ابن سينا, Avicenna, 980–1037) in his *Remarks and Admonitions (al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbihāt)* (see Section 3) already presents examples for this when he says that asceticism and worship are misinterpreted as a kind of “business deal” by those who do not aspire for “the Truth”.³¹

Thirdly, for the above reasons, the mode of language in mysticism (M) cannot be confused with the semantic patterns of scientific (S) abstraction and symbology—or forms of philosophy that merely function on the level of traditional Aristotelian either-or logic. In a “metaparadoxical” (Gloy 2001, p. 170, tr. DB) way, the “logic of ineffability” (Bartosch 2015, pp. 233–300) in intellect mysticism alludes to the *immanently transcendent* “(trans-)form” of the *infinite Unity* of unity and difference, because *true* all-encompassing Unity must include all difference (infinitely), or rather, difference per se—otherwise it is mixed up with the *finite concept* or form(ulation) of a *unit besides (an)other unit(s)*. For example, a “proof” of God that tries to prove the existence of an *infinite* and unbound creational power *by separating it* from its *creaturae* in the “either-or sense” of an unbridged gap between both “sides” mistakenly *conceptualizes* an infinite *creator*. In such a case, the infinite is considered as if it would be possible to encompass an infinite or boundless instance by means of

a finite concept—as if it would be possible to refer to “it” like in the case of a finite process or “object” of the experience. This is obviously pointless.

However, the intellect-mystical, trans-conceptual allusion of the (infinite) Unity of (finite) unity and difference is hard to grasp in its utmost *non-conceptualizable* simplicity,³² because it is to be found *outside of the mode of thinking in exclusive distinctions*, namely as the awareness or intellectual “scent” of the precondition of the latter and in the latter (as an ongoing process of cognition). Modern dialectics, which is still a form of two-valued logic or thought progression but synthesizes the contradiction via the ‘and’ (Günther 1976, pp. 199–200 [75–76]) (in the formalized manner of thesis–antithesis–synthesis), is “closer” to the self-conscious realization of this meta-logikon (of the Unity of unity and difference) that reveals itself as the implicit condition of the possibility of both Aristotelian and modern two-valued dialectical logic (Bartosch 2022a). In both cases, or rather, levels of transformation of (1) not-yet-being-present in the awareness of the observer and (2) having had the most profound intellect-mystical aha experience, the *meta-logikon* cannot be precisely defined for the reasons explained so far. But it can be alluded to by means of “semantic pointing rods”, such as, ‘Unity of unity and difference’ or, in the transferred sense, the “wall of paradise” or the “mirror surface”, etc., described further above.

In prospective view of the next but one section, it has to be noted that centuries before Cusanus, Ibn Sīnā already alluded to this metalogical (trans-)form of the Unity of unity and difference by using the *aenigma* of a famous Persian tale in which *two lovers*, (a) Salaman and (b) Absal, are identified as symbols of the Unity (through difference) of (a) the common level of rationality of human life, that is, cognition on the basis of more or less precise concepts, and (b) divine *intellective* speculation of the One that is the differentiating source of, or rather, within the many—both in their unity and difference at the same time (Mehren 1891, p. 11).

Another philosophical *aenigma* (or “pointing rod”) in regard to intellect-mystical foundations is presented by Cusanus’s correlation of the term ‘*sapientia*’ (wisdom) to ‘*sapere*’, which also means ‘to taste something’, the act of gustation, and ‘*sapor*’ (taste; flavor).

“In the moment of tasting, in the actual experience of taste, outside and inside are elevated and absorbed in an ineffable—enjoyable—way. In the act of tasting, the world and our reflexive consciousness coincide. The taste reflected as such is then also, in a broader figurative sense, the actuality of the [U]nity through difference of inside and outside, world and thought, subject–object”. (Bartosch 2019b, p. 48, tr. and insertion DB)

This is also to say again that, in an indescribable way, the meta-logikon of intellect mysticism is not excluded from any possible object sphere of any form of possible cognition. It *goes through* everything that we experience (in the sense of immanent transcendence) and in analogy to our inhaling–exhaling that is also there when we lose conscious track of it. Just as this process is the most basic foundation of our life, the former is the inescapable foundation of our cognition. For example, in this sense, it also has to be assumed as the foundation of any “logikon in matter” (Bloch 1972, p. 47, tr. DB), as one may add.

The extension of the term ‘intellect mysticism’ thereby includes the somatic, psychological/emotional, and rational faculties of the philosophical seeker—it refers to the, as I call it here, “One ‘taste’”³³ (*sapor*) of ‘wisdom’ (*sapientia*). As the reflection of the “non-other” (*non aliud*³⁴) *per se* (Nicolaus de Cusa 2001, p. 23; 1982b, p. 40; Bartosch 2015, pp. 64–67), it can neither be thought of as being apart from nor as being a part of anything. It represents that *which implicitly goes through everything without being conceptualizable like any other thing, or rather, object or field of consideration*.

3. Intellect-Mystical Asceticism as a Path to Human Reintegration

The most fundamental, or rather, existential problems humanity has to face, which are generally discussed, are known to be climate change, pollution (chemicals, plastic, radioactive waste, space junk, etc.), the causation of a catastrophic extinction of species, ongoing wars and genocides and their various, also politico-economic, causes, and many

other issues. Without question, these are urgent problems, and they have to be tackled as they unfold *in actu*. That is to say, these processes can and must be reversed in specific practical steps in the sense of undergoing a collective change of habits. However, the aspects of theory and practice cannot be separated in this matter. With regard to environmental issues, this correlation is anticipated in the context of the pre-scientific “symbolic form” (Cassirer 2010) of religion: Various ancient religions have emphasized the protection of “creation” (in the sense of their contemporaneous worldviews), for example, in Ancient Egypt (especially regarding the Nile) (Gualdi 2020) or in the case of Zoroastrianism (Yachkaschi and Yachkaschi 2012, pp. 110–11). Various pre-modern Christian thinkers, for example, Augustine of Hippo (354–430), have reflected upon the necessity of protecting the “book of nature” from philosophical and theological angles (Sadowski 2020, p. 79). Many of the great thinkers of the Arab-speaking world have introduced early environmentalist thoughts, and in fact Ibn Sīnā is one of them (Gari 2002). Cusanus defines the human being as the “Messiah of the animals” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1986, p. 187, tr. DB). Furthermore, with regard to human intraspecies violence, we find historical theoretical entry points in many religions, for example, in the philosophy-related reflections of “atheist” Buddhist and Jain *nāstika* traditions of South Asia (e.g., Cort 2000).

Since the 20th century, a myriad of environmentalist theories and activities have emerged. For example, in the works of John B. Cobb, Jr., we find the reconstruction of Christian eco-theological elements through the lens of process philosophy in the Whiteheadian tradition in combination with an extended transdisciplinary approach (e.g., Cobb 1995; Daly and Cobb 1994). Partly overlapping, yet also different perspectives have been developed in the context of ecofeminism, for example, in the form of a particular critique of capitalism in correlation to the problems of gender hierarchies and patriarchic structures of power and domination (Gaard and Gruen 1993). Since the earlier 20th century, scientists have variously developed comprehensive approaches that can provide important foundations for modern environmentalist theory and action. For example, Attila Grandpierre (2023, p. 47) lists the following: the biocentric cosmology of Lawrence Joseph Henderson (1878–1942); anthropic cosmology; Alexander Oparin’s (1894–1980) conclusions regarding the existence of an autonomous law of life; the theory of a bio-friendly universe; the idea of life as a cosmic imperative in astrobiology; James Lovelock’s (1919–2022) Gaia theory; and Ervin Bauer’s (1890–1938) theoretical biology, which is complemented and developed further by Grandpierre’s own contributions. In parallel to environmentalist approaches and scientific theories that provide the related backgrounds, human intraspecies violence has been reflected in a great variety of perspectives in the context of modern peace and conflict studies.

From an integral perspective, such as that of Gotthard Günther’s understanding of poly-contextuality, poly-contextural logic, and trans-classical science (see further below), these theories can be seen as containing “regional” truths in regard to a shared core problem—a core problem which is often rather implicit or only alluded to in these contexts. This is to say that they are all manifestations of *the same most fundamental problem* that we are driving and evolving ourselves into more and more disintegrated states of existence—disintegrated with regard to our planetary and cosmic environment as a species, but also disintegrated with regard to ourselves as a species. For example, in ecofeminist theory this is alluded to by way of the assessment that mankind is suffering from an erroneous rift in which “nature and women are mere externalities in formal economic accounts” (Ruder and Sanniti 2019).

In a highly ambivalent way, these and other forms of disintegration—which as an overall phenomenon must be taken in a much wider sense that transcends the regional truths of the various theoretical *perspectives* here—increase along with the complexity of our sciences, technologies, and communication in general. Not only our everyday “language games” (Ludwig Wittgenstein) and forms of cognition, which are easy to manipulate by ever more sophisticated forms of social engineering, but even the scientific discourses (S), increasingly fractionated and splintered into the tiniest subject areas and highly de-

pending on more and more sophisticated technological systems, *cannot provide any lever* to counter this existential threat. My thesis is that one of the reasons why we are in this situation is that a modern philosophical (meta-)understanding of what is at the core of intellect mysticism (M) has not been publicly promoted or widely conveyed as a general *practical* path or *task* of human existence. The reason for this is that mystics of the past had to conceal and hide the great and simple Truth of the meta-logikon also in this practical regard, because it conflicts with the very same petty egoisms that feed this calamitous *conditio humana*.³⁵ Intellect mysticism became a path of a very few, highly talented thinkers, who preferred to tread that path in seclusion and even disguise. One of the reasons why the process of realizing the Truth of the self-immanent foundation of cognition has not been promoted more widely, or in general, may be that someone who is aware of the foundation of his/her thought process, that is, the process of differentiating, conceptualizing and making judgements, thinks independently, takes his/her own positions in science and society, and can hardly be manipulated.³⁶

The related problem of disguise and secrecy or seclusion in relation to the mystical quest is also alluded to in the word origin of ‘mysticism’ and ‘*Mystik*’—‘μυστική’ (mystical/connected with the mysteries) (μυστικός n.d.). It is related to ‘μυέω’, which can mean ‘(to) initiate’ or ‘(to) teach’; it has also been related to the term ‘μύω’, which means ‘(to) close the eyes’ or ‘(to) close the lips’ (Gemoll 1908, pp. 512, 514; *Mystik* n.d.). That which mysticism (M) relates to cannot simply become part of explicit learning and education, because it cannot be conveyed in the form of a definition in the realm of (delimiting) conceptualization. However, there is nothing “mysterious” or incomprehensible about it; it just takes longer to develop an “eye” and the self-referential “view” for it—exactly *because* it is always present and the most basic foundation inherent in all cognition. Plato is said to have emphasized the necessity of prolonged contact with a teacher who has mastered the fundamental level of intellect in this respect. A holistic education with many “branches of learning should [...] lead to an experience of a fundamental understanding or ‘enlightenment’, [namely] a universal understanding which cannot be mediated by words sufficiently, as the author of the famous Platonic *Seventh Letter* (originally ascribed to Plato) explained” (Bartosch 2017, p. 105, insertion DB; see also Edelstein 1966, p. 100). This “enlightenment” means the initial self-referentiality of the process of cognition (in correlation with volition and emotions, in the waking state), which can be viewed as the *utmost* “aha experience” (Karl Bühler) possible. However, the indirectness of “pointing” in the direction of the non-conceptualizable source of conception and the (often necessary) occultation of the mystics (for reasons of self-protection) have often led to an unfavorable mystification (fM) of mysticism (M) itself. It has been misinterpreted in the sense of closed events like the ancient Greek mysteries (τὰ μυστικά/μυστήρια), etc., which, at least from an outsider perspective, have invited perceptions of secret cults with strange rites, etc. The resulting mystification (fM) pertained to the idea that some kind of “veil” of secrecy has to be lifted to experience some alleged sort of “wholly other”, one on one, so to speak. Very much on the contrary, however, (philosophical) intellect mysticism (M) means the self-realization that the “secret” *is at all times and under all circumstances hidden in plain sight*, and that the assumption of the “wholly other” only implies that the target has so far missed the arrow, if I may put it in this Zen-like fashion of reversing the usual semantics here. The realization of the meta-logikon of intellect mysticism means the holistic realization that studying the “veil” and “lifting the veil” can all be considered as manifestations of *the same infinite foundation* that is also present “before the veil” and, moreover, *as* the mystical seeker himself.³⁷

In this regard, one is reminded of the “pun” of the allegory of the enlightenment of the 30 birds in Farīd ad-Dīn-e ‘Attār’s³⁸ (Farsi: فرید الدین عطار, in English also: Attar of Nishapur, c.1145–c.1221) *Conference of the Birds*: A group of birds sets off for China under great hardship to learn the supreme mystical secret from a mystical master bird, called the Simorgh. After a long journey with many obstacles, only 30 steadfast birds remain:

“They gazed, and dared at last to comprehend
They were the Simorgh and the journey’s end.

They see the Simorgh—at themselves they stare,
 And see a second Simorgh standing there;
 They look at both and see the two are one,
 That this is that, that this, the goal is won". (Farud ud-Din Attar 1984, p. 219, italics DB)

In the sense of the aforementioned word relation of the term 'mysticism' to 'μύω', one often hears that the field of mysticism correlates to ineffability. This also has to be clarified, namely to prevent the false worship of the "veil". The activity of myriads of mystical writers and oral teachers of the past and present times simply alludes to the fact that the mystical "path" can be and must be referred to and manifested by using words, at least in the sense of "giving signs" (Wohlfart 1998).³⁹ For example, Farīd ad-Dīn-e 'Attār's whole epic poem *Conference of the Birds* can be regarded as an intellect-mystical attempt in this regard. However, although the use of words is still a use of words here, *it is at the same time completely different* from the use of words in the sense of science (S), scientism (fS), mystifying narratives/mystifications (fM), or any other non-mystical everyday "language game" (Wittgenstein 1984) or narrative imaginable.

In this context, it strikes the eye that, in *Conference of the Birds*, the Sufi intellect-mystic Farīd ad-Dīn-e 'Attār refers to a "pointing rod" that strikingly resembles Nicolaus de Cusa's *aenigma* of the 'wall of paradise' (*murus paradisi*), mentioned further above. By wandering through the "valley of Unity", the intellect-mystical seeker realizes the uncountable Unity *through the difference* of "Being and Non-Being, [which] is always this essence..." (Farīd ad-Dīn-e 'Attār quoted in Buber 2013, p. 75, tr. from German translation DB). This infinite Truth *that leads along the difference-free difference itself* transcends the differences between the narratives and finite *conceptions* of the sacred (mosque) and the secular ("wine house" symbolizing the universe, the world, and even the abandoned Zoroastrian belief system): "The way to the wine house and the mosque, which one is it?/Both are prohibited to my wretched self./There is a way between the mosque and the wine house./Find out, o dear ones, which one it is"⁴⁰ (Farīd ad-Dīn-e 'Attār quoted in Fariduddin Attar n.d., tr. from the German translation, DB).

I have already discussed the related meta-logical "trans-form" or *form-transcending ground in all concrete formulation* in the sense of a "foundational logic" (German: *Grundlogik*) (Bartosch 2015, tr. DB), or rather, "implicate logic" (Bartosch 2022a) of *ineffability* (Bartosch 2015, pp. 233–300): Just as *uncountable Unity*⁴¹ necessarily must include all difference (see further above), *the mystic cannot cease to speak*. Intellect mysticism does not lead to a state that is characterized by the simple non-articulation of words (inarticulateness). It goes beyond and rides along the difference, or cognitive *confinium*, of 'articulateness' and 'inarticulateness'. To simply remain non-articulate and to cease to speak (as did the early Greek philosopher Cratylus, allegedly) would *still mean to produce a sign within non-mystical language* (S, fS, fM, or other non-mystical language games). The simple privation of words does *not* and cannot represent the *intellect-mystical ineffability* of that which is implicitly "worded" (*verbatur*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1959a, p. 54) in and as any word. The non-articulation of words or, more generally speaking, the abstention from giving signs still "says something", too. The (meta)paradoxical situation here is, on the other hand, that the "pointing" of intellect mysticism (M) can indeed not be made explicit for the said reasons. Mysticism (M) *points at the act of pointing itself*; it means the application of the (in itself difference-free) difference to itself (Luhmann 2001, p. 245). This is also the real meaning of *Mantiq al-tayr*: Instead of the more common title *Conference of the Birds*, another (maybe even more) correct translation is *Logic/Language of the Birds*. In the sense of what has been said so far, this 'logic' cannot be the two-valued either-or logic in an Aristotelian sense, but only the *meta-logic of ineffability* itself. One has to remember the definition of poetry of Nur ad-Dīn Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī here. To him, poetry is "[t]he song of the bird of the intellect [... and t]he similitude of the world of eternity" (quoted in Ogunnaike 2022, p. 1). The expression '*mantiq al-tayr*' is actually taken from "verse 27:16, in which Solomon

says, ‘O people, we have been taught the language of the birds, and we have been given of all things. Truly this is the clear (*mubīn*) bounty” (3). Ogunnaike then states:

“As Muslim scholars and poets throughout the ages have noted, the word *mantiq* in this verse, commonly translated as “speech” or “language” [or “conference”], also means “logic”, expressing the close relationship between logic and poetry, while the second half of the verse conveys the all-encompassing nature of the latter as a bounty of clarifying exposition (another meaning of the term *mubīn*) and *wisdom, uniting all things*. (Ogunnaike 2022, p. 3, insertion and last italics DB)

Wohlfart and Kreuzer (1992) have opened the discourse to the transcultural dimension: From their angle, this can be taken as a case example for the *general* transcultural intellect-mystical mode of “giving signs”, namely in the sense of an articulate or “eloquent silence” (*beredtes Schweigen*). Egly A. Wyller makes the general remark that, in the sense of intellect mysticism (M), the (finite, DB) most *basic concept of the foundation* (“Grund-Begriff”) has to be “blasted”, so that the very *basic experience of the foundation* (“Grund-Erfahrung”) can be “harvested”. At the same time, Wyller hastens to emphasize that thinking itself cannot come to rest in this initial position of silence (in the sense of not giving signs). This would “mean giving up its own nature. [...] Silence would cease to speak as soon as thinking ceased its work” (Wyller 1995, p. 46, tr. DB).

In this sense of eloquent silence, the “master bird’s” name ‘Simorgh’ in the above quote from Attar of Nishapur is used as an allusion and as a *mystical aenigma*. In the Persian language of Attar’s *Conference of the Birds*, the name ‘Simorgh’ can be interpreted as a combination of ‘*si*’, meaning ‘thirty’, and ‘*morgh*’, which means ‘bird(s)’ (Sadeghi 2013). So in their quest for mystical “revelation”, a small collective of 30 remaining birds (out of a larger group that had started the journey but fails to reach the goal due to “excuses, doubt, and inaction” (Taghavi 2022, p. 1)) finally “finds” the master bird—“Thirtybird”—namely in the collective realization that they themselves, forming a unity of the one and the many, individually and collectively, *make manifest the master bird*. This is not in the least an allusion to the transformative experience of realizing the *Unity through difference*, or to formulate it in an alternative way, the *Unity of unity and difference* that defies any finite/finalizable conceptualization, but is the “implicate logical” (Bartosch 2022a) center of cognitive gravitation in the context of mysticism (M): “They look at both and see the two are one, [t]hat this is that, [and] that [is] this [...]” (see further above for full quote).

To use Max Scheler’s (1874–1928) German term, one can say that Nicolaus de Cusa’s works or Attar of Nishapur’s epic poem represent examples of the method of the implicit intellect-mystical *Aufweis* (Scheler 1921, p. 546). This semantic mode in mysticism (M) differs from the *Beweis* (German for ‘proof of’) in science (S) or philosophy that is restricted to two-valued Aristotelian or other non-dialectical logic. Please note the semantic relatedness and different prefixes of the words ‘*Beweis*’ and ‘*Aufweis*’ in this context—namely in the sense that the *Aufweis* indicates or

“shows something that has not been found yet. [...] An *Aufweis* may well be so constituted in such a way that it contains in its course intermediate argumentation and also various conclusions. *But the whole of the process* that is called ‘*Aufweis*’ *has only the same meaning as a pointing rod* with which we point to something and make it visible, so that the other may see it better, or see it at all”. (Scheler 1921, p. 546, tr. DB)

Against this background, it is possible to methodologically secure a new and general approach to intellect-mystical asceticism that correlates to modern approaches in philosophy and to a transcultural foundation, of course. One possible “run up” in this direction is provided in the context of the German philosophical tradition. Thinkers of the later Enlightenment, such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), did not address the possibilities of intellect mysticism (M), but rejected false mysticism and “*Schwärmerei*” (fM). With German Idealist thinkers like Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), the philosophical poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843),⁴² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), and espe-

cially Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854), the *meta-logikon* of mysticism (M) was reintroduced in a probably more advanced context of philosophy (Quero-Sánchez 2020) that also spurred the philosophical rehabilitation and re-emerging appreciation of intellect-mystical thinkers such as Meister Eckhart or Nicolaus de Cusa, from whom I draw here as well.

I propose to combine the possibilities that lie herein with an analysis that can be correlated to the much underrated and future-laden 20th-century German discourse of philosophical anthropology (Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner, Arnold Gehlen, etc.). In my view, it can help us understand the deeper foundations of mankind’s growing disintegration and how a *world-related*, intellect-mystical asceticism, *which is in keeping with the times in a multicivilizational context* (with many, possibly conflicting worldviews in play), can pave the way for humanity’s self-reintegration. Based on that, the derived cultural practices have to aim for a *transfiguration of planetary nature* by means of a transfiguration of the human *noosphere* “as a planetary phenomenon” (Vernadsky 1997) of generated meanings and related activities. It would be extremely furthering if *also* the leading, or rather, decision-making forces of future mankind could be motivated and enabled to undergo a thorough philosophical training in the sense of a revived and modernized approach to intellect-mystical asceticism (on an extended poly-cultural and also adjustable or pluralistic foundation that allows to choose from various civilizational horizons accordingly), namely as an integrating nexus of such a transfiguration of planetary nature. In most political cultures today, a very detrimental absence of such a higher form of self-realization can be witnessed. To avoid any misreading of this passage, I would like to emphasize that I am not talking about a modern version of Plato’s philosopher kings. But the *common* propagation of modernized approaches to intellect-mystical asceticism (on a transcultural philosophical basis) should also enable elites with different backgrounds to come together on the basis of such a mystical self-realization. (Again, I am not talking about a worldview but about a form of practice that can be traced to the shared principles that can be derived, amongst others, from all the historical backgrounds mentioned in this paper, including the Chinese ones further below, etc.) Especially in the Age of AI, a new approach to intellect-mystical asceticism can and should be propagated as a common and *public task*. It can and should be propagated not unlike the common approach toward forms of explicit learning—albeit, again, one has to bear in mind that intellect mysticism (M) does not convey a form of particular common knowledge or a worldview. It provides the opportunity to learn to be in touch with the source of all cognition and action while consciously keeping the awareness on one’s resulting process of thinking and of being in action. *As an exercise*, such kind of a self-realization (and the common propagation of it) could then function as a *tertium comparationis et concordiae*, namely as a condition of the possibility to form a *fully integrated* coherent “swarm” (remember the Simorgh!)—*integrating the cultural and civilizational differences of various social systems and subsystems and individual actors on the basis of the same Truth that is evident in the fully realized self-reflection* of the intellectual meta-logikon of the Unity of unity and difference.

In this context, mankind’s “emancipation from the organic barrier” (Cassirer 1985, p. 73, tr. DB), which also stands for our technology-enabled, cognitive, and consciousness-related *accelerating planetary disintegration* (individually and collectively), is to be read in a dialectical fashion. The human-made machinery, the *unique path that started with fire-making*, enables us to emancipate ourselves from the boundaries set by our physiological constitution. Distances that would take months to walk on foot are overcome in hours by plane, and in milliseconds via internet communication. On the other hand, the technological systems emancipate themselves from the organic context of the biosphere—and even from human decision-making processes themselves (AI). Future technology very likely will soon build and repair itself and take care of its energy resources. Technology, as a planetary system, is emancipating itself from its human foundation (which is a part of the biosphere).

What brings us back to the topic of intellect-mystical asceticism here is the general problem that our common form of thinking in these evolving contexts is still dominated by Aristotelian either-or distinctions *and is increasingly becoming a subservient and reactive element in this development*. In the transferred sense, the mental and technological “fire”⁴³ that we have “ignited” in the sense of an increasing energy and information release into our life-enabling environment⁴⁴ is taking over our humanity. The reason is that we cannot be in control of our minds as long as we just exist in view of the finite rational (and increasingly irrational) products of our uncoordinated and half-conscious, as well as increasingly outsourced, processes of cognition. We can only establish a livable position by additionally directing our awareness to its own source process. In the Age of AI and the convergence of all civilizational traditions, only the higher path that unveils the meta-logikon can lead to a new developmental process on a planetary scale. Cultural and civilizational aspects of all civilizations coincide into one pool of information. To metaphorically and maybe even to literally survive the upcoming developments, human intelligence has to learn and train, or rather, elevate itself to permanently rest in its own indifferent source of cognitive creativity—while all natural and extended or technological processes of distinction are unfolding and accelerating at the same time (as a personal process of experience but also in the sense of the self-organization of social systems). It will also enable individual consciousness to abide in different cultural traditions and relate to various civilizational pillars of planetary humanity at once—nurturing the self-formation of a growing nexus of transcultural learning. Only in such a self-reflective state of consciousness, in which the most basic *tertium comparationis* of human cognition (Bartosch 2015, pp. 15–17) becomes the resting point and the angular point of reflection itself, will the individual mind be able to enjoy the *freedom* to, so to speak, “ride” the growing and accelerating “wave” of information (based on differentiation) that its self-emancipating projection (AI) is unfolding in the sense of a new artificial “habitat” of our species. If we do not master this cumulative situation in a sustainable manner, it may very well lead to the extreme self-estrangement of the human mind (German: *Selbstentfremdung*). In my view, the only viable alternative that we should head for is the case where the extremely demanding situation leads to a new *general* level of intellective (an alternative term would be ‘noetic’) self-reflexivity that accompanies the process of finite rational cognition (as the consciousness of its own foundation) and that can help us to reintegrate and to correctly assign each element in a world of ever-growing complexity. In this sense, AI means an implicit call to master the form of self-reflexivity that reflects the most basic foundational logic or implicate logical “root” of thought. (It is referred to as the *meta-logikon* here.) If we do not realize this unity of the self-enfolding and the self-unfolding of our cognitive processes, each one of us might very likely be ending up as a biological “appendix” to an omnifarious artificial *rational* mega-set of self-iterating digi-technological differentiation processes—with most future generations soon to be helplessly carried away in the current of an exuberant transhuman noosphere. I think the alternative is more promising—and this alternative, which means the uncovering of the source of an extreme openness and situation-appropriateness in thinking and decision-making, is exactly that to which intellect mysticism pertains. It means the path towards a meta-cognitive self-realization which inherits a self-organizational potential that can lead to a gradual reintegration of all the planetary processes. In other words, the rebalancing of the planetary habitat starts with a fundamental individual reintegration of the human noosphere, that is, the overall process of human cognition as it is unfolding and manifesting itself in the form of a collective nexus of finite consciousness, on the basis of the capability of subjective consciousness to reflect back on itself (self-enfolding consciousness).

In view of the scientific field (S) of quantum physics, advances have been made to surpass classical logic in either-or distinctions,⁴⁵ while in modern logic the field of dialetheism (e.g., Priest 1995; Priest et al. 2024) provides a path toward the meta-logikon. Despite these developments and possibilities that also pay respect to situational and process aspects of reality, most of the political, economic, and other subsystems of human societies are still

helplessly stuck in *extremely* simplistic ways of thinking and the resulting dichotomies on the basis of terms that are over-defined when it comes to their conceptual intensions and *tragically* under-defined in view of extensions and a much more complex process of reality (Korzybski 2000, p. lxiv). The possibility to link particular questions regarding the interpretation of quantum mechanics (S) to the dimension of intellect mysticism (M) in a “parallel perspective” has been proposed many decades ago.⁴⁶ But such a transformative development is not encouraged, not to mention its absence in terms of general education. Under these conditions, even the most sophisticated monocentric adherence to basic classical habits of thought cannot stop its graceless echo in oversimplified ways of speaking and thinking in political and media contexts *that are not timely anymore at all*. They have not ceased to fuel the same old slaughterhouse of human self-deception in terms of populism, warmongering, racism, etc., in many societies. In fact, we should have already shifted to a mode of “trans-classical science” (e.g., Günther 1979, pp. 278–79) *that includes subjective consciousness, the observer, in the objective representations of our scientific observations*. In general, this is not (yet) the case, unfortunately. The central question is: Where will humans find meaning in life in the expanding torrent of the 21st century? And how can we overcome the general trait of our disintegration as a species?

In view of the last questions, however, the good news is that *not all human communities of the past have lived in conflict (the state of disintegration)* with their neighbors or the respective natural environments. This means a hint at the possibility of establishing a new form of general integration of our species at a planetary level. The “world-openness”⁴⁷ (Arnold Gehlen) and *special form of non-specialization* that characterize the human life form enable the current path of disintegration and *should also enable the species to adapt and to reintegrate at a higher level*, at the same time.

Immanuel Kant once demanded that the human being has to transform itself to the level of *Vernunftwesen* (rational being)—a term which did not only have ethical connotations to him, *but also cosmological ones*, even up to the level of and including speculations of more advanced extraterrestrial beings (Kant 1917, p. 331).⁴⁸ Kant’s term *Vernunftwesen* refers to a state of being which is *fully integrated into the fabric of the infinite universal nexus of the cosmos* (Kant 1938, p. 549). Without achieving this transformation towards reintegration, human beings will always be inferior to animals and other life forms—and would indeed have to be defined as helplessly deficient.⁴⁹ If we want to prove ourselves as a long-term sustainable aspect of this hypercomplex cosmic nature, of which we represent an integral element as receivers of our lives, we have to achieve and consciously pursue a re-integration into its fabric on a higher level of thought and intellection, namely, consciousness. Otherwise, our species will not be able to keep what the previous generations have prepared in terms of civilizational stability and convenience of survival.

However, in his view of reason, Kant more or less tried to circumvent the higher dimension of the *coincidentia oppositorum* and the meta-logikon of Unity through difference. Although Kant’s great successors in the discourse of German Idealism have tried to deal with this problem in the transcendental-philosophical reflection of reason, not much progress has been made in terms of a general implementation and further development of this revolution towards a higher holding ground in the meta-logikon of intellect mysticism. The fascinating, much further developed perspectives of 20th-century thinkers such as Alfred Korzybski (2000) or Gotthard Günther (1979, 1980, 1991) have provided more useful attempts, but have not experienced an appropriate impact. Instead, the *paradigmatic* physicalist and mechanistic modern worldview of the present time, that is, so-called ontological naturalism (see, e.g., Singh 1966, p. 367)—which may also have become predominant because of an inherent inability of German Idealism to properly include the element of inductive science (S) and the aspects of pre-dialectic (Aristotelian) logic in a more encompassing framework⁵⁰—totally excluded the factor of the logical foundations of consciousness. In my view, we need to advance *towards a new worldview* that includes the achievements of modern rationality and science (S), but is open to the higher forms of dialectical logic, multivalued logic, dialetheism, “poly-contextuality” (Gotthard Günther), and even the basis

of all human thought itself, that is, the “foundational” (Bartosch 2015, pp. 15–17) or rather, “implicate” (2022a) logic that is alluded to in the *Aufweis* of the ‘Unity of unity and difference’. It is here, in this sense of a very necessary second, *integrative* wave of intercultural enlightenment, *that we can go back to certain traditions of intellect mysticism that correlate to philosophical developments that are open to scientific reasoning at the same time* (corresponding to both modes on intellectual enfolding and rational unfolding).

The source—which is identical with the end of any singular thing at the same time⁵¹—is different from everything that is finite (concept, experience of “something”, a processual situation) in the sense that it cannot exclude anything finite—and is therefore in the very same sense indifferent to anything at the same time. In Nicolaus de Cusa’s terms, it is this ‘non-other/nothing else’ (*non aliud*) that provides the absolute uniqueness of anything (making it *nothing else* than itself), because only “the” *non-other* is none other than non-other: “*Non aliud est non aliud quam non aliud*” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1982b, p. 39). It is represented by the implicate logic of the meta-logikon (Unity of unity and difference), because it represents the higher *foundation* of the identity theorem $A=A$, namely, by presenting the latter’s dialectical integration into its own negation of the finite definition or specification of ‘A’. What is represented by the equal sign in ‘ $A=A$ ’ is itself based on the form of the *ternar* that presupposes that absolute sameness can only be conceived if that which is identical with itself is set apart from itself and reconnected in and with itself at the same time, negated and affirmed at the same time (see also Bartosch 2015, pp. 454–60; Schwaetzer 2011b, p. 204; 2011a, p. 17; Nikolaus von Kues 2011). The equal sign makes that which is one and identical with itself at the same time two. I would like to repeat Attar of Nishapur’s above-quoted words again. They point in the same direction: “They look at both and see the two are one, [t]hat this is that, that this [...]”. The difference/non-sameness is implicitly included in absolute sameness, and this implicate logical form of the equal sign, which is to be unfolded in three steps or dimensions of itself (see also Schwaetzer 2011a, pp. 12, 22; 2009, pp. 150–51), alludes once more to the hidden and ineffable root of *all* manifestations and self-realizations in the sense of intellect mysticism.

This is also to say that this *same* intellect-mystical end of philosophy has been expressed in *different ways and different languages at different times* in the same sense of a higher form of reflection. This highest possible form of *intellection* is not a particular trait of European or “Western” philosophy. For example—I hope the small sidesteps are permitted at this point—in ancient Mesoamerican (Toltec) thinking, the meta-logikon is implied by a highest “deity” which is “at the same time unity and duality” (Leon-Portilla 1970, p. 30, tr. DB). *Mutatis mutandis*, Nicolaus de Cusa hints at Cupid. The Roman deity symbolizes the Unity through the difference of male and female elements (Nicolaus de Cusa 1932, p. 52)—which is also a reminder regarding the image of the *two lovers* Salaman and Absal, whom Ibn Sīnā introduced as an *aenigma* or intellect-mystical “σύμβολον” of the meta-logical Unity of finite reason and divine speculation (see further above and Mehren 1891, p. 11). In ancient China, the meta-logikon is similarly represented by the world principles *yīn–yáng* 陰陽, that is, two inseparable poles of universal “femineity” and “masculinity” in a dynamic, life-bestowing process that represent the *One* that is *at the same time two* (see also Bartosch 2015, pp. 68–115). In Heraclitus’s thought, the *same* implicate-logical root of mystical intellection is alluded to in almost all of his aphorisms, for example, when he says that “the way up and down is the same” (Heraclitus quoted in Kahn 2001, pp. 74–75 [CIII]). From a general transcultural angle, for example, also in comparison of *yīn–yáng* thought and Heraclitus of Ephesus (Wohlfart 1998), “we have to assume that the implicate (self-) enfold[ing] of the ‘supremae regionis’ (Bartosch 2015, [pp.] 370, 812) in which all logical oppositions coincide must be older than the Aristotelian logic (also Günther 1976, [p.] 199 [75])” (Bartosch 2022a, p. 115, insertions DB).

Here, one also has to note that Confucius (Kǒngzǐ 孔子, 551–479 BCE) was the first to ask himself the question: “Do I know?” In his *immediate* self-response “[...] ‘I do not know’, thesis (knowing) and antithesis (non-knowing) coincide *without alternative* while the tension of the contradiction, that is, its undecidedness, is preserved”⁵² (Bartosch 2022a,

p. 110, first italics DB). Obviously, Socrates, like countless Western thinkers after him, *was motivated by the same—implicate logical—foundation*⁵³ that is *ineffably “worded” (verbatum)* (Nicolaus de Cusa 1959a, p. 54) in every word in absolute sameness. The resulting *knowing non-knowing* (German: *wissendes Nichtwissen*),⁵⁴ which represents the meta-logikon as the *Unity of affirmation and negation of knowing*, is the infinite point of flux of all possible theory that is not only the manifest foundation of every valid form of mystical intellection but also the sole guiding light that holds the promise of a reintegration of humanity with itself and the (infinite) cosmic environment today. The reason is that it can help us to *render our thinking into the process of an open flow that allows us to manage the increase in complexity that we face*, realizing that the goal is identical with everything that we encounter and experience and our own self-evidence, namely as one continuous unfolding of an in(de)finite realm of possibility: This Truth speaks to the mystic in the insight that “[the form] ‘is’ in any case not only the boundary, it also contains the two sides that are separated by it. It has, one could say, an open world reference, and perhaps this is underlying the enigmatic phrase ‘distinction is perfect continence’” (Luhmann 2001, p. 245, insertions, italics, and tr. DB). In other words: “The line or boundary which draws all individual forms is in itself without any limit; it is in [itself] undivided” (Bartosch 2021, p. 136, insertion DB). Luhmann also referred to this by saying that “the distinction is containing itself” (Luhmann 2001, p. 245, tr. DB), namely in the sense that if “the distinction contains itself, which means infinite self-referentiality, it can itself not be separated from anything else in the world” (Bartosch 2022a, p. 117).

This has implications for our understanding of science and, on the other hand, for our ethical conduct of life and social interaction. In an abstract sense, a single point in the universe can be looked at from an infinite number of angles (Bartosch et al. 2023, p. 131). To allude to Cusanus’s *coincidentia oppositorum* once more: The point, which is infinitely small, is a representation of the infinitely vast.⁵⁵ “From one point of view, it is the whole, and from another point of view, it is the part. Different points of view will also produce different results” (Yan 2023, p. 89). Already Nicolaus de Cusa pointed out the consequences for our understanding of science (S) in relation to its research objects. In reality, everything is a *singularitas*, that is, everything in the world is *infinitely precisely defined*, and our cognition—especially our orientation by means of conceptual intensions which leads to an “under-definition” (Alfred Korzybski) in regard to the extensions of the singular case⁵⁶—can always only be a finite approximation towards the infinitely precise *confinium* of each singularity’s form-process and self-unfolding being (see also Leinkauf 1994).

Mutatis mutandis, this general understanding can be transferred in view of a possible future “trans-classical science” (Gotthard Günther) (S), namely because

“[...] every ontological datum of the world must be considered an intersection of an infinite number of contextures, the fact that—any two data we choose to describe in their common two-valued relations belong to one contexture does not exclude that the very same data may also—apart from the contextuality chosen for our description—belong separately to additional and different contexturalities”. (Günther 1979, p. 297, italics DB)

In our everyday social interaction and image of other people (as well as ourselves), this is paralleled by the insight that, when “a definition is given in terms of [A]ristotelian ‘properties’, [f]or instance [...] when we] verbally ‘define’ ‘man’ as a ‘featherless biped’, ‘rational animal’, and what not [...] no listing of ‘properties’ could possibly cover ‘all’ the characteristics of Smith1, Smith2, etc., and their inter-relations” (Korzybski 2000, p. lviii).

From “here”, Kant’s old question “*Was sollen wir tun?*” (What should we do?) can be correlated to the very general answer to the necessity of an integrative turn of humanity in a completely new way and in a higher sense of intellect-mystical asceticism: It receives a guiding light in the form of the semantic “pointing rod” (Max Scheler) of the Unity of unity and difference, or rather the *implicate* logic of a constantly-to-be-cultivated knowing non-knowing—namely, and to stay with Nicolaus de Cusa’s previously mentioned philosophical *aenigma*, in the sense of progressing along the “top” of the “wall of the coincidence of enfolding and unfolding” (*muris coincidentiae complicationis et explicationis*) (Nicolaus de

Cusa 2000, p. 40, tr. DB), that is, along the *confinium* in the autopoietic process of all mental, imaginative, representational, and experiential aspects of the life process. The general insight that humankind somehow has to find a mode of reintegration that transcends the restrictions and boundaries of particular times, cultures, and worldviews (with itself and the planetary or even cosmic environment) therefore leads to the more specific insight that this necessarily also implies a transformation of consciousness, namely in the higher form of self-reflection to which great thinkers and intellectual mystics of many places and times have alluded. If we gain the “One taste” of the insight that the Unity necessarily is to be found in the difference, or rather, that boundless Unity has to be identical with the in-itself-boundless difference that sets all finite units and cognitive self-orientation (as its own medium of representation), we have to approach a third step or problem: How should we practically realize what we should do?

4. The Effort and Stages of Practical Realization: An Outline

From a philosophical perspective, the related practice of transformative holistic integration should be open to be inspired by all systems of self-transformation that humanity has brought forth during the course of world history. This includes the possibility of abstracting from particular original contexts or even trying to “translate” the more specific correlations to particular religious worldviews into more general, or rather, context-independent perspectives. In view of the shared intellectual foundation of the Unity of unity and difference, comprehensive forms of mystic self-transformation and *training*—that is, ways of an *instantaneous* “translation” of the implicate logical “(trans-)form” of the thinking of thinking⁵⁷ (representing the Unity of unity and difference) *into action*—can be developed that fit the necessities of our distorted global age. It is important to learn to view this training of mystical consciousness and, with it, its constant manifestation in action (which is conveyed in the form of the image of walking on the wall of paradise (*murus paradisi*) in the last segment)—not as an escape mechanism, *but, on the contrary, as a path to general and holistic integration*. An important element of this final step of reintegration is to integrate the intellectual insight (that manifests itself in the form of knowing non-knowing) in the form of a continuous practice and effort with the realm of emotions or—more philosophically speaking—the aspect of our experience and existence that starts to unfold on the basis of “aesthetic sympathy” (Lipps 1898, pp. 222–24).

The concept of aesthetic sympathy was introduced by the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851–1914), a renowned and important thinker of his day:⁵⁸

“How do we know about other persons? How is it that these exist for us at all? What we perceive when another person confronts us is a gestalt, an outer appearance, a sum of life expressions. But this is not the other person, *I mean the emotional or mental, the suffering, rejoicing, hoping, fearing, etc., personality of the other*. The image of this person can only be composed of elements of our own personality [...]. *The image that we have of the other person is the idea of ourselves being attached to another body, that is, in the sense of a modified idea of ourselves according to the nature of this other body and the particularity of this other body’s expressions of life*”. (Lipps 1898, pp. 222–23, my translation, bracketing and emphasis; quoted from Bartosch 2022b, p. 42)

This *pre-intellective* state of consciousness (exclusively representing its self-unfolding/*explicatio* in finite reasoning and the related imagination and emotions) can be raised to the highest quality level or “purest” emergence of aesthetic sympathy, namely of the “We” that is called *love*. From the point of view of aesthetic sympathy, love means *the most intense practical and most complete realization* of the Unity through difference under the conditions of finiteness: One can discern several preceding, “lower” stages that transcend the privation or even opposition of love (hatred), the lowest of which is mere sufferance, followed by (gradually ascending in terms of quality) tolerance, recognition, and appreciation. In comparison to love, these manifestations of a “we-relationship” are inferior and less complete. In the context of these phenomenologies of the We, the focus of

personal consciousness is positing itself on the other side, as opposed to the other, *projecting its own personality into the "other's" gestalt*, because in "my" finite, natural perspective, "I" cannot take the observer perspective of the individual experience of the "other". All of these phenomenologies of the "We" are implicitly *pre-intellective*.

Love is obviously even more intense than appreciation and represents the higher perspective of the implicate logic of the *non-other (non aliud)* (to refer to Cusanus's term once more), in the context of which I "see" and feel that the other person *cannot be separate from what "I" represent*. In a higher sense, "I" and the "other" are the "We" that transcends the reciprocal reflection of one another in each other. This is the *implicit intellect-mystical (M) foundation and reality of sympathy* as realized from the higher plane of an awareness of the meta-logikon. And in its most extended form, this "We" is to be conjectured as infinite, cosmic, all-transcendent, and all-encompassing. *The constant exercise and maintenance of this intellective vision (or visio intellectualis) of Unity and boundless ground through all differentiation (as a process of the self-unfolding of Unity) means the realm of the constant exercise of self-(trans)formation and self-formation. This "(trans-)form", or rather, self-unfolding of Truth as integrative intellect-mystical asceticism is truly an "asceticism" in the way that it represents the path of transformative, holistic integration based on universal Love.*

The intellect-mystical Truth⁵⁹ that is alluded to herein is that—at least as a prerequisite for the reintegration of humanity—we have not only to learn to "see" but also to practice⁶⁰ the Unity through the difference of both sides. Nicolaus de Cusa's earlier-mentioned *aenigma* of the "wall of paradise" (*murus paradisi*) for the true—infinite creative—foundation of the mental process is not just to be taken as a "static point rod". I said that we have to walk along on top of this "wall", which alludes to the *unifying process of differentiation* between 'paradise' and 'non-paradise', or put differently, positive and negative, thesis and anti-thesis. The finite is occurring within an infinite foundation, that is, our cognitive processes, our finite reasoning itself, is constantly *manifesting* the infinite, boundless, through the boundary (finiteness) set. The knowing non-knowing of intellective mystical spirituality means exactly the awareness of the self-realization of this higher "taste" of wisdom in the personal process of the self-unfolding Unity of unity and difference. In the ascetic practice that translates the *initial* intellective "aha experience"⁶¹ into a now liberated existence, this is experienced as the emotion of unrestricted Love. Without this realization, the initial intellect-mystical insight would be pointless. The mystical Truth only emerges to fruition by means of its reintegrating practice.

In this sense, we can (and must) look for models of mystical asce(n)ticism that can be studied in their historical and civilizational contexts (keyword: worldview), but can also be adapted in the more general philosophical sense described further above. It is the task of our time to develop an integrative form of mystical asceticism that preserves and transcends the traditional models *at the same time*. The goal has to be the transcultural planetary discourse and scholarly collective of practitioners of wisdom—striving for the ideal⁶² that has been *variously* expressed in a myriad of terms in the philosophical traditions of various cultures and civilizations, such as *homines perfecti* (Nicolaus de Cusa), *shèngrén* 聖人 (Wáng Yángmíng 王陽明), or *Urbild des göttlichen Menschen* (Immanuel Kant 1968), (A 569–570/B 597–598) 513).⁶³ With this "permeable problem horizon" (Bartosch 2015, p. 17) of traditional philosophies and the possibilities of present-day systematic reflection in mind, I would like to turn to a model presented by the Central Asian master and healer Ibn Sīnā.

This great thinker, who was born at a central node of the ancient Silk Roads (Bukhara), has also influenced the Central European developments of intellective mysticism (e.g., Meister Eckhart, Nicolaus de Cusa). Namely in the sense of his "statement [that] 'the best of men is one whose soul is perfected by becoming an *intellect in act*, and *who has acquired morals that constitute the practical virtues*'" (Ibn Sīnā quoted in Arba'iyah 1994, p. 56, insertion and italics DB), Ibn Sīnā has much to provide in terms of our problem of reintegration by way of mystical asceticism. Besides, Ibn Sīnā stands close to the present approach of a transcultural entanglement of thought: One just has to think of his contemporary scientific synthesis (S) of elements of Persian, Greek, Indian, and Chinese medicine.

Ibn Sīnā's mature *analytical* positions on self-perfection and self-realization—which, in fact, represent a systematic outline of transformative holistic reintegration—are to be found in his work *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt* (*Remarks and Admonitions*), where he discusses Sufism (Ibn Sīnā 1996). The interesting and extremely useful element in this is that Ibn Sīnā's *analysis of the process* of self-perfection in mystical asceticism is more detailed and systematic than in many other cases of the traditional literature. For example, in the thought of Nicolaus de Cusa one can discern only three possibilities: the ones who do not care (the non-exercising “evil-doers”), those who consciously tread on the path of self-realization and self-perfection, that is, the “sonship of God”⁶⁴ (*filiatio Dei*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1932, pp. 163–64; 2008, p. 663; Bartosch 2015, pp. 603–18), and the fully realized, totally unselfish, fully self-integrated “perfect human beings” (*homines perfecti*) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1982b, p. 52; Bartosch 2015, p. 645) at the top of the ladder, so to speak.⁶⁵ However, Cusanus does not develop a concrete plan of practice or realization in regard to these three stages of self-realization (with references to them scattered in various works).⁶⁶

Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, presents us with a more detailed and more complete systematic outline and conceptuality of intellect-mystical transformation and reintegration. His blueprint can be used to project it on the content that has been laid out in this paper so far. To start with, Ibn Sīnā uses the term *murīd* (‘adept’) to designate the seeker of the absolute Truth of the active intellect (*intellectus agens*). For our purpose, that is, *the adaptation of useful elements of Ibn Sīnā's outlook in view of our times*, it is important to abstract from the original context of the accompanying Neoplatonic cosmology here (Davidson 1992, pp. 74–83). In the following, I am reading Ibn Sīnā in an extended (post-Kantian and post-Hegelian) consciousness-theoretical sense (*bewusstseinsphilosophisch*). This is to say that consciousness and self-consciousness are emanations of its pre-mediated (time-transcendent) *implicate logical* form, which I call the meta-logikon—namely the autopoietic process of the self-unfolding of the Unity of unity and difference. It points into the direction of the “[*wholly actual*] cause that makes our souls pass from potentiality to actuality in respect to intelligible thoughts’, and the cause is the ‘active intellect’” (Ibn Sīnā in Davidson 1992, p. 87, insertion by Davidson, italics DB).

In *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt*, we find that Ibn Sīnā distinguishes the adept (*murīd*) of intellect-mystical asceticism from *two* other characterizations, the carriers of which cannot reach the level of true self-perfection according to his views. Their path leads toward what has been defined above as mystification (fM). These two are characterized as the *ignorant ascetic* and the *ignorant worshipper*:

“[1] *Asceticism for one who is not a knower* is a kind of business deal, as if one buys the delights of the second life with the delights of the present one. But [only] for the knower it is a kind of abstinence from that which distracts one's innermost thought from the Truth and an elevation over everything other than the Truth. [2] *Worship for one who is not a knower* is a kind of business deal, as if one acts in the present life for a salary that one will receive in the second life as a retribution and a reward”. (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 82, italics and insertions DB)

For Ibn Sīnā, only the one is considered a *murīd* (‘adept’) who seeks Truth and perfection, also the perfection of his own actions and behavior, *for their own sake*. This is why only the *murīd* (adept) is considered a ‘knower’ (‘*Ārif*’): “The name ‘knower’ is reserved for one who disposes one's thought toward the sanctity of divine power, seeking the perpetual illumination of the light of the Truth into one's innermost thought” (81). The “light of truth” is to be read in the sense of the meta-logikon of the Unity through difference/Unity of unity and difference, manifesting itself as actual infinity through the realm of finite (“*ratio-nal*”) cognition and representation of living creatures and “things”. Based on this boundless foundation of all “manifestations” of intellect mysticism, Ibn Sīnā emphasizes:

“But for the knower [‘*Ārif*’], [asceticism] is a kind of exercise of one's faculties (*himamih*), including the estimative and imaginative powers of one's soul, to orient them by habit from the side of error to the side of Truth. Thus they become re-

ceptive to the private innermost thought of the soul, so that, when this thought seeks the revelation of Truth, these powers will not be in conflict with it". (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 82, italics and insertion in square brackets DB)

The 'private, innermost thought of the soul' can be related to the thinking of thinking in the Neoplatonic sense of *nóēsis noēseōs* (νόησις νοήσεως)—which represents the *self-differentiation of the same* ($A=A$) that enables all finite conceptualization and the condition of the possibility of the cognition and determination of single "objects". I have already said that the "One taste" of the implicate logic that it represents (Unity through difference/Unity of unity and difference) includes what Ibn Sīnā refers to as "estimative and imaginative powers of one's soul" here.

In this context, the *murīd* (adept) represents the first stage of the realization of the knower (in the sense of the higher Truth represented by knowing non-knowing): "The first step in the knowers' movement is that which they themselves call 'willingness' (*al-irāda*)" (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 85). This "willingness" is special in the sense that it does not motivate the translation of a concept into the encountered environment but is self-referentially directed towards the cultivation and perfection of the subject-objectivity of the self in its encompassing loving self-identification as "We". It represents a higher form of "philosophical belief" (Karl Jaspers) in the sense of "a characterization of genuine faith [*ein Merkmal echten Glaubens*], namely the certainty of truth, which I cannot prove" (Jaspers 1948, p. 11, tr. DB), because, in the sense of intellect mysticism (M), it is self-directed at the very foundations and conditions of the possibility of any forms of proving or providing proof of something itself. It has to be discerned from the religious belief in a mythological (non-intellect-mystical) narrative or the scientific belief in a contemporary theoretical paradigm (Bartosch 2019a, pp. 47–49), because it is neither unfounded in the use of imagination nor related to the exploration of *particular* empirical data (S).

However, at this level of 'willingness' (*al-irāda*), this is not yet reflected in the sense of the intellective Truth of the Unity of unity and difference. In terms of the gradual realization of the mystical path, and although somehow self-attracted by the still unconscious dimension of the meta-logikon, the awareness in the willingness of the *murīd* (adept) is still pre-intellective and emerges in correlation to the medium of the (intellect-descendent) rational mind (as the functionality and process of the finite unfolding of the intellect), that is, in relation to finite conceptualization and a differentiating "either-or" two-valued logic that excludes the (higher, implicate) meta-logikon. On the other hand, the directionality of the willingness already *implicitly foreshadows the form* of the intellective reality of thinking of thinking, namely in the mystical sense of the (trans-)form of the *Unity through the difference* of the knower and the known (see further above, my reference to Plotinus). As a manifestation of genuine faith (see further above), this willingness means the motivation towards something that cannot yet be comprehended. It is the precondition for the initial insight of *knowing non-knowing*. Although implicitly or unconsciously present in the willingness of the *murīd*, the Unity of the boundary of the concept and the infinity of the boundary itself (the undividedness of the "wall" itself, see further above) has not yet been consciously realized at this initial stage of intellect-mystical asceticism.

On the basis of the 'willingness' (*al-irāda*) to realize the perfect, or rather, perfectly integrated self, the knower (*Ārif*) has to accomplish a second dimension on the path of the adept (*murīd*) that integrates the former stage of development. This relates to *the realization by constant exercise itself*:

"The knower needs spiritual exercise. This [...] is directed towards three goals: [...] remove from the path of choice whatever is other than the Truth [...],] to render the commanding soul obedient to the tranquil soul so that the power of imagination and that of estimation will be attracted to the ideas proper to the saintly affairs [...]. The third is to render the innermost thought sensitive to attention". (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 85)

In this intellect-mystical context, ‘whatever is other than the Truth’ means the state of consciousness when the knower is *detached* from, or rather unconscious of *non-differentiatedness* of differentiation itself (that is, the knower is not yet familiar with the level of knowing non-knowing) and *attached to one or more of the “products” in the stream of this permanent act of differentiation* instead. This can be a particular concept, a memory, an association constantly held in view (or a conglomerate of finite thoughts, concepts, images, particular feelings, etc.)—maybe even in the sense of mystification/*Schwärmerei*. The Truth that Ibn Sīnā alludes to comes with absolute spontaneity and the most uninhibited process of finite experience. The only “thing” that counts is the relation of the self to itself in the insight of the infinite ground of the constant unfolding of finite experience(s). This exercise means the key to the vision of the all-encompassing (to refer back to Nicolaus de Cusa’s expression) ‘*non-other*’ (*non aliud*) in the process of finite experience in our embodied perspective of time and space.

Ibn Sīnā’s ‘tranquil soul’ refers to the foundation of the ‘commanding soul’. As the center of volition, the latter is therefore supposed to realize the former’s basic trait: Those who focus their awareness in the non-differentiated Unity that is constantly represented *through* the process—or rather as the superordinate faculty or, so to speak, “unbound apex” of (creative or transformative) differentiation—come to rest in all movement. They stay calm and tranquil within all change, formation, and movement, especially also in relation to their “*e-motions*”. This most original ataraxia of consciousness results from the knower’s (‘*Ārif*’) awareness and practical realization of the Truth (which can also be imagined in the sense of de Cusa’s *aenigma* of the to-be-made-constant walk on the *muris paradisi*): The *murīd* (adept) does not fall on either side of any of the finite conceptualizations and judgments that spring forth from the non-conceptualizable foundation of their formation itself. Therefore, the “knowing ones”, that is, those who practice the superordinate cognitive “(trans-)form” of knowing non-knowing, “stand firm” and unattached in the constant flow of experiences, cognitions, volitions, and emotions. In this sense, there is tranquility in their constant change, silence in the eloquence with which the *murīd* (adept) handles his/her “saintly affairs”.

Rendering the ‘innermost thought sensitive to attention’ is important to keep focused on the vision of the true Unity that constantly runs through all particular experience, which *necessarily* springs forth *with that Unity and through it*, because the unboundedness of Unity would not be conceivable without its *finalization* of experience in its co-creative differentiating function. We also need attention to become aware when we are detached from the Truth—namely to be able to correct the detachment and to reintegrate with this very basic and self-evident origin of our self. In this sense, the “sensitivity” to attention is an important *conditio sine qua non* to maintain the functional relation between the original tranquility and the *reality-setting* (“commanding”), consciously experiencing layer of our life process—and therefore to be able to constantly “remove from the path of choice whatever is other than the Truth” (see above, Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 85).

Based on these three basic methodological pillars, the knower (‘Ārif) and practitioner of intellectual Truth has to master nine ascetic stages of self-realization to perfect himself to the utmost extreme, according to Ibn Sīnā:

First, spiritual exercise will lead him to momentarily glimpses of self-evidence in light of the Truth in the above-stated sense of impartial awareness of the cognitive precondition of all possible partial, therefore only “truth-like”, judgements. Secondly, upon further upholding of the exercise, “[h]e is then absorbed in those overwhelming moments [of insight into the foundations of all reasoning and action] until they overcome him even while not exercising. [...] Thus, he almost sees the Truth in everything” (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 86, insertions DB). One might add that this “[...] process reveals an ‘ecstatic’ quality, akin to the union with the divine of Sufi dervishes who dance until they can’t remember the difference between themselves and the dance” (Doyle 2011, p. 899). As a third step, the knower has to solve the problem of his own reaction to “the experience of conjunction before and after familiarity with the Truth” (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 86). This is to be interpreted as the dealing with

the shift from a consciousness that had not been familiar with its source-level and therefore alternated between, or rather, *differentiated* between conjunction (partial unity) and non-conjunction (difference), namely in the sense of two-valued Aristotelian logic (representing a derived form of cognition as its systematization)—and the self-conscious awareness of unbound conjunction through all difference/differentiation (one can think of Cusanus's *murus paradisi* example here). On the fourth level, a stable knowledge of the Truth, self-conscious “immersedness” in the unbound Unity of the world's process, is attained, so that “the lightning becomes a clear flame” (86–87).

For the *murīd* (adept), this also means the conversion of his moments “into tranquility” (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 86), namely in the above-stated sense of the tranquil soul (ataraxia). Ibn Sīnā alludes to this in the sense of a fifth level of self-realization in intellect-mystical asceticism: In the sense of a to-be-made-permanent *coincidentia* of an unshakeable ataraxia and the full “emotionality” of life's experience, it means tranquility while being immersed in all processual forms and occurrences of action and activity that one can imagine. Prior to this stage, the practitioner's consciousness is quasi-reflecting the present delimited content of the experience. Here, the focus shifts to the “mirror surface” instead of the objects and situations that the “mirror” (of consciousness) is presenting (regarding this intellect-mystical metaphor or *aenigma*, see further above, the first segment). This decrease, as Ibn Sīnā puts it, in corresponding “manifestation” (87) leads to the practitioner being “present while being absent, and stationary while marching on” (87). This stage of self-reference comes with heightened awareness and attention regarding the experiencing foundation in the experience. The notion of being present while being absent may be compared to training the attention to remain conscious and self-aware during sleep in certain Buddhist practices.⁶⁷

The sixth step of intellect-mystical self-realization means to reach the ability to enter such stages of consciousness at will (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 87), which is to say that the knower—or rather, the ascetic practitioner—reaches the stage of permanence of this encompassing quality of self-realization of the Unity of unity and difference. This leads to the seventh level of self-realization, in which the adept's development emancipates itself from his will-iness (*al-irāda*). It means that the knower's (*‘Ārif*)

[...] situation does not depend on a wish. Rather, whenever he notices one thing, he also notices another, *even if his noticing is not for the purpose of consideration*. Thus, it is available to him to move away from the world of falsehood to the world of Truth, remaining in the latter, while the ignorant move around him”. (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 87, italics DB)

Here the shift from finite non-intellective reasoning (exclusively ‘either-or’) to mystical intellection (Unity *through* difference) *has become permanent*. While those who are “ignorant” of this consciousness-level of intellection believe they know while they do not, the knower knows and “sees” that the finite concepts and processes of finite reasoning cannot reach and encompass their own *infinite* source. This is the nature of his *knowing non-knowing* (*docta ignorantia*) and this is why he is “un-knowing” in a superordinate sense: While, of course, he is in a process of thinking in finite terms like the “ignorant” (those who do not know that they do not know), he also constantly “sees” (in the sense of permanent intellection) these manifestations of the process of differentiation and (re)cognition (that we call thinking) as the self-unfolding of that which cannot be recognized by means of differentiation—and which is yet ineffably present in this process of differentiation as its unfathomable ground. In this sense, as he notices a finite product of reasoning, a concept or a “thing” in the experience, he also notices “another”—which is at the same time implicitly present in the former, representing the mystical Unity of the unity and difference of the Infinite and the finite *through the finite as its manifestation*: This “other” is not another finite concept or “thing” but at the same time the reflection of the *non-other* that is equally present in all its finite manifestations (representing an unceasing process towards their infinite end).

The eighth level is characterized as “becoming a replica of Truth [the meta-logikon, in my terminology] while remaining aware of oneself” (Ibn Sīnā 1996, pp. 87–88, lower case DB), while level nine is described as “awareness of nothing but the Truth: real conjunction” (88, lower case DB). These two levels refer to the highest dimensions of self-realization and perfection, because they mark the crossing “from spiritual exercise to attainment of Truth” (87). Level eight is characterized by an awareness of the foundational self-reference in the Unity of unity and difference of knower and Truth in which the knower “is still reluctant” (88). At this stage, the difference between the knower as a “polished mirror” (87) and the infinite Truth manifesting through its finite creation has a stronger accent—it is maintained as the last shelter of familiarity. Level nine, that is, *the level of absolute completeness*, means the non-conceptualizable self-absorption of the awareness of this last difference in the Unity that is constantly present in setting even this most fundamental difference in self-referentiality. With this, the path of the individual “philosophical believer” (Jaspers 1948, p. 11; see also Bartosch 2015, pp. 591–600; 2019a) is completed in itself and he or she has become a perfect Knower (*‘Ārif*), according to Ibn Sīnā.

It is important to emphasize that the intellect-mystical path of human reintegration that Ibn Sīnā envisions obviously *cannot and must not be interpreted as seclusion from the world and other human beings*. The author provides a clear warning: “Beware that your smartness and detachment from the commoners do not make you go on denying everything [...], for that is rashness and weakness” (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 107). On the contrary, in view of the aforesaid one has to acknowledge that true realization of the intellect-mystic ascetic’s goal must mean *complete unification with an imperfect environment* and ataraxia as well as “giving signs” (Wohlfart and Kreuzer 1992; Wohlfart 1998) in the sense of eloquent silence (not inarticulateness in the sub- or pre-intellective sense!) in the face of an intellect-blind and, thus, philosophically underdeveloped environment.⁶⁸

“The [perfect K]nower is bright-faced, friendly, and smiling. Due to his modesty, he honors the young as he honors the old. He is pleased with the unclearheaded as he is with the alert. How could he not be bright-faced when he enjoys the Truth and everything other than the Truth, for he sees the Truth [in the implicate logical sense of the Unity of the unity and difference of infinite, superordinate Truth] even in everything other than the Truth [cognition in terms of concepts and finite things]! Furthermore, how could he not treat all as equal when, *to him*, all are equal! *They are objects of mercy, preoccupied with falsehoods*”. (Ibn Sīnā 1996, p. 89, italics and insertions DB)

The process, described above, marks nine distinctive stages of intellect-mystical ascetic self-*enfolding* that consistently ends with the full reintegration of the practitioner in the encompassing social context and, of course, with the surrounding nature. The practitioner is transformed into the Knower, entering a stage of unshakeable happiness and ataraxia at the same time. I believe that this realization of the core dimension of human cognition can lead to the establishment of a form of feasible equilibrium of human consciousness even in times of exponential growth and acceleration of artificial rationality and knowledge (AI)—which may be seen as an (exteriorized) expression of the same immanent-transcendent meta-logikon. In the direction toward the latter, the intellect-mystical ascetic can find peace.

5. Conclusions

The question of the actuality of transformative philosophy such as the systematic approach to mystical reintegration in the thought of Nicolaus de Cusa and/or Ibn Sīnā, to whom I have mostly referred, finds a positive answer. The foundational nature of mystical insight, namely intellection as the self-reflection of the origin of all cognition and human orientation in the experience of life—that is, the self-conscious and even meta-conscious realization of the implicate logic that is inherent in the formula of the Unity of unity and difference—is of perennial value in developing approaches to solve the human crisis of our times: Neither technology nor science have solved or can solve our problems. The

ambivalence of partial (“truth-like” or “truth-approximate”) knowledge and its application in the form of evolving technology in the context of cognitive processes that lack self-referentiality is necessarily ambivalent. On the contrary, the disintegration of humans and their environment may be more extreme today than ever before. The reason is the lack of foundation in source-directed thinking, namely in relation to technological and other practices. The emphasis today is clearly on the *unfolding* and not the *enfolding* of thought.

From a philosophical angle, scientific development and technological progress are not meant to fulfill private economic interest (which might be considered as a motivating subordinate element), or the accumulation of partial knowledge alone, but should *primarily* lead to the (self-)reflection of their implicit, or rather implicate-logical principle itself. Because this is not generally the case today, from an overall perspective, human thought and action—despite becoming more and more differentiated and complex—currently lack overall coherence and reveal themselves as an extremely destructive process. There is neither an awareness of the shared intellectual foundation of this self-unfolding of finite cognitive production nor is the human thought process coordinated in a pluralistic and mutually *complementary* sense as a whole process (that is, without falling into the possible trap that Hegel described as “negative freedom” (Hegel 2003, p. 38)). In the vicinity of our possible self-destruction as a species, it is worthwhile to render Martin Heidegger’s *bon mot* that “only a god can save us” (Heidegger 1981) in the direction of an intellect-mystical approach that is paired with a new form of “trans-classical” (Gotthard Günther, see further above) science that can deal with the perspective a boundless, or rather, cosmic foundation of human consciousness. What has been discussed as knowing non-knowing represents the actuality of proper reflection of the mystical (non-conceptualizable) foundation of all conceptualization. In the sense of a most ancient, profound, and yet at the same time (always) new and higher way of dealing with thought and its process, it provides a first starting point for the reintegration of the human species.

Moreover, this level of human intellection (M) is not contradictory to (classical) science (S) but is to be viewed as the latter’s pre-condition, or rather encompassing *and yet immanent* source of conceptualization and logical operations. It is no wonder that the quality of scientific reasoning and experimental approaches (S) had gained new historical heights in the cases of both Ibn Sīnā’s and Nicolaus de Cusa’s work (e.g., Avicenna 2009; Nicolaus de Cusa 1983; see also see also Bartosch 2015, pp. 507–19). Both philosophers were able to achieve new grounds in science (S), because they were highly aware and grounded in the superordinate intellect-mystical dimension (M) of their thinking (as a self-unfolding process). Intellect mysticism pertains to a higher and more basic (implicit) dimension that represents the root and base of all finite reasoning and scientific theory-building itself. The intellect-mystical “vision” is expressed by alluding to it in the form of *aenigmata* and symbols that relate to the knowing non-knowing as the awareness of the meta-logikon or self-*enfolding* of thinking.

“And [... this higher intellectual] symbol, in turn, is the seed of new knowledge. This is how an organism develops—and one can interpret it in any way one sees fit—a scientific [S] organism. Science [S] always grows from symbol [in relation to the source of differentiation]. But the reverse is not necessarily true”. (Friedmann 1949, p. 3, tr. DB)

The “reverse” leads to Truth only in the case of a conscious realization of the Unity *through* the difference of *enfolding* (Cusanus’s *complicatio*) and *unfolding* (Cusanus’s *explicatio*) of intellectual reality.⁶⁹ It means the conscious intellect-mystical return to the otherwise *unconscious* self-awareness in the unconditional and perpetual self-processing or autopoietic self-unfolding of a personal world of cognition into form processes.

Thus, the foundational or implicate logic of the Unity through difference—which is the foundation of all mystical *reflection of thought(s)*—does not oppose but *integrates* our mental and physical means of survival. The development of this faculty is the *conditio sine qua non* of the long-term sustainability of the human species, because only by means of integration into the coherent fabric of the persistent changes and developments of the

cosmic whole⁷⁰ can we extend our species form of life. I hasten to say that my “refurbishing” references to Nicolaus de Cusa or Ibn Sīnā do, of course, not imply the necessity of adopting the religious or other elements of the historical worldviews of the civilizational contexts of these thinkers. The meta-logical foundations of (self-)reflexivity in the practice of intellectual mystical asceticism *transcend the contexts of finite narratives of particular worldviews* that are confined because of the inherently limited forms of the concepts upon which they are built. Mystical intellection frees from the boundaries of particular historical or present-day worldviews and implicitly *includes all of these at the same time*—which allows the modern intellect mystic to make use of the best elements of all cultures of all places past and present.⁷¹ The modern intellect mystic is supposed to bridge all worldviews and civilizations, and holds the keys to reintegration—the only path for humanity to save itself and assign itself some intrinsic value in relation to the “starry skies above me”.

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Notes

- ¹ In this sense, the present train of thought adds a new observer perspective in the direction of the problem horizon of how spiritual intelligence can evolve personal and transpersonal potentials that can help to develop a long-term sustainable perspective for humanity (for advances in the same direction—partly on common ground, partly on the basis of different theoretical terrain—see, for example, [Chittick 2008](#); [Collins 2010](#); [Emmons 2009](#); [Rimanoczy and Klingenberg 2021](#)).
- ² It is sufficient to refer to Vladimir I. Vernadsky’s original concept of the noosphere here. The term is derived from the ancient Greek word *noûs* (νοῦς) or its variant *nóos* (νόος) (mind; spirit).
- ³ It is possible to find comparable designations in other traditions of thought, but this does not lie within the scope of interest of the present study.
- ⁴ Much less can the reintegration and peace of humanity with itself and its environment be achieved by mere political activism in the direction of, for example, minimizing and taxing “carbon footprints”, etc. It is by no means as “easy” as that.
- ⁵ The idea of the technology-based artificial environment that we create for ourselves goes back to Aristotle. For example, in *The Politics* he states that humans are by nature *city-building* living beings. In modern terms, this means that it is part of our biology, of our life process as a species, to create more and more complex technological systems. We are the driving element of the autopoiesis of a planetary technosphere that is self-emancipating from its organic barriers.
- ⁶ The idea of technology as the historical process of an instinctive projection of human nature into its environment was first explored by Ernst Kapp (1808–1896), who thereby initiated the whole discipline of the philosophy of technology ([Kapp 1877](#)).
- ⁷ This does not only pertain to the classical “emancipation from the organic barrier” ([Cassirer 1985](#), p. 73, tr. DB) in the realms of machines but, more importantly, in the context of AI and self-learning, non-biological systems.
- ⁸ It also represents the *implicit* core of all discussions on spiritual intelligence (SI) in this context; see also fn. 1.
- ⁹ The term ‘thinking of thinking’ (*nóēsis noēseōs* [νόησις νοήσεως]) relates to Aristotelian and Neoplatonic reflections (ancient and medieval), but what it formulates, or rather, what it “hints at” in an intellect-mystical sense has been reflected in other non-Western traditions (by means of other ways of formulation), too (see, for example, my comparison of the philosophies of Nicolaus de Cusa and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) in [Bartosch \(2015\)](#), pp. 233–300)).
- ¹⁰ An earlier French translation of the same segment is to be found in [Mehren \(1891\)](#), pp. 10–14).
- ¹¹ To avoid any misreadings or misinterpretations of this article, I would like to emphasize that I am developing a synthetic approach here, or, as one could also put it with regard to the respective sociohistorical contexts, an etic approach instead of an emic one. Apart from that, one could define the present approach as “trans-classical” in the sense of the philosopher Gotthard Günther (see also further below) in addition, namely in that subjective consciousness is to be (consciously!) included in (self-)reference to objective representations ([Günther 1979](#), pp. 278–79).
- ¹² I use double quotation marks for quotations, terms that are used in the transferred sense, or unusual formulations. Single quotation marks are used to refer to terms and words as objects of the reflection. Single expressions or parts of phrases in foreign languages that are written in Latin characters are set in italics.

- 13 The modern philosophical distinction became possible due to the evolution of concepts that resulted in the establishment of the substantiated form of the expression 'Mystick' in the German-speaking context of the early 18th century (e.g., [Thomasius 1713](#); [Historisches Jahrbuch vom Jahr Christi 1736 1737](#); [Stiebritz 1747](#)). The subsequent development of the terms 'Mystik' and 'Mystizismus' in the further history of partly affirmative and partly dismissive philosophical discussions of the 19th century ([Lessing 1984](#)) further prepared the above contemporary distinction. It pertains to the difference between intellect mysticism (M) in the sense of a *real, highly reasonable (intellective), or rather, eminent* dimension of possible human self-realization and, on the other hand, a false mysticism in the sense of mere mystification (fM) (see further below in the above para).
- 14 The history of the *philosophical* concept starts in the context of Eduard von Hartmann's (1842–1906) philosophy of the unconscious (e.g., [von Hartmann 1870](#), pp. 286–87).
- 15 A German philosophical term for this is 'Schwärmerei'.
- 16 The way of Cusanus's thinking, which is more directly alluding to it than Hegel's approach to create a system based on dialectical progression, has also been characterized as "meditative variation" ([Borsche 2007](#)).
- 17 In the double sense of the word (theoretical and practical realization)!
- 18 The idea of consciousness and experience as the foundation of life can be traced to [Plotinus \(2018, sct. 3.8.1, p. 356\)](#) and has been revived in various ways at different times. In the 20th century, Alfred North Whitehead proceeded in that direction. From the perspective of present-day science, Ford informs us that "[i]ngenious, perceptive and intelligent behaviour is apparent in a single living cell" ([Ford 2017, p. 282](#)). In regard to cognitive differentiation in non-human life forms, I refer to the discussion in [von Weizsäcker \(1978, pp. 219–21\)](#).
- 19 The substantiated term 'logikon' is derived from the Greek adjective λογικόν (neuter of *logikós λογικός*). At the same time, it represents the Esperanto word 'logikon'. This is supposed to allude to the transcultural or culturally ubiquitous connotation of my new formulation 'meta-logikon' here, too.
- 20 For example, in contemporary Christian terminology, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) has referred to it in the sense that if one understands the (meta-logical) relationship of the "Father" and the "Son", one is elevated into the realm of the "Holy Spirit" (here to be read as another word for the metalogical Unity of the unity and difference of "Father" and "Son")—*nota bene*, under the conditions of finiteness (expressing the infinite) ([Kreuzer 2001, pp. XXIII–XXIV](#)). "Thinking the Trinity means thinking the 'unity of difference and unity', the *inseparabilis distinctio et tamen distinctio*" (XXIV, tr. DB).
- 21 I am alluding to Cusanus's term '*visio intellectualis*' here.
- 22 It can also be trodden on the paths of other traditions of other civilizations, of course. For some examples, see further below.
- 23 Already Nicolaus de Cusa talks about this difference in the sense of modes of cognition ([Bartosch 2015, pp. 467–88](#)).
- 24 This is not to be mistaken in an absolute sense, of course. Lucid dreaming and certain meditation techniques (see below, fn. 25) mean exceptions from such a lack of consciousness.
- 25 In its most evolved form, this mystical awareness of the "gateless gate" (another *aenigma* for the meta-logikon, namely of the Unity through the difference of 'gate' and 'non-gate') can even be extended to the dream state by special training, as Buddhist practitioners claim ([Chang 1959, pp. 147, 215](#)).
- 26 Exceptions are provided by dialectical (Hegelian, Marxist, etc.) conceptions of science, or situational approaches, such as in the cases of Alfred Korzybski or Gotthard Günther's conceptions of science, and also in philosophical cosmologies in relation to quantum physics (e.g., David Bohm). All of them point in the direction of the possibility of a more profound form of "comprehensive science" (Attila Grandpierre) that is based on the implicate logic (of the Unity of unity and difference).
- 27 This stands in a certain parallel to the abstractions and generalizations that represent personal conclusions that we draw from various individual experiences in our daily lives. A new experience may provide a new perspective that, if we are honest to ourselves, leads to a progressive readjustment and reevaluation of our views of things.
- 28 In its all-encompassing function, this includes the aspect of morality, for example, in Nicolaus de Cusa's intellect-mystical sense of '*laus Dei*' as a permanent *exercitium* ([Bartosch 2015, pp. 658–79](#)).
- 29 Against this background, it is not surprising that the image of the mirror plays an eminent role in intellect-mystical speculation. Even the word 'speculation' in the sense of 'philosophical speculation' (towards the meta-logikon) is derived from it ([Kreuzer 2011, pp. 50, 54, 63](#); [Schwaetzer 2006, pp. 108–9](#); [Bartosch 2015, pp. 319–23](#)).
- 30 Very recently, Alasdair [Beal \(2024\)](#) discovered simple mathematical errors in Albert Einstein's 1905 paper on special relativity. How this will be dealt with—or not—will provide an interesting future case example for those who are interested in the sociology of science.
- 31 See the whole quote further below.
- 32 It took Cusanus until old age to become fully aware of it in its utmost simplicity: "The simpler the Truth, the clearer it is. I once believed it was easier to find in the dark. The Truth is of great power. In it, ability itself shines very brightly, for it is shouting in the streets" ([Nicolaus de Cusa 1982a, p. 120, tr. DB](#)).
- 33 This could also be associated with Ken Wilber's following diary entry: "Just this greets me this morning; just this, its own remark; just this, there is no other; just this, the sound of one hand clapping—the sound, that is, of One Taste. The subtle and causal can be so overwhelmingly numinous and holy; One Taste is so pitifully obvious and simple" ([Wilber 2000, p. 173](#)).

- 34 Cusanus's expression 'non aliud' for God can be traced to Plato, Eriugena, and Meister Eckhart (Bartosch 2015, pp. 64–65, fn. 126).
- 35 This also relates to the shortcomings of our language in the sense of Friedrich Nietzsche. He emphasized that the related "seduction of language" (Nietzsche 2006, p. 26) and grammar result in "fundamental errors of reason" (Nietzsche 2006, p. 26), which further mistaken beliefs in alleged truths. In relation to the present perspective, one can add that these shortcomings result from the absence of the meta-reflection of that which is "worded" (verbatur) (Nicolaus de Cusa 1959a, p. 54) in and with every word. This absence also opens the gates for the "reification" (*Verdinglichung*) of the other (to connect this problem horizon to another field of German philosophy), that is, when the other's capability of suffering is ignored and he/she/it is treated *as if* representing a merely lifeless "thing". Intellect mysticism (in the sense of the present meaning) inherits the possibility to free oneself from this rather common fallacy by establishing the necessary openness and "cognitive leeway" to overcome exactly those petty egoisms that are (also) furthered by the shortcomings of language. This is achieved by establishing a mode of eloquent silence (*beredtes Schweigen*), as is also explained further below. In addition, please also see the reference to Alfred Korzybski in relation to Aristotelian logic on page 16 of this paper.
- 36 A "classical" example is provided by John Scotus Eriugena: It is not surprising that his *Periphyseon* was condemned since the High Middle Ages and even placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*—while exerting a hidden influence on many great minds at the same time.
- 37 In more recent times, the artist Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) stated that we have to learn to see the human being not only as an artist in the most general and ubiquitous sense, but as his/her own self-transformative work of art at the same time. Beuys emphasized the necessity to further and to unleash the self-reflected creativity of the human individual without limitation, namely to initiate a self-transformation *that would lead to an intellect-mystical self-revelation* of the source of all possible productivity and innovation itself (Knacken n.d., min. 57:50).
- 38 He was the teacher of the more famous poet Rumi (1207–1273).
- 39 I would like to emphasize again that the various expressions of the foundation of this are not restricted to Western Eurasian traditions of mysticism (see also Bartosch 2015). For example, although Laozi alludes to the fact that a way *that is abstracted or conceptualized (in the sense of a way)* is not the "Way" (*dao* 道) that is sought for in (Philosophical) Daoism, *he still makes use of words (in this case ancient Chinese characters)*. In regard to mystical theology, Wohlfart remarks: "The mystical theologian names the divine. He calls it—the nameless. Nothing is without language" (Wohlfart 1986, p. 160). This is also to say that this tradition can be compared to Western Eurasian traditions of intellect mysticism (Buber 2013, pp. 201–2; Forke 1922; Bartosch 2015, pp. 257–59).
- 40 I am adding the source text as provided in Fariduddin Attar (n.d.), because I have found no other translation and could not manage to find any other Western edition and translation of this particular poem. The translator of the German interpretation is unknown:
 "rah-e meyhāne-wo masġed kodām ast ره میخانه و مسجد کدام است
 ke har do bar man-e meskīn ḥarām ast که هر دو بر من مسکین حرام است
 miyān-e masġed-o meyhāne rāh-ī-st میان مسجد و میخانه راهیست
 beġū'id ey 'azīzān k'īn kodām ast "بجوئید ای عزیزان کین کدام است".
- 41 See also Farīd ad-Dīn-e 'Attār quoted in (Buber 2013, p. 75): "Since the essence I proclaim is apart from [any countable/finite] unity and [any] number [itself], cease to contemplate the eternity of the before and the eternity of the after; and since the two eternities have passed away, remember them no more." (tr. from the German translation DB).
- 42 For an original quote, see: "Im Begriffe der Theilung liegt schon der Begriff der nothwendigen Beziehung des Subjects und Objects aufeinander, und die nothwendige Voraussetzung eines Ganzen wovon Subject und Object die Theile sind" (Friedrich Hölderlin quoted in Kreuzer 2014, p. 359).
- 43 This double-sense includes the Heraclitan reference to "fire" as a symbol of the *lógos* (λόγος).
- 44 See also the article by King and Sherwood (2023), who emphasize that we have added the energy equivalent of 25 billion Hiroshima bomb explosions to our atmosphere since the early 1970s.
- 45 From a philosophical angle, one can still refer to Herbert (1985), who provides a highly inspirational overview and basic thoughts in that direction—or to the works of David Bohm ("implicate order").
- 46 An important voice in this context that is still very inspirational today is the quantum physicist, philosopher, and peace researcher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (1912–2007) (e.g., von Weizsäcker 1982, 1985, pp. 634–40; 1993).
- 47 Regarding this characterization of the human being in ancient Greek philosophy, see Hügli (1980). According to the physiologist and philosopher Adolf Portmann (1897–1982; see also Jaroš and Klouda 2021), humans are born approximately one year too early. This relates to our physiological development at the time of birth. Every member of our species undergoes a *physiologically normalized premature birth (extrauterines Frühjahr)*. Compared to other mammals this is also a physiological necessity, because otherwise our comparatively oversized heads would not fit the birth canal at a later stage. Even at this premature stage, the human birth process is the most complicated and most dangerous compared to other mammals. According to Portmann's theory, the unique feature of "normalized" premature birth and the related physiological "immaturity" manifest a lack of physiological specialization compared to other mammals. And it is the reason that we are "secondary nestlings" (*sekundäre Nesthocker*), that is, we need much longer and more parental care until maturity than any other life form. In a complementing perspective, Arnold Gehlen (1904–1974) observed the "'disengaging' of the sensory organs from their ties to functions [...] the reduction of instincts"

(Gehlen 1988, p. 22), and the human being as being able to “draw back and establish distance” (33). As a “world-open being” (33), the movements and the possibilities to acquire new forms of movement are much less specified than that of animals (34).

48 The assumption was not unusual during the 18th century (Bartosch 2023b).

49 This relates to the ancient thesis that the human being is a deficient being, was later revived and adapted to German Enlightenment discourse by Johann Gottfried Herder, and became part of modern philosophical discourse. Since the early days of Greek thought, the idea was associated with the notion of nature as a “bad stepmother” (later: *natura noverca*), which then triggered the view that man should exploit and suppress nature already in ancient Greek thought (Hügli 1980, pp. 1063–64). There is the well-known motif of the compassion of Prometheus, who, due to our deficient nature, our nakedness and helplessness, decides to present us with the forbidden “gift” of fire. The “Forethinker” (literal translation of “Prometheus”), who is severely punished by Zeus for this act of disobedience, *personifies the role of human imagination and understanding according to later Renaissance discourse*. One may allude to the ambivalence of Prometheus’s “gift” in the sense that the etymologically related German word *Gift* means ‘poison’.

50 As Nicolaus de Cusa did, for example.

51 In this regard, one can also think of the Neoplatonic *ternar* ‘μονή—προόδος—ἐπιστροφή’/‘*principium—medium—finis*’ (Proclus, Nicolaus de Cusa) and the related thoughts that go back to Plotinus and have exerted great influence on thinkers like Ibn Sīnā or, to provide another example, Mullā Sadrā.

52 For the locus classicus, see *Lunyu 論語—The Analects* (n.d.), chap. “子罕—Zi Han”, para. 8: “吾有知乎哉?無知也。”

53 In the sense of the meta-logikon, as discussed earlier.

54 From a transcultural perspective in the history of philosophies it obviously has a much wider geographical and historical extension than Cusanus’s rendering of the formulation ‘*docta ignorantia*’.

55 See also Nicolaus de Cusa’s original remark: “Unde hic videtur magna speculatio, quae de maximo ex isto trahi potest: quomodo ipsum est tale, quod minimum est in ipso maximum, ita quod penitus omnem oppositionem per infinitum supergreditur. [...] Qui hoc enim intelligit, omnia intelligit [...]” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1932, p. 30). Regarding the preceding conceptual history of ‘*coincidentia oppositorum*’, see Bartosch (2015, p. 434, fn. 32).

56 Korzybski (2000, p. lxv) refers to the example of the conceptual intension of ‘house’ “as a ‘building for human habitation or occupation’, etc. [...] and the] extensional activity [of buying a house ..., which after moving into it] with our furniture [...] collapses because termites have destroyed all the wood, leaving only a shell, perhaps satisfying to the eye. [...] It becomes obvious [...] that by intension the term ‘house’ was over-defined, or over-limited, while by extension, or actual facts, it was hopelessly under-defined, as many important characteristics were left out. In no dictionary definition of a ‘house’ is the possibility of termites mentioned”.

57 In the above-stated sense of *nóēsis noēseōs* (νόησις νοήσεως).

58 Lipps was an influential figure in German philosophical discourse prior to 1914. He also influenced Sigmund Freud’s development of psychoanalysis, etc.

59 Cusanus also refers to this as the invisible Truth that is not seen with the carnal eyes but with the spiritual or intellectual eye (Nicolaus de Cusa 2000, p. 20).

60 Remember Cusanus’s earlier-mentioned allusion to this by means of his etymological derivation of the meaning of ‘*theōria*’ (θεωρία) from the meanings of ‘I see’ and ‘I walk’ (Moran 1990, p. 280).

61 In the case of Cusanus, one can refer to the description in Nicolaus de Cusa (1932, p. 163).

62 The realization of this ideal may not be achievable for every individual human being, but research has shown that the presence of more practitioners of ways of self-perfection and self-cultivation raises the general quality level of a social system.

63 Regarding all three concepts, see the discussion in Bartosch (2015, pp. 601–56).

64 This is, of course, a Christian symbolic representation of self-realization on the general and transcultural ground of the meta-logikon. “Le concept [...] de christiformitas comme conformitas au Christ pourrait [...] servir de conciliateur entre identité et différence” (Reinhard 2006, p. 98; Vannier 2006).

65 One may also see this in parallel to the three stages of possible human existence or self-realization according to the *Table of Cebes*.

66 One might conjecture that this is due to the fact that Cusanus mainly focused on the objective of providing ‘*Aufweise*’ (see further above) to initiate first glimpses and insights into the meta-logikon of intellect mysticism—probably in the way that he describes it in regard to his own initial aha experience in the “Epistola auctoris” to *De docta ignorantia*: “Accipe nunc, pater metuende, quae iam dudum attingere variis doctrinarum viis concupivi, sed prius non potui, quousque in mari me ex Graecia redeunte, credo superno dono a patre luminum, a quo omne datum optimum, ad hoc ductus sum, ut incomprehensibilia incomprehensibiliter amplecterer in docta ignorantia, per transcendens veritatum incorruptibilem humaniter scibilem” (Nicolaus de Cusa 1932, p. 163, italics DB). We can see here that in the italicized part of the quotation, Cusanus describes his insight into the meta-logikon with many words as a moment of, as he expresses himself here, incomprehensibly encompassing the incomprehensible in knowing non-knowing (the most well-established translation for Cusanus’s ‘*docta ignorantia*’ in German is ‘*wissendes Nichtwissen*’, which also translates as ‘knowing non-knowing’) by transcending the indestructible truths of that which is knowable to man. This means the transcendence of the forms of two-valued Aristotelian either-or logic to the highest and at the same time most basic

ground of its (implicit, or rather, implicate logical) foundation, the process of differentiation which inherits the non-difference at the same time (as its *conditio sine qua non*). In his following works, it was Cusanus's goal to provide more and more direct and "economic" allusions and enigmata (or "semantic pointing rods") with each of his philosophical works in this regard (Bartosch 2015, pp. 290–95). Implicitly, this also reflects his growing understanding and his own realization of an intellect-mystical practice, which is also conveyed in the following statement from his last work: "Veritas quanto clarior tanto facilius. Putabam ego aliquando ipsam in obscuro melius reperiri. Magnae potentiae veritas est, in qua posse ipsum valde lucet. *Clamitat enim in plateis [...]*" (Nicolaus de Cusa 1982a, p. 120, italics DB). Maybe, he was of the opinion that these developmental stages of increasing intellectual reintegration cannot be properly described in such detail as provided by Ibn Sīnā (in the sense of "mystical backcasting", so to speak), or should be left enclosed in the personal experience of intellect-mystical asceticism; or maybe he preferred not to speak about it in the concrete sense of a "ladder" (he alludes to the metaphor at some point), because he was a high-ranking cleric and political functionary. We can only guess the reason for the absence of a concrete and more detailed outline of intellect-mystical self-unfolding comparable to that of Ibn Sīnā. As mentioned above, very basic differences between developmental stages are indicated in Cusanus's works, however.

⁶⁷ See fn. 25 further above.

⁶⁸ Besides the elaboration of the nine steps of intellect-mystical (re)integration, Ibn Sīnā presents many more admonitions and remarks like the above in the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt* (*Remarks and Admonitions*). These are supposed to provide practical advice and guidance along the path of mystical asceticism. For reasons of space, and also because this would "transgress the boundaries" of this little investigation, these cannot be discussed here.

⁶⁹ Such an integrated approach to science and intellect-mystical foundations was provided by the famous physicist David Bohm, who was also influenced by Cusanus (e.g., Bohm and Wilkins 1987). Likewise, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker developed an integrated perspective of intellect-mystical spirituality and quantum physics (e.g., von Weizsäcker 1982, 1985, 1993).

⁷⁰ See also Yan (2023), who discusses the problem of the relationship of the cosmological whole and its parts in the context of holographic philosophy.

⁷¹ In this sense, and to stay with the example of a "secular applicability", it is not surprising that the aforementioned Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch made reference to the intellect mystic Ibn Sīnā. Ernst Bloch has shown that also a secular worldview such as Marxism can and must be extended into the realm of the meta-logikon. From the perspective of quantum physics, the "logikon in matter" (Bloch 1972, p. 47, tr. DB) cannot be denied either. One has to assume that a long-term sustainable liberation from poverty and the holistic "total human being" that the early Marx imagined cannot be achieved without developing consciousness to the level of its unfathomable and all-integrating foundation. A holistic reintegration of humanity could never be achieved when the root of consciousness and cognition is excluded from view.

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