

DIALOGUE AND UNIVERSALISM

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HUMAN IDENTITY

Edited by *Malgorzata Czarnocka, Charles Brown, and Emily Tajsin*

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German Melikhov — On the Philosophy of Those Who Are Discordant with Themselves

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Editorial

HUMAN IDENTITY

From antiquity till modernity the problem of man has frequently been reduced to the problem of human nature, i.e., the quest to identify and clarify the fixed and innate essence or defining characteristic of human beings. Numerous schools of contemporary philosophy undermine this traditional reduction of human identity to a common nature (essence) either by neglecting essentialism or, more frequently, weakening it.

By rejecting the conviction that human nature is the only source of human identity and thereby removing the earlier held specificity of human nature new approaches to the problem of human identity became open. In those conceptions viewing human identity as a personal or social construction human nature ceased to be regarded as the exclusive source of human identity, i.e. as the only base from which all that is human emerges.

These images of human being see the traditional focus on human nature as radically incomplete. To be human is to be engaged with constructing a human, especially a human self, i.e., to become a human self, person, individual, and member of community. The sources and materials needed to construct and realize a human are found in the natural and social world surrounding any individual person. Human identity maintains itself in a dialectical tension with its surrounding worlds.

Thus, weakened essentialism maintains that human identity is made possible and constrained by both human nature and the culturally constructed and intersubjective worlds in which humans are thrown. The presupposition of this conception of man may lead to two different conclusions: 1) in becoming human, a person absorbs elements alien to his individual self in the course of his existence, so in the process of becoming human one's primitive I is changed and even alienated by the world; and 2) particular humans are only partially individual and autonomous since all are shaped and constructed within the parameters of natural and cultural history.

On this view human nature becomes a set of innate—biological or other—predispositions, abilities or powers in the Kantian sense that are open to different realizations. In consequence of adopting the above-sketched presupposi-

tions, the contemporary ways of investigating the problem of human identity largely abandon or ignore the idea of an innate fixed non-changeable human essence. Instead they search for human identity—a non-separable union of human possibilities and their realizations. They hope to reveal what had been concealed by the focus on human nature, i.e., the diversity and totality of human becoming—becoming human. The problem of human being is replaced with the problem of human becoming. Thus, in contemporary philosophy human identity is mainly revealed by investigating the manifold spheres of human activities—the worlds of cognition, morality, values, religion, society, culture, as well as humanity’s immersion in and engagement with the more-than-human world.

The idea of this *Dialogue and Universalism* issue, devoted to the problem of human identity, follows the above-sketched attitude. The papers included in the issue investigate human identity by examining various spheres of human activities that are its manifestations.

We would like to mention three papers demonstrating how cognitive representation, i.e. a connection between human cognition and the world, can be a promising explanative tool (not committed into copy theory of knowledge) if treated in non-standard ways. Two of them (authored by Enidio Ilario, Alfredo Pereira Jr., Valdir Gonzalez Paixão Jr., and by Małgorzata Czarnocka) take an inspiration from Ernst Cassirer’s conception of symbolic forms.

The papers authored by Charles Brown, Małgorzata Czarnocka, Stanisław Czerniak, Debamitra Dey Marie Pauline Eboh, Jean-François Gava, Manjulika Ghosh, Leepo Modise, Spyros P. Panagopoulos, and Vasil Penchev are an International Society for Universal Dialogue legacy. They were submitted to the 10th ISUD Congress (Craiova, Romania, 2014).

Małgorzata Czarnocka, Charles Brown, Emily Tajsin

Marie Pauline Eboh

THE WOMAN BEING: ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

ABSTRACT

The woman being is a human being. This paper critiques gender politics and questions the mistreatment, the second class status and some of the socio-cultural gender roles of women. It posits critical education of men and women, sensitivity and sensibleness as the surest way out of the quagmire.

Keywords: human being, woman being.

INTRODUCTION

The human being is complex and should be analyzed holistically, i.e. from religious, philosophical, and socio-cultural perspectives, etc. The Psalmist observed the array of heavenly bodies and wondered: What are human beings that God should be mindful of them, mortal humans that He should care for them? (Ps 8:4) He could not comprehend why God bothers with frail contingent humans. But Jesus Christ posited the question: “Is it not written in your Law: / *said, you are gods?*” (JnlO:14). He averred that humans are children of God; “You should pray like this: Our Father in heaven ...” (Mt. 6:9). If humans are gods, made in the image and likeness of God, their Father, then their nature is, *in quo modo*, godlike and immortal. If they share in God’s glory, then they are dignified and worth of dying for. Jesus therefore laid down his life for their salvation. The Egyptian mystery system was the first salvation system to preoccupy itself with human being’s highest good—the *Summum bonum*. Ancient Egyptians believed that if human beings would improve themselves through studies, they could commune with immortals and when they die, they would become gods, meaning that human life is supra-temporal and education is the key to the development of human potentials.

Aristotle defined human being as a rational animal. But Antonio Rosmini-Serbati criticized Aristotle’s definition as addressing the intellectual dimension

only without a thought for the volitional dimension, which is the seat of freewill, and therefore of freedom, decision and choice, and hence morality. A human being is a spirit in matter. St. Thomas Aquinas asserted "*Anima mea non est ego*" (my soul is not me). The corollary is: *corpus meum non est ego* (my body is not me). A holistic human being then is a composite of body and soul. The human nature is therefore corporeal, intellective, moral and spiritual.

The fact that we still find it pertinent, at this time and age, to define and re-define the human being indicates that the problem of inclusiveness, identity in difference, whole hearted mutual acceptance of fellow human beings still persists. "The human being: its nature and functions" is but a gender sensitive re-formulation of the perennial question: what is man? The spate of senseless killings all over the world makes this theme very relevant because our concept of human beings influences how we treat them. Consequently, in the light of raging feminist anthropology, the nature and function of the "*woman being*" ought to be clarified as well because in the words of George Orwell, "All animals are equal but some are more equal than the others." The mistreatment of women in spite of the UN Millennium Development Goals still persists in many cultures. In Nigeria, for instance, despite public outcry, an ex-State Governor, who already had wives, married a thirteen year old girl child and justified it on the basis of his religion. Early marriage truncates the girl child's education and undermines her dignity and potentials. In addition, she could suffer from fistulae. In October 2012, over a thousand Nigerian women on hajj pilgrimage were deported right from Jiddah International Airport because they were unaccompanied by male chaperons. Were all the men accompanied by females, let alone female chaperons? Will history ever correct its blunders? When will these insults and assaults come to an end? As Hajj is a religious pilgrimage, a religious obligation, what should hold sway and be uppermost in people's minds is spirituality, not biology. Perhaps women are expected to remain "*in a state of perpetual childhood*" (to borrow Mary Wollstonecraft's expression), so that men will chaperon women in perpetuity. Is travelling with a male chaperon not a pure economic waste? It is equally a waste of time on the part of the male chaperon whose sole business is to watch over a woman. Besides, is the male chaperon an eunuch? History is replete with instances of females raped by their fathers and close relatives. As a rational animal, man should do better than the stallion that defends its mares against the attention of other males. To enact a law that no man should accost, molest, or rape a woman is cost effective and much better than the law that no woman should travel unaccompanied by a male chaperon. For man to safeguard woman against man is contradictory. Man is a moral agent. Instead of hiring a chaperon, why not place the onus on man? Or is the act very different from stealing and money laundering? The law is "*Thou shalt not steal,*" not *Thou shalt employ a security guard.* Freewill is part of the constitutive essence of human nature. Women are responsible moral agents;

their freewill should be free to will human conducts, unshackled; a male chaperon is no substitute for a woman's conscience.

We still live in the man's world of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas for whom man is the norm and woman is a defective male. Expressing the autonomy of males and the non-autonomy of females, Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* termed man "the One," "the Absolute," "the Essential" and woman "the Other," "the Relative," "the Inessential," or "the Incidental." The issue of non-autonomy is rooted in culture. That was why in the *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft advocated the reform of the educational system for the equal development of the rational powers of both males and females so that women as well as men would be able to realise their full humanity.

GENDER POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF GENDER

Gender is *inter alia* a political process, a hierarchical system of exploitative relationship between men and women wherein women are culturally subordinated and undermined by subtle subversive machinations systematically designed to checkmate female power. It is a well-coordinated patriarchal system of a repressive power structure in which the structural injustices embedded in culture enslave women and even make women the purveyor of the very false values that oppress them.

Louis Althusser stabbed at the domination-subordination model when he expressed the view that we were all subjects of ideology which operated by summoning us to take our places in a social structure. This summoning works through the discursive formations materially linked with state apparatuses: religious, legal, educational, etc. The imaginary consciousness which ideology induces gives us a representation of the way individuals relate to their real condition of existence, but being merely an undisrupted and harmonious image it actually represses the real relations between individuals and the social structure.¹ Patriarchy is one of such social structures and it uses gender politics to men's advantage. Gender politics consists in *the argument of force* or coercive instruments of domestication in maintaining the *status quo*. On the contrary, the politics of gender employs *the force of argument* or rational discourse. It is the deconstruction of gender, the unmasking of this socio-political masquerade. For gender is but a patriarchal contraption, which time honoured socio-cultural usage has made to look natural. Gender is a classifier, a stereotype, a qualifier/disqualifier, occupying a prominent position in bio-data forms. It is enough to fill in M/F and people who have neither seen nor known you will classify you as male or female. This is the anatomical or biological concept of gender. Gender

¹ Selden, R. et al. 2005. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th Edition. Edinburgh: Education Ltd, 148.

is also a qualifier because from the M/F filled in a bio-data form an employer of labour can judge *a priori*, rightly or wrongly, that a given candidate is suitable for the job at hand. In the process of short-listing candidates for interview or for a position, gender equally serves as an eliminator, a disqualifier.

Gender straddles cultures and women are exploited in all cultures but some cultures suppress women more than others. In some cultures, women have inheritance rights, but in some others they neither inherit property from their parents nor from their husbands. In fact, at the death of their husbands they are even dispossessed of properties, which are personally and legitimately theirs, as if a woman should die with her husband, *having lost her raison d'être!* Probably, this informed the burning of a *sati* on the funeral pyre of her dead husband until South Asian widow's resisted *sutteeism*, as wicked custom.

In his famous work *The Origin of the Family*, Friedrich Engels categorically states that the first class opposition that existed in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in a monogamous family, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male. According to Engels, monogamous marriage was a great step forward. Nevertheless, together with slavery and private property, it opened the period in which prosperity and the development for some is owned through the misery and frustration of others. With the oppositions and contradictions running in the society, household management lost its public character. It became a private service and no longer concerned society. The wife became the head servant, excluded from participation in social production. The modern individual family is founded on the domestic slavery of the wife and modern society is a composite of these individual families. The husband was obliged to earn a living and support his family, and that gave him a position of supremacy. Within the family, he became the bourgeois and the wife, the proletariat.² Of course, the hand that gives is always on top of the one that receives, hence the dictum "It is more blessed to give than to receive." According to an Igbo adage, "*The famine that killed the rich must have buried the poor alive.*" If monogamy degraded women that much, what then can be said about women in polygynous marriages? Women are subjugated the more in Africa where polygyny is presumed to be cultural and polyandry is frowned upon, where wives are severely punished for infidelity but the same offense is overlooked when committed by husbands, for men are considered naturally polygamous.³

One wonders if the African man is perhaps an uncommon species different from other men within the genus, animal. However, the media recently reported

² Engels, F. 1968. "The Origin of the Family." In: Marx, K., F. Engels. *Selected Works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 494–495.

³ Eboh, M. P. 1999. "Aetiology of Feminist, Womanist, Femalist and Gynist Philosophy." In: *Beyond the Marginal Land: Gender Perspective in African Writing*. Opara, Ch. (Ed.). Port Harcourt: Belpot (Nigeria.) Co., 14–15.

the news of an East African woman who was in love with two men and both men got married to her, meaning that polyandry is equally possible in Africa.

Various societies constructed systems and imposed on them meanings that serve their purpose irrespective of whether or not the systems corresponded with the realities on ground. To some extent, they forced reality to fit into pre-conceived ideas. The Gynist deconstruction as a critical procedure, a radical examination and interrogation of such existing state of affairs, aims at stripping social reality of falsehood and inequity by unmasking structural injustices and exploitative tendencies, while calling for a positive attitudinal change, and the transformation of human relations between men and women. "Deconstruction encourages plurality rather than authoritarian unity, criticism rather than obedience, difference rather than identity, a general skepticism about absolute or totalizing systems."⁴

THE WOMAN BEING: ITS NATURE

Woman being is a subset of human being, a composite of body and soul, made in God's image and likeness, endowed with intellect and will, an end *in se*, which is never to be treated as a means to some other end. Having a rational nature, she is only morphologically different from a male human being. Wollstonecraft claims that women have the same human nature as men, but their human potential was stunted by a culture that devalued and viewed them as less than human. Women were believed to be emotional rather than rational; they were expected to run after the vagaries of dress, acquire superficial beauty and remain intellectually pretty instead of developing inner royalty, especially the mind power in which real beauty resides. Wollstonecraft argues that dehumanization of women stemmed mainly from the educational system, which did not offer to females the same opportunities for the development of their minds as it did to males. Women were merely trained to become alluring mistresses, while men were taught to develop their rational powers.⁵ Woman's nature was perceived as fleeting, unstable, problematic and enigmatic. Simone de Beauvoir had to ask:

"What is a woman? [...] All agree in recognizing the fact that females exist in the human species; today as always they make up about one half of humanity. And yet we are told that femininity is in danger; we are exhorted to be women, remain women, and become women. It would appear, then, that every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered

⁴ Selden, R. et al., 2005, op. cit., 170.

⁵ Stumpf, S. E., D. C. Abel. 2002. *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction*. 4th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 529–530.

she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity. Is this attribute something secreted by the ovaries? Or is it a Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination?"⁶

It follows that masculinity and femininity are social constructs. The society determines what it means to be masculine or feminine, hence some men are said to be effeminate. "*Femina*" is the Latin term for woman and the verb *effeminare* means to make feminine. The fact that the human society can emasculate a male or masculinise a female, at will, implies that society created these categories. In Igbo culture, a male who successfully performs a difficult task is affirmed to be *truly a man* (*Nwoke k'ibu*). A woman who accomplishes a spectacular feat is praised, and *called a man* which implies that the term, man is fluid, fleeting and unstable. Strange enough, the same society frowned at females who tried to do what males did, e.g. playing rough games like soccer or climbing a tree. Such a female was mocked with the derogatory term "*nwoke-nwanyi—man-woman* or *oke-nwanyi—male-woman*."

This ambivalence is one of the paradoxes of patriarchal culture. As we argued elsewhere, the fact that an only daughter who grew up in the midst of boys could be boyish and play rough outdoor games with her brothers, shows that given the same exposure which men enjoy women can be stout-heartedly adventurous. It is nurture, not nature, deficient socialization, not feminine genes, that make most women less daring and unadventurous. "The decisive social matrix for assertiveness and courage is nurture not nature."⁷ The adjectives active and passive ascribed to male and female gender respectively are preconceived ideas given that women such as the Ijo were branded strong, more active and more hardworking than their men. They were breadwinners who performed strenuous tasks to cater to their husbands and children. Like the Amazons they render tenuous the belief that women are passive. Even if in comparison to men women are not as muscular as men, the difference is a matter of degree, and not that of inferiority and superiority. Even so, women trained in martial art are undoubtedly stronger than most men. Man and woman are but two modes of being human. Hence Carol Gilligan argues that developmental psychologists must listen to the "feminine voice," understand how it differs from the masculine point of view, and realise that it is equally valid.⁸ Boys and girls have gender gap mostly because they are differently socialised. Orientation matters a lot. In the past, soccer was considered an impossibility for females. In some quarters, it was thought that such a strenuous game would tear the hymen. Soccer was thus disallowed for girls; they were made to play netball instead. Now soci-

⁶ de Beauvoir, S. 2002. "The Second Sex." In: Stumpf, S. E., D. C. Abel. 2002, op. cit., 541.

⁷ Stumpf, S. E., D. C. Abel. 2002, op. cit., 529–530.

⁸ Eboh, M. P. 1996. *Philosophical Essays: Critique of Social Praxis*. Port Harcourt: Paragraphics, 116.

ety is disabused of this idealistic notion, and there are many female soccer teams all over the world. It follows that many of the ascriptions and epithets tagged on women are the product of socialization and wrong perception. This is not to say that there are no gender-specifics. Of course, there are gender-specifics but gender-specifics are not enough to subordinate permanently one half of humanity to the other half. In a typical Igbo community both men and women engage in farming. Non-mechanized farm work is exacting but women farm and trade at the same time. In addition they fetch water and hew firewood, do other domestic chores and most importantly nurture their children. Most of the work, which women do coupled with the long hours they put in, proves them to be strong and resilient. If they are not as physically strong or muscular as men, they were not meant to be, just as men are not as compassionate as women. If men are not motherly and it does not count against them, why then should it count against women if they are not manly? At any rate some women are applauded with the sobriquet “Agu” (lion), indicating unusual strength and courage, “given that the lion is a symbol of valour.”⁹ A woman who accomplishes a spectacular feat is also praised and termed a man and she is expected to be happy even though it is a great insult to call a man a woman¹⁰ an antinomial discrepancy that implies male pre-eminence.

THE WOMAN BEING: ITS STATUS AND FUNCTIONS

Nature determines some functions while some other roles are culture imposed. People are born male or female but society ascribes mannerisms, a status and roles to them. These are gender roles. Gender roles are fluid and shifty; they often differ from culture to culture, e.g., women have a great deal of latitude in the matriarchal society. On the other hand, biological roles are natural and the same in all cultures. For instance, nature endowed women with womb and functional mammary glands, and hence the function of childbearing which is a very essential function, a great service to humanity, a feat which no man can ever achieve. The role of gestation, lactation and suckling a baby is proper to females alone. This is a nature based sex role and it gave the woman greater responsibility in pro-creation. If men could get pregnant this quintessential life-giving role would have been primordially elevated far beyond everything else. Nevertheless, men have their own characteristic role in the siring of children, a role which no woman can ever play. Biological or sex roles are duties that nature assigns to individuals by virtue of being either male or female; roles that are in keeping with the anatomy of each person. Biological determinism made it im-

⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰ Eboh, M. P. 2000. *Philosophical Criticisms: Anthology of Gender Issues*. Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers, 27.

possible for men and women to perform each other's biological functions. Biological roles are uniform in all cultures.

On the contrary, gender roles are societal expectations, duties, which the society assigns to men or women. Anyone, man or woman can perform gender roles, e.g., anyone can be a breadwinner. If a woman decides to climb palm trees, she can learn and master the art even though society may frown at it because it is not expected of her. If a man determines to take up "house husbandry": clean the house, babysit, cook and serve his family, he can acquire the skill and do it with dexterity. After all, even though in patriarchal families, cooking and domestic chores are part of women's connubial responsibilities, men are chefs and cleaners in restaurants and big multinational establishments. In the unremunerated private sector, housekeeping is women's job but in public sector where the same job is remunerated, it becomes men's job as well. The difference then is pecuniary. Most societies assign menial jobs and service orientated self-effacing and subordinate roles to the female folk while assigning respectable, recognised, highly rated jobs and image making roles, especially governance to the male folk. Gender roles differ from society to society. In some societies it is incestuous, an abomination to marry one's close relatives whereas in some other societies it is culturally right and lawful to marry one's cousin. Consanguinity, which is a taboo and constitutes an impediment to marriage in Igbo land, for instance, is even the very reason why a Jewish girl should be reserved for a certain male relative of hers (cf. *Book of Tobit*); the dangers of inbreeding notwithstanding. In Greek mythology, Hera was even the wife of her brother Zeus. As regards the headship of the family, it is not necessarily true that a man is incontrovertibly the head of a family. In a matriarchate, women have power and are in-charge as recognised heads of families, with power, lineage, and inheritance passing from mother to daughters. Therefore, there is nothing in woman's nature that inhibits her from becoming the Head of State in any nation. With euphemisms such as "Behind every successful man there is a woman," women were indoctrinated to target the self-effacing powerless role behind the throne instead of aiming at the throne itself. With other cliches like "Anatomy is destiny," the woman being was so pinned down to reproductive functions as though that is the only role her nature permitted her to perform. It was even erroneously believed that marriage and childbearing were the sole purpose of a woman's existence and her life is unfulfilled and meaningless without them. Consequently, many women were constrained to forego the pursuit for self-actualization in preference to childbearing, as if the two were incompatible.

Thus the function of who should cook for the family, and who should govern the community are socially constructed gender roles. In terms of socially constructed functions, women do not get a fair deal. Hence the need to seriously address socio-cultural constructs such as gender which hinders the attainment of equal opportunity for all. Roles and statuses, a system of rewards and participation in the cultural life of a people, and the mode of distribution of goods and

services favour the male. They were largely designed to project male ego. From the forgoing, it is clear that gender is not synonymous with sex. Sex is biologically determined while gender is socially constructed. Sex is natural and innate but gender is more of politico-socio-cultural ascriptions.

DYSPHORIA AND GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT

It is not uncommon to hear subjugated village women say “*N’ uwa m ozo agam abu nwoke*” (*In my next world I will be a male*). This kind of utterance is called *ibi ebibi*, a destiny-changing pronouncement. Some well-known influential men were said to have been women in their previous life. For such a male, a rite of passage was organised, a kind of role changing ritual wherein pestle was taken from him and gun presented to him instead. The exchange dissociates him from pestle, a kitchen utensil that identifies with women. This transition rite from culinary pestle to pistol, from pounding to shooting, is supposed to detach and transfer him from women’s culinary domain to the manly world of bravery and bravado, hence the presentation of gun that takes instead of giving life. This ceremony is a symbolic movement from immanence to transcendence, from reified object to subject. It is perhaps an external sign of gender transition from female to male, and the last stage of the emancipative quest.

With this ritual, Igbo culture pre-empts and forestalls gender identity disorder (gender dysphoria). Even at that a complete gender reassignment was not always achieved. A man exhibited certain untoward behaviours like strong inclination to own or seize a palm kernel from his wife and also cook his own food at the least provocation, acts which our community considers women’s preserve and women’s culturally ascribed connubial responsibilities. This inordinate attachment to domestic chores was always explained away by saying that the man in question was a woman in his previous life.

The foregoing re-incarnationist view implies that there is more to gender than sexual dimorphism. Gender has assumed psychological, socio-cultural, political, euphemistic and feminist meanings in addition to the anatomical sense. Gender is a social divide along biological lines in terms of who does or gets what in the society and how depending on cultural nuances and also on what side of the divide people find themselves. Thus, while the divide is a universal phenomenon, the specifics are culture determined.

With hindsight it is easy to intuit and interpret women’s subculture and the frustrations of their foremothers. From the malcontent expressed in the altercation and utterances of oppressed village women gender inequality is very much implicated in their lived experience of femaleness. The female experience lay at the very centre of the concern as subjected women verbally opted out of womanhood as a solution to the problem of domestic violence, exploitation, marginalization and gender inequality. Their next life held emancipation and freedom

for them thanks to reincarnation and the prospect of becoming male in their next life based on their destiny-changing fundamental option. This change of status from the oppressed to the oppressor fits into the defeatist ideology "If you cannot beat them join them." If every discontented woman were to adopt this stance, would it not spell doom for the human race because a time would come when there would be no more women to engender even those fellows who wish to reincarnate as males? Therefore, the solution lies not in fugacity or escape tendency but in courageously taking one's destiny in one's hands here and now in this life by fighting for the abrogation of obnoxious aspects of patriarchal culture and the socio-political processes that demean women.

If only such village women knew that androgenisation exists, they would have put on hold a re-incarnationist belief to fight here and now for freedom from oppression and marginalisation. The next life is too far away. To bemoan their lot and wait for reincarnation is to acquiesce to injustice. They ought to speak out and face squarely the patriarchal system, which is the cause of their discomfiture and of gender inequality. They themselves should stop propagating obnoxious customs that oppress women. The fight is not easy but at least let the minority have their say while the majority have their way until the majority realises why they should buy the sound ideas of the minority. Fortunately, fundamental freedoms and human rights are there to fall back on. As a woman is a human being and nothing human is alien to her, human rights are woman rights. When women voice out their desire to reincarnate as males they speak from a position of weakness, not strength. However, their unique female consciousness has taken on positive affirmation as women decisively demand for affirmative action from their various Governments, especially in terms of women in governance.

It has to be mentioned that in the West, some men, who felt that their true mental and emotional sex did not correspond to their apparent anatomical sex, have tried to clinically change their biological gender through transsexual surgery accompanied with hormone treatment. The goal of this weird operation is to enable them develop female physical characteristics in order to become women. This is the Western angle to gender reassignment. However, it is bizarre and should be discouraged because of the monstrosity that might ensue. Nevertheless, the fact that some men also desire such a change and are ready to emasculate themselves shows real discontentment. This calls for gender studies and gender mainstreaming. In gender studies men's studies is factored in which makes gender studies more holistic than women's studies. Even though this has many advantages e.g., bringing feminist criticism from the margin to the centre, it is feared that opening up the literary theory stage and bringing in questions of masculinity into feminist theory risks depoliticizing the study of women.¹¹

¹¹ Lee, E. 1996. *'97 Feminist Theory—An Overview*. The Victorian Web, Gender Matters.

CONCLUSION

The paradoxical power play existing between men and women is unhealthy and not in the best interest of humankind. Sigmund Freud had it that anatomy is destiny, which implies that our fate is sealed by biological determinism but the underrating of women has nothing to do with anatomy. Women's biological characteristics gave them the power to do certain tremendous things which men are incapable of doing. Instead of waw effects, women face contumelies and denigration on daily basis.

Gender unequal power sharing is rather vicious; it has nothing to do with women's strength and weaknesses. Otherwise, it should have changed when many women became soldiers, medical doctors, teachers, engineers, drivers, artistes, bankers, philosophers, etc. Like neo-colonialism, the gender relation is an on-going political process of a master-slave relationship. The difference between the two is that in matters of gender, women are dominated not by strangers but by their own kin, which makes it worse. A woman's greatest enemies are her patriarchal father who collects bride price, overprotecting chauvinistic brothers, and domineering husband, plus an authoritative mother-in-law. It is rightly said that women are the last colony to gain their independence. When a woman gains independence from her father and brothers, she falls under the surveillance of a domineering husband and overbearing mother-in-law. Children also colonise their mothers in their own way. When then will a woman be free?

The human society should reconsider its position on women matters. A Yoruba maxim asks: "How many people do you see in the village?" The answer is two: male and female. Men are nothing without women and women are nothing without men. Both are complementary parts of humankind. In feminist agenda worldwide, gender is a basic and highly relevant issue as feminists and gynandrists try to dismantle the ideological barrier between men and women. Critical education is the surest way out. The answer to the woman question lies in a good and judicious rapport; sensitivity and sensibleness are called for. The woman being is as good as man, if not better.

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TWO-LEVEL, OPEN, PLASTIC AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL HUMAN NATURE. AN ONTOLOGICAL RIDDLE

ABSTRACT

I present—in an extremely sketchy form—a model of two-level, open, plastic and multidimensional human nature. Due to the included attribute of multidimensionality this model opposes the reductive conceptions of man dominating in today's philosophy. The main objective of the paper is the ontological status of man, especially the ontic foundation of multidimensional man. I demonstrate that this status remains a riddle; one only knows that from the ontological perspective man is a wholly exceptional object, not explainable by to-date ontological constructions.

Keywords: human nature, plasticity, multidimensionality, openness, two-levelness, ontological status.

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN NATURE

In the presented proposal two-levelness, openness, plasticity and multidimensionality are four founding characteristics of human nature. These characteristics, which together form a certain general and rather abstract model of man, chiefly determine the fundamentals of human existence and the way men function, also in their relations with the world; relations between man and the world are a necessary part of being human. These four features bring about that man in his foundations is not an unchanging object, and not isolated from others objects, hence does not possess the classical attributes of being. A particular ontological riddle is the multidimensionality of human nature. The abovementioned characteristics are interconnected and condition each other.

My proposal is closely inspired by and rooted in diversified philosophical as well as scientific conceptions of man. More precisely, the suggested here characteristics of man are separately—though not very often in explicit forms—approved in scientific and philosophical conceptions. Multidimensionality—

however, not reduced to duality, among others of the most common Cartesian type—the feature most rarely recognised in philosophy as a primal and irreducible trait of human nature will be the main focus of my attention in this paper.

TWO-LEVELNESS

Man is ontically heterogeneous. I assume that human nature has two levels. On one level are attributes, i.e. basic man's features and, in the here-adopted understanding, human functions, i.e. abilities and needs. Needs are what inspires and upholds human activity, man's existence as an active, living being, a constant dynamic process, whereas abilities are specific instruments of activity, first of all, instruments of realizing needs. The category of needs has been introduced to philosophy by Karl Marx. However, it should be noticed that current theoretical constructions inspired by Marx's thought, apply more often the category of interests; both categories are related to each other. Attributes, abilities and needs, conditioned each other, are not granted permanently, they can develop or wane within the span of one human life or, on a social scale, together with cultural change or changes in social relations. The changes of attributes, capacities and needs, however, are not unrestricted. Their limits are what determines the scope of humanity, i.e. the identity of man. Attributes and functions underlie areas of potential human activities (cognitive, political, moral, communicative, environmental, activity related to biological survival, etc.).

The potential activity spheres, which ultimately decide about the possibilities of the human-created world, constitute the second level of human nature. Their inclusion into human nature alongside attributes, functions, abilities and needs appears to ground the thesis of human dynamism—the plain and fundamental truth that man is not a petrified object but a living, active being. Thus, what humans are is also constituted by the spheres of their possible activities—the human being is, among others, formed by the sphere of experiencing emotions, undertaking material actions aimed at ensuring his biological survival, and creating symbolic representations of reality, among others knowledge and art works. Pursued, these possibilities create the human world on the individual and social planes.

The inclusion of the spheres of possible human activities into human nature leads to the thesis that—in a loose reference to Marx, Antonio Gramsci and others Marxists as well as to existentialism—humans constantly “become themselves”; are the process of their own activity, whose spheres and boundaries are specific to human nature.

OPENNESS

Human beings are open to the world—immersed in it, they permeate it, are active in it and are also the recipients of its different fields. Thus, man perforce exists in a feedback relation with the world—he is unable to exist as separated from it as a completely isolated, detached object, and not only because of what conditions his biological life. Man's existence consists of a string of activities by means of which he penetrates the world—being both its part and standing to it at an external position. The world in turn penetrates man. Thus, man-world penetration is a two-way process; the feedback is not solely material and relates to more than man as a biological object. There are also non-material—spiritual, cultural and social—interactions, which penetrates both to consciousness and individual and collective unconsciousness. The interactions take place by various means: through the medium of language, art and other forms of human expression, used among others in intersubjective communication, where cultural context and the play of gestures also play a major role. Man's dynamic, multi-level feedback with the world co-shapes his nature.

Both levels of human nature are open. Thanks to his dynamic being in the world, not least its transformability over history and over individual existence, man in the course of its development acquires new attributes and develops new abilities and especially needs, and loses others. Also the spheres of its potential activity undergo change.

Openness to the world and ontic immersion in it are simultaneously accompanied by a tendency to defend the individuality of the I. It must be remembered that man in his self-identification efforts regards himself—in dialectical way—as both a part of the world and different from it, and treats the world at once as his own and as an external, unfamiliar, even alien sphere. At work here, therefore, are two opposing tendencies: on one side, the wish to unite with the world, among others in order to diminish the sense of isolation, and also for more pragmatic ends, and, on the other side, the need for isolation from it. Through isolation man aims to preserve his individuality and the specific freedom which enables him not to succumb to the pressures of the world. These divergent desires, by the way, are a chief source of both the internal and intersubjective human conflict.

PLASTICITY

Human nature is not petrified into one state from birth to death and has not remained constant over human history. Here, plasticity is understood as constant change within specified boundaries. The plasticity of human nature is primarily determined by its openness. The effect of the desire for activity inherent in human nature, man's dynamic relations with the world change human attributes, human functioning and the spheres of potential human activity. Plasticity

generates an identity problem: from the traditional belief it can be derived that because the identity of a “plastic” man changes in the course of its life, so he cannot be identified as one man. This dissonance imposes the change of the traditional criterion of human identity—despite the changes taking place in the man, he introspectively identifies himself as the same man and is thus identified by other men, e.g. friends or relatives. The man, therefore, is a being with the same identity despite the changes he undergoes. This means that individual identity does not require absolute constancy but only a continuity of changes. Also important here is memory, on the epistemic level. The memory of the sequence of changes in a human being (the continuous or quasi-continuous effects of its states, especially the moments of its transformation) allows it to maintain that it is still the same man although in many ways it is not the same throughout its life.

The field of plasticity of human nature conditions the identity of humans, both as individuals and specimens of the species *Homo sapiens*. The changes humans can undergo without losing their individual and species identity are limited. The external world is not the only factor which generates the plasticity of human nature; men are not devoid of immanent barriers to their formation by surrounding reality. For instance, the environment in which humans live induces change in the human body, but such change is restricted by physiological barriers which humans cannot cross without losing their specific and individual identity. Once they are crossed, men die becoming human remains or change into specific hybrids. Man’s consciousness and unconsciousness change constantly in cultural and social interactions, including intersubjective communication. In other words, the individuality of the I undergoes change—restriction, enslavement, but also enrichment—in social interactions. On the consciousness level the onslaught of cultural and social change is opposed by the subjective consciousness and unconsciousness of the individual I. Together the latter stand guard of the individuality of the I and protect it from excessive pressure by collective consciousness and unconsciousness. This is because inherent in the subjective I is the desire to preserve its individuality, ward it off from the world, defend it against social enslavement, and, in extreme cases, against the destruction of individuality and subjectivity by the pressures of socialisation. To sum up, the subjectivity and individuality of the I mark out the boundaries of social plasticity. One may wonder if the protection of the I from socialisation is not culturally determined and, for example, stronger in European culture, where individuality is a major value, than, say, in Chinese culture. Anthropological studies provide ample argumentation for this claim.¹

Human plasticity is, among others, propounded in sociology-rooted philosophical conceptions of man. It has been enunciated in Karl Marx’s *Sixth Thesis*

¹ Cf. among others Richard E. Nisbett’s findings presented in: 2003. *The Geography of Thought. How Asians and Westerns Think Differently ... and Why ...* The Free Press.

on *Feuerbach*: “the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.”² This thesis deprives man of his individuality, unless we regard it to consist of the entirety of the social relations which shape him and which are specific—it may be argued—for each human individual.

Owing to man’s openness to the world and the plasticity of his nature human nature and human existence determine themselves mutually. Contrary to classical images of man (which claim that his nature determines his existence) and contrary to the existentialists (for whom existence precedes essence), it is reasonably to say that human nature and human existence condition each other, although this mutual formation has its limits.

The thesis about the plasticity of human nature is present among others in the work of Erich Fromm and, as I remarked above, in radical variants in sociology-based theories of man.

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

The idea of man’s multidimensionality is rather rarely approved in philosophical conceptions of man. This idea tells that man is essentially and irreducibly multidimensional, i.e. he is at once a biological being (body) and a thinking being (mind), consciousness and unconsciousness, a social and individual entity, a subject of culture, emotions, practices, etc. No human dimension can be relegated from the essence of humanity as secondary and not immanent to human nature. Neither can any human dimension be reduced to others. No dimension can be regarded as a construct of others, basic ones. Although they differ in origin, all dimensions of man have equal ontic status and are equally basic constituents of man.

Only the dimensions united together—being their own necessary complements—constitute a human being. According to the multidimensional man concept, the human being is the indivisible unity of its mutually-irreducible dimensions.

The core of the multidimensionality idea is the fact that human nature, hence also men cannot be reduced to only one set of attributes and functions (the soul, the body, individual consciousness, social interactions, etc.). For example, the non-material mind (including the Kantian transcendental subject) neither exists nor functions separately from the body,³ nonetheless men cannot exist as social

² Marx, K. 1969. *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1, 13–15. Note that this version differs from the version of Engels’ edition. Lough, W. (Trans.). In: MECW. Trans. from the German, vol. 5, 6–8. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

³ Having introduced the transcendental subject, Kant battled until the end with the issue of the necessity of the empirical subject as necessarily associated with the transcendental subject.

beings without founding socialisation of their individual I, which absorbs social conditioning.

Neither are men a patchwork conglomerate of their dimensions. The bonds between human dimensions are much stronger than those between the elements of a structure or, of course, the parts of a set. The dimensions are presumably interdependent pre-beings (in a more common term—man's aspects), i.e. non-autonomous objects which do not exist in separation from other pre-beings. Only in a specific, inseparable ontic union they create the unique being that is the man.

Thus, none of the human dimensions can be eliminated on grounds of cultural (e.g. ideological, religious etc.) convictions. Christian monks who strive for spiritual enrichment to be closer to God, or mystics who aim at spiritual transcendence, unrealistically claim that they separate themselves from their bodies to attain a higher level of humanity, a pure spirituality devoid of body. In their belief spirituality is the only dimension of humanity *per se*, the other human aspects are unimportant and unessential to being man. The multidimensionality thesis propounds the opposite: men are not only mind, neither are they guided solely by emotions, nor are they just body or just spirit—whereby corporeality is not an emanation of spirituality and human spirituality is not reduced to the body, although all the dimensions condition themselves mutually. Also mind cannot be presented as corporeality, proof of which are the numerous and intensive, albeit unsuccessful efforts to this effect by the cognitivists. Moreover, man is not only an individual; his necessary immersion in the world also makes him a social and cultural being, although the social and cultural implementation does not eliminate his individuality.

Human multidimensionality is tied to the other here-postulated human characteristics: two-levelness, openness and plasticity.

In a travesty of Buddhism's famous Noble Eightfold Path, multidimensionality marks out a manifold path as appropriate to human existence. There are no clear grounds to hierarchise the human dimensions, to say, for instance, that spirituality is more important and primal than corporeality or *vice versa*. The manifold path is not ordained but (in ideal and rarely encountered existential circumstances) suggested as an area of free and conscious choice, a set of equally valid possibilities. This brings us to an essential existential dilemma. On one hand, men should not suppress certain of their dimensions in their unconscious or enslaved submission to ideologies which exert pressure on them, like religions, social trends, propounded economic recipes, etc. Ideological pressure (social, cultural, economic and other) reduce men to slaves, entirely will-less objects of the propagators of the given ideology. On the other hand, the manifold path does not mean man should be torn apart in dividing his aspirations and *modus existendi* equally between all human dimensions. In its suggestion of a choice between dimensions, the manifold path postulate acknowledges the existence of them all in the man, hence the choice of one as a lifestyle determinant does not mean the others are eliminated. On the social level this principle

proclaims that all lifestyles are equally valid emanations of humanity regardless of ideological trends, provided they are realised wisely.

The idea of the multidimensionality of human nature is not a pioneering conception; similar claims have been made by, among others, Gernot Böhme.⁴ Theories which define man as multidimensional also include Max Scheler's concept of man as a tripartite structure and Emil Durkheim's vision of dual man: "Man is dual. There are two different beings in him: an individual being based on the organism [...] and a social being."⁵ Non-reductionistic dualisms, including the most frequently propounded variant which claims man consists of soul (or mind) and body, relate to the concept of human two-dimensionality, i.e. the simplest form of multidimensionality.⁶ Visions of man as multidimensional appear more frequently outside of philosophy, e.g. in cultural anthropology. To illustrate this, let me quote James Frazer's account of how Bronisław Malinowski understood human nature:

"It is characteristic of Dr Malinowski's method that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. He sees man, so to say, in the round and not in the flat. He remembers that man is a creature of emotion at least as much as of reason, and he is constantly at pains to discover the emotional as well as the rational basis of human action. The man of science, like the man of letters, is too apt to view mankind only in the abstract, selecting for his consideration a single side of our complex and many-sided being."⁷

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY AND THE REDUCTION PRINCIPLE

Fundamental for the theoretical grounding of the multidimensionality of human nature is to know how the human dimensions, which are non-autonomous pre-beings, form autonomous human nature. There are two opposing ways of dealing with this problem. The first is negativistic, it bases on the reduction principle and excludes the multidimensionality thesis. The second, which I support, relegates the reduction principle with regard to men, and recognises that men are essentially multidimensional. This approach, however, calls for defining the ontological founding of the combining human dimensions in the unity that is human nature. And this is problematic.

The thesis about the irreducibility of man's multidimensionality stands in opposition to philosophy's generally-accepted metathesis about the ontological

⁴ Böhme, G. 1985. *Anthropolgie in pragmatische Hinsicht*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

⁵ Durkheim, E. 1916. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. A Study in Religious Sociology*, 155–159.

⁶ They are not reductionist (i.e. do not reduce the body to the soul) although they do hierarchise the importance of the human dimensions, ascribing priority to the soul.

⁷ Malinowski, B. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific. An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Preface: Sir James G. Frazer. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

reduction of beings, expressed among others by the sentence “*Entia non sunt multiplicanda paeter necessitate*” (usually ascribed to William Ockham, called Ockham’s razor), and also known under the debatable name in an epistemological version “economy of thinking principle.”⁸ Precisely for this reason the thesis about man’s multidimensionality is rather rare in philosophy, also today. In contemporarily propounded and accepted philosophical approaches the one-dimensional view of man prevails. Such are the theories developed by two fathers of philosophical anthropology Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, sociology-related theories of man as an exclusively social being, and materialistic concepts, including those most widespread today, based on the biological, psychological and neurophysiological theories which primarily elaborated in cognitive sciences are transformed to philosophy.

In reference to human nature the reduction principle says that it essentially consists of a distinct and fundamental type (or types) of attributes, e.g. materialistic according to biological concepts, or only spiritual according to spiritualists. The remaining dimensions inherent to man are considered secondary as assemblages, ontic constructs or emergences of the fundamental dimension.

One of the effects of accepting the reduction principle⁹ is the continuing philosophical debate about whether man is a rational or an emotion-guided being, a spiritual, or rather a purely materialistic being. Whether he is an animal or culture-rooted and isolated from nature or in a transcendental relation to it, whether he is an individual or, on contrary, only an individual implementation of social being (e.g. of the spirit in Hegel’s system), etc. The elements of indicated pairs under discussion are considered mutually opposed and exclusive. The dimension held to be constitutive for humanity has to reductively absorb all the others. For instance, biological conceptions do accept that man is both a biological and a culture-rooted being, but they treat culture as a specific form of the biological sphere, among others as an instrument to compensate biological shortcomings (Plessner).

Generally speaking, reductionism views man as essentially one-dimensional, reduced—contrary to facts stated in introspection, in cultural anthropology etc.—to a basic dimension which constitutes the whole of human nature, i.e. all the diversity of its dimensions.

The approaches which grasp man as one-dimensional have their positive sides. They provide pictures of man as undiffused and unambiguous either in assessment or self-identification. Humans convinced about their one-dimensionality have no essential dilemmas with their identity. They identify themselves as authentic unities—as either purely corporeal beings guided by biological instincts, or purely rational, or purely spiritual, etc. The fundamental

⁸ The reduction principle bases on ontological theses, hence it too enjoys this status. Therefore, its interpretation as a principle of thought—which implies that it is purely epistemic—is debatable.

⁹ There is also a metaphysical element here both in the Aristotelian and Kantian sense.

dimension—the only one that essentially in fact constitutes human nature—is here the source, organiser and founding force of all the sensed and perceived richness of being human. On the normative level conceptions of one-dimensional man offer explicit *modus existendi* recipes, and do not cause man to be torn between mutually-conflicting existential decisions. For example, in his recognition of subjective, non-rational spirituality as the only fundament of humanity, man is supposed to develop and focus his attention only on his spiritual attributes. At the same time he is to regard corporeality, rationality and emotionality as unworthy of his attention and relegate them as secondary or merely as specific forms of spirituality.

When not narrowed down to man, ontological reductionism is one of the universal rules in cognitive, ontologically-based dealing with reality that have been binding in Western philosophy and culture since the antiquity. The pre-Socratics searched for an *arche* or a small number of *archai* as the ontic fundament of all phenomenal reality. The *arche* concept commanded them to seek the essence of being in a single substance—among others fire, water, air or *aperion*. The aim, therefore, was to reduce the diversity of phenomena to the *arche*. A variant of this principle is extremely successful in all modern science.

THE REDUCTIONISTIC APPROACH TO HUMAN NATURE AND THE ESSENCE OF PHILOSOPHY

The reduction principle, however, is questionable and unreliable when it comes to philosophical reflection on human nature. Here, it leads to implausible, aspectual and selective visions of man which are unable to withstand confrontation with diverse non-philosophical beliefs and also with man's insights into himself in his purified self-consciousness.

Man's observed and felt diversity is poorly and dubiously explicated in one-dimensional models of man. A spectacular example is the multifarious reductions of consciousness to body, all of which do not stand up to criticism. Despite this, reductionism appears to be faring quite well in contemporary philosophy, which is dominated by one-dimensional models of man—either exclusively psychological, or neurophysiological, sociological, biological, etc. An important exception is Habermas' vision of man, focused on the epistemological and communicative problems, revealed among others in the *Truth and Justification*.¹⁰

In creating its images, philosophy with its typical leaning towards generalising and all-embracing approaches should not (as it often does today) restrict its field of vision to a single scientific domain—biology, or psychology, neurophysiology, linguistics, etc. The aspectual images of human nature, formed on such fragmentary scientific insights, are unable to explain the richness of the man—his nature, behaviour, cultures, civilisations, lifestyles, and the ways in

¹⁰ Habermas, J. 2003. *Truth and Justification*. Fultner, B. (Trans., Ed.). MIT Press.

which he constitutes his many worlds. Such visions are too poor, limited and therefore deforming. The philosophical investigations on man unlegitimizedly universalise aspectual scientific findings: a given human dimension (aspect) primarily examined in a selected scientific theory, by its very nature fragmentary, is transformed into a vision which supposedly embraces the entire human spectrum. A spectacular example is Darwin's evolution theory, which philosophy has transformed into a comprehensive concept of man as an exclusively biological being driven by the instinct of survival. Philosophical interpretations of Sigmund Freud's concept of the human psyche postulate to founding the entirety of human nature in psyche, mainly unconsciousness.¹¹ The cognitivist theories transformed to philosophy reduce man to his central nervous system. And so on.

The above objection to contemporary philosophical, scientifically founded visions of man does not mean that philosophy should break its ties with science in this sphere. Philosophy today would not be possible without multifarious and elaborate links to science. My objection only tells that philosophy must move beyond the particularism of the various scientific theories of man and take them all into equal consideration, itself adopting a transgressive, all-embracing position. However, philosophy is not the sum or of scientific findings. Its connections with science and the humanities are much more sophisticated, looser, and, moreover, viewed differently in each philosophical school.

THE MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF HUMAN NATURE THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Fundamental for the theoretical grounding of the multidimensional character of human nature is to explain how the human dimensions constitute autonomous human nature, and especially what relations connect the dimensions into the authentic unity that is man.

The dimensions, which are pre-beings (I understand them as objects which together create a being but which are not beings themselves) cannot exist independently, in isolation from each other and outside the unity that is the man. The emotional and rational dimensions do not exist apart from the corporeal dimension, and it is doubtful whether the human body deprived of human functions would still be a human being (this, by the way, is the subject of a heated bioethical debate). The human dimensions have no *modus existendi* outside the unity that is the man. Also, they are ontic instances which are not suspended on or attached to any fundamental and primal human substance as the fundament of their unity. Man does not exist beyond his dimensions; all he is is contained in the dimensions and their unity.

¹¹ Because of the ambiguous status of Freud's original theory, this transposition has vague limits and its legitimacy is questionable, as Freud's constructs were assumedly not solely forays into the unconscious sphere of the human psyche but a more general inquiry into the human essence.

Two solutions concerning the theoretical grounding of human multidimensionality must be rejected although they appear obvious at first sight: that the human being is the sum of its dimensions, and that it is a structure of its dimensions. In accepting each proposal we would have to assume that the human dimensions are ontically independent and are able to exist autonomously, because such is the ontic character of the components of a sum and the elements of a structure—isolated from the whole, they remain independent beings. Neither are the human dimensions man's attributes. The dimensions cannot also be viewed as substances, in each philosophical sense of the term.

At this point it seems appropriate to investigate—albeit not without doubts—two other hypothetical theoretical explications of the (ontological) concept of man as a multidimensional being. The first idea, in a cautious analogy, refers to the physical concept of spacetime. Spacetime is “composed of” dimensions, but the dimensions themselves do not exist apart from it. Time does not exist in separation from spacetime according to relativistic physics, and, according to Newtonian physics, particular dimensions of space do not exist apart from Newtonian space. The spacetime dimensions are not separable objects, nor in any sense fragments¹² or properties of spacetime. Like the human dimensions, the dimensions of spacetime belong to a special ontic category of objects which are not independent from the objects (wholes) in which they “are”, which they constitute or which are formed by them. Essential here is that in attempting to explicate man as multidimensional we cannot refer to the mathematical definition of space, according to which space is a superstructure over a set.¹³ In the case of humans there is no set (which would also have to be discontinuous) over which a structure is built. Thus, although it appears quite plausible, the analogy between multidimensional man and physical space is limited in scope and questionable.

In the view of man's multidimensionality man's ontic status is manifold. He is body, a spiritual being, a social being, an individual ego, etc. This ontic manifoldness resembles complementary objects (ontically dual) in Niels Bohr's complementarity principle. The recognition of complementarity in human nature is legitimate but poorly effective as an explanatory source.

CLOSING REMARKS

The essential claim of this paper is that the description and comprehension of human nature and its ontic fundament calls for non-standard ontological constructions for which ontology has no ready models. The here-mentioned hypo-

¹² Fragments as parts of space are a totally different matter.

¹³ For example spacetime (e.g. Minkowski's) is defined as a set of atomic events, built over which are relations of temporal and spatial separation. This definition absolutely excludes ontological intuition concerning the ontic specifics of spatial dimensions in their relation to whole spacetime.

thetical analogies to physical space and the physical complementarity concept appear limited and unreliable and, as I said earlier, low on explanatory potential.

Despite man's proximity, our constant intercourse with him, his intercourse with us and the resulting illusion of familiarity, man remains a mystery to us—also on the ontic level. Owing to his openness, plasticity and perhaps most of all his multidimensionality, in the ontological perspective man is such a unique being that he defies all known ontological constructs and insights drawn from either philosophy or science. Man is ontologically unfathomable, although for purposes of self-analysis he has at his disposal a richer array of cognitive means (introspection, the cognition-bordering ability of intuitive and conscious self-analysis) than those used to investigate objects external to man. Man's ontological mysteriousness creates gaps in his philosophy. There can be no plausible explanation of what man is without knowledge about his ontic constitution.

Concepts which flatten man to one dimension do not explain but prolong his ontological mystery (cf. the riddle of consciousness in materialistic theories). Let me mention one worrying property of one-dimensional human concepts. The visions they offer are instrumentalised, subordinated to pre-anticipated value systems, to scientific and religious ideologies. Perhaps implicitly, they strive to create unambiguous images of man whose normative equivalents formulate life styles and its rules according to the given wide ideologies and dominated cultural worldviews (the difference between them is hard to define in the universal instance). Therefore, they are in a sense the means by which the ideologies and world views are sanctioned and gain strength.

From the ontological perspective man is not a being in the classical sense: his limits are blurred and changeable, he is co-constituted by an external reality, and he is a heterogeneous object, with different united, non-separable dimensions united in a whole. The ontic mystery of man does not lie only in his multidimensionality. Man's openness to the world, his necessary relations with it and his plasticity are also reasons why the ontological riddle of man cannot be solved by applying traditional ontological categories and constructs.

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RETHINKING *ANTHROPOS* IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

ABSTRACT

A growing number of geologists, geophysicists, and other Earth scientists now claim that human caused changes in the chemistry of the atmosphere, oceans, and land are so pervasive as to constitute a new geological epoch characterized by humanity's impact on the planet. They argue that these changes are so profound that future geologists will easily recognize a discernible boundary in the stratigraphy of rock separating this new epoch from the previous geological epoch, i.e., the Holocene. They propose to name this new geological epoch the "Anthropocene," a term meaning the age of man. Common to this view is the claim that humans are now the ecologically dominant force on Earth.

This paper will compare the understanding of human self-identity developed by the defenders of the Anthropocene discourse with the understanding of human self-identity developed by radical ecologists. The defenders of the Anthropocene Discourse argue that human beings must accept a new understanding of human self-identity as an emerging elemental force of nature and as master of the planet while radical ecologists argue that human beings must cultivate a conception of human self-identity as integral to nature. Radical ecologists argue that human self-understanding has traditionally been constructed by defining the realm of the human through the denial of our embodiment, our animality, and our presence in the natural order of things. These forms of self-understanding and self-expression now result in the failure to envision and promote thriving and sustainable lifestyles and the consequent environmental tragedies that undermine the natural systems making possible good and healthy lives for all species.

This paper will conclude by arguing that only an ecologically and dialogically informed conception of human self-identity can provide an adequate point of departure for an ecologically benign form of human dwelling on this planet.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Anthropocene discourse, geoengineering, human-nature dichotomy, radical ecology, self-identity, master self.

THE ANTHROPOCENE DISCOURSE

A growing number of geologists, geophysicists, and other Earth scientists now claim that human caused changes in the chemistry of the atmosphere, oceans, and land are so pervasive as to constitute a new geological epoch characterized by humanity's impact on the planet. They argue that these changes are so profound that future geologists will easily recognize a discernible boundary in the stratigraphy of rock separating this new epoch from the previous geological epoch, i.e., the Holocene. They propose to name this new geological epoch the "Anthropocene," a term meaning the age of man.¹ Common to this view is the claim that humans are now the ecologically dominant force on Earth.

Eileen Crist describes these and other complementary and overlapping claims made by a variety of like-minded scientists as "the Anthropocene Discourse."² She suggests that the term "Anthropocene" is only one element within a broader conceptual framework consisting of a blend of interweaving and recurrent themes that describe humanity as an elemental force of nature now rivaling the other great forces of nature while proposing that humans must embrace their destiny as agents of planetary transformation.

These same Earth scientists argue that recognition of this new reality results in a profoundly important turning point for contemporary global culture. Either we embrace this new reality by initiating the massive geoengineering of ocean and atmospheric chemistry as well as species and ecosystems in order to make nature safe for they label as the "human enterprise" or we deny this reality and futilely attempt to transform human practices to make them safe for nature. They argue that the former choice can lead to stability and sustainability of the human enterprise while the later choice can only lead to ecological catastrophe. They argue that by embracing and celebrating the inevitable human destiny of planetary transformation, i.e., by taking control of natural evolutionary and ecological processes, humans can shape and control these processes and ecosystems for the advantage of human beings.

Environmental scientist Erle Ellis argues that all currently existing ecosystems and the underlying natural processes guiding them, such as the carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen cycles have been profoundly reshaped by human impacts.³ He argues that humans now control biodiversity and ecosystem processes as much as climate and geography. He goes so far as to suggest that "Nature" is

¹ Examples include: Steffen, W., P. Crutzen, J. McNeill. 2007. "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?" *Ambio* 36, no. 8, 614–621; Zalasiewicz, J. et al. 2008. "Are We Now Living in the Anthropocene?" *GSA Today*, February, 4–8; Zalasiewicz, J., M. Williams, W. Steffen, P. Crutzen. 2010. "The New World of the Anthropocene." *Environmental Science & Technology*, 44, no. 7, 2228–2231.

² Crist, E. 2013. "On the Poverty of Our Nomenclature." *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 3, 129–147.

³ Ellis, E. 2014. <http://ecotope.org/people/ellis/>. Accessed on March 5.

now embedded within human systems and that current ecosystem processes are mostly a function of human populations and their ecosystem interactions.⁴ Consequently, ecology and Earth Science must recognize the totality of human practices as an elemental force of nature on a par with the biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere.

These Earth scientists who advocate the recognition of a new geological epoch resulting from human impact argue that these planetary transformation powers constitute the inevitable destiny of our species and through the wise use and direction of these powers humans have the opportunity to guide and construct new natural systems and processes that would provide a “safe operating space” for the “human enterprise.” Nobel laureate Paul Cruzen argues that humans are now capable of overcoming the unwanted and potentially catastrophic effects of human caused mass extinction, climate change, and ubiquitous pollution through the geoengineering of atmospheric and ocean chemistry and the genetic manipulation of crops, species, and ecosystems. The result would be the construction of a “smart planet” capable of supporting “ten billion reasonably rich people.”⁵ Advocates of the Anthropocene discourse argue that by continual geoengineering of the atmosphere, oceans, eco-systems, and species we can construct a new ecological reality capable of supporting a growing human population of rich people with long term or indefinite sustainability.

This diagnosis of current ecological conditions bears some interesting continuities and discontinuities with previous environmental philosophers and activists who have argued that the current and unguided human impact on the biosphere and existing eco-systems is rapidly leading to ecological catastrophe. The issue of human self-identity is fundamental to the perspective of the radical ecologists who wish to reshape human practice to fit nature and to the perspective of the Anthropocene discourse that seeks to reshape nature to fit human practice.

OVERCOMING THE TRADITIONAL HUMAN-NATURE DICHOTOMY

It is common for environmental philosophers to note that humanistic self-understanding has typically been constructed by defining the realm of the human through the denial of our embodiment, our animality, and our presence in the natural order of things. They argue that the traditional understanding of human self-identity is constructed through the conceptual framework of a human-nature or human-animal dichotomy, which separates and privileges humans and human interests over all others. They argue that these forms of self-

⁴ Ellis, E. 2014. <http://ecotope.org/anthromes/paradigm/>. Accessed on March 5.

⁵ Quoted by Eileen Crist and attributed to Paul Cruzen in a 2011 special issue on the Anthropocene by the newspaper *The Economist* in “On the Poverty of Our Nomenclature.”

understanding and self-expression result in the failure to envision and promote thriving and sustainable lifestyles and the resulting environmental tragedies now undermine the natural systems making possible good and healthy lives for all species. These environmental philosophers and activists are often labeled as “radical ecologists”⁶ as they argue that a fundamental change in human self-identity is needed to cultivate ecologically benign human practices and thus avoid ecological catastrophe.

The radical ecologists promote the agenda of undermining and overcoming the traditional human—nature dichotomy in order to develop and cultivate a form of self-understanding that is integrated into the natural world. Radical ecologists typically emphasize the, evolutionary origins and the ecological emplacement of human beings. Radical ecologists argue that only by changing the dominant form of human self-understanding from “conqueror of the land community to plain members and citizens of it”⁷ can human praxis can be made safe for natural processes and eco-systems.

The advocates of the Anthropocene discourse, on the other hand, argue that only by embracing an understanding of human beings as evolutionarily destined for the project of planetary transformation and by the subsequent changing, modifying, and controlling of natural processes to make those processes safe for human practices can we avoid ecological disaster. Rather than modify human practices to fit nature or to make human practices safe for existing ecosystems the voices of the Anthropocene discourse seek to modify nature to make nature safe for the inevitable human destiny of planetary transformation. This strategy seeks to change natural processes, species, and eco-systems so they become integral to the human enterprise of planetary (and beyond) transformation. The strategy of the radical ecologists to is change human practices so they become integral to nature.

From the point of view of the advocates of the Anthropocene discourse, the recognition and acceptance of this evolutionary destiny effectively undermines and overcomes the traditional version of the human—nature dichotomy that renders human identity as separate and superior to nature. From their point of view the human geoengineering of natural processes is simply the result of one element of nature working in tandem and in harmony with other natural processes. Rather than best described as human domination and control over nature the Anthropocene discourse understands the human takeover of nature as the on-going and self-organizing integration of differing natural processes.

They often speak of humanity’s skill of planetary transformation as a natural phenomenon, as evolutionary destiny of the human species, and as a moment in

⁶ Radical ecologists typically include thinkers like Aldo Leopold and Arne Naess who argue the new forms of human self-understanding must emerge that locate human self-identity as integral to nature rather than separate from nature. They typically argue that only from this perspective is the inherent value in non-humans revealed.

⁷ Leopold, A. 1949. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press, 240.

ecological evolution in which the activities of one natural feature has massive and enduring effects on the larger eco-systems. They argue that the current human takeover of the biosphere is no different than the emergence of oxygen producing organisms that profoundly changed the Earth's biosphere two and one half billion years ago. The successors of these cyanobacteria live on today and are responsible for photosynthesis and the regulation of the Earth's oxygen cycle. These cyanobacteria displaced, disturbed, transformed, and to a large extent "took over" the biosphere and yet, today, they appear to be integral to the fabric of life as we know and value it. Just as cyanobacteria emerged as an elemental force in reshaping the Earth's biosphere so have human beings.

The traditional versions of human self-identity [as critiqued by the radical ecologists] locate the defining essence of humanity as rationality, understood as a non-natural property that both separates humans from all other natural beings and endows humans with an intrinsic moral value that renders humans as morally superior to the natural world. This "separate from and superior to nature" understanding of human self-identity generates a moral justification for treating all non-human reality as mere instruments for human interests. The rational powers of humans both radically separate humans from other natural beings while granting humans moral superiority over other natural beings.

As rationality is understood to be both the defining characteristic humanity as well as the justification for moral superiority, the distinction between the rational and the irrational, or the more rational and the less rational, creates a logic of domination that justifies the control of the rational over the irrational. The internalization of this logic of domination and the self-identification with the rational constructs what ecofeminist and radical ecologist Val Plumwood calls a "master identity or master self"⁸ Although advocates of the Anthropocene discourse embrace a naturalistic, evolutionary, and ecologically informed understanding of human self-identity they nevertheless fail to transcend this logic of domination and the resulting perspective of the master self.

The many different forms of traditional master identity claim rationality for itself while denying it to others. The Eurocentric self claims that rationality is more fully embodied in Europeans, the racist self claims rationality to be more fully present in certain races, and the traditional patriarchal self locates rationality as more fully developed in males than in females. As these forms of master identity claim rationality for themselves while denying it to the other they implicitly or explicitly claim the power of universal legislative authority and work to silence the voices of others as less rational and therefore as less than fully human. By claiming rationality for itself and denying rationality to the other, these forms of the master self claim the power of universal legislative authority thereby dismissing and disrespecting all other points of view. The resulting

⁸ Plumwood, V. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London–New York: Routledge, see especially chapter 6, 141–164.

epistemic closure silences all other voices. The master self has then no need or appreciation of dialogue with the other.

The understanding of human self-identity constructed by the advocates of the Anthropocene discourse locates the essence of humanity in the power of planetary transformation through geoengineering. Unlike more traditional forms of human self-identity this perspective neither understands the power of planetary transformation to metaphysically separate humanity from the rest of nature nor as conferring a special moral status on human beings. On this view, the powers of planetary transformation have emerged from evolutionary processes and are fully natural. Consequently, unlike other traditional forms of human self-identity, self-identities constructed by the Anthropocene discourse cannot claim the moral right to transform natural processes, genetically modify other species, or to construct new ecosystems for its own good. The perspective of the Anthropocene discourse can only claim the power and the inevitable destiny to do so.

The Anthropocene discourse does not so much deny that rationality is the core essence of humanity but merely interprets that rationality as the power of planetary transformation currently possessed only by humans. On this view, humans have no special moral status but are simply the beneficiaries of natural processes only contingently embodied within humans. In this way the moral discourse emerging from the more traditional understandings of human self-identity has been transformed by the Anthropocene discourse into a nihilist discourse of power. The logic of domination inherent in traditional discourses of mastery survives in the Anthropocene discourse but is no longer morally justified but defended as inevitable destiny.

Nevertheless, just as traditional forms of master identity denied rationality to its chosen set of others the Anthropocene discourse similarly dismisses the voices and perspectives of others [humans or otherwise] who fail or refuse to participate in the projects of mass planetary transformation. These others [humans or otherwise] become more raw materials for reengineering. The logic of domination inherent to traditional forms of the master self and justified on moral grounds remains within the anthropocentric discourse but is grounded or explained (not justified) on the basis of power and destiny. The result is the same: the silencing of the voices of alternative perspectives and discourses as irrational, less than rational, or less than fully human. This, in turn, results in the dismissing of alternate points of view as less than rational and leaves no room for dialogue as the master self of the Anthropocene discourse, like other forms of the master self, claims the power of universal legislative authority and epistemic closure.

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

The construction of identity establishes a unity of meaning forged from a manifold of differences. Whether it is the identity of concrete things like an animal, a rock, a house or identities of abstract things like species, democracy, or rationality they are constructed either by reducing the manifold of differences to some single core essence and dismissing, forgetting, erasing other differences as contingent or accidental or by recognizing and integrating a network of differences into a gestalt of interrelated and mutually defining differences. The former seeks a permanent and fixed identity through the exclusion of non-essential differences while the latter seeks only a quasi-stable unity that is always open to the inclusion of newly recognized or acknowledged differences. The former style of identity construction underlies the construction of all varieties of the master self while the latter process underlies the construction of the relational or ecological self championed by the radical ecologists.

If this is right then master identities are exclusionary while relational identities are inclusionary. Master identities and their underlying conceptions of rationality are equally constructed through the elimination of difference while relational identities and their underlying conceptions of rationality are equally constructed through the integration of differences. The former embraces a monological conception of rationality that privileges a narrow and single perspective of impersonal and value free calculation of self-interests as rational while the later embraces a dialogical conception of rationality that refuses to privilege any single perspective.⁹

This silencing of the voices of the other is common to all forms of the master self and their commitments to a monological and totalizing form of rationality. The rational becomes whatever promotes the destiny of human planetary transformation while the irrational becomes whatever hinders this process. From this perspective the concerns of radical ecologists who promote the cultivation of feelings of care and concern for existing species and ecosystems, the feeling of belonging to particular landscapes, a sense of community with other living beings, easily become seen as quaint at best but always as irrational and not worthy of dialogue. The perspectives of all others who regard non-human life forms and landscaped with dignity, awe, and moral concern become irrational.

By emphasizing the evolutionary destiny of humans skilled in the project of planetary transformation as the core feature of human destiny the master self of the anthropocene discourse forgets, marginalizes, dismisses, and disrespects other evolutionarily generated characteristics formerly considered basic or fundamental to human self-identity. The lived moral experience of encountering other humans as well as animals and landscapes with a sense of moral respect, a sense of care and concern, along with the capacity for reflection and delibera-

⁹ Plumwood, V. 1993, *op. cit.*, see especially chapter 6, 141–164.

tion on how best to exist with others flows from our natural evolutionary history just as the skill for planetary transformation. If it is true that the human capacity for planetary transformation is inevitable human destiny then so is the human capacity for moral reflection emerging from our natural emotive responses to the world. If and to the extent that it is true that the powers of ecological transformation are somehow tied up with human destiny then it must also be true that the natural abilities of moral experience and moral reflection must also be tied up with human destiny.

When the core identity of human beings is posited as planetary transformers then the moral reflection that questions the agenda of the Anthropocene discourse becomes irrational and even less than human. The underlying logic inherent in the Anthropocene discourse privileges a technocratic and nihilist form of calculative rationality over moral experience and moral rationality. Suppressing or devaluing the natural feelings of care and concern, trust and commitment that are fundamental elements of human moral psychology is necessary to construct the master self of Anthropocene discourse.

The ecological, dialogical, and relational form of self-identity championed by the radical ecologists need not reject the basic insight of anthropocene discourse that humans are evolutionarily *disposed* toward transforming their environments. *To the extent* that projects of ecological transformation are human destiny, this must be recognized by a healthy and well-integrated sense of self-identity. By acknowledging a fundamental disposition towards ecological transformation we need not privilege this over equally human tendencies and practices. A dialogical and ecological form of self-identity should be capable of acknowledging and even developing this tendency while integrating this tendency with other equally natural tendencies.

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MORALISATION, HUMAN NATURE, MORALITY

ABSTRACT

The author defines moralisation as cultural processes marked by a rise in moralistic argumentation (also in areas in which such argumentation has heretofore not played a meaningful role) to a degree which raises questions and doubts of a philosophical and sociological nature. This is developed on in detail in the sections “The moralisation of the world and suffering,” “The moralisation of everyday life and history,” “The moralisation of knowledge” and “The moralisation of human nature.” The closing section of the article, “Moralisation and morality,” focuses on the relation between the described moralistic approach and the changes broadly-understood moral awareness is undergoing in the contemporary world.

Keywords: moralisation, morality, philosophical anthropology, human nature, suffering, everyday life, knowledge, genetic manipulation, virtues, moral norms,

1. A TERMINOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

As common experience teaches, to “moralise” means to “preachify,” or overuse argumentation relating to moral categories—also in situations, in which such reference is not the best path to attaining the ends pursued by those who resort to it to influence the conduct of others. Thus, parents who, in an effort to change their children’s behaviour, restrict themselves to moral rebuke like, “it is your fault,” “you are breaking the rules,” “you are bad,” “you are a sinner” in place of seeking dialogue and emotional leverage with their children and helping them to master their daily problems, have indeed chosen a very treacherous persuasion tool. This is moralising in the hypertrophic sense, where the importance and effectiveness of reference to moral values and norms are overvalued, where such reference is used in inappropriate contexts and situations from which it was previously absent, and other argumentation and persuasion methods are abandoned in their favour.

There exists, however, a non-hypertrophic understanding of moralising, where it simply means dealing with new areas and aspects of human life by means of moral discourse. Modern-day civilisation confronts man with heretofore unknown challenges, which in a sense themselves demand to be responded to in a language that creates moral norms suited to the given new reality. The emergence of the stock market gradually created a morality to guide stock transactions, when the devastation of the natural environment crossed certain limits there arose the need for ecological morality, etc.

What, however, is the meaning of the anthropological sense of hypertrophic moralising signalled in the title of this paper? Most generally speaking, this kind of moralising is not psychological in character, nor does it refer to individual character traits or idiosyncrasies, but moves within the context of historical changes in the essence of human attitudes and conduct on the civilizational and specific plane. Why does modern man resort to hypertrophic moralising much more frequently than his early-medieval ancestors? What underlies contemporary (postmodern) humanity's continuous moralising in areas of life which still in the 19th century were very rarely (if at all) a subject of moralisation? We will attempt to find some answers to these questions below.

2. AN ATTEMPT AT A GENERAL CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF MORALISATION IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SENSE

Generally speaking, moralisation in the anthropological sense accompanies man's realisation that there is less and less contingency in the various spheres and dimensions of reality. Here the term "contingent" is mostly used in its "fatalistic" and not "potential" connotation (both contingency types come under the broad definition formulated by Aristotle, for whom "contingent" referred to that which was neither necessary nor impossible¹): something is contingent for X not because it could have been different and X, if he had so wished, could have prevented its coming into existence (this is "potential" contingency), but as factuality beyond the control of X, a "judgment of fate" which could have been different (is not necessary) but whose appearance in this or that form X had no possibility to influence. Contingency in this sense may embrace entire reality in one of its essential aspects (e.g. the omnipresence of suffering) as well as refer to various everyday events and processes, from biological (the contingency of birth) to those connected with the usage of technology and the accumulation of knowledge.

The awareness of the contingency of fate wanes with the rising awareness that we are "masters" of our own destiny, with the ever-firmer dominance, both

¹ Cf. Bubner, R. 1998. "Die aristotelische Lehre vom Zufall" [Aristotelian Teachings on Contingency]. In: *Kontingenz* [Contingency]. Von Graevenitz, D., O. Marquard (Eds.). Munich.

in human lives and over history, of that which humans control over that which “happens” to them. In Weber’s words, we could say that this tendency is one of the dimensions—or aspects—of modern-day rationalisation processes. Today people behave like rational beings (in sovereignly posing themselves goals for whose attainment they select the optimal means to maximise their gains of minimise their losses) to an increasing degree and in a rising number of areas in life, hence they are gradually losing their capacity for the “blind” acceptance of anything, which is now considered synonymous with irrationality. We experience less and less situations in which the subject simply “accepts” or “takes note” and more in which agreement is preceded by a moral verdict regarding the conditions under which is to be given. Moralisation is evolving into a universal legitimisation strategy. The subject seeks moral legitimacy for the existence of evil in the world, shows interest in the moral premises of searching for truth in conditions of chronic cognitive uncertainty, and regards fewer and fewer situations as a decree of fate, instead describing them in categories like “good,” “evil,” “guilt” and “punishment.” The subject today considers it self-evident that agreement to any reality preassumes this reality’s legitimisation within certain axiological standards, among which moral values play a leading role.

3. THE MORALISATION OF THE WORLD AND SUFFERING

Moralising attitudes towards the world and towards suffering as its ever-present element—as well as the moral neutrality standing in opposition to them—were not discovered by modern-day humanity. Philosophers in this field point to the paradigmatic Biblical example of Job, who accepted his sufferings as God-given fate: “I know that you can do all things,”² while his friends and neighbours, who in the *Book of Job* are the moralists, sought to explain his plight in moral terms, e.g. as punishment for his sins.³ The subject of the moralisation in the *Book of Job* is one of the first in Western history to resort to theodicean reasoning. Theodicy, as we know, aims to exonerate God from the charge that He is only seemingly omnipotent if, as an almighty and benevolent Creator, he failed to call into being a world uncontaminated by evil. Here, the confirmation of the Creator’s moral purity is regarded as a necessary condition for humans to accept the world, such acceptance in turn is the existential starting-point of all earthly human activity and a religious fundament: Job’s friends are only able to believe in a God whom they know to deserve the predicate of “goodness” without it contradicting His remaining predicates. Thus, a certain kind of knowledge appears here as an inalienable element and condition of faith and the act of faith itself rests upon rational theodicean grounds.

² *Book of Job*. 2011. The Outline Library of Liberty. A project of Liberty Fund. Inc.

³ Cf. the third speech by Eliphaz: God only inflicts punishment for, *Book of Job* ..., op. cit., 22.

In many of his writings Odo Marquard offers an interesting account of the evolution of modern-era Western philosophy as a succession of variations on this very theme.⁴ Marquard writes about the secularisation of theodicean formula, with man gradually taking over from God as the creator of the world in the social and civilizational sense, and sees the leading theodicean questions as questions about the moral potential and moral grounding of this creatory role. All the philosophers Marquard refers to in this context (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, the founders of philosophical anthropology from Johann Gottfried Herder to Arnold Gehlen and many others) propounded the crypto-theodicean compensation principle: evil is real, but fulfils several positive functions and is not a metaphysical finality—evil being goes beyond itself in its exteriorisation, whose result is good other-being, revolutionary violence is the threshold to a kingdom of freedom (Marx), human biological defects are compensated by human public institutions and creativity (Gehlen). Humans suffer, but their suffering has a metaphysical class or specific sense or some other deeper sense. And whatever has sense is good or at least a semblance of good.

Unlike Job, neither Marxian nor Gehlenian man shows unconditional approval for the world's shortcomings, but either seeks to bring those responsible for them to account before the Last Judgment of a revolutionary tribunal, or at least strives to determine the biological or historical prospects of mechanisms to compensate them. This is so because man as an active being and creator of his own history contributes to this history an ever-greater degree of rationality and gives moral legitimacy to all historical factuality he creates. The crowning of this secularised theodicy in each of these formulas is a vision of the good man is able to bring into the world (even as the carrier of Hegel's unhappy consciousness) and of a world "open" to the human goodness contained in the creativity of the human spiritual element. Evil exists, but it is good that is creative, that diminishes and relativises the role of evil in the creative process. Good gives evil its ultimate essence, not vice versa. Only such an *a priori* morally legitimised world is worth living and being active in *a posteriori*.

The crypto-theodicean model Marquard uses to define the identity of modern philosophy may be regarded as a suitable instrument for describing an important *anthropologicum*: the mounting and increasingly universal tendency to moralise as an essential characteristic of modern-day man. This anthropological element is reinforced by the conclusions Hermann Lübbe draws from the description. In his opinion moralising the world is a sign that the moral consciousness has annexed areas of experience which heretofore had an essentially religious

⁴ Marquard, O. 1986. "Entlastungen. Theodizeemotive in der neuzeitlichen Philosophie" [Theodicean Traits in Modern Philosophy]. In: idem. *Apologie des Zufälligen* [In Defense of the Accidental]. Stuttgart; idem. 1984. "Der angeklagte und der entlastete Mensch in der Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts" [Man Accused and Freed from Responsibility in 18th-century Philosophy]. In: idem. *Abschied vom Prinzipiellen* [Farewell to Matters of Principle]. Stuttgart.

character.⁵ Religious humans do not make God accountable for the “ethics” of His grace and see it also in the adversities they experience. An example are funeral masses, which are not a collective complaint against Divine injustice but rather serve to help people come to terms with the tragic contingency of fate in an eschatological perspective. Lübbe’s favourite example in this context is the *Erntedankfest*, the Protestant thanksgiving feast.⁶ Its religious meaning does not lie in calling upon God to witness a successful harvest, but in showing gratitude to God for any harvest at all, however small, for the possibility to live upon the earth, which can yield a harvest if thus commanded to by God. Thus, also poor harvests are an occasion to express unconditional gratitude for creation to the Creator. Lübbe believes that in today’s world such religiousness is being replaced by rationalistic and demanding attitudes, where the subject assumes that poor harvests should also be useful to humans as customers of insurance companies, or an occasion for anti-globalistic settlements with those responsible for climate change. Here, there is no room for religion’s entrustment of human suffering to God, as such suffering is entirely embraced by society’s moralistic compensation perspective.

4. THE MORALISATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND HISTORY

The moralisation of everyday life expresses itself in the refusal to accept many kinds of daily experiences and events as accidental, or independent from human intention and will. The sphere of everyday life is, as Lübbe points out, very broad and getting bigger. There is less consent to regard most medical errors as inevitable, an accidental by-product of all therapy on the current, still far-from-sufficient technological level. This rising trend to expose and subjectively attribute medical failure is the effect of the disappearance, or considerable weakening, of the belief that illness and its effects are a gift of fate.⁷ Also new life is seen less as a contingency, with damage claims filed against gynaecologists who fail to inform expecting parents about the existence of abortion grounds, misdiagnose such cases or neglect to examine them. Moralising attitudes are also increasingly present in areas like technology usage, services and leisure. There is less belief in the possibility of air or road accidents for which

⁵ Cf. Lübbe, H.1997. “Moral und Moderne. Über die Moralisation des Lebens in der wissenschaftlich-technischen Zivilisation“ [Morality and Modernity. The moralisation of life in scientific-technological civilisation]. In: idem. *Modernisierung und Folgekosten. Trends kultureller und politischer Evolution* [Modernisation and Resulting Burdens. Cultural and Political Evolution Trends]. Berlin, 134–138.

⁶ Cf. Lübbe, H. 1990. *Religion nach der Aufklärung* [Religion after the Enlightenment]. Graz, 142, 148, 168.

⁷ The media reported about a lawsuit filed against a physician by a patient who, upon being told that he was terminally ill and would soon die, squandered away his entire estate—only to learn with horror from the same doctor that subsequent tests showed him to be in perfect health.

no one is responsible, travel agency clients file charges against their agencies if they happen to experience inconvenience on their vacation site, and users of medication hold pharma corporations liable for any side-effects of their products, which, statistically subliminal, were not registered in the experimental phase. Whereby liability in such cases embraces not only personal responsibility for product defects, but also the effects of their inappropriate—and often common-sense-defying—usage.⁸ At the same time these moralistic measures are becoming increasingly impersonal—claims may be filed against institutions or anonymous groups like medical corporations. Accompanying this is a rising trend among the top-earning class to “insure against everything” to prevent adversities happening to individuals in a “moral vacuum,” i.e. impunitively or without the possibility of adequate compensation.

5. THE MORALISATION OF KNOWLEDGE

In the classical Enlightenment–positivistic model of the relation between knowledge (truth) and the moral awareness of the subject of knowledge it is impermissible to question facts on moral grounds. Reality may be—and often is—perceived as negative and this perception may involve postulates to change the *status quo*, but in order to be capable of such perception individuals must know that evil exists, thus they cannot deny its factual existence, as only its acceptance ensures insight into the cause-and-effect relations which enable conclusions about the aims and methods of combating evil.

The moralisation of knowledge reduces the moral distance between the subject and the factuality of some categories of facts, and entails: a) the ethical-rooted decreeing of the boundaries of true knowledge (truth is what is at least not inconsistent with the general moral trend); b) the social tabooing of knowledge which runs against thus-understood truth, in effect of which such knowledge becomes a kind of “anti-knowledge” and as such undisputable; and c) reaction to infringements of the cognitive taboos based not on counter-argumentation but moral indignation: those who break the taboos are “not wrong or mistaken, but compromise and discredit themselves,”⁹ willingly taking the position of people who are not discussed with as a rule because they “cannot be right.”

⁸ In this context Lübke mentions the case of a female dog-owner whose pet died in result of being dried in a microwave cooker after its bath. The woman sued the microwave producer for not placing an appropriate warning in the instruction manual. Cf. Lübke, H. “Moralismus und die fingierte Handlungssubjektivität” [Moralism and the Fake Subjectivity of Action]. In: idem. 1997, op. cit., 178.

⁹ Lübke H. 2004. “Die Wirklichkeit und gute Wille. Über Tendenzen der Moralisation des Wissens” [Reality and Good Will. On Tendencies to Moralise Knowledge]. In: idem. *Modernisierungsgewinner* [Modernisation Winners]. Munich, 185.

Lübbe attributes today's moralisation of knowledge to two main reasons. He sees the first in the rising complexity of cognitive procedures, the fact that knowledge is becoming increasingly hypothetical and esoteric, and the increasingly frequent helplessness of human common sense and experience as a reference source in cognitive dispute. We are unable to achieve the knowledge we pursue ourselves, at the same time its various fields are so complex that knowledge-storing institutions are also unable to provide it quickly enough nor sufficiently guarantee its genuineness (the latter made more difficult by the fact that the effects of civilizational change and of risk-involving moves whose outcome can at best be predicted take time to germinate). The transformation of facts into hypotheses and predictions changes moral neutrality towards facts into the moral defence of predictions—for moral reasons we support only some of them, but because we are convinced they are true we regard them as universally-acclaimed facts. The moral falsification criterion appears wherever scientific validation/falsification procedures fail to meet the human need of cognitive certainty: morality decides which "p" the cognition subject includes into the "I know that p" formula. As Lübbe notes:

"The simple distinction into good and evil re-establishes [our cognitive needs] in face of the confusion bred by civilisation, which, because of the mounting complexity of the cognitive premises of rational action, reduces our certainty (German: *gewissheitmindernd wirkt*). A moral decision cuts through the Gordian knot which the realities of contemporary life are turning into."¹⁰

When there appears a cognitive dissonance between failing knowledge about the true state of affairs and moral convictions like "it should be so, that p," moralisation helps reduce the dissonance by gradually changing the "should" awareness into a "factual" one. The subject transfers its sense of moral evidence to the cognitive sphere and moral truth in a sense acts on behalf of and replaces cognitive truth, imbues it with its persuasive powers and thus allows it to ultimately present itself as cognitive evidence. The unhampered sense of the truthfulness of moral convictions has a compensating role in recreating the sense of the truthfulness of knowledge.

Lübbe sees the second reason for moralising tendencies in the knowledge sphere in the waning inclination and ability to participate in discourse, which in itself excludes the acceptance of cognitive taboos. This in turn is connected with a) falling confidence in experts, who have trouble supplying cognitively valid knowledge; b) the de-homogenisation of individual cognitive competencies due to the mounting diversification and specialisation of education and knowledge-

¹⁰ Ibid., 189.

storing institutions.¹¹ Thus, individuals who seek consent as to the validity of a particular knowledge field strive to find it outside all discourse—in the canons of “moral correctness.” Here we have an escape into non-discursiveness, into a moral peremptoriness generated by the contamination of the cognitive and moral approach. This tendency is further strengthened by the mass media, who pillory opponents of what is “morally correct” in a given sphere of beliefs.

6. THE MORALISATION OF HUMAN NATURE ACCORDING TO WOLFGANG VAN DEN DAELE

Earlier we spoke about moralisation in the context of the rising tendency to seek personal responsibility for medical error. Contemporary medicine, especially its biogenetic avant-garde, is also witness to moralisation in a more general sense, which expresses what Wolfgang van den Daele calls “the moralisation of human nature.”¹² As we shall see, here we also have to do with a reaction to the presence of contingency, however—unlike the contingency of fate discussed so far—this is the contingency of choice, or an experience involving the more or less conscious undertaking or abandonment of various activities in a sphere of possible goals and activity forms. In other words, the experience of subjective perpetration in a sphere of “decisional manoeuvring” whose boundaries are hard to define.

The increasingly intensive development of genetic engineering has put at humanity’s disposal a steadily growing array of possibilities regarding targeted interference in natural human biology. As examples van den Daele names the separation of motherhood from pregnancy, experiments on embryos, the genetic manipulation of the personality or the possibility to “cross special boundaries between humans and animals by constructing chimeras or hybrids.”¹³ This list can, of course, be supplemented by cloning and biotechnology, which came under broader debate several years after the publication of van den Daele’s work. The author himself says:

“Scientific technology transforms anthropological constants into options. Human nature becomes contingent and can be changed according to our projections [...] We react to this new openness of our situation by attempting to moralise human nature—in such a way that we constitute what was heretofore unquestioned data as legal norms. The integrity and continuity of human

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 192–194.

¹² Cf. v. d.Daele, W. 1987. “Die Moralisierung der menschlichen Natur und empirische Bezüge in gesellschaftlichen Institutionen” [The Moralisation of Human Nature and References to Nature in Social Institutions]. *Kritische Vierteljahresschrift fuer Gesetzgebung und Rechtswissenschaft* [Critical Quarterly Journal for Legislation and Law], vol. 2 (70).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 352.

nature as such becomes a committing good [...] The typical tendency of moralisation [...] is to institutionalise human ‘naturalness’ as a social norm.”¹⁴

In other words, national legislations introduce restrictions on various kinds of biotechnology in the name of human dignity manifested by the inviolability of human nature. Van den Daele concludes:

“Man is defined by the specific natural conditions of his corporeality. He is also this natural corporeal nature and respect for his person forces the same respect for this nature [...] The contingentisation of nature is felt as a threat and opposed by efforts to moralise naturalness.”¹⁵

What psychological and social functions does such moralisation have, and how should we explain the tendency of contemporary legislators to set boundaries to medical experiment? Here van den Daele especially points to the “relief” (*Entlastung*) motive. Moralisation together with its legal anchoring are to relieve contemporary humans of the discomfort of having to accept the excessive risks connected with total freedom in planning and carrying out biomedical experiments. Their possible long-term negative effects are difficult to foresee, therefore it appears rational to strive for the total discontinuation of many of them as a measure to eliminate such risks. This tendency is validated by moral argumentation. Thus, elevated to a supreme good in the context of biotechnical science is “human nature” understood as the existing *status quo*, whose violation could in the long run irreversibly damage the “health” of the entire species.

Van den Daele also quotes interesting examples of moralising reference to human nature in such spheres as the legal recognition of parenthood or, in extreme cases, the proclamation of a person as an object of unconditional medical care (as in protracted lethargy). Van den Daele notes that contemporary legislation “strives for correspondence between the kinship bonds mentioned in family and inheritance laws and biological origin,” while the status of the person is linked to the “natural event of birth.”¹⁶ In both cases reference to nature counteracts the “rising pressure to act and decide,”¹⁷ with certain controversial issues resolved in advance on the moral/legal plane to save the protagonists of concrete activities in concrete situations from entanglement in moral dilemma. These relieving functions of moralisation are especially vivid in extreme medicine.

“When we tie the status of the person to the natural event of birth we avoid situations in which we have to decide whether a living human being is a person or not. We save ourselves the task of thematising and determining what

¹⁴ Ibid., 351, 360.

¹⁵ Ibid., 353.

¹⁶ Ibid., 357–359.

¹⁷ Ibid., 351.

properties this human being would have to possess to be a carrier of rights, especially the right to life. It must live and that's that. [...] It is neither possible nor necessary to politically negotiate a catalogue of normative conditions under which a human is human. The institutionalisation of human naturalness as a norm and morality which advocates respect for human nature protect us from the need to decide by what criteria and by whom future humans are to be genotypically programmed, who is to have control over *in vitro*-developing humans until they are capable of life, who they are to be assigned to, what status the various forms of laboratory studies of human life are to have, what ties between humans and animals there are to be, etc.”¹⁸

Van den Daele's examples and anthropological diagnoses in a sense order our to-date reflections, allowing a second and more general look at the relation between moralisation and the experience of contingency. Here we can in some measure speak about there being two kinds of this experience, and about the functionally homogeneous role of moralisation in both. The moralisation-neutralised contingency experience can be written into the structure of the human condition as an effect of man's status as Pascal's "thinking reed" (contingency of fate), on the other hand it can be connected with civilizational change and cultural evolution (contingency of choice). The relieving functions of moralisation appear in both these spheres of the uncertainty which, on the one hand, accompanies human fate unsubjected—or unsubjectible—to religious rationalisation and, on the other, the excessive choice of activities available to their subjects in crucial existential situations.

7. MORALISATION AND MORALITY

We should make a more detailed distinction between moralisation and the anthropological role of morality as a behaviour-controlling instance. Gernot Böhme draws attention to the latter when he reminds that "a part of the modernity project was [the postulate] for man to tame and control his own nature, and this conflict with nature mainly took place on the moral plane."¹⁹ Internalised moral norms were in a sense a weapon against human nature's impetuosity, a means of civilising its responses and expressing disagreement to those of its impulses which were considered irrational. At the same time they were an instrument in face of contingent natural events. However, in a situation:

“where pharmacology, prosthetic technology, birth control, pre-natal diagnostics, embryo selection and the looming possibilities of genetic manipula-

¹⁸ Ibid., 360.

¹⁹ Böhme, G. 1994. *Weltweisheit, Lebensform, Wissenschaft* [Wisdom of the World, Form of Life, Science]. Frankfurt/Main, 97.

tion [...] have made problematic what man is to continue to accept as his own nature [...] man's status as a moral being has also become problematic."²⁰

“What sense is there still—Böhme asks—in Christian virtues like humility and patience if the sphere of what man has to accept unconditionally has narrowed down so drastically?”²¹

In other words, the assumption here is that morality is becoming less and less “necessary” to humanity as something that ensures harmony between human behaviour and human self-conception. In many cases the subject does not have to develop any virtues itself, in order to, through respect for the norms and values associated with them, to attain goals within the accepted canons of auto-creation. It need not mortify itself, brace its will or practice temperance to, say, fight against an addiction if pharmacological treatment promises better results. Here internalised moral norms cease to function as a bridge between the anthropological *status quo* and the purposes of human self-transformation and in their place come decisions about which of the available medical means and/or technologies to resort to. Böhme notes that the declining behavioural role of moral values and norms is especially vivid in the context of the ever-closer prospect of science mastering the art of biological interference into the human character.

But how does the rising role of moralisation fit in with these anthropological trends? Is not moralisation, which after all refers to moral values, antithetical to them? And, therefore, is it not so that the two tendencies mutually eliminate each other leaving the here-discussed anthropological role of moral norms and values basically intact? Here it is worth remarking that moralisation does not use moral norms as an immediate behaviour control tool. We do not moralise in order to do anything better (pursue certain goals in keeping with our self-image) but to rationalise what we are doing, to reimbue it with lost sense or make this sense more vivid if it has blurred. When it moralises, the subject reconstructs the reasonableness of what it is unable to accept in an attitude of irrational consent to the contingency of its fate. Moralisation is an important external reference frame for activity, situating it within a certain ideological sphere without exercising any immediate control over it.²²

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² More complicated is the moralisation of human nature in reaction to specific contexts arising from the contingency of choice analysed by van den Daele. Biotechnology-connected restrictions doubtless define medical praxis in a certain way. Here, however, we can rather speak about “negative” behaviour selection criteria than “positive” moral ideals guiding and overseeing concrete behaviour. Moralistic restrictions lend meaning to a whole variety of medical practices, thus fulfilling the general functions of rationalisation, and make only secondary reference to specific human behaviour and its ethical infrastructure.

As we have said, here moral judgment enters an area which culture earlier reserved for religion. Accompanying this is a sociological phenomenon: moral correctness increasingly replaces religion as the Durkheimian social binder. People unite in face of injustice, supposedly justified demands or ideological orthodoxy. As an element of moralistic argumentation moral norms and values serve self-preservation purposes in face of the individual's loss of its ability to accept fate spontaneously. This argumentation embraces entire human existence as such, its fundamental existential and cognitive competencies and not, as in the case of traditional virtues, specific areas of behaviour. This would mean that moralisation is not equivalent to morality and cannot be an antidote to the crisis of morality's anthropological functions Böhme writes about. But is this crisis irreversible? And how deep does it run?

At this point we come to an important anthropological problem discussed in its many variations in Charles Taylor's philosophical writings. Taylor assumes that ethical ideals (and the moral norms they carry) are an essential component of human identity, which leads to the conclusion that no human individual can cease to refer its conduct to moral norms as an assessment and control criterion without risking the violation of a certain anthropological *a priori*.²³ According to this assumption, Böhme's man, increasingly deprived of the controlling function of morality, would be veering close to pathology. Would moralisation and the related structural changes in human identity be able to curb it? In other words, does not moralisation, which in fact has other functions than morality, in a way compensate the effects of the anthropological evolution described by Böhme, i.e. the abandonment of Taylor's anthropological model?

Let us begin to answer this question by remarking that moralisation participates in the formation of the human identity in a different way than moral ideals do. The latter situate the individual in an axiological dimension in which it strives to fulfil specific values and activates its anthropological potential to "change for the better,"²⁴ whereas moralisation as an axiological decision in a sense determines "good identity," or at least the "correct" identity components, thus allowing the individual the splendour of possessing a "rational" self-image. Here good is not situated on an axiological horizon as a biographical goal but appears to be the immediate effect of declaring oneself among the carriers of "correct views and attitudes." Moralisation binds identity to immediate axiological decisions and not to the strenuous pursuit of good over an entire lifetime. This is connected with the anti-contingent character of moralisation, while morality in Taylor's understanding is rooted in the experience of the contingency of fate. The pursuit of moral ideals as the material of autobiographical

²³ Cf. especially: Taylor, Ch. 2001. *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Harvard University Press, 10–250.

²⁴ Cf. Czerniak, S. 2006. *Kontyngencja, tożsamość, człowiek. Studia z antropologii filozoficznej XX wieku* [Contingency, Identity, Man. Studies in 20th-century Philosophical Anthropology]. Warsaw, 167–229.

narration cannot be brought down to single instances of rationalisation. By this pursuit the individual registers the successive stages of its contingent progress towards good. Moralization, on the other hand, is anti-narrative in character: its disapproval of contingency disrupts self-narration and poses questions about the reasonableness of general action frameworks and the cognitive conditioning of action. Individual biographies are unimportant for moralisation. What is important are individual acts of rationalisation—which side to stand on “once and for all” in ideological strife, which cognitive content to regard as true within the boundaries of common consent, “which” reality (in the sense of its axiological status) to regard worthy of approval. Here, therefore, individual identity is also devoid of narrative character, a layered structure corresponding to the temporal segments of biography. It is not continuous but a “set of points” ascribed to essential rational decision.²⁵

These comparisons, therefore, bring forth a certain anthropological alternative: on the one hand is man as the subject of moralisation (Lübbe) and a being which increasingly does without the controlling functions of moral norms (Böhme)—as we have said, these attitudes are not opposed and can combine—while on the other there is man as seen by Kant and Taylor, who builds his identity upon specific ethical virtues, models and imperatives. If, however, we accept that the first model evolved from the second (as Böhme appears to assume), is this not rather a mechanism by which the subject compensates its refusal of the role of morality in Taylor’s understanding by moralisation, i.e. rationalisation-based reference to moral norms in life contexts whose essence was heretofore provided by religious experience? An affirmative answer to this question would lead to the conclusion that the anthropological importance of reference to moral norms as an element of human identity is inalienable, while the character of such reference and its role in the structure of identity changes over history. Here one may speak about an engaging (Taylor) and relieving (Lübbe) sense of moral order as the material of individual identity. Taylor’s man sets himself moral goals which he actively pursues, sometimes to the verge of heroism. Whereas the subject of moralisation resorts to acts of ethical rationalisation to relieve its psychological life of the discomfort of unawareness, the sense of excessive risk and uneasiness about making decisions. One may say that here the heroic moral identity propounded by Socrates, Kant and Taylor is replaced by the rentier-like identity typical for carriers of rationalising attitudes, whose main need is security—especially safe self-fulfilment.

This, however, does not at all mean that Taylor’s man has “died” like Nietzsche’s God. In the psychological and sociological sense one may rather speak about a wide range of transitional forms. Neither is it certain if moralising tendencies are an irreversible civilizational *telos* of anthropological change, nor

²⁵ Ch. Taylor resorts to the concept of “punctual” identity in the context of his polemic with the naturalistic anthropological tradition inspired by John Locke. Cf. Taylor, Ch. 2001, op. cit., 83.

if they really can completely replace morality (and its traditional functions) in a longer historical perspective—even if we accept Lübbe's claim that religion will never again regain the anthropological importance it possessed in pre-Kantian Western civilisation.

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HUMAN BEING AS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL BEING: A THEANTHROPOCOSMIC APPROACH TO WELLNESS AND WELLBEING

ABSTRACT

This paper examines four issues concerning human being as a multi-dimensional being. Firstly, the dualist and tripartite conceptions of human beings are discussed. The dichotomist (dualist, bipartite) view of human beings—according to which man comprises of spiritual soul and body—underscores in a strongly materialistic world the idea that faith, spirituality, belief, trust and confidence are soft options in daily life. Secondly, the author investigates the possibility of a differentiation and interchange of human fields of experience as components of human nature. In the African and Christian approaches taken into account in this paper, human being comprises a differentiated multiplicity of fields, components, dimensions and facets of experience integrated into a wholesome creature that experiences God, itself, other human beings and the natural environment. Each component of human being, though radically different, is of the same importance. Thirdly, the modern integral and differential conceptions of human being as a multi-dimensional entity are discussed. The approach in this paper is of postmodern non-reductionist type; according to it, human beings are comprised differentially of a multiplicity of fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience dynamically integrated in a union.

Keywords: Human being; soul; body; wellness; Theanthropocosmic.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I will focus on some important points constituted conceptions of human being from the Greek-Roman era to the present one. The discussion will revolve around man as a multi-dimensional being. First, I will examine the dualist and tripartite approaches to human beings. According to the well-known dichotomist (dualist, bipartite) view, human being comprises of spiritual soul

and body. This view underscores in a strong materialistic world the idea that faith, spirituality, belief, trust and confidence are soft options. The approaches in which soul and body are less dualistically set up in holistic balanced unities do not show clearly that including faith, belief and trust into human being's life is its necessary element. In the second step I will investigate the possibility of the differentiation and interchange of fields of human experience as the components of human nature. In the wholesome African and Christian approaches that are adopted and investigated in this paper, human being comprises a differentiated multiplicity of fields, components, dimensions and facets of experience integrated into a wholesome creature that experiences God, the human self, other human beings and the natural environment in each field of experience. Each component of human being, though radically different, is equally important. In the third step, the modern integral and differential approaches to human being as a multi-dimensional being will be considered. The view adopted in this paper is of the late non-reductionist type of approach to human beings—according to which they are comprised differentially of a multiplicity of fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience dynamically integrated into human beings. In the final part I will probe what role or part is played by the truth elements of the dualist and tripartite conceptions in the multi-dimensional conceptions of human being.

DUALIST AND TRIPARTITE APPROACHES OF HUMAN BEINGS

The approaches in which soul and body are less dualistically set up as holistic balanced unities do not lead to including faith, belief and trust into necessary spiritual human beings' wellbeing and wellness. They do not realise that the forms of faith and spirituality carried from the outside into human beings' life operate as factors which are necessary for human beings.

The other well-known trichotomist (triadic, tripartite) view of human beings as including spirit, soul and body, similarly demarcates the experiences of faith, spirituality, etc. as those which do not really contribute to human beings' wellness and wellbeing in real life. Similarly, as in the dualist view, a solution is inevitably looked for in a balanced equilibrium of the components of the three-some. In the conceptions of two components (i.e. spiritual soul and material body) as well as in the conceptions of three components (i.e. spirit, soul, body) the components are out of synchronisation with each other due to evil, stress and sin in the world. Therefore as a solution for the acquisition of wellness and wellbeing, two or three components have to constitute a state of equilibrium and balance. Obviously, such a solution makes sense if and only if one accepts the twosome or threesome division of the human condition. If, however, the modern radically integral and differential approach to human beings is taken into account, the twosome (soul–body) and threesome (soul–spirit–body) images of

human beings are hopelessly inadequate for the task of tackling human problems.

Thus, the more incisive question—apart from the question how one gets such equilibrium—is whether it is acceptable to distinguish between such components, essences or substances of the twosome or threesome nature of human being. The first problem is that human being is broken into more important and less important components. This problem has a very old, complicated and long history and is based on the God–life–world approaches that rather should no longer be an object of our investigating. When the emphasis is put more on spirit or soul and mind and less on body and matter, we usually speak of such an approach as spiritualist or idealist, while the materialistic approaches emphasize solely the body and matter side of human beings and nature.

The persistency of the ancient dualistic and trichotomist views in the modern world is remarkable. Many proponents regard the persistency as a demonstration of their correctness. The popular view that the imbalances, disintegration and disjointedness of people is corrected by establishing the homeostasis and equilibrium of spirit, soul and body, or mind and matter expresses the old tautology of the ancient anthropological views that the components of spirit, soul and body operate simultaneously as tools in establishing homeostasis and equilibrium. A similar tautology functions in the modern anthropological views in which the basic components of being human is mind and matter operating as tools for achieving a homeostasis and equilibrium.

Similar problems seem to concern the modern version of the mind and matter duality. The conceptions of the twosome and threesome types do not slot easily into the modern reliable (holistic) God–life–worldview conception of human beings which in the African setting are formed by mixing and uniting the black African and Judaeo-Christian views and approaches. One has to admit that the modern duality of mind and matter broadly applied in philosophical, scientific, theological and religious circles is similarly slotted in the wholesome and differentiated God-life-and-world approach towards human beings.

DIFFERENTIATION AND INTERCHANGE OF HUMAN FIELDS OF EXPERIENCE

The first problem is that of a view of human beings and the differentiation and the interchange of human fields, modes and facets of daily experience in which wittingly or unwittingly God, human being and the natural environment play a role in one's experience of wellness and wellbeing. The main perspective is that of faith, spirituality, belief, and trust which leads the discussion and reflection to investigating the pattern of God, being human and the natural worldly environment.

In the African and Christian approaches taken into account in this paper, human being comprises a differentiated multiplicity of fields, components, dimensions and facets of experience integrated into a wholesome creature that experiences God, the human self, other human beings and the natural environment in each field of experience. Each component of human being, though radically different is equally important.

Human being is viewed as a differentiated but integrated singular and irreplaceable (Van Niekerk, 2008, 95ff). The equilibrium of wellness and wellbeing in the approach proposed here has been achieved through the differentiation and interchange of fields of experience. In this paper the emphasis is put on the following aspects of human beings and fields of experience: (1) faith, belief and trust, (2) thinking and conceptualising, (3) feelings and emotion, (4) verbalising and speaking, (5) production (performance) of artefacts and constructs (performances), (6) experience of justness as the setting of proportions, (7) social and relational experience, and (8) education and training.

THE TENACITY OF DUALIST AND TRIPARTITE APPROACHES TO HUMAN BEINGS

Soul, body and spirit, or soul and body have been still viewed as human aspects and functions by many modern people. These beliefs have a long history; they have been established in Greek and Roman antiquity. I do not approach the notion of experience of equilibrium and differentiation adopted in the most common dualist (twosome) view of an immortal soul and mortal body. The other less accepted approach of the tripartite (threesome) of spirit-immortal soul-mortal body, still highly fashionable in certain religious groups, has also not been employed here. According to the current Christian view, the immortal soul-mortal body dualism is foreign to the Bible and nonsensical from the perspective of the resurrection of Jesus, which is God's greatest gift for the continuation of people's existence after life (Van Niekerk, 2008, 121). The notion of the primordial inbuilt immortal soul lingering on through life into eternity is one of the strongest factors undermining the practical day-to-day experience of the resurrection of Jesus. In the ancient tripartite (threesome) view of human being, spirit, and soul are linked together as a divine and eternal grouping set apart from the mortal body.

In any philosophical reflection, the discussion about the number of human fields, modes, dimensions and aspects should be widely open. While I strongly suggest to not follow the ancient essentialist views of soul and body, or spirit and soul and body, I also suggest to not follow the major approaches of modern churches and theologians emerging from the sixteenth-century Reformation. The latter approaches boil down to the propagation of faith and belief as the outstanding semi-divine or semi-human field of experience giving meaning and

embracing all other such fields. Fideism or pietism, firstly, makes faith and belief half- (semi-) divine and half-human, while according to them other fields of experience are only human and natural. In this sense, the old dualist scheme shows its ugly spiritualising head again (Van Niekerk, 2006, 389; 2008, 121). The fact that other fields of experience are also constituted by God does not influence the eager and avid followers of the fideist and pietistic views. According to those views, God added faith in the historical period of salvation and reconciliation through Jesus Christ as an extra and super field of human experience. Fideism and pietism simply continue those views by adopting that faith is an act colonising all the other fields of human experience. Faith in these views is an extra addition to all other fields. The God-glorifying and Biblical adhering intention of such a centralised view of faith is thus to give other fields of experience more meaningful and sensible insight into their basic and characteristic natures. Unfortunately, reducing everything meaningful in human life to faith is a part of the grand approach of idolising faith against the God-glorifying and Biblical-adhering intentions of its pietistic and fideist propagators.

IS THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN BIBLE EXPRESSING DUALIST AND TRIPARTITE VIEWS?

In the traditional sense, a topic of human beings' equilibrium and differentiation is treated within the perimeters (margins) and in terms of the parameters (basic natures) of the complexes of either soul and body, or mind or spirit or soul or body. Various attempts to form full and holistic views including the traditional notions of mind or spirit or soul or body are being undertaken in the past. In the Judaeo-Christian world, the ancient categories are present in many times in the Bible. According to some recent interpretations, the ancient essentialist categories of immortal soul and mortal body have a truly Biblical character. The Biblical as well as the traditional African God-life worldviews emphasise the wholeness of human beings against dualist and tripartite essentialist schemes. The old terms "soul," "body," "spirit," "heart" and "mind" have been used in two senses in the texts of the Old and New Testament. Firstly, in different contexts human being is presented in his/her totality and wholeness as *being* totally his/her soul, *being* totally his/her body, *being* totally his/her spirit, *being* totally his/her heart or *being* totally his/her mind. Thus, human being is totally his/her soul, body, spirit, heart or mind depending on the contexts where these concepts are used as the designations of totality. In very few instances soul, body, spirit, heart, etc. are used together in an essentialist sense as substances. One of few places where soul and body are being used in the same context is Matthew 10: 28.

Secondly, these terms appear in other contexts as partial designations of human beings in the sense of human being *having* different abilities, sides and

aspects such as thinking, feeling, believing, speaking or evolving. In the most concrete form of the word soul-sides, bodily-sides, spirit-sides, heart-sides or sides of the mind come to the fore in different written worlds. The notion of soul is used to express biotic-evolving side of man whereas the notions of soul, life and blood are very closely correlated up to the point where the live-giving part of the soul is seen in the blood. By reading this text where the biotic-evolving side of “soul is in the blood” is confused with the soul as a total designation for human being, leads to the practice of refusing blood transfusions by Jehova’s witnesses (Van Niekerk, 2009, 99).

In rural and semi-rural areas, academic growth is slowly expanding and is taking place among professionals. There are strong indications that the wellness and levels of professionals, thus their differential and integral equilibrium in various fields of experience, are hovering on the lower end of the scale of the meaningful experience. When one approaches the relationship of equilibrium and differentiation and the concomitant experience of wellness and wellbeing from either the dualist soul or body scheme or the repartitions of spirit or soul or body positive results and solutions are not only minimal, but usually support the stressful and problematic situations and contexts in which modern people are finding themselves. The main reason for this is the incompatibility of the God-life-world approaches, from which these dualist and tripartite views originated, with our current African– Christian God-life-world approaches. Unfortunately, many modern people wittingly and unwittingly approach many societal and experiential problems from the stance of the ancient dualist and tripartite God-life-worldviews.

The generally accepted modern—especially Protestant—approach of viewing religious faith and beliefs as a supernatural spiritual super-elected semi-divine or semi-human field and dimension of human experience immensely improves investigations of the kind undertaken in this study, their most important and basic facet of experience in the theological sense.

The ancient dualist view and the modern reductionist approach of religious faith in God as a basic facet of human being, is followed by Norma Vincent Peale (1952, 31). Peale asserts that as an expression of the natural state of a person, the physical wellbeing and the wellbeing of faith and spirituality should be coordinated. In this coordination a continuous replacement of energy is needed by the person to perform his/her work, i.e. every normal person is both the emotionally well integrated and religiously sound person. In this sense, the maintenance of one’s sound spiritual life allows to enjoy him/her the energy of his/her personality. However, the suggested solution is not complete and subordinated to an integrative and differential point of view.

Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile, though more in line with the African sense-making approaches, follows argument similar to that by Peale (Lebaka-Ketshabile, 1997, 16). In applying the dualist principle to African life she describes African life as comprising physical and spiritual components which are

both vital as gifts of God. She also argues that to be human is more than to be physical; the essence of human is being spiritual and living for God, for oneself and for others. Lebaka-Ketshabile (1997) argument is valid within the outlines of the dual approach in which the physical and spiritual components are both vital as gifts from God and need to be nourished together. However, her dual approach becomes dualist when the spiritual being is viewed as more important than the physical one.

MODERN INTEGRAL AND DIFFERENTIAL APPROACHES OF HUMAN BEINGS

The approach in this paper is that of the late or postmodern non-reductionist approach to human beings; according to it human being comprised a multiplicity of fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience dynamically integrated with each other. In this paper, the views of E. van Niekerk are used as a basis of the performed analysis and synthesis. Van Niekerk describes a human being as simultaneously a uni-, bi- and multi-being (2008, 95; 2009, 96).

1. Firstly, human being is a singular and irreplaceable being connected to God, to himself/herself, to other human beings and to physical-organic nature, but is simultaneously radically different from God and physical-organic nature.

2. Secondly, human being is dual; it comprises the left and right hemispheres. Those two hemispheres express many dualities, tool pairs and dual organs of the human “bodily” existence such as two ears, two eyes, two arms, two legs, two kidneys, etc. Some of the dual organs can operate oppositionally, others only complementary, still others dialectically, or one erupts into the other.

3. Thirdly, each human being comprises a multiplicity of fields, capacities, faculties, modes or dimensions of experience. The multiplicity or multiplex of fields and capacities of experience—interconnected to the physical-organic environments and God—express themselves through, in and as processes of acts, operations and doings of human beings whose leading emphasis and focus continuously change episodically and contextually. Each one of the fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience may be a leading one which draws others along for an episode and for a demarcated setting of experience (Van Niekerk, 2008, 95–96). Each of these fields is in the modern era the constant limitless and timeless reductionist initiating agency and meaning-giver for all the other fields of experience (Van Niekerk, 2009, 90–91).

Van Niekerk (2009, 96) proposes the following fields, modes, domains, dimensions or facets of human experience as constructed discoveries of the modern era:

The following fields, modes, domains, dimensions or facets of human experience as constructed discoveries or discovered constructs of the modern era are being suggested as to a large degree been accepted as fields, modes and dimensions of experience:			
Thinking/reasoning: thoughts and reasons	Feeling: emotions and feelings	Loving: love expressions and acts	Speaking/verbalising: words, terms and symbols
Apportioning: justness, justice, laws, rules and ordinances	Economising: supply/needs and demand/capacities	Imagining/fantatising: imaginative creations, fantasies and artful expressions	Socialising: codes, modes and styles
Producing/performance: products and performances	Bio-organic evolving: cells, organisms and growths	Moving: movements and kinetics	Physico-processing: mass and gravitational processual energies
Chemicalising: chemical processes and energies	Entitising: things and entities	Spatio-coordinating: spatial constructs and coordinates	Informing: information and data
Empowering/managing: powers and strengths	Believing/faith: beliefs and certainties	Educating/training: skills and capacities	Etc.

Each of these fields of experience in Van Niekerk's view is encapsulated and intersected by the ancient distinctions of mind and matter, spirit and physical nature or spirit or soul and body (2008, 97). In the traditional dualist and modernist dual views, a half of the fields, modes, dimensions and facets of human experience belong to the matter and physical nature or body part, and the other half to the mind or spiritual and soul part of human being.

In the view presented here, mind and matter or soul or spirit and body cut through every field of experience of human being. In this regard Van Niekerk (2008, 69) asserts that faith, belief and trust, i.e. the so-called spiritual and soul facets in traditional views, do not have a higher nor more important embracing position than thinking, feelings, producing, loving, speaking, physico-chemical energy. Faith and belief experience is not more religious or divine than other fields of human experience and is not a religious supernatural dimension beyond any comparison to the natural. The classic Christian view of faith as an all-embracing permeating dimension inserted into human being by God's salvific grace, thus turning someone from the state of being an unbeliever without the capacity of believing to a believer with that capacity, is highly problematic. It is one of the strongest creators of the dualist sense-making approaches in the Christian world.

In fact, there is no special religious dimension because God is directly involved in every field of experience as the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. Saying metaphorically, every field of experience has its own sparkplug, the nucleus

or core where the Spirit of God continually sparks and fuses, connecting God, being human and the physical-organic environment (Van Niekerk, 2008, 69). The idea of religious dimension creates the impression that God hovers outside non-religious “ordinary” human dimensions, and is allowed to enter our lives only through the so-called religious and supernatural faith dimension (Van Niekerk, 2008, 69). In the traditional sense, religious faith plays a basic role among the multiplicity of fields and modes of experience, but does not form intrinsically and initially a part of human experience. One of the basic premises of the paper is that one can only speak of faith as faith-experience in a similar way as thought experience, experience of emotions and experiential apportioning of justness.

One of the problematic modern attempts of approaching human beings as multi-dimensional is found in the four-structure view which has its foundation in the traditional mind and matter, or soul/spirit and body approach. According to J. A. Rens (2006, 24–25), the existence of human being in the time-bound earthly life manifests itself in a coherence of four structures which have been combined in a wonderful way by God as a human totality:

1. The basic structure of human body is the physical-chemical which indicates the muscles, skeleton, tissue, blood, hair, body, processes etc. This structure forms the basis of the human being’s temporary existence on earth.

2. The next structure is the biotic which indicates life. The physical-chemical structure is subordinated to the biotic.

3. Human being also has a psychological structure because he/she can feel and respond. The psychological structure guides the biotic and physical-chemical structures.

4. The highest and most complex structure of human being is the behavioural structure directing all three lower order structures. The behavioural structure has three functions, namely to know, to will and to imagine. Through knowledge humankind comes to know how and what things are. Man’s imagination enables him/her to transcend what he/she knows, to formulate new possibilities, to change existing issues, such as to create culture from nature within his/her human limits. By directing his/her will human being can organise his /her actions according to norms.

The problem with this view is that the old distinction mind (soul/spirit)–matter (body) implies that the first three structures, namely the physical-chemical, biotic and psychological structures, are matter-like and bodily structures, whereas the fourth, behavioural structure is the mind and soul/spirit structure. Following this view, it is obtained that an overemphasis on one or two of those structures results into an imbalance of person’s wellness and wellbeing. The development and maintenance of these structures thus result in a state of equilibrium and homeostasis. The wholeness and wholesomeness of person is in this view better approximated, and is therefore an improvement of the old view of dualism of mind (soul) and matter (body). However it does not actually bring

us further in our reflection on the problem of wellness and well-being, as well as on the problem of the equilibrium and homeostasis.

TRUTH ELEMENTS FROM THE DUALIST AND TRIPARTITE VIEWS

The entire open list of fields of human experience is not used as a guiding pointer in this investigation. To understand what the approach is, one has firstly to take into account that a selected number (a cluster) of fields of experience is guided by a perspective of faith. Secondly, the traditional components of mind and matter or soul/spirit and body are intrinsically a part of each field of experience. The traditional groupings of mind and matter or soul/spirit and body, proposed by the ancient dualists and trichotomists, influence people's experiences and capabilities through the ages.

The modern God-human-world view, taking its clues and tones amongst others from the Bible, comprises more fields, dimensions and modes of experience than the ancient views including *rational soul (anima rationalis)* and, on a lower level of being human, the *physical body*. Similarly, modern God-human-world views outweigh the threesome view assuming a higher level of *spirit* and *rational soul* and a lower level of *physical body*. The question is whether there are essential elements in the experiences of the ancient people from which the twosome and threesome conceptions emerged.

The truth elements of the mind and matter, spirit and nature and soul and body dualities are viewed by Van Niekerk (2008, 96–99) as intrinsically a part of each field, mode or dimension of human experience, as limiting pointers on two ends of a continuum. Thus, all experiences and meanings of the modern mind–matter and ancient spirit–nature dualities are not casted aside as if they do not contribute to a wholesome differential and integral view of being human. Instead of viewing human being as comprising a group of fields of mental or spiritual processes—the term “experience” is seldom used for these processes—and a group of matter-like and bodily experiential processes, the dualities are turned to be intrinsically part of each field, mode or dimension of human experience. For instance, experience of faith has a mental or spiritual side to which a matter or natural side is linked. In a similar sense coordinative spatial experience, thought experience, and experience of feelings/emotions have mental/spiritual and matter/natural sides.

The continuation of the time-tested dualities in this new embracing sense brought a slightly different duality. There is, in fact, no duality between the mind or spirit and matter or the natural physical world in someone's experience of believing and faith, thinking and thoughts and feeling and emotions.

For people operating in today's world with any of the vertically constructed dualities it is still highly problematic to speak on mental and spiritual processes as thought, faith or symbolic rhetorical experiences. It makes sense to speak on mind/spirit processes and matter/bodily experiences. What does not make sense

is to call them the mind/spirit processes because they happen more or less in the human being's head. Outside the head, the empirical experiential world, which includes human body, is experienced as a sensible realm. Since Aristotle the term "experience" has been mainly referred to the sensible physical-organic realm. Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of supporters of these dualities are not consistent since the senses by use of which experiences are performed are mostly situated in and around the head (eyes, ears, noses, taste buds). Touch seemingly seems to be a bit different, because the sense of touch is located at any part of the body. In a sense, every sense has the whole body as its playing field.

Human sciences and natural sciences adopt the vertical division between mind or spirit and material body alongside the horizontal division of human beings and the physical-organic environment. Human beings are necessarily surrounded by the natural physical-organic environment.

The array of problems that seems to be unsolvable contemporary could largely be ascribed to the ongoing portrayal of human beings as deriving from the ancient God-human-world approaches, which were couched in twosome or threesome vertical and hierarchical schemes. These schemes made sense to many people's existence in the eras in which they have emerged. The blunt application of imitations and mirrorings of these ancient schemes in later eras, in which new fields, modes and dimensions of experience appeared, has a doubtful value. Strong authorisation and endorsement by God, experts, certain readings of the Bible or cultural and social conventions undermine the reasonability of holding the old dual and triadic portrayals of human beings.

In the differential and integral God-human-and-world approach, it does not make sense to divide human being into a group of mental or spiritual fields, modes and dimensions intrinsically separate from the matter or bodily group of fields, modes and dimensions. Ironically, mental/spiritual processes—not mental/spiritual experiences in the duality view—necessarily need the fields, modes and dimensions of the matter/bodily group as its playground in real life.

What makes more sense is to allowing the idea of mind and matter, and spirituality and body to appear in every field, mode and dimension of experience, interconnected with the divine side. Thus, the interconnection operationalises the theanthropocosmic threesome of God, being human and nature in every field of experience. In such an approach, faith is on the sides of mind and matter, moreover, on spiritual, natural and divine sides.

DUALIST VERSUS WHOLESOME ANTHROPOLOGIES AND THE BIBLE

One may ask whether the notions of duality and tripartite views attempting to embrace the whole human life from both the spiritual and soul sides as well as from the soul or bodily sides have contributed to the emergence of the anthropologies which claim to be based on the Biblical background.

It has become increasingly clear that dualisms, dualities and binary schemes are not solved by stating over and over like a mantra that one actually applies the notion of interconnectedness. Whether one tackles the anthropological questions holistically from the mind, culture, spirit and soul side of dualism or from the body, matter and physical nature side of dualism, the dualism stays in place, albeit in the form of soft dualities that helps on the road to a greater interconnectedness and comprehensiveness in the description of different fields, modes and dimensions of human experience (Modise, 2009). As long as those anthropological attempts of diversifying all the fields, modes and dimensions into soul, spirit and body components, i.e. even in its ultra-modern version of mind and matter, real diversification of human fields, modes and aspects of experience cannot be accessed. Each component of the basic foursome that revolves around God, the human self, other human beings and the physical natural world cannot be unlocked.

Where does the dual or triadic view of God, human beings and the natural world that plays such a central role in the Christian churches come from? One has to take into account those notions of spiritual body and its opposition, i.e. bodily spirit had supposedly been derived from the Bible. Dual and triadic descriptions appear in different parts of the Bible. The main question is whether one can build a complete anthropology on these episodic descriptions.

The terms “body,” “soul,” “spirit,” “mind” and “heart” are used in the Bible in different ways. Sometimes the approach is a mixed one with a wide range of fluctuating meanings, some of the Biblical texts are very close to the dualist soul-body approach or the trichotomist spirit-soul-body approach. In the majority of instances, however these texts and contexts indicate clear clues, cues and hues concerning our lifeworld. The commonly used dual sets of clues such as “spirit and body,” “rational and sensory,” “inner and outer,” “invisible and visible,” “incomprehensible and comprehensible,” “intelligible and empirical” and even “heavenly and earthly” appear in many Biblical texts as designations of holistic integrated and differentiated approaches. The reading into the Bible dualist and triadic anthropological views is problematic. What is more sensible is to extract and to translate the seemingly dual and triadic schemes into our contextual frameworks by confronting them with a holistic, integral and differential view on human life. In other words, such the so-called duality is not viewed as two substantial domains, substances or components, but as one integrated substantial domain of experience.

In some ways, the modern notion of the broad view connecting closely the spiritual and the bodily is presented as the holistic African-Christian approach to God, human beings and the physical-organic world. My idea is that the differential and integral role of the 20th-century idea of physical body is a part of the secular world. The notions of spiritual body or bodily spirit are presented in various circles as mending the gap between human spirit and material body. Anyone who adopts the conception of interconnectedness on the basis of a dual-

ist or trichotomist viewpoint while starting from the bodily-matter side or the spiritual-mind-culture-soul side is unaware that the rendered solution of interconnectedness is still couched in terms of the dual immortal spirit/soul and mortal body.

In some of these hard-core dualist views soul does not need body, while in others there is an interaction between soul and body. For example, when soul has to express its inward attributes it needs bodily senses to communicate those attributes. An argument is put forward that body and soul are inseparable substances of human existence that need to be treated equally and nourished equally for humankind to reach two states of equilibrium on two levels, that is, the eternal spiritual and the temporal mortal bodily levels of wellbeing and wellness. The hard dualists emphasise the unity of soul and body but as long as they view soul and body as two substances (essences) of human life, the one heavenly eternal and the other earthly temporal, no unity is reached and no real and helpful states of contentment and equilibrium can be achieved in the earthly world which is our home and daily habitat (the so-called secularised world).

Hard dualists and trichotomists assert that some of the actions of the body are dependent on the conscious operations of the soul, while others are not. According to them, the operations of the soul are connected with the body as its instrument in the present life, but from the continued conscious existence and activity of the soul after death it appears that it can exist without a body. In a similar way as human life is more or less complete as a soul without a body in its immortal existence after death, the spiritual domain seems to be more crucial and important than the body, which spells out only the physicality of the earthly existence.

In the modern era, simultaneously alongside the hard-core dualist schemes following Platonic and Neo-platonic philosophies, softer dual versions were propagated by scholars basing on Aristotle's works. The latter views claim that human life is one substance with two components—soul and body. The views open the way to the current view that human life has many fields, modes and dimensions of experience, which though differentiated, are simultaneously operating on the same level of experience. Human being is not divided into eternal spiritual soul and temporal earthly body.

If we take into account the distinction between eternal and temporal, then eternal and temporal should be intrinsically built into each field, modes and dimensions of experience. In turning the whole scheme into the holistic network of fields of experience, it is incomprehensible why a snippet of the spiritual or the eternality cannot be intrinsically part of one's feelings, talking, socialising or professional performances. It seems that supporters are either admitting in a facile way that the spiritual world is also a part of the world of the body, or they steadfastly cling to the chasm between eternally heavenly and temporal earthly experience.

AN EQUITABLE MULTIVERSITY OF FIELDS OF EXPERIENCE VERSUS THE CLASSIC DUALITY AND TRIADIC SCHEMES OF HUMAN BEINGS

In the light of the above considerations, though the soft duality scheme of soul and body, and mind and matter and its more extended sister scheme of a soft spirit, soul and body triad present unsatisfactory and insufficient answers and solutions, they vastly improve the strong dualist and trichotomist schemes. In terms of the unitary scheme of spirit-soul-body, when processes of intellectual behavioural growth occur in the mind, corresponding activities and performances of spiritual and physical materiality occur in the conglomeration of the time duration of life and place of dwelling. These corresponding activities and performances must be displayed by a healthy, happy, satisfactory life environment which means in terms of the ambience of an African cum Christian sense-making approach, that the environment has to be people friendly, God friendly and friendly to the experience of individual human beings (Modise, 2009).

The question may be raised whether a 21st century sense-making view of the African-Christian sense making really corresponds with what Van Niekerk (2006, 373–374) defines as the mystery of the simultaneous *at-one-ment* and *the at-other-ment* of God, human beings and the physical-organic environment as well as with the radical, integral and differential equity and multiversity of fields, modes and dimensions of human experience. The second aspect of the statement espouses the idea that human life comprises a multiversity of experiential fields, modes and dimensions integrated and differentiated in one human life. This mainly means that human being comprises the largest possible number of fields, modes and dimensions of experience discovered and constructed in the modern era. The main question of reflection is thus not which fields etc. of human life are basic or the most important one, or which one is eternal and which one is temporally worldly but how each field is integrated and differentiated with its own radical characteristic nature in one interconnected human being simultaneously connected and different from God and the physical-organic environment.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to address the complexity of human nature from the dualistic or tripartite views to a more holistic in nature. The view that human beings are body and soul or body, mind and spirit was examined critically and a cluster of views about human being was introduced through the Theanthropocosmic approach. Furthermore, a conclusion is reached that there is a possibility of differentiation and interchange of human fields of experience as the components of human nature. In a holistic African-Christian approach human being comprises of a differentiated multiplicity of fields, components, dimensions and

facets of experience integrated into a wholesome creature that experiences God, the human self, other human beings and the natural environment in each field of experience. Each component of human being, though radically different, has the same weight of importance. The approach in this paper is of non-reductionist type; according to it human beings who are comprised differentially of a multiplicity of fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience dynamically integrated into one whole.

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**MAN AS A SUPERIOR QUALITY OF THE REST
OF CREATION:
HUMAN BEING AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
IN GREGORY OF NYSSA**

ABSTRACT

In the treatise on the construction of man *De opificio hominis*, Gregory of Nyssa argues that man is qualitatively superior to other natural creations of God. Man is created in the image of God, a condition not found, at least explicitly, for other creatures. It is up to him whether he will digest this image in question or not. Despite the superiority attributed to man, it is not claimed in any way that he shall behave towards the rest of nature by a way of domination.

Keywords: Gregory of Nyssa, creation, Christian anthropology, *De opificio hominis*, teleology, in the Image, in Likeness, *Book of Genesis*.

INTRODUCTION

Examining the question of reasonableness of the term “Christian anthropology,” we could argue that the Fathers of the Eastern Church very rarely formed in a meticulous way a complete theoretical edifice that includes cohesively all the aspects of this branch. Their theology, however, as a descriptive theology, conceptually and practically, insofar as possible, including all the truths concerning the Holy Trinity, refers to man in the sense of the flat image correlation to supernatural archetypes. Through this correlation it defines God’s offer of those potential through which man organize his life away from the conventions of the neutral morale, competitive mood and vulgar materialism and conquer existential freedom as a personal achievement. Thus, man obtains the conditions to be led to the “likeness” as a promotion of his spiritual elements of existence, namely, to a specialized ownership and concrete realization of all abilities and donations that he has received from the divine energies. Essentially, however,

the succession from the “image” to the “likeness” is an excess of mundane human measures, for a total clearance and renovation of the “self” and a route to deification, the ontological fulfillment of each individual existence. The only one of the Church Fathers who undertook the venture to incorporate into a single system the abovementioned issues is Gregory of Nyssa, in his treatise *De opificio hominis*. The other Church Fathers described individual anthropological issues, frequently for some doctrinal needs. We should also mention the treatise of Nemesius of Emesa, a contemporary of Gregory of Nyssa, *De natura hominis*.¹

The treatise, *De opificio hominis*,² although referred to the divine creative work of the biblical sixth day, was written before Gregory of Nyssa’s work: *In Hexaemeron*. The main part of the work includes an interpretation of the passage in the *Book of Genesis*, 1, 26: “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’ [...],” and mainly investigates the following topics: a) the place of the human being in the universe; b) the place of soul, miracles and sleep; c) the origin of soul and the transmission of its energetics; d) passions, evil and, mainly, the Resurrection; e) the last chapter, i.e. chapter 30, deals with the human body. On the basis of the overall content of the chapters, we may say that it excludes anthropological idealism, as it investigates organic physicality and its functions. The third chapter—which emphasizes the primacy of man over the rest of creation—maintains the hierarchical priority given by God’s will. It also refers to some opinions of Gregory of Nyssa about the physical universe; the opinions present anthropology as an organic part or as a continuation and completion of cosmology. Our research objective will be to consider some interpretative implications which will illuminate—to a feasible extent—the concept of the Christian thinker and record his specific, albeit introduced indirectly, regulatory proposals.

THE ONTOLOGICAL PREMISES OF NATURAL REVELATION

In Chapter 1, 26 Gregory attempts to demonstrate the qualitative superiority or evaluative priority of man in relation to the rest of creation, especially since the last one has been preceded. The problem to be considered arises from the outset of negotiation:

¹ About Christian anthropology see: Steenberg, M. C. 2009. *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius*. London: T& T. Clark. About Gregory of Nyssa’s anthropology see: Peroli, E. 1993. *Il platonismo e l’antropologia filosofica di Gregorio di Nissa*. Roma: Vita e Pensiero.

² About the introduction to the *De opificio hominis* see: Maturi, G. 2010. “De hominis opificio.” In: *Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*. Francisco, L. Mateo-Seco, G. Maspero (Eds.). Leiden-Boston: Brill, 544–545; Zachbucher, L. 2000. *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*. Leiden.

“Ἄξιον δὲ μηδέ τοῦτο παριδεῖν ἀθεώρητον, ὅτι τοῦ τηλικούτου κόσμου καὶ τῶν κατ’ αὐτόν μερῶν στοιχειωδῶς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ παντός σύστασιν ὑποβληθέντων, ἀποσχεδιάζεται πως ἢ κτίσις ὑπὸ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως ὁμοῦ τῷ προστάγματι ὑφισταμένη. Τῆς δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατασκευῆς βουλή προηγείται καὶ προτυπῶται παρὰ τοῦ τεχνιτεύοντος διὰ τῆς τοῦ λόγου γραφῆς τὸ ἐσόμενον, καὶ οἷον εἶναι προσήκει καὶ πρὸς ποῖον ἀρχέτυπον τὴν ὁμοιότητα φέρειν καὶ ἐπὶ τίνι γενήσεται καὶ τί ἐνεργήσει γενόμενον καὶ τίνων ἡγεμονεύσει.”

(English translation: “But it is right that we should not leave this point without consideration, that while the world, great as it is, and its parts, are laid as an elemental foundation for the formation of the universe, the creation is, so to say, made offhand by the Divine power, existing at once on His command, while counsel precedes the making of man; and that which is to be is fore-shown by the Maker in verbal description, and of what kind it is fitting that it should be, and to what archetype it is fitting that it should bear a likeness, and for what it shall be made, and what its operation shall be when it is made, and of what it shall be the ruler.”³)

It is attempted—through a comparative confrontation or simply a joint examination of ways by which the divine view is manifested to the world of sensible experience—to analyze the basic problems of the chapter which considers the issues of priorities in research and interpretive structures, or even, based on textual connotations, reconstructions of potential superficial assessments. In the first version, we have the rest of creation as a whole, and, on the other, man with a shading particularity against it. The common causal substrate of these two creatures is that they were created by the same entity, the triune God, the ontological source of giving rise to their original identity. However, they differ in the way of their creation, a specialization that emerges with qualitative criteria, in the way of mechanisms that are presupposed in reference to the “being” and their presence on the “becoming.” They work according to regulatory functions or until the divine design will be realized. And herein begins the reflection on the dialectic of similarity-dissimilarity realized within the divine creation or during its unfolding. Whatever answer is given, it possesses specifications based on theoretical principles which are adopted and related to how the unity of the divine is understood. The second version clearly leads to a subordinated and not unconditional God whose actions would be similar. The rest of creation, however, is considered to be a product of command which is not susceptible of any objection as to the validity of its application—here the divine design constitutes the absolute. The tone of the description is narrative, but reflects a sudden

³ Gregory of Nyssa. *De opificio hominis*, P. G. 44, 1–6. Will constitutes a more personal element in relation to construction.

intervention of God's will, His ability to come out of Himself freely and carry out His planning.

Therefore, the creation is designed in its general foundations on the basis of the Holy Trinity as an architectural planning, and begins to exist as a specific ontological fact once when the divine command is given. Extraneous co-causalities do not exist in the Christian context, so monism-monotheism is non-negotiable. We do not ascertain, however, that a certain divine mental energy exists, such one which would aim to produce results with some obvious similarities with their creator. Such a solution would clearly support pantheism and its supremacy, and repeal the default of the explicit ontological distinction between Thence and Hither. This diversity between reason and causality should not be seen definitively as an element that makes unimportant and unnecessary the existence of the rest world, generated before human, because such a scenario has negative implications for productive interventions or the initiative of the Creator Himself. Characterizing them as irrelevant could then be attributed to what has already been occurred. It will be implied that the Creator is imperfect in His architectural ability to produce new beings, or the concepts of randomness and automation of creatures will be introduced. Moreover, the mechanistic model has no place in Christian cosmology, whereby typically repetitive determinisms and suzerain prosthetic-proactive elements as expressions of a personal intervention are excluded. God raises His infinite energy wealth—which is nothing else but a depiction—of His perfection and goodness. The comparison is qualitative and aims to demonstrate the advanced rational constitution of human being and not the disadvantage of the rest of creation. Degrees of perfection or the functional correspondence to the archetype are introduced. The Christian thinker does not attempt to bring to the fore with a derogatory manner a productive model or any preformed realizations of it as quasi sub-realizations. The latter element would impose as dominant pessimistic tendencies with respect to the presence, i.e. to the view of the physical universe, or at least some of its parts. In order to prove, however, such an ontological and axiological distinction between the two levels of creation, a perspective criterion is necessary. Its source can be found only in the very creation which is derived from the maximum and unique Principle, the source of the founding conditions and of the human being. The issue of intent and specialized design indirectly emerges here. This design is a result of new situations; it serves to reflect specific grounds of the divine volitional mood, its shading cause. The question examined in this paper refers mainly to the structural design as man differs, both internally and externally, from the rest of creation. What are true principles in both cases? Beyond this epistemological commitment another experience of the same category emerges: two ontological facts are not only compared with each other; reasoning includes an architectural paradigm, whose normative views obey the built-up entities as to their composition, structure, function and evolution. We conclude that there is no intention to reduce the rest of creation, but an

intention to comparatively determine man, which is further from this Good that governs the rest of creation. This intention refers to an extended good which will be even more closely related with God, but not be formed by any suspicions about pantheist shapes.⁴ The products of the divine intervention are not individual gods, and therefore, their behavior must be equivalent.

THE PECULIARITY OF MAN'S CREATION

For the creation of man in the cosmic context, therefore, no general production plan that would lead to the emergence of a simple “being” or to rudimentary forms of existence is used; the creation precedes reflection, even the reflection of collective participation. The verb *προηγείται* (precede) is especially important, at least for evaluative proposals. Its use is mainly founded on a cognitive need. The verb “precede” indicates the particularity of the treatment of the creature, which has been created by the Creator in a posterior phase. So, the reflection is based on specific criteria and principles, interfaced with the definition of the divine perfection. Here problems feasible in the creation of human beings and in recording its theoretical formulations are revealed:

- a) How exactly is man ontologically constructed in accordance with the divine pre-plannings: “καί προτυπῶνται παρὰ τοῦ τεχνιτεύοντος διὰ τῆς τοῦ λόγου γραφῆς καὶ οἷον εἶναι προσήκει”. It is a question of structure, projecting in the same way that it captures, but it will depend on its successive joints.
- b) To what pattern is man similar: “καί πρὸς ποῖον ἀρχέτυπον τὴν ὁμοιότητα φέρειν” (and to what archetype it is fitting that it should bear a likeness). It is a question on virtual archetypes, with a clear recall of the Platonic theory on ideas, with diffusing the relation between the transcendent–immanent and the example–pattern.
- c) For what purpose man has been created: “καί ἐπὶ τίνι γενήσεται καὶ τί ἐνεργήσει γενόμενον” (and for what he shall be made, and what operation shall be made when he is made). It is a question on teleology, with an obvious Aristotle’s influence and with the issue of whether the final cause is superior to the poetic cause or if they correlate each with other in a complementary way.
- d) What other creations will dominate man “καί τίνων ἡγεμονεύσει”. A question on control and on cybernetics, which in the general context of the treatise cannot be associated with expansionist absolutism but with initiatives of utilizations and with originalities of new functional and creative situations.

⁴ For Christianity’s ant pantheistic stations see: Nisiotis, N. 1986. *Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν Θεολογικὴν Γνωσιολογίαν* [Prolegomena to the Theological Epistemology]. Athens, 46–67.

We must also note anew that those four questions do not introduce forms of evolution to God's thinking and action, but they ask how the human consciousness identifies itself or how it understands the distinctions of God's unity concerning His creative economy and planning. Generalizing, evolution constitutes a cosmological category, and, by extension, the way in which human consciousness works, i.e. an epistemological category. However, we may reasonably argue that the divine will is naturalized and historicized, so it is acquired in time.⁵

Man, therefore, is created on the basis of the above questions (criteria) which are hierarchized: they start from the ontological question "how to be," and end at "what creations will dominate man." The last two mentioned criteria constitute an instrumental reason, in order to join—in a clear interpretation—the foremost two, which essentially refer to planning as a divine constitutional presence. The latter transfers the self-examination to the creations themselves, and highlights the initiatives they have to undertake. Man now appears as a new reality that will continue and complete the divine view regarding the hypostatic view.⁶ The prospect of synergy is explicit and, by implication, the appreciation of man is non-negotiable.

FROM CREATION TO TELEOLOGY

The structure of man's creation allows to refer to the purpose for which he emerged in the "being." He is called for realizing it: the presence of the human being is directly linked to the execution of a pre-designed causality. Here the question of the ontological constitution of man's status emerges. The divine thought (preplanning) is not concentrated on external characteristics of man, but mainly on the capabilities, both mental and spiritual in general, which must be given to him in order to fulfill by him the purpose of his existential erection. The building factor is the crucial presence of man, because it is connected with the unity of reactions and behaviors of his body. The whole issue is set predominantly in qualitative terms, which also record specialized ways of evaluative comparisons with other creatures. Because the purpose of man is the "likeness," God's specific move is to indicate what transcendent capabilities are necessary to form that likeness with Him. In any case the role of external characteristics (body) is not overlooked. A concrete and tangible projection of the activity of the mind is connected with those bodily characteristics. So, religious idealism, independent of the particular hypostatic originality, does not appear here. Furthermore, according to Christian anthropology, man is a dual entity, however,

⁵ *De officio hominis*, P. G. 44, 133. 10–11. It should be noted that the whole matter is fulfilled in the context of a general Triadology and Christology.

⁶ See: Gregory of Nyssa. *Catechetical Oration*, 386, 11–15.

he has priorities, based mainly on freedom of choice which shapes history and culture. The priorities can also be linked dialectically with a teleological model.⁷ So, it is an evidence that Plato meets Aristotle in the light of the Christian interpretation. Thus, the whole issue is mainly semantic (an occasion given by teleology), without abrogating the analytical requirements which will particularize the content of component interventions.

Another very important factor in the above-listed criteria is not just how man will appear as similar to the divine, but the criteria determine a model according to a strictly specialized syllogistic; the text makes plea for divine consultation. The difference between those two versions is somewhat elusive but absolutely necessary. Ontological similarity and similarity to a design are different from each other. The model is compared with the an extra-visibility of the divine and not with its substantial self, which is beyond any comparison. A self-examination emerges about how the material includes the conditions to capture the immaterial. The emphasis is given in the structural–functionalist element, which requires a systematic planning, with emphasis on the structural nature of the association of those ingredients from which the new product will result. This item showcases by definition the rational of individual substrates both *per se* and in relation to the purpose for which they are mobilized. It validates in a prominent manner the specific location and price that were given at the outset to man as a gift. Firstly, because no pattern was found out, any other creature which—noteworthy in accordance to the total Platonic tradition, so extensive in time and to the time of Gregory of Nyssa—is interpretively and normatively reduced to a rational, coherent and complete design, whose main property is goodness. It is indeed the property that constitutes in itself the poetic with the final cause, mobilizing attitudes for an active imitation. Secondly, the template upon which the creation of man employed a springboard, especially for those spiritual qualities of which the world is triune God Himself “... εἶπε γὰρ ὁ Θεός ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν...”. So, to a certain extent,^h the principle of proportionality, the ἀμφοσημαντότητες, mainly of the personal rather than strictly ontological character comes to the fore. Man constitutes an expression of God's image—and certainly not the identification of existence. Automation cannot work either in God nor in man. Here the moral question of freedom and man's free will lies; this question is the central theme of Christian anthropology and ethics, which also compose criteria for positive or negative moral imputation, but they are not set off the virtual quality.⁸

⁷ For man as a dual entity, see Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration*, 417. 12–16.

⁸ See *De opificio hominis*, P.G. 44, 134. 10–11. The interest is that apophatism is not only referred to divine existence, which is not subject to human intelligibility. Inasmuch man's source is of supernatural class, so man himself is not totally understandable.

MAN'S RATIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RATIONAL CREATURE

There is an additional element which demonstrates the superiority of man. It was posted from the outset by the Creator as: the presence of man is not an addition to complete the previous creation, but to dominate it, so new modalities of the created world emerge. Man's presence has no mission in relation to other beings. Man is created (a statement that the Christian thinker discusses elsewhere) as a king and a ruler of the creatures that preceded man's presence.⁹ Man's appearance, therefore, does not work cumulatively in the previous creation, but it serves a finality of a different kind. This finality is associated with the emergence of other creatures as entities of a specific value. These entities cannot show the finality, because rationality does not constitute the dominant factor of their structure, or at least such one that suzerainties over their other constituents and directs them: "Ὄν οὐδέν τι τῶν κατὰ την κτίσιν ἴσον ἐστὶ ρήματι μόνῳ τό τοιοῦτον θαῦμα συνίσταται."¹⁰ So, if man intervenes in the foregoing creation with the help of cybernetics, he will highlight forms and rational capabilities that are not initially apparent.

In the second section of the analyzed chapter, the Christian theologian notes that none of the creatures, which he mentions by name, was preceded only by a rational command: "πάντα λόγῳ προς γένεσιν ἄγεται".¹¹ In contrast, for man's creation the Creator progresses productively with caution, basing on specific teleological principles which God Himself sets. This is a design that is not subject to necessities of transitional and ameliorative movements, and it shows just the upfront appreciation of man in the scale of the created beings. The scale is determined before specific responsibilities, choices, attitudes and actions are constituted. The selected form of creation does not lead to the complacency and self-sustaining situations of blissful enjoyment. God does not grant qualifications, but one potential intent—with the necessary self-awareness, such that plays a key role in self-realization. It is for the permanent ecstatic referentiality. Man is obliged to co-live with his relativity.

The researcher will put to examination whether it is possible to identify common points of Gregory with Plato and the Stoics, personalities of ancient Greek philosophy whose works the Christian thinker partially knew. It cannot be argued that triune God produced automatically also other beings. The outer product would preposterously impose its conditions in internal processes. The emphasis is put on the conditions that formed the human species and which come to ratify the "in image" as the top "trans-filling" of divine creativity in an

⁹ Ibid., 132–133.

¹⁰ Ibid., 133, 20–21.

¹¹ *De opificio hominis*, P.G. 44, 135.25. Here we can locate one of the basic theses of Christianity about the Word as a source of creature.

act that exceeds every human intelligibility and evaluation. Any interpretation, therefore, given by the researcher, does not concern only God (“διότι”) but also “προς τι”—the human being. Gregory’s thesis is explicit. It includes also aesthetic dimensions: “Ἀρχετύπῳ τινὶ κάλλει τὴν μορφὴν ὁμοιωῶσαι”.¹²

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the interpretative reconstruction presented above, it can be argued that the power of man has no sense of a typical secular dominion over the animate and inanimate creation. Such an interpretation may give to man the right to assume by default himself as an absolute and uncontrolled suzerain—an oppressive ruler of creation. Examining the issue in its timelessness, we may say that modern man has a similar arrogant view towards the ecosystem. Instead, the power that Gregory foresees is of intellectual texture and constitutes man’s controlling of the earth and his aesthetic elements of existence; both the elements coexist, because of man’s relativity. Any separation between ethics and anthropology constitutes an unnatural situation and reverses the divine design of the realization of the “κατ’ εἰκόνα” (in image) through the “καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν” (in likeness). Ethical values need an implementation into an objective and inherent being. The dialectic of Hence with Thence must also be realized in human consciousness which thus can become a microcosm, an inclusion of cosmological processes and their meaning. The divine donation had prepared all them in accordance with the declared design: “Κατάλληλον αὐτῷ καὶ οἰκείαν ταῖς ἐνεργείαις δημιουργῆσαι τὴν φύσιν, ἐπιτηδείως πρὸς τὸ προκείμενον ἔχουσαν.”¹³ (The nature has to be created according to the energies of God) This quote sums up a harmonic beauty with “ἐπιτηδείως” (intelligently) to declare the internal manufacturing capacity that carries it out, not even managing but workmanlike, as well as to declare that the same capacity will be absorbed by the recipient. Therefore we can conclude that the analysed here text of Gregory of Nyssa proposes an idea for philosophy and theology of the environment, although it directs theoretically to the general principles of specialization of divine creation. This idea is included in the belief claiming that the human being came to prominence in elements that collectively lead to good creation. However, this problem is a subject of another study, namely considering whether the Christian thinker adopts an eco-centric theory.¹⁴ We may ask if Gregory indicates an intrinsic value in all physical be-

¹² *De opificio hominis*, P.G. 44, 135. 28–29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 135. 30–32.

¹⁴ About eco-centrism in Greek philosophy and not only, see the unpublished PhD thesis: Athanasios Chondromaras. 2011. “Μεταφυσικές προκείμενες μίας οικοκεντρικής θεώρησης στον Νεοπλατωνικό Πρόκλο” [Metaphysical Premises of an Eco-centric Theory in Neoplatonic Proclus]. University of Patras.

ings and especially a relative equivalence between them in practice. The answer of course is positive, since by definition the whole universe constitutes a natural product of Revelation, one theophany. The problem is the degree of intensity of that value. Therefore, the universe as a whole is nothing but a product of divine existence. Furthermore, if we accept the evolutionary example, we will take it in the perspective of the degree of maturation of consciousness, so there are parallels between “consciousness” and “being.”

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SUPERHUMANS: SUPER-LANGUAGE?

ABSTRACT

The paper questions the scientific rather than ideological problem of an eventual biological successor of the mankind. The concept of superhumans is usually linked to Nietzsche or to Heidegger's criticism or even to the ideology of Nazism. However, the superhuman can be also viewed as that biological species who will originate from humans eventually in the course of evolution.

While the society is reached a natural limitation of globalism, technics depends on the amount of utilized energy, and the mind is restricted by its carrier, i.e. by the brain, it is language which seems to be the frontier of any future development of humans or superhumans. Language is a symbolization of the world and thus doubling in an ideal or virtual world fruitful for creativity and the modeling of the former. Consequently, the gap between the material and the ideal world is both produced by and productive for language.

Keywords: Heidegger, Husserl, human evolution, language Nietzsche, superhuman.

The paper questions the scientific rather than ideological problem of an eventual biological successor of the mankind. Though there is not enough knowledge to answer the question, the contemporary cognition can examine it as a research hypothesis. A necessary condition is the emancipation from the philosophical legacy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger and especially from the horrible doctrine and practice of Nazism, from any relation to racism or eugenics.

Furthermore, the natural framework of that question is the study of the origin of humans as eventual superhumans' predecessors: the enumeration and extrapolation of those evolutionary innovations which have allowed of our species to blossom.

The contemporary humans can be featured by a few global systems: society, technics, mind, and language in which all evolutionary innovations have result-

ed. While the first three have reached certain natural limits, language is that frontier in which any successful future biological advantages should project in order to specify “superhumans.”

The investigation of the supposed “super-language of the superhumans” addresses infinity as beyond our finite language designating also mainly finite objects. Anyway, its outlines are already hinted in contemporary knowledge: the concept of phenomenon in Husserl’s phenomenology; the semantic and philosophical theory of symbol; the notion of infinity in mathematics and its foundation; the coincidence of the quantum model and reality in quantum mechanics and information.

These questions are considered in the article.

1. THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PROBLEM ABOUT THE FUTURE SUPERHUMANS FROM THE LEGACY OF NIETZSCHE AND HEIDEGGER

The concept of superhuman is usually linked to Nietzsche or to Heidegger’s criticism to Nietzsche, or even to the ideology of Nazism. However, superhumans can be properly underlain by philosophical and scientific anthropology as that biological species which eventually will originate from humans in the course of evolution.

The first uses of the term of “*Übermensch*” (overman or superhuman) can be found in Nietzsche in the fragment 4[75] from 1882–1883 according to the site “Nietzsche source.”¹ Already the *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883–1891) introduced the term in a plurality of uses. One can find among them the conception about the human being the link (“a rope over an abyss”) between the animal and the superhuman² or “the middle of the pathway” between them.³ The human being is the “bridge” or what must be overcome on the “road” to the superhuman.⁴ The images of “God’s death” and the “superhuman” were connected,⁵ and they followed chronologically: the empty place of the “dead God” was occupied by the “superhuman.” In the autobiographical reflection *Esse homo*,⁶ Nietzsche defined the notion of “superhuman” as the “highest reality,” “infinitely far under” the human beings and their world.

¹ <http://www.nietzschesource.org> accessed 20.02.2014.

² Nietzsche, F. 1883. *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Bd. 1. Chemnitz: Schmeitznel, 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴ Nietzsche, F. 1884. *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Bd. 3. Chemnitz: Schmeitzner, 67.

⁵ Nietzsche, F. 1891. *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Bd. 4. Leipzig: Naumann, 77.

⁶ Nietzsche, F. 1928. *Gesammelte Werke*. Bd. 21, 165-275 (*Esse homo*). München: Musarion, 256.

Heidegger titles the chapter devoted to the “*Übermensch*” in his monograph *Nietzsche: “Obermensch.”*⁷ “*Über*” in the “*Übermensch*” contents Nietzsche’s relation to mankind as a whole.⁸ According to Heidegger, this relation is metaphysical and nihilistic.⁹ “The absolute subjectivity of the will to power is the source of the essential necessity of the superhuman.”¹⁰ Thus Heidegger discussed the term “superhuman” in an abstract and philosophical way. Following him, the “overman” should perhaps be interpreted as an “among-man” who “at last thinks” in a properly philosophical way while mankind “do not yet think” according to him.¹¹

There are also publications equating the Nazi doctrine about racial superiority and Nietzsche’s concept about superhumans:¹²

“Nietzsche and Nazism had declared an all-out war against these avowed enemies of the superman whose rule would be a spiritual, radically aristocratic age aimed at producing a collective evaluation and self-overcoming humankind towards greatness and perfection on earth, towards the creation of God-Man.”¹³

Instead of all that, the problem about the biological species which might appear as a successor of the contemporary humans should be regarded as scientific, but not as ideological, speculative, metaphysical and only philosophical. It refers to some distant and undetermined future hypothetical being. The outlines of any possible answer can be hardly guessed, however, they might be specified on the base of the contemporary knowledge and tendencies of cognition.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE SUPERHUMANS FROM THE HUMANS AS A PROGNOSTIC DIRECTION

Paleoanthropology presents¹⁴ new facts, and new interpretations appear. Nevertheless, there is a series of more or less well-established facts in anthropogenesis which would be relevant to the philosophical question about the

⁷ Heidegger, M. 1997. *Gesamtausgabe*. 6.2. *Nietzsche*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 291–314.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁹ Heidegger, M. 1997, *op. cit.*, 293.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹¹ Heidegger, M. 2000. *Gesamtausgabe*: 7. *Vorträge and Aufsätze*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 130.

¹² E.g.: Taha, A. 2005. *Nietzsche, Prophet of Nazism: the Cult of the Superman: Unveiling the Nazi Secret Doctrine*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁴ Tattersall, Y. 2000. “Paleoanthropology: The Last Half-century.” *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews*, 9(1), 2–16.

“superhumans”: bipedalism,¹⁵ cooling by persistence,¹⁶ specific hair or its lack,¹⁷ omnivorous-ness,¹⁸ thumb opposition and apposition,¹⁹ vocal system of speech production,²⁰ human brain,²¹ long childhood²²; our species is evolutionary young (about 200 000 years old²³), but it is the last survived descendant being genetically exceptionally homogenous²⁴ (less than 0,1% genetic differences²⁵) of the genus “homo”²⁶ (about 6 000 000 old²⁷) originated from *Homonidae*²⁸ between about 20 000 000 and 6 000 000 years ago.²⁹ All this generates a few main features of our population: society, technics, language, and mind³⁰ which guarantee the contemporary absolute domination of mankind.

Almost all those evolutionary innovations featuring the contemporary humans can be substituted by corresponding technical devices. However, some of them, such as the brain and long childhood, are yet irreproducible by technics. Others refer to the species only as a whole but not as a collection of individuals.

¹⁵ McHenry, H. M. 2009. “Human Evolution.” In: *Evolution: The First Four Billion Years*. Ruse, M., J. Travis (Eds.). Cambridge, Mass.–London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 269–271. Also: Harcourt–Smith, W. E. H. 2007. “The Origins of Bipedal Locomotion.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*. Henke, W., Y. Tattersall (Eds). Berlin–Heidelberg–New York: Springer.

¹⁶ Liebenberg, L. 2008. “The Relevance of Persistence Hunting to Human Evolution.” *Journal of Human Evolution* 55, 1156–59.

¹⁷ Bergman, J. 2004. “Why Mammal Body Hair Is an Evolutionary Enigma?” *Creation Research Society Quarterly Journal* 40(3), 240–243, 242–243.

¹⁸ McHenry, H. M. 2009, op. cit., 271–272.

¹⁹ Young, R. W. 2003. “Evolution of the Human Hand: the Role of Throwing and Clubbing.” *J. Anat.* 202, 165–174, 168.

²⁰ Fitch, W. T. 2000. “The Evolution of Speech: a Comparative Review.” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 4 (7), 258–267; Hauser, M. D, N. Chomsky, W. Fitch, W. Tecumseh. 2002. “The Language Faculty: What Is It, Who Has It, and How Did It Evolve?” *Science*, 298, 1569–1579.

²¹ McHenry, H. M. 2009, op. cit., 268–269.

²² Bogin, B. 1997. “Evolutionary Hypotheses for Human Childhood”. *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology*, 40, 63–89.

²³ Bräuer, G. 2007. “Origin of Modern Humans.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit., 1755.

²⁴ <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/genetics/skin-color/modern-human-diversity-genetics>, accessed 26.02.2014 (Smithsonian National museum of Natural History).

²⁵ Jorde, L. B., S. P. Wooding. 2004. “Genetic Variation, Classification and ‘Race’.” *Nature Genetics* 36 (11), S28–S33, S28.

²⁶ Collard, M., B. Wood. 2007. “Defining the Genus Homo.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit.

²⁷ Strait, D., F. E., Grine, J. G. Fleagle. 2007. “Analyzing Hominid Phylogeny.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit., 1801 (Fig. 15.8). However the common progenitor of the apes and homos lived about 12 000 000 years: Senut, B. 2007. “The Earliest Putative Hominids.” In: *ibid.*, 1534.

²⁸ Schwartz, J. H. 2007. “Defining Hominidae” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit.

²⁹ Koufos, George D. 2007. “Potential Hominoid Ancestors for Hominidae.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit., 1354.

³⁰ Mithen, S. 2007. “The Network of Brain, Body, Language, and Culture.” In: *Handbook of Paleoanthropology*, op. cit.

Anyway, they can offer some ground about the prognosis of those innovations, which could enliven superhumans. An evolutionary innovation, which can be reproduced by human technics, does not make any sense, and accordingly it cannot become established. Even more, genetic engineering is gradually entering the evolution and also the human one, in particular. The development of technics is much, much faster than that of natural evolution of mankind. Thus human evolution can survive only out of any competition of technics. Those areas, in which the technics has not yet entered, are: human brain, long childhood, jump-like mutations, which would allow of inhabiting some radically new environment such as space, etc. However, none of them seems to be probable and even possible as that area in which one can expect any breakthrough.

3. A PROGNOSIS FOR THE FRONTIER OF THE SUPERHUMANS

Therefore another approach is not less possible: the main systems featuring mankind can be investigated in order to find out those apt to intensive development. Which of them are most relevant for that might be the next frontier for superhuman evolution.

The society has reached a natural limitation of Earth. The technics depends on how much energy is produced. The mind is restricted by its carrier, i.e. by the brain. Thus only language seems to be the frontier of any future development inducing a much better use of the former three. The recent informational technologies suggest the same.

Language creates the human mind: The “ability to perceive the minds of others” plays the crucial role: “the human mind itself, and not just its fruits or results, would have originated in the perception of the minds of others.”³¹

Language is defined as a symbolic image of the world doubling it by an ideal or virtual world which is fruitful for creativity and for any modeling of the real world. Consequently, a gap between the material and the ideal worlds produces language. In turn, the language increases that gap. Furthermore, the ideal world is secondary and derivative from the material world in its origin and objectivity: language serves for the world to be ordered. Thus language refers to the philosophical categories of being and time. Any “super-language” should transcend some of those definitive borders of language and be its generalization.

The involving of infinity can extend the language. Any human language is finite and refers to some finite reality. Thus, the gap between reality and any model in language can be seen as that between infinity and any finite representation of it: finite representations dominate over society, technics, and uses of the mind.

³¹ Bejarano, T. 2011. *Becoming Human: From Pointing Gestures to Syntax*. Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 4.

Even more, language seems to be only possible access to infinity at least as to mankind. Indeed language can be considered to be that semiotic system designated to denote anything doubling it by its name, which is an image from the world into a language. That object which has become a word is much more easily to be manipulated mentally. However, one can suggest a special kind of objects such as infinity which can be indicated or transformed only mentally; as to them, three primary semiotic elements (sign, signified, signifier) should be reduced to two ones thus excluding the redundancy and conventionality of natural language:

For example, any infinite collection unlike any finite one cannot be enumerated by its members: it can be denoted only by its signifier and sign while the corresponding signified can be only mentally complemented in an unambiguous way. In a sense, one can state that infinite collections or the true infinity are accessible only by the mediation of language as a semiotic system.

Furthermore, if matter and energy as the physical fundament of the world can be considered to be some finite measure or quantity of infinite information, that super-language is also definable as the generalization of language identifiable with reality and therefore supplying another access to it.

4. THE LANGUAGE OF INFINITY IN THE REFERENCE FRAME OF CONTEMPORARY COGNITION

A “super-language” as an “infinite language” can be approached in a few reference frames. One of them is Husserl’s motto “Back to the things themselves!” if the “phenomenon” in his philosophy can be thought as the “word” of the language of consciousness. Husserl’s famous words from the *Logical investigations* are: “We want to return to the things themselves.”³² Its context elucidates that the logical abstraction should be within the “thing themselves.” One can say that the things themselves can be obtained by eidetic reduction, using another Husserl’s notion, varying its meaning in a free plurality of uses and restoring the obviousness of the contemplated thing in a logical way as itself and by itself. “The appeal to the things and facts themselves” should be the base of the “universal science of absolute foundation.”³³ By rigorous science he means philosophy.³⁴ Though the concept of phenomenon in Husserl’s thought is implicitly rather than explicitly expressed and correspondingly defined in his

³² Husserl, E. 1901. *Logische Untersuchungen*. Zweiter Theil: *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und die Theorie der Erkenntnis*. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 7.

³³ Husserl, E. 1973. *Husserliana*: 1. *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*. 2nd Edition. Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 188.

³⁴ Husserl, E. 1911. “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft.” *Logos*, 1, 289–341, 291.

final analysis,³⁵ it can be thought as the unity of a concrete experience or insight of correlative extension (“*Noema*”) and intension (“*Noesis*”).³⁶

The words of that “super-language” can be seen in the above Husserl’s terms as the unity of abstraction and reality representing an exact choice among an infinite set of alternatives.

Ernst Cassirer’s concept of symbol can serve as the link between Husserl’s phenomenon and symbol as the latter occurs in human experience. The meaning unambiguously correlative to some objects originates from the human ability of symbolizing them: “Cassirer regards the ability to symbolize as the distinguishing feature of human thought and considers all [the] knowing as symbolic.”³⁷ The symbol is the only a form of thought in which it can occur. It is the essential link which manages to unify a plurality of fundamental physical oppositions.

Indeed, the extension is an “*incomplete symbol*”: it can “gain its sense by the relation to an intension.”³⁸ “A symbol denotes” “by virtue of these intellectual and symbolic underlying acts” “the previously far distant and seemingly disconnected as a whole.”³⁹ This processes leads to infinitesimal analysis⁴⁰ studying infinity by scientific methods.

The “super-language” can be thought as that generalization of language which develops a series of words for infinity to be denoted by a complete system of relevant symbols. The contemporary semantic and philosophical theory of symbol, i.e. from consciousness and language to reality, would be included in it as that part which is devoted to finite symbols.

What unifies as well as divides Husserl’s “things themselves” and Cassirer’s “symbols” is the choice of a link between some plurality of individuals and its finite designation, either necessary or conventional, but necessary as the form of thought. Leaping into the super-language supposedly indicating those infinite pluralities each of them separately, one can use only the choice, which cannot be yet conventional, and the name in order to denote one single infinite item

³⁵ “Husserl’s later writings follow the lines laid down in his *Ideas*. He quite often uses the word ‘phenomenon,’ and he does this to indicate that he talks about the reduction or *epoché* or that he talks about ‘something.’ However, in Husserl’s later transcendental phenomenology, ‘phenomenon’ is no longer an essential concept nor a problematic one; it is more or less just a *word* used at times” (Kienzler, W. 1991. “What Is a Phenomenon? The Concept of Phenomenon in Husserl’s Phenomenology.” *Analecta Husserliana. The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*. vol. 34; *The Turning Points of the New Phenomenological Era: Husserl Research, Drawing upon the Full Extent of His Development*. Tymieniecka, A-T. (Ed.). Dordrecht–Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 524).

³⁶ Husserl, E. 1976. *Husserliana: 3.1 Ideen za einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 215.

³⁷ Verene, D. 1966. “Cassirer’s View of Myth and Symbol.” *The Monist*, 50 (4), 524.

³⁸ Cassirer, E. 1929. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3. *Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*. Berlin: B. Cassirer, 343.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 466.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 466.

separately. For example, what is “super-thought” can be the name being linked to some observed object in reality by the form of that “necessary choice” among the infinite number of items in reality: Just one seen thing starts as if lighting to indicate its only relevance to what the observer is thinking at this moment. Consequently, that “super-language” would seem poetic according to a human. One can find a hint to Heidegger’s philosophical consideration of poetry and poetic thought in the context of his thesis that “we do not yet think”⁴¹:

“Hölderlin says therefore of poetic living not the same as our thinking. [...] Writing poetry and thinking meet each other in one and the same only then and insofar they have decided to remain in the difference of their essence.”⁴²

The concept of infinity in mathematics supplies another reference frame for the human cognition of infinity. George Cantor was who created the foundation of set theory and introduced infinite sets as a basic subject⁴³ for it. He clearly understood actual infinity as the philosophical generalization of his work.⁴⁴ He generated an absolute new area of scientific investigation, that of transfinite numbers representing the infinite generalization of arithmetic,⁴⁵ and managed to define cardinal and ordinal numbers as well as their calculus.⁴⁶ However, the unlimited use of “set” allowed a series of antinomies. Ernst Zermelo put the foundations of the contemporary axiomatic set theory⁴⁷ avoiding the known paradoxes. He introduced a version of the axiom of choice⁴⁸ to prove the well-ordering theorem.⁴⁹ By applying the axiom of choice, Thoralf Skolem demonstrates the “relativity of the concept of ‘set’ ”⁵⁰ and thus even the relativity of infinity at all: any infinity can be enumerated by the positive integers⁵¹ and even equated to any finite set.⁵²

⁴¹ Heidegger, M. 2000, op. cit., 130.

⁴² Ibid., 196.

⁴³ Cantor, G. 1874. “Über eine Eigenschaft des Inbegriffes aller reellen algebraischen Zahlen”. *J. Reine Angew. Math.* 77, 258–262.

⁴⁴ Cantor, G. 1886. “Über die verschiedenen Standpunkte in bezug auf das actuelle Unendliche (Aus einem Schreiben des Verf. an Herrn G. Eneström in Stockholm vom 4. Nov. 1885)”, *Zeitschr. Philos. und philos. Kritik*, 88, 224–233.

⁴⁵ Cantor, G. 1895. “Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre.” *Math. Ann.*, 46, 481–512.

⁴⁶ Cantor, G. 1895. “Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre.” *Math. Ann.*, 49, 207–246.

⁴⁷ Zermelo, E. 1908. “Untersuchungen über die Grundlagen der Mengenlehre I.” *Mathematische Annalen*, 65(2), 261–281.

⁴⁸ Zermelo, E. 1904. “Beweis, dass jede Menge wohlgeordnet werden kann.” *Mathematische Annalen*, 59 (4), 516.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 514–516.

⁵⁰ Skolem, Thoralf. 1922 (1970). “Einige Bemerkungen zur axiomatischen Begründung der Mengenlehre.” In: *Selected Works in Logic of Thoralf Skolem*. Fenstad, J. E. (Ed.). Oslo: Univforlaget, 144.

⁵¹ Skolem, T. 1922, op. cit., 143.

⁵² Ibid., 143–144.

Kurt Gödel published two fundamental papers concerning the cognition of infinity by mathematical means: the finiteness under the condition of his theorems does not generate any statements which can be simultaneously true and false in a strict logical sense⁵³ while infinity can generate those statements.⁵⁴ Infinity unlike finiteness turns out to be “incomplete” under a rigorous mathematical definition of the term “incompleteness” as to the axiomatic base of any theory.

Albert Einstein, a close friend of Gödel in Princeton,⁵⁵ reckoned quantum mechanics, another fundamental physical theory, to be incomplete, too. In order to demonstrate that the alleged incompleteness, entanglement was theoretically forecasted by him, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, and independently by Ervin Schrödinger⁵⁶ in 1935. An experimentally verifiable criterion of distinguishing a classical from quantum correlation (entanglement) was deduced by John Bell in 1964.⁵⁷ The existence of quantum correlations exceeding the upper limit of the possible classical correlations was confirmed⁵⁸ experimentally. The theory of quantum information has thrived since the end of the last century in the areas of quantum computer, quantum communication, and quantum cryptography. The theorems about the absence of hidden variables in quantum mechanics⁵⁹ demonstrate that the mathematical formalism of quantum mechanics implies that no well-ordering of any coherent state might exist before measurement.

Information can be discussed as an order reached by a series of successive choices and the quantity of information is the minimal amount of elementary choices necessary for this order to be created. The unit of the quantity of information is that elementary choice defined as the choice between two alternatives with an equal probability: one bit of information.

⁵³ Gödel, K. 1930. “Die Vollständigkeit der Axiome des logischen Funktionenkalküls,” *Monatshefte der Mathematik und Physik*, 37(1), 349–360.

⁵⁴ Gödel, K. 1931. “Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der *Principia mathematica* und verwandter Systeme I,” *Monatshefte der Mathematik und Physik*, 38(1), 173–198.

⁵⁵ Yourgrau, P. 2006. *A World without Time: The Forgotten Legacy of Gödel and Einstein*. New York: Perseus Books Group.

⁵⁶ Einstein, A., B. Podolsky, N. Rosen. 1935. “Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?” *Physical Review*, 47 (10), 777–780; Schrödinger, E. 1935. “Die gegenwärtige Situation in der Quantenmechanik.” *Die Naturwissenschaften* 23(48), 807–812; 23(49), 823–828, 23(50), 844–849.

⁵⁷ Bell, J. 1964. “On the Einstein—Podolsky—Rosen Paradox.” *Physics* (New York), 1(3), 195–200.

⁵⁸ Aspect, A., Ph. Grangier, G. Roger. 1981: “Experimental Tests of Realistic Local Theories via Bell’s Theorem.” *Physical Review Letters*, 47(7), 460–463; Aspect, A., Ph. Grangier, G. Roger. 1982. “Experimental Realization of Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen-Bohm Gedanken Experiment: A New Violation of Bell’s Inequalities.” *Physical Review Letters* 49(2), 91–94.

⁵⁹ Neumann, J. von. 1932. *Mathematische Grundlagen der Quantenmechanik*, Berlin: Springer, 157–163; Kochen, S., E. Specker, 1968. “The Problem of Hidden Variables in Quantum Mechanics.” *Journal of Mathematics and Mechanics*, 17 (1), 59–87.

However, that concept of information is not applicable to the infinite series or sets which are an interesting problem in set theory. The notion of quantum information involved by quantum mechanics can be considered as a relevant generalization as to infinity. The unit of quantum information, one quantum bit, is a generalization of bit as a choice among a continuum of alternatives. Furthermore, Hilbert space, in which quantum information is definable, can be introduced as a generalization of the positive integers, after which any positive integer is replaced by a corresponding cell of a quantum bit. The quantity of quantum information is the ordinal corresponding to the infinity series. Both definitions of ordinal⁶⁰ are applicable as the ordinals are small. The ordinal defined in Cantor–Russell⁶¹ generates a statistical ensemble while that in Neumann, a well-ordering. Both correspond one-to-one to a coherent state as the one and same quantity of quantum information containing in it.

Hume’s principle⁶² can be relevantly and rather heuristically generalized, too: in the quantum analog of the principle, the “numbers” should be interpreted as some “many” and the “things” as some “much.” Indeed abstraction and thus any sign can be interpreted as a set of tautologies, in which each name designates a set as a whole, i.e. as a “much,” while the collection of elements designates as a “many” consisting of separated individuals. That quantum principle of Hume is quite meaningful and exceptionally well interpretable in terms of quantum mechanics and the theory of quantum information.

5. CONCLUSION

Mankind has approached the idea of infinite language as the language of nature. The answer to the question whether that “super-language” will arise for the relevant innovations in the human culture or it would need some corresponding evolutionary perfection is not forthcoming. However, the problem can be put. Furthermore, it can be even generalized in a few ways:

What is the correspondence between the fundamental innovations in human culture and the essential evolutionary perfections apt to generate a new species?

Are there those perfections, which cannot be reached for culture development?

⁶⁰ Cantor, G. 1897. “Beiträge zur Begründung der transfiniten Mengenlehre,” *Math. Ann.* 49, 207–246; Neumann, J. von: 1923. “Zur Einführung der transfiniten Zahlen,” *Acta litterarum ac scientiarum Ragiae Universitatis Hungaricae Francisco-Josephinae, Sectio scientiarum mathematicarum*, 1(4), 199–208.

⁶¹ Whitehead, A. N., R. Bertrand. 1912. *Principia Mathematica*, vol. II. Cambridge: University Press, 334–338; idem. 1913. *Principia Mathematica*, vol. III. Cambridge: University Press, 18–26.

⁶² Boolos, G. 1987. “The Consistency of Frege’s Foundations of Arithmetic.” In: *On Beings and Sayings: Essays in Honor of Richard Cartwright*. Thomson, J. J. (Ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Can human progress be discussed in terms of an eventual or virtual competition with a biological rival or a potential successor?

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HUMAN TRANSCENDENCE, NATURE AND SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

Man is a being-in-the-world and at the same time he defies the dictates of nature; he is a being-off-the-world. Man tries to transcend the unconditionally given nature through invention, symbolization, representation and imagination. Man not only belongs to nature but also intervenes in the processes of nature. Man is duplex. This duplicity is also species-specific to man and can be termed as human transcendence. This implies not only the transcendence of external nature but also self-transcendence, i.e. transcendence of his ego-self. Self-transcendence not only makes morality possible but is also the basis of formation of society. Further, it brings about a change in man's attitude to nature. Nature is not seen purely as an object of utility, but also as a power, a force, having a *telos* or an end. In clarifying what we want to say, we study the positions of two figures, Friedrich Nietzsche and Rabindranath Tagore. This paper attempts to address the idea of man's self-transcendence and its bearing on harmonious living with other individuals and with nature.

Keywords: human transcendence, man, Friedrich Nietzsche, Rabindranath Tagore.

Every individual of all the animal species learns from birth to maturity; learns, among others, how to become a member of a "community," i.e. to emerge out of mere egoism and socialize itself. While for animals this process of learning means coming to terms with nature by following the course of nature (even when they are evolving survival mechanisms to adapt with situations which are sometimes congenial, but more often than not inimical); *Homo sapiens* is the only species which defies the normal course of nature, although men are in it. Man is a being in the world, and at the same time he defies the dictates of nature; he is a being off the world.

Man, equipped with suitable abilities, develops himself to attain completeness through his struggles with nature. Animals also struggle with nature, but man's struggles with nature are not always for survival or adaptation. It is more

to overcome the limitations that nature throws in his path. Though in cases he has to follow the natural order of causality, he has freedom to go beyond the order. It is only man who can dissociate from the causal order of nature and stand apart from the chain of occurrences and events. Only man has this freedom. Hence, we can say that all other animal species are in nature; they are, by their very nature, in nature. Man, not only belongs to nature but intervenes in the processes of nature. Man tries to transcend the unconditionally given nature through invention, representation and imagination. To elucidate this we may note that nature can bring out of itself only those things which are contained in it. It cannot add anything new; nor can it rearrange the group of things which originate from its depth. Such a reproduction and rearrangement is possible only by human intervention. Man cognizes nature; represents it in language and symbolizes it in imagination. Man is a being-in-nature; there is no doubt about that. Yet, man never faces nature as such, brute nature, but as an object to be encountered at different levels of experience. Nature is objectively organized through human subjectivity. Generally, nature is lived in human existence. It is a part of man's lived reality.

Man is homo-duplex. At one pole of his existence he is "one with the stocks and stones"; on the other, he can visualize possibilities, alternative ways of thinking and doing, discovering yet another mode of his being. This duplicity is species-specific to man. Man's attempts at release from the dominance of nature can be termed as human transcendence. To put it in Ortega's words, "Man's being and nature's being do not coincide."¹ In other words, man is extra-natural.

However, in the case of man, transcendence not only implies the transcendence of external nature but also self-transcendence, transcending his lower, animal, ego self. The idea of self-transcendence as being the essence of man is a generally accepted conception of human nature, in the Eastern as well as in Western cultures. In clarifying what we want to say, we study below the positions of two figures, Friedrich Nietzsche and Rabindranath Tagore.

According to Nietzsche, "Man is something that should be overcome."² Man is not an end. He is a bridge between the human animal and authentic selfhood. Self-overcoming, as a basis of self-perfection, lies at the core of Nietzsche's conception of man. The natural self, according to Nietzsche, is the chaos of unrestricted instincts, desires and passions. This field of warring instincts, in which each instinct seeks its gratification and controlling every other, he calls the "will to power." The solution to the problem of warring passions is not by quenching the instinctual drives but by a process of sublimation and a creative reformation of the natural self. According to Nietzsche, in this way self-overcoming can be achieved. Self-transcendence is the common essence of all

¹ Kaufmann, W. (Ed.). 1975. *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*. New York: New American Library, 154.

² Nietzsche, F. 1978. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Kaufmann, W. (Trans.). Middlesex: Penguin Books, 12.

moral codes. Nietzsche proposes a powerful ethical project in which morality is a self-determining ordering of one's natural drives into something higher. Will to power is thus a drive toward self-transcendence which is natural to all humans. Humans try to go beyond their boundaries and "become more."

But does not the autonomy of self-transcendence require the abandonment of morality? Is not human autonomy an anti-thesis to morality? What Nietzsche does really suggest is freeing oneself from one's moral heritage which stifles personal realization and growth. Social customs and conventions often stand on the way of the originality and creativity of individuals. Man's good lies in the authentic choice of ends and his only evil lies in his blind conformity to custom. Morality is a trans-morality—a morality beyond the imposed morality of a society's value system. Trans-morality is not immorality but a reversal of the morality dictated by tradition.

In India, Rabindranath Tagore, in his first significant English prose work, *Sadhana, Realization of Life*,³ published one year after the publication of the Nobel-Prize winning *Gitanjali*, speaks at length of this self-transcendence in terms of the realization of soul-consciousness. *Sadhana* contains the germs of many crucial ideas which were more fully developed in such works of Tagore as *Nationalism, Personality, Creative Unity, Religion of Man* and *Crisis in Civilization*. In the *Sadhana* he makes a distinction between the self and the soul. The soul signifies the higher nature of man. It loses its significance when it remains imprisoned within the narrow limits of the self. The self is that constricted part of man's nature which makes it impossible for him to look beyond his own interests and utilities. Self-transcendence gains mastery over the self—rising above all pride, greed and fear. The harmonious life expounded in this work consists in the losing of the egoistic self and in uniting with others. The guiding metaphor of this harmonious living is the spirit of love. Tagore believes that love is purely self-less. When we set any limit to the spirit of love, our friendship becomes exclusive, our families selfish and inhospitable, and our nations insular and aggressively inimical to other races.

Written in 1913, Tagore's words appear prophetic. Individuals have become more and more self-centered today; they have become intolerant of their own folk, not to speak of others. In communities, enveloped in their self-imposed isolation there is willful disregard to foster conditions for other communities to progress forward and have commands of their own powers such that they can overcome the various obstacles and difficulties and eliminate their defects. This is evident in societies divided on caste-lines, societies, in which an unobliterable distinction between the higher and lower castes prevails. No less self-centered are societies where questions of cultural survival of one community makes others targets of violence. In nations, egoistic tendencies lead to a sense of national pride and superiority, and extreme individualism leading to hostilities towards

³ 1961 (1913). *Sadhana, Realization of Life*. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.

other nations, expansionism and unnecessary wars derailing the possibilities of peaceful co-existence.

The harmonious life expounded by Tagore has a spiritual ring. For in becoming one with all, we have not only awakened to the truth and greatness of our soul, we have also realized the universal spirit—which exists in everything. In a passage of *Sadhana*, Rabindranath says:

“When a man does not realize his kinship with the world he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him. When he meets the eternal spirit in all objects, then he is emancipated, for then he discovers the fullest sense of the world into which he is born; then he finds himself in perfect truth, and his harmony with the all is established.”⁴

We have, however, to pay a price for this attainment of the freedom of consciousness. What is the price? It is to give one’s “self” away. Our “soul” can realize its “self” truly only by denying its “self.” The ascendance from the self to the soul does not mean the negation or denial of the self but to bind its discordant elements into a harmonious whole. The extension of self into soul-consciousness is repeatedly emphasized by Tagore in his English works, especially *Creative Unity*⁵ and *The Religion of Man*.⁶ In the latter work he writes:

“... the fact can never be ignored that we have our greatest delight when we realize ourselves in others, and this is the definition of love. [...] It gives us the immense field where we can have our release from the [...] dominance of the limited material means, the source of cruel envy and ignoble deception, where the largest wealth of human soul has been produced through sympathy and co-operation. ...”⁷

Now the question is: How to account for the extra-natural, self-exceeding character of man? For both Nietzsche and Tagore the answer lies in man’s creative activity. Nietzsche’s commentators like Walter Kaufmann⁸ and Alexander Nehamas⁹ give an interpretation claiming that Nietzsche’s thought is in its core permeated by an artistic or aesthetic conception of life. The sub-title, “Life as Literature” of Nehamas’ commentary on Nietzsche is entirely based on this

⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁵ 1925. *Creative Unity*. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.

⁶ Tagore, R. 1988 (1931). *The Religion of Man*. London: Unwin.

⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁸ Kaufmann, W. 1974. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist and Antichrist*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 211–227, also, 250–252.

⁹ Nehamas, A. 1985. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1–40.

understanding. This sub-title, “recalls a very Nietzschean statement” by Ortega: “whether he is original or a plagiarist man is the novelist of himself.”¹⁰ It is further observed that for Nietzsche,

“The human is at once the artist, the basic raw material and the finished product of his own self-transcending creativity. Just as the artist has to overcome the resistance of the raw material and transform it into a beautiful work of art, so the creator in the human must overcome the resistance of the natural self in giving form and shape to his extra-natural humanity.”¹¹

This makes morality possible. Morality is not something given, but brought into being by an act of will. In that sense it signifies human creativity. Moral creativity is essentially aesthetic in character. Alongside Jean Paul Sartre and other existentialists Nietzsche would say that life is a work of art, and it is up to us as we go along, to construct a beautiful life.

Nietzsche’s view of man as the creative subject bears a striking parallel to Tagore’s conception of man as an artist. In *The Religion of Man* he says,

“... man by nature is an artist; he never receives passively or inaccurately in his mind a physical representation of things around him. There undergoes a continued adaptation, a transformation of facts into imagery through constant touches of sentiment and imagination.”¹²

A deeper conception of the creative activity is inherent in Tagore’s concept of “the surplus” enunciated in *The Religion of Man*. This concept is a central one in Tagore’s philosophical anthropology. It signifies man’s freedom which is akin to creative activity. “... Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. He is aware that he is not imperfect but incomplete. He knows that in himself some meaning has yet to be realized.”¹³ Again, man is a paradox in the sense that he is not what he is and is what he is not. “... he is not what he is but something greater.”¹⁴ The surpassing power in virtue of which man, from his original serfdom as a creature, an animal, still dependent on nature, takes his right seat as creator, Tagore calls “surplus” by borrowing a phrase from the Atharva Veda, a spiritual text of ancient India.

¹⁰ Lik Kuen Tong. 1978. “Self-transcendence and Morality: Human Creativity in the Thought of Nietzsche and Confucius.” In: *The Humanization of Technology and Chinese Culture*. Tomonobu Imamichi *et al* (Eds.). Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Tagore, R. 1988 (1931), *op. cit.*, 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

Since human life is incomplete there is the urge for creativity. We can make a distinction between construction and creation. We construct a bridge to facilitate crossing a river. Construction serves some utilitarian purpose. In creating something we transcend the given order of things, even what is given and stable in human experience. We create not to achieve some premeditated end but because it gives us delight. Tagore may say alongside Nietzsche that “Artists create not because art is good but because they are creative.”¹⁵ Creative activity is evidence of the fact that we can recreate ourselves and transcend what we already are and that way we are constantly in the way of making ourselves anew. A surplus in man is the freedom which holds out the possibility of hitherto unknown dimensions of life beyond the habitual pursuits of everyday. In our creative mode we are made to realize the world more fully or richly real than we do in normal experience. We feel the world and make it our own. Understandably, to be creative one needs not to be a creative genius, a painter or a singer. Any ordinary person is quite capable of experiencing and understanding a creative process. When someone makes a vessel for fetching or holding water it serves some utilitarian purpose. If she draws a design on it, it does not enhance the utilitarian purpose but it delights her; it gives her joy. The process of creation gives rise to the perpetual suggestion of something further than the utilitarian purposes served by something.

In the creative attitude love and sympathy make possible the transcendence of the tragic dominance of the self and de-alienated living with others. “Our imagination makes us intensely conscious of a life we must live which transcends the individual life and contradicts the biological meaning of the institution of self-preservation.”¹⁶ Society as a community of selves is marked by a we-feeling. It is a model of non-alienated living. Such a society cannot be brought into existence automatically. It is not received as a gift or forced into existence from outside. Society exists because man ever recreates his relation to others through love and sacrifice. The power of love not only sustains life, human and sub-human, it also transforms society into a community of persons. The fundamental desire of life is not only to exist but also co-exist. The spirit of love, dwelling in the boundless realm of the surplus, emancipates our consciousness from the illusory bond of the separateness of self.¹⁷

If society is an outcome of the surplus in man, civilization, according to Tagore, is mainly formed by our expectations. It is an objective realization of our vision—of the perfection we dream of, according to its fulfilment. In *The Religion of Man* Tagore relates his experience of visiting the ruins of the Roman Empire. What appealed to him was not Rome as a world-builder of human history or a big commercial power but the imagination of its people, their vision of

¹⁵ Nietzsche, F. 1962. *The Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Cohen, M. (Trans.). Chicago, 55.

¹⁶ Tagore, R. 1988 (1931), op. cit., 53.

¹⁷ Ibid., 46.

a great Roman civilization. Civilization is the creation of “a transcendental humanity.”¹⁸ Almost in a similar vein, Tagore says that great civilizations are not created by warriors or statesmen but by “the men of the great soul.”¹⁹

How does all this bear upon man’s relation to nature? When man is regarded as different from and superior to the rest of creation, it easily gives rise to the belief that man has to wrest everything he needs from nature without impunity. The deep sense of harmony between man and nature that Tagore speaks of is never a mere physical contact—it is a living presence.²⁰ The water not only cleanses the limbs but purifies the heart; the earth not only supports our body but it gladdens our mind. The seeking of harmony with the universe transforms facts of nature into human truth. We feel the serenity of the *sky*, the gloriousness of a *sunset*, the sublimity of a *mountain*; we speak of the *morning star*, that is, *Venus*, as a dew drop glistening on the forehead of dawn when all these can be studied in a detached manner as facts of science. Moreover, we can build upon the phenomenon of self-transcendence to necessitate a change of attitude to nature. Through an extension of our moral sensitivity, nature can be seen as a power, a life-force which asserts itself when too much is taken for granted about its ways of functioning. We may come to see in nature a purpose to be achieved, to become what it is not yet. A seed contains in it the possibility of germinating; a sapling holds out the potentiality of growing into a huge tree. Geologists have discovered that nature has the capacity to recreate itself after thousands of years of lying dormant under ice-cover. The mystery and enigma of creation which bewildered the human comprehension since the time of the Rig-Veda till today should fill our minds with awesome respect. We should rethink our relationship with nature in view of all this.

Many would doubt, even abhor the idea of comparing Nietzsche and Tagore with regard to their views on human essence. There is, however, no doubt that both believed in human perfectibility and the emergence of humanity from animality. Both underlined man’s capacity for imaginative ordering which is the hallmark of creative activity. It is true that Nietzsche’s critique of socialization and civilization as founded on injustice and violence is opposed to Tagore’s views on the matter. What Nietzsche argues against is the mass society of his time. He is critical of society instituted and preserved through the manipulation of its members. Tagore, too, would not have endorsed the society which would force its members to submission to its norms and rules. It is true that Tagore’s faith is not free from doubt, negation and despair. He, too, had moments in his life when he was not in that perfect harmony he wrote about and valued so much. In many of his works, particularly those of his last years, the Apollonian element gives way to the Dionysian, belying his image as “the sage from the

¹⁸ Tagore, R., 1988 (1931), op. cit. 59.

¹⁹ 1961. *Sadhana*, op. cit., 28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

east.” Likewise, the Godless and absurd world-view attributed to Nietzsche should be given proper interpretation. Only then a full-blown comparison of Nietzsche and Tagore could be undertaken.

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Debamitra Dey

HUMAN BEING BELIEVES IN GOD: UNFOUNDATIONALLY?

ABSTRACT

From the dawn of human intelligence to the present era, the question ‘does God really exist?’ has been important for human being. Is there any proof of his existence? Philosophers, scholars, preceptors, monks and even atheists have tried to find the answer in their own ways. Various schools of Indian philosophy have also expressed their views about God’s existence. Some schools of Indian philosophy have accepted the ideas of *karma* (deeds), *karmaphala* (effects of deeds), rebirth etc. They have denied to admit the existence of God due to their own philosophical standpoint hence they have presented a series of arguments to refute the existence of God. Udayanāchārya, a famous Indian philosopher of the 10th century A.D., belonging to the Nyāya School, has shown some refined arguments to prove the existence of God. This paper presents his way of reasoning examining whether the belief in the existence of God is reasonable or not.

Keywords: God, God’s existence, Udayanāchārya, the Nyāya School.

1. INTRODUCTION

In colloquial Indian language the words *devaḥ*, *devatā*, *Īśvara* are used as the synonyms of God, whereas according to some ancient Indian scriptures, there is clear distinction among these terms. The term *devaḥ*, or *devatā*, is synonymous with the word “deity” implying the sense: a possessor of special qualities. Even an ordinary person can also attain *devatva* (divinity) by performing some special acts. In various *Upaniṣads* it is stated that if a person chooses the path of knowledge or wisdom, i.e. *jñānamārga*, he or she can attain *devatva* (divinity).¹ It is also mentioned there that it is definitely a temporary state; when the fruit of

¹ *Vrihadaranyaka Upanisad*, 1.5.16.

virtuous act comes to an end, at that time a person has to come back in his previous state.

In ancient Indian scriptures, *Īsvara* (God) is described as an omniscient, omnipresent, and possessor of eternal knowledge. Contextually we have to look at the scenario of Indian philosophy for a particular purpose. It is known that Indian philosophy is mainly divided into two schools, i.e. the *āstika* (enactment) and the *nāstika* (denial). The term “*āstika*” denotes those schools that accept the validity of the *Veda*; and the term *nāstika* denotes the opposite.

Among the main schools of Indian philosophy, *Cārvāka*, *Jaina* and *Bauddha* are titled as *nāstika-prasthāna* as they have never accepted the validity of the *Veda*, whereas the *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Yoga*, *Sāṃkhya* and *Vedānta* are referred as the *āstika* ones. But it is noteworthy that two *āstika* schools, namely the *Sāṃkhya* and the *Mīmāṃsā*, did not accept God's existence. *Sāṃkhya* is the oldest system of Indian philosophy. At an early stage it was a materialistic system. Later, due to the influence of *Yoga*, it has become an *āstika* one. Being a materialist system at an early stage, *Sāṃkhya* could not accept God. Even in its mature state, the standpoint of the *Sāṃkhya* School remains the same as earlier. But the *Mīmāṃsā* system's view is quite amazing in this context. Though in *Mīmāṃsā*, the existence of *svarga*, *naraka*, *karmaphala*, *paraloka* (heaven, hell, effects of deed, life after death) is recognized and even proved, surprisingly, the *Mīmāṃsā* School did not admit God. The reason is that *Mīmāṃsā* accepts the *Veda* as “*apouruṣeya*” (impersonal). On the contrary, the *Nyāya* School has described God as the creator or author of the *Veda*. The scholars of Indian philosophy have claimed that at an earlier stage even the *Vaiśeṣika* School was also a non-theist system. Later commentators like Praśastapāda and Śankara Miśra have explained some of the *sūtras* of the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* in the context of God.² But in *Yuktidīpikā*, being one of the oldest commentaries of the *Sāṃkhya*, the *Vaiśeṣika* School was clearly treated as a non-theist (*nirīśvara-vādī*) one.

Now it can be stated that not only the *nāstika* schools of Indian philosophy have refuted the existence of God, but also some of the *āstika* systems. In this regard we can mention Kumāriḷa Bhaṭṭa's *Ślokavārttika* where Kumāriḷa, following the tradition, has refuted God as an entity by some excellent arguments. Kumāriḷa was contemporary with Śankarāchārya, and he was a profounder of the *Bhāṭṭa* sect of the *Mīmāṃsā* School. On the other hand, to ascertain the existence of God, Udayanāchārya, a profound scholar of the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* schools of the 10th-century A.D., has discussed the topic in an elaborate way in his book *Nyāyakusumāñjali* (Offering Flowers of Logic). Many scholars have claimed that the *Nyāyakusumāñjali* was written as a counter-reply to Kalyāna-Rakṣita's *Īsvarabhāṅgakārika*. Kalyāna-Rakṣita was a famous Buddhist scholar

² Isvarakrsna. 1982. *Samkhyakarika*. Swami Divakarananda (Trans.). Kolkata: Sri Ramakrisna Sevashrama.

and in his works he did not accept God as an entity. Udayana challenged those arguments and established God's existence by his own way of reasoning.

2. UDAYANA'S VIEWS IN THE *NYĀYAKUSUMĀNJALI*

In his book entitled *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Udayana presented five objections raised by different schools of Indian philosophy. He refuted them successively in his book. The first objection³ was raised by the *Cārvākas*, "*Īśvara nāsti alaukikaparalokasādhanasyābhāvāt*" which means "there is no existence of God because there is nothing as "*aloukikaparalokasādhanah*," i.e. an argument which can prove the state after death. This objection seems to be a single one, but actually there are four objections laid in it. They are (1) *alaukikasyābhāvāt*, i.e. there is nothing beyond perception, (2) *paralokasyābhāvāt*, i.e. there is nothing like heaven or hell after death, (3) *sādhanasyābhāvāt*, i.e. there is nothing as cause or cause-effect relationship, and lastly (4) *alaukikasādhanasyābhāvāt*, i.e., the cause of hell or heaven (*adr̥ṣṭa* or *dharma-adharma*) does not exist because it also cannot be perceived.

So ultimately the essence of the *Cārvāka* view is that there is nothing beyond perception and for this reason the cause of heaven or hell (*adr̥ṣṭa*) cannot be accepted. They also do not accept the cause-effect relationship; therefore God cannot be the creator of this world. The next conclusion is: if there is no world after death, then also God's presence is not proved since it is not perceived. Due to the performance or non-performance of Vedic rituals like sacrifices, a person can attain heaven or hell. So, if there is no existence of heaven or hell then the performance of Vedic rituals or sacrifices is useless, and as a preceptor of sacrifices, God's entity also cannot be substantiated.

The second objection⁴ was put forward by the *Mīmāṃsā* School, and its main concern was to establish authority of the *Veda*. They consider that the *Veda* is an impersonal creation, so the validity of it is not determined *ab extra*. On the contrary, the validity is determined by itself, and hence the *Veda* is valid by itself; then it has no author i.e. *Īśvara*. The *Naiyāyika* (the followers of the Nyāya School) says that all the Vedic rituals like sacrifices etc. are performed to attain heaven. These activities are performed because *Veda* obtains validity as it is a creation of God. But *Mīmāṃsaka* simply refuses it by saying that *Veda* is "*svataḥpramāṇa*," or valid by itself. It is not man-made, so it is free from any fault and its validity does not anticipate authority of God. If God's existence is not proved still there would not be any kind of inapplicability at all.

In spite of some disagreements most of the scholars have accepted that the third objection is both from the *Mīmāṃsā* School and the Buddhist school. The

³ Such as *Vaisesikasutra* 1.1.3 etc.

⁴ *Nyayakusumanjali*, 7.

third objection⁵ is that the non-existence of God can be proved by a particular means of valid knowledge, “*anupalabdhi*.” Basically the *Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas* (a sect of the *Mīmāṃsā* School) have accepted this as an indicator of non-existence. If we analyze the word “*anupalabdhi*” (a means of valid knowledge which proves non-existence), then we will get the meaning that “which does not exist, and cannot be cognized,” too. Similarly, God cannot be cognized as God does not exist.

In the fourth chapter of the *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Udayana discussed the fourth objection.⁶ It is almost an epistemological discussion. This objection is also from the *Mīmāṃsaka*’s side. According to the objection, if it is accepted that God exists, there is still no validity of Him or His knowledge. Using an epistemological argumentation Udayana discusses about the nature and the proper definition of valid knowledge. The commentators of the *Nyāyakusumāñjali* have opined that the fifth objection⁶ is actually an amalgamation of views of four schools: *Sāṃkhya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Bauddha* and *Cārvāka*. All of them have stated that there is no means that can prove and establish the existence of God. So these are five main objections raised by different schools of Indian philosophy about God’s existence.

In his magnificent work *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Udayana refuted these objections in his brilliant argumentation. Ultimately, in the last chapter of *Kusumāñjali*, he gave a final conclusion in the form of a *kārikā* (a verse):

*Kāryāyojanādhrtyādeḥpadātpratyayataḥśruteḥ
vākyaṭsaṃkhyāviśeṣaccasādhyoviśsvavidavyayath.*⁷

(In English: The existence of God can be proved due to eight reasons and they are 1) *kāryāt* (from effect), 2) *ayojanāt* which means “from combination”, or “from the combination of atoms,” 3) *dhṛteḥ* (from support) 4) *padat* (from [a] word) 5) *pratyayataḥ* (from faith) 6) *śruteḥ* (as it is *Veda*), 7) *Vākyaṭ* (from the sentences of ancient scriptures), 8) *Samkhyāviśeṣāt* (from a number of God’s special qualities.)

In the *kārika*, he has mentioned eight principal causes to prove the existence of God. The first one is *kāryāt* (from effect). An inference is given here as an example and that is *kṣityādikarṭṭpūrvakam kāryatvāditi*.⁸ (Meaning: The earth, atoms etc. are produced by a conscious producer as other objects of this world.) Whenever there is an effect there must be a cause. According to *Nyāya* philosophy an effect cannot be produced without a cause. As the whole world is a creation or effect hence it must have a cause. The *Naiyāyikas* state that causes are threefold—(1) *Samavāyī*, (the material cause) (2) *Asamavāyī* (the cause which produces characteristics in an effect through material cause) and (3) *Nimitta* (the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

efficient cause).⁹ Among them *Ísvāra* (God) is the third one. The conscious cause or the creator must possess an absolute knowledge of the ingredients of his creation and that is possible for none other than God. So from the creation of the world, the existence of God is proved.

The second point of the argumentation is stated by the term “*ayojanāt*” which means “from combination, or to state it more precisely,” “from the combination of atoms.” According to the *Vaiśeṣikas*, there is no doubt that the world is made with atoms. But atoms are inactive as they are material. So being combined by a conscious entity, the atoms, dyads and then molecules create this world. Otherwise if they were combined in a random way, there would be chaos, so it is beyond doubt that the conscious organizer is God.

The third cause mentioned in the *kārikā* is by the term “*dhr̥teḥ*” (from support). It is known that, from a particular dyad to the whole world, everything is supported either by a direct or mediated support. Otherwise, the world would not remained like it is now because it is heavy in nature and therefore it will fall. So God is the supporter and bearer of the whole world that also is the proof of his presence.

The fourth cause in the *kārikā* is which proves God’s existence is stated by *padat* (from [a] word). The term “*Pada*” means “referring to an object.” So here exists a rule stating that a particular object would be signified by a particular term, i.e. *Pada*. This happens due to the will of God (*Íśvarecchā*)—this also proves God’s existence.

The fifth proof given by Udayana is denoted by the term “*pratyayataḥ*” (from faith). The actual meaning of the term *pratyayataḥ* is deep faith, but here we have to understand it as the deep-faith produced due to validity of *Veda*. If there is no validity, there can be no faith. A traditional belief claims that the *Veda* is without any fallacy; the lack of fallacy denotes its validity. Now the author of the *Veda* cannot be a human being because a normal human being does not possess absolute or eternal knowledge. So the author must be God. *Sruti* is the synonym of the term *Veda*.

According to the sixth cause given by Udayana, an omniscient person must have created *Veda* because it is “*the Veda*.” This argument was denoted by the term “*śruteḥ*” (as it is *Veda*). The meaning of the term “*Śruti*” is *Veda*. So the essence of Udayana’s argument is as it is the *Veda*, it cannot be created by any human being. We can say it in another way that what is not created by an omniscient person is not *Veda* and this omniscient person is God.

The seventh cause of this *kārikā* is *Vākyāt* (from the sentences of ancient scriptures). This particular one is a counter reply to *Mīmāṃsaka*’s arguments. Here Udayana declares *Veda* is an author-made text. He argues that as *Veda* is author-made hence it is actually a collection of sentences like the sentences uttered by common people. In reply, *Mīmāṃsaka* can say that nobody recalls

⁹ *Tarkasaṃgraha*.

that there was any author of the *Veda*, so it is titled as *apauruṣeya* (impersonal). But Udayana maintains that this is not true and he quotes some phrases from the relevant *śāstras* (scriptures) to prove that it is stated both in the *Veda* and *Smṛti* that God exists. Moreover, Udayana quotes a particular *arthavāda*, (a kind of sentences found in *Veda*), i.e. “*tasmādyajñātsarvahutarcahsamanijajñire*” (in English: from that sacrifice everything sacrificed and the *Veda* were produced). Here the word “*yajña*” denotes God. So this *arthavāda* gives a clear proof about the existence of God.

The last and the final argument of Udayanāchārya’s *kārikā* is *Samkhyāviśeṣāt*. The meaning of the term is substantiated from a number of special God’s qualities. From the combination of two molecules (*paramāṇu*) a dyad (*dvyāṇuka*) is formed and by the conjugation of three dyads a *traṇuka* (triad) is originated. Both of them possess a particular type of quantity. *Dvyāṇuka* and *traṇuka* are basically effects as they originate from some cause. Similarly their quantities are also effects as they are also produced. But what is the cause of them all? *Naiyāyika* answers that the numbers like *Dvitva* (duality) and *Tritva* (property of a triad) which lie in *dvyāṇuka* and *traṇuka* act as a cause. This number expects a particular thing named *apekṣābuddhi* (a kind of knowledge which is necessary for producing qualities in dyads or triads) for the combination process. Commonsense people cannot be possessors of *apekṣābuddhi*. So the possessor of the *apekṣābuddhi* must be God.¹⁰

In this way Udayana has refuted various objections concerning the existence of God raised by different schools of Indian philosophy. He has so much confidence in his own argumentation that his confidence is seen in a famous and quite popular story about him. Once there was a debate between Udayana and a Buddhist monk. The monk was defeated by Udayana and he could not take it easily. It was so much unbearable for him that he sacrificed his life by burning himself and for this reason vice captured Udayana as the cause of monk’s death. After some time Udayana made a trip to Purī-Srīkṣetra for a visit of Lord Jagannātha. But since he was captured with vice, he was prohibited to visit Him. As he was prohibited from the *darśana* (visit) of Lord Jagannātha, Udayana made a statement to Him. He said: “Today I am prohibited from your visit, but when these Buddhists will raise questions about your existence, then you have to come to me, (i.e. to my arguments).” Such was his confidence that he had the audacity to utter that kind of statement to God.

In conclusion it can be said that though God is omnipotent, omniscient and the creator of this world but His existence can only be established by none other than His own creation, i.e. man. Through this insignificant work, a tribute is offered to the great stalwarts of Indian philosophy. *Alamiti*.

¹⁰ *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 417.

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SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS OF THE HUMAN COGNITIVE ARCHITECTURE

ABSTRACT

We briefly review and discuss symbolic expressions of the cognitive architecture of the human mind/brain, focusing on the *Quaternion*, the *Axis Mundi* and the *Tree of Life*, and elaborate on a quaternary diagram that expresses a contemporary worldview. While traditional symbols contain vertical and horizontal dimensions related to transcendence and immanence, respectively, in the contemporary interpretation the vertical axis refers to diachronic processes as biological evolution and cultural history, while the horizontal axis refers to synchronic relations as the interactions of individuals in society. In spite of these differences, we claim that old and new symbols are similar, expressing the cognitive architecture of the human mind/brain in the world of experience.

Keywords: symbolic expression, cognitive architecture, mind, triple-aspect monism.

INTRODUCTION

An ancient view of a conscious mind tuned with the world was expressed by Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers (1991): “The whole world is a circle. All of these circular images reflect the psyche.” The circle is a recurrent theme in Greek philosophy; Campbell also dealt with, among other things, the Sun Disc of New Guinea and Navajo sand paintings. According to this tradition, mental and natural domains display close affinities that can be expressed by means of symbols.

A class of symbols contains a circle divided in four quadrants by a cross. Aside from the complementary aspects of the quadrants forming a whole, the superposition of horizontal and vertical lines of the cross is suggestive of the domain where and when human experience happens. In different cultures and respective religions, this prototype has received different interpretations. In traditional symbols, the vertical dimension is related to transcendence (having material beings at

the bottom and God at the top) and the horizontal to immanence (covering relations between internal individual life and external social life). In contemporary interpretations, the vertical axis is not explicitly connected to a transcendent God, but refers to the exercise of human freedom towards intentional states (as in the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre, e.g. (Sartre, 1984)). In spite of these differences, we highlight the similarity between cosmological symbols and the current concept of an embodied and embedded consciousness.

SYMBOLS AS “GESTALTS” OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Algirdas Julien Greimas and Joseph Cortés (1993) recognize that the term “symbol” admits multiple definitions, characterizing syncretism and ambiguity; they do not recommend its use in semiotics, making clear that it should not be understood as synonymous to “sign.” While scholars usually emphasize the role of symbols as representative signs of realities not accessible to theoretical reason (Mora, 1964), we claim that a certain class of such symbols is perfectly amenable to a philosophical interpretation.

There is, on the one hand, a common nature shared by metaphors and this type of symbol, but, on the other hand, the symbol cannot be explained only by the model of a metaphor. A German idealist philosopher Schelling (1989, 45 ff.), for instance, believes that the sacred dimension can never be reduced to an allegorical language, as it is essentially symbolic. We understand from this claim that symbolism is special because it affords a real “gestalt.”

Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) called the human animal “symbolicum,” recognizing the symbol as a key to the nature of man. In his *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* he claims on this point:

“Man has, as it were, discovered a new method of adapting himself to his environment. Between the receptor system and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link which we may describe as the symbolic system. This new acquisition transforms the whole of human life. As compared with the other animals man lives not merely in a broader reality; he lives, so to speak, in a new dimension of reality. [...] No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe. [...] Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium. [...] Reason is a very inadequate term with which to comprehend the forms of man’s cultural life in all their richness and variety. But all these forms are symbolic forms. Hence,

instead of defining man as an *animal rationale*, we should define him as *animal symbolicum*.” (Cassirer, 1953, 42–44)

Cassirer concludes that the symbolic function is not restricted to particular cases, but is a principle of universal applicability, covering the whole field of human thought: “The principle of symbolism, with its universality, validity, and general applicability, is the magic word, the Open Sesame! giving access to the specifically human world, to the world of human culture.” (Cassirer, 1953, 55).

In this view, human culture does not extract its specific character and its intellectual and moral values from the material domain, but operates on symbolic systems:

“Without a complex system of symbols relational thought cannot arise at all, much less reach its full development. [...] The mere awareness of relations cannot, therefore, be regarded as a specific feature of human consciousness. We do find, however, in man a special type of relational thought which has no parallel in the animal world. In man an ability to isolate relations—to consider them in their abstract meaning—has developed. In order to grasp this meaning man is no longer dependent on concrete sense data, upon visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic data. [...] Geometry is the classic example of this turning point in man’s intellectual life. Even in elementary geometry we are not bound to the apprehension of concrete individual figures. We are not concerned with physical things or perceptual objects, for we are studying universal spatial relations for whose expression we have an adequate symbolism.” (Cassirer, 1953, 58–59)

Without symbolism, man’s life would be similar to the prisoners of Plato’s famous cave; it “would be confined within the limits of his biological needs and his practical interests; it could find no access to the ‘ideal world’ which is opened to him from different sides by religion, art, philosophy, science.” (Cassirer, 1953, 62)

Although often being called a “Neo-Kantian”, Cassirer argues for a concept of symbol that is closer to Aristotelian philosophy. For Kant, the objects of our perception do not determine how we perceive them. For a sensory intuition to become an object for cognition, it has to be subsumed to an *a priori* form and subjected to the principle of unity of apperception (Kant, 1996, 12-129-140). The patterns employed by human minds for the understanding of a multiplicity of intuitions are called “pure concepts of understanding” or categories. Imagination, for Kant, has a function of joining, schematically and figuratively, the diversity and multiplicity of perceptions.

The Aristotelian theory of abstraction, in turn, can be contrasted to Kantian epistemology (Brugger, 1957). For Aristotle, human cognition is conceived in terms of an understanding that receives the determination (form, image) from entities (substances) in the world. The mind “abstracts” the essence (“*species intel-*

ligibilis”) that determines conceptual knowledge. The form, configuration, contour or figure characterizes things themselves and the thought on these things; they are present both in the mind and in the world.

JUNG AND THE QUATERNION

A leading author who recognized the importance of symbols for the study of the psyche was Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). He recognized two outstanding influences in his work on comprehensive psychology: a Genevan philosopher Théodore Flournoy (1854–1920) and William James (1842–1910) in his work *The Variety of Religious Experience* (1902).

Jung appreciated symbols in almost all cultures, especially in Eastern and indigenous ones, and prioritized those that came closest to the idea of unity. Diagrammatic symbolic figures are inspired the Jungian theory of archetypes. He did not consider the symbol in an allegorical sense, but properly as the description and formulation of archetypal objects (Jung, 1968b, 1969). These appear in dreams, visions and products of imagery, consisting of geometric objects that enclose elements (circular and spherical forms) and the quaternary circle, a square or cruciform figure. They represent variations on a basic theme, the mandala, a sacred symbol in India, where it is called “*yantra*.” Nise da Silveira (1981) recognized in this graphic an expression of the unconscious by schizophrenic patients.

According to Jung, polarities constitute the human psyche and intra-psyche conflicts. Black and white, light and darkness, good and evil are pairs of opposites, so that one always assumes the other (Jung, 1968b, 54; Jung, 1968a). He states: “... in all chaos there is a cosmos, [...] everything that works is grounded on its opposite” (Jung, 1968a, 66). The Yang-Yin (Fig. 1) relation is interpreted as representing the unity of the Tao.



Fig. 1. Taoist Symbol of Unity

Jung discussed the “*Unus Mundus*” alchemy, trying to symbolically express the collective unconscious (Jung, 1969), as well as the Tibetan Wheel of Life (Fig. 2), displaying the delights and torments of humans, gods and demons, and the polarity of Goodness (above) and Evil (below).

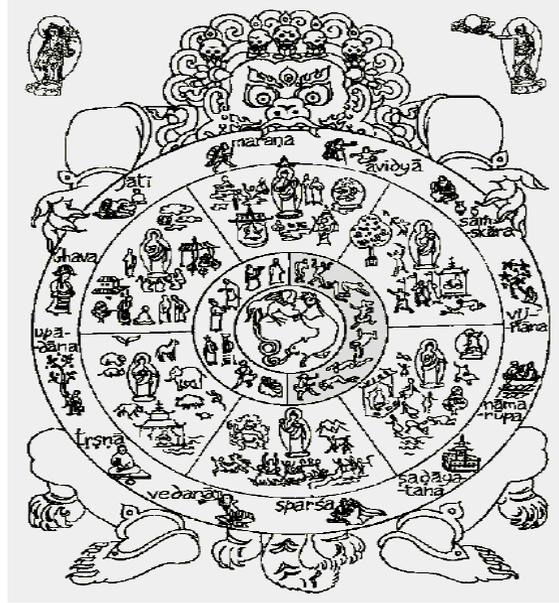


Fig. 2. The Tibetan Wheel of Life

Jung (1968b, 226–246) also dealt with Gnostic psychology and alchemical conceptions of quaternity related to the “philosopher’s stone,” in a hierarchy composed of the “Round Element” at a lower end, the “Lapis” in the middle position and the “Snake” occupying the apex. He noted that “Consciousness and understanding arise from discrimination, that is, through analysis (dissolution) followed by synthesis, as stated in symbolical terms by the alchemical dictum: “*Solve et coagula*” (dissolve and coagulate)” (Jung, 1968b, 260). A quaternity (Fig. 3) can be seen as an attempt “to organize the chaotic medley of numinous images” (Jung, 1968b, 242), and therefore “represents a psychic fact which can be brought into relationship with the four orienting functions of consciousness” (Jung, 1968b, 258).

This kind of graphic illustration of a phenomenon of interest entered Western science by means of the Cartesian system of coordinates, which reduces the quaternary structure to an empty space for the representation of quantitative aspects of nature. With this adaptation, the qualitative character of the quadrants—having the function of expressing the organization of the phenomenal world—was not taken into consideration.

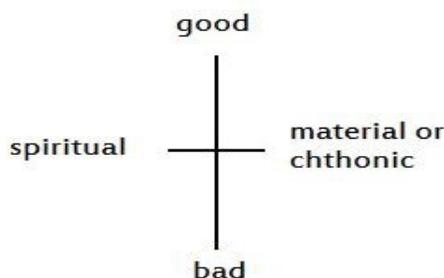


Fig. 3. Example of a Quaternion

THE AXIS MUNDI

Mircea Eliade (1959, 45) focuses on uses of the quaternion approach for the division of villages and towns using four cardinal points. He assigns this division to the “*axis mundi*” (axis or pillar of the world) that marks the center from which the axes pointing to cardinal points radiate. According to the author, to live in a world you need to organize it; no world can be born in the “chaos” of homogeneity and relativity of profane space, hence the projection of a fixed point would amount to a “creation of the world.”

In the “Navel of the Earth” concept from the Mesopotamian tradition, also present in the Judeo-Christian and Iranian traditions, the center is the place where space becomes sacred, real par excellence: “Just as the universe unfolds from a center and stretches out toward the four cardinal points, the village comes into existence around an intersection” (Eliade, 1959, 45). The square built from a central point is the “*imago mundi*.” The division of a village into four sectors corresponds to the division of the universe into four horizons. According to Eliade (1959) it is not surprising to find a similar concept in Italy and among the ancient Germans, because it is an archaic and widespread idea.

It is worth noting the description that Gregory of Nyssa (394 AD) makes of the Christian cross: “The cross meets the four cardinal points thus symbolizing the unity of the cosmos: its vertical axis’ north-south links heaven to hell, while the cross-lateral east-west covers the earth. It is the *Axis Mundi*, a ‘tree of life’” (Nissa ‘apud’ Leloup, 2001). In the same vein, Eliade describes the *Axis Mundi* (Fig. 4) this way:

“... communication is sometimes expressed through the image of a universal pillar, *axis mundi*, which at once connects and supports heaven and earth and whose base is fixed in the world below (the infernal regions). Such a cosmic pillar can be only at the very center of the universe, for the whole of the habitable world extends around it.” (Eliade, 1959, 36–37)



Fig. 4. The *Axis Mundi*

The drums of shamans also illustrate the concept of the *axis mundi*, displaying a space divided into two major areas: the sky above (Upper World) with stars, and the human world below. The shamanic art displays a visual hierarchical syntax, as in Egyptian iconography. They are far from being naive, expressing abstractions and subtle elaborations of cosmogonic significance. Almost identical images appeared in Siberia some 5,000 years ago during the Bronze Age, in the form of drawings on rock, as well as in the words of a Sioux medicine man, Black Elk Oglata, who participated in the battle of Little Big Horn, 1876, in which the Sioux inflicted serious defeats in the U.S. Army (Neihardt, 2008). It can also be noted in the Zodiac of Dendera (Fig. 5), as well as in the Aztec Sun Stone (Fig. 6).

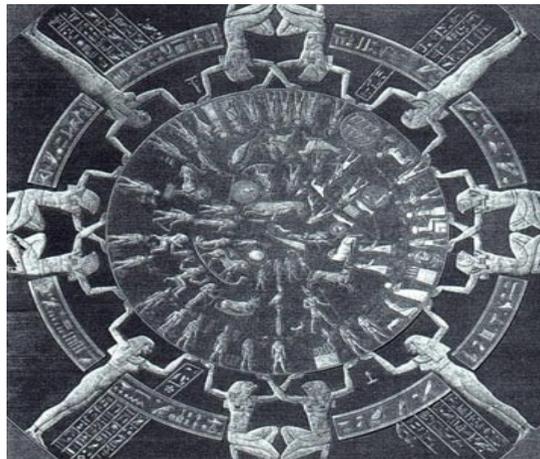


Fig. 5. The Zodiac of Dendera



Fig. 6. The Aztec Sun Stone

We find similar expressions in pictorial rock art, at least since the Mesolithic Bronze and Iron Ages (Coimbra, 2004). They are structured in oppositions, in a quaternary topology featuring the above, below, left and right. It can also be found today in the rituals of Brazilian Umbanda (Lima, 1997, 70–82).

THE KABALLAH'S TREE OF LIFE AND INFLUENCES ON PSYCHOANALYSIS

The term “*qabalah*” in Hebrew is translated as kabala, *kabalah* or kabbalah, and means “tradition.” It designates a series of speculations commonly considered to be a part of Jewish philosophy (Mora, 2004). There is an extensive literature on the subject, much of it of dubious character from the academic point of view. However, there are also excellent historiographic, exegetical and hermeneutic studies. The Kabbalah has received the attention of many scholars, even outside the field of Jewish philosophy.

It is not so surprising to see the interest in Kabbalah shown by exponents of the Renaissance, such as Marsilio Ficino, Giordano Bruno and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, through whom this interest was kept alive into the contemporary epoch (Atlan, 1993, 2013; Singer “apud” Aczel, 2000). Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) sought to give a Christological significance to the doctrine (Tarnas, 1996, 227–238). Scholem (1970) reports the influence of this mysticism on the prehistory of German Idealism, for instance in Jacob Brucker’s *Historical Criticism Philosophiae*, the first history of philosophy in Germany (circa 1750).

In addition to philosophy, Jewish mysticism exerted an attraction on other fields, for example in mathematics. George Cantor was under such a powerful influence (Aczel, 2000). The matter was also discussed from a biological perspective by Miranda (2002). Another scholar interested in the matter is an anthro-

pologist Patai (1994), who showed the importance of a Jewish alchemy from ancient times until the nineteenth century. He proposes a reconsideration of the role of Kabbalah in alchemy, and emphasizes its importance in a worldview of a “world above” and a “world below” interacting and influencing each other (Patai, 1994, 152–174).

In the field of psychology, aside from Wilfred R. Bion (1984) and Jung, Freud also knew the mystical Jewish Kabbalah. This fact is well documented by the contemporary exponent of the study of Kabbalah, Gershom Scholem (1970), who remembers that the granddaughter of a Jewish scholar, Isaac Bernays (1792–1849) became the wife of Freud. The evidence that Jewish mysticism is constitutive of many aspects of the Freudian worldview can be appreciated by the kabbalistic symbolism of the “Tree of Life” (Fig. 7). The classic diagram representing the id, ego and superego refers to the cabalistic diagram. Even if such influence occurred unconsciously, it is impossible not to highlight the similarity of organization of both representations. We dare conjecture that such a hierarchy, in which sexuality is manifested in Yesod and placed hierarchically above the physical plane (Malcuth), would have influenced Freud’s own worldview. This topology is also similar to the position of the existential human being in what Kurt Lewin (1936) calls “living space.”

The Kabbalistic Tree of Life consists of circles that are interconnected by paths, each circle representing a divine emanation or a form of knowledge (Bension, 1932). As the number of circles is usually 10, an eleventh would mean “surpassing human knowledge.” Linking the ten circles of the diagram twenty-two paths are obtained, each one corresponding to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is worth noting that although the diagram is projected onto a two-dimensional plane, it represents a three-dimensional structure.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1994) make reference to symbols and their diagrammatic nature:

“It is only from this point of view that Chinese hexagrams, Hindu mandalas, Jewish sephiroth, Islamic ‘imaginals’ and Christian icons can be considered together: thinking through figures. Hexagrams are combinations of continuous and discontinuous features deriving from one another according to the levels of a spiral [...] The mandala is a projection on a surface that establishes correspondence between divine, cosmic, political, architectural, and organic levels [...] That is why the figure has a reference, one that is plurivocal and circular by nature. Certainly, it is not defined by an external resemblance, which remains prohibited, but by an internal tension that relates it to the transcendent on the plane of immanence of thought. [...] All that can be said is that figures tend toward concepts to the point of drawing infinitely near to them.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, 89–92).



Fig. 7. The Kaballistic Tree of Life. The image displays an upward hierarchy, from the material (below) to the spiritual plane (above). The upper quadrants of the diagram are: Kheter (Celestial Crown) above all, seconded by Binah (Heavenly Mother) and Chochmai (Heavenly Father). Below, Yesod (Foundation Sefirah) lies on the genitals of the “Primordial Adam,” above the physical world Malcuth (The Kingdom).

In orthogonal diagrams,

“The plane of immanence has two facets as Thought and as Nature, as *Nous* and as *Physis*. That is why there are always many infinite movements caught within each other, each folded in the others, so that the return of one instantaneously relaunches another ...” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, 38).

In Aristotelian philosophy, immanent activity is the activity that remains within the agent, in the sense that it has its own end, hence opposed to transcendent (or transitive) activity. This sense of immanence was adopted by Baruch Spinoza. For him, God is the immanent cause of all things (Mora, 2004, 2746–2751). Although immanentist rationalism was a frequent feature in modern thought, this does not necessarily apply to all the philosophy of this period. An exception was German idealism, in which its proponents tended to conceive the existence of windows to the infinite or transcendent, within the domain of immanence. Therefore, one should not reduce the plane of immanence to a finite extension, since it can contain intensive ordinates of the infinite (Deleuze, Guattari, 1991, 39–40). The forces acting on the plane of immanence are forces that transcend the field itself, because they are not only drives, but attractions exercised by constellations of values within their axiological horizon or even beyond.

There is a possibility of constructing a multitude of axes espousing infinite planes, in proportion to the number of concepts considered as fundamental to human existence, as in the multidimensional spaces (e.g. Hilbert space) used in contemporary physics. Future concepts may inhabit this space with as much or more comfort than those in the present. However, the orthogonal axes define the method, the quadrants and the tension between the two founding polarities, vertical and horizontal.

A CONTEMPORARY VERSION OF THE QUATERNION

In an attempt to formulate an interdisciplinary ontology that includes three aspects of reality considered to be fundamental:

- a) the physical-chemical biological,
- b) the informational, corresponding to non-conscious mental processes, and
- c) the mental consciousness,

Pereira Jr (2013) proposed the doctrine of Triple-Aspect Monism (TAM). It can be visualized in a cross diagram (Fig. 8).

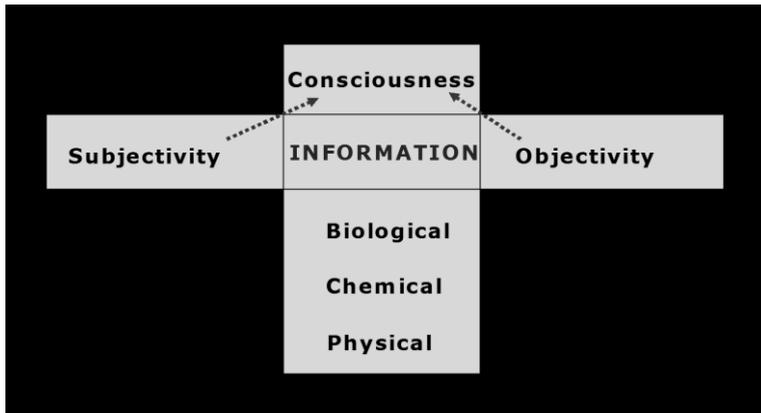


Fig. 8. Triple-Aspect Monism. The concept of information is at the centre of the diagram, mediating the other two aspects, which are displayed in the vertical axis. The horizontal axis refers to the subjective and objective poles of information, which are projected as the subjective and objective poles of consciousness. The subjective-objective structure is reproduced in the conscious domain (see ascending arrows).

The evolution of reality is conceived by TAM as a becoming process, in which the eternal possibilities contained in the repertory of nature are progressively actualised and eventually extinct, in the same way that new biological species appear and some of the existing ones disappear.

The first aspect to be actualised is the physical-chemical-biological, from the Big Bang to the origins of life. A primitive living being is conceived as a successful union of active proteins (prompting metabolism) and a data bank (DNA)

used to reproduce them. Information processes are still in a very elementary form of actualisation, being restricted to physical signalling at the quantum level (these processes are not those properly addressed by information theory, but can be approached by the new area of quantum communication).

Properly informational processes occur when there is a source of information and a receptor, forming law-like correlations between their states. In the evolution of reality, these processes begin when primitive unicellular living systems exchange signals with the environment. In evolutionary processes in our planet, four kinds of ions available in the environment were recruited to carry most of the relevant signals, namely the calcium, sodium, potassium and chloride ions.

The emergence of systems executing mental functions, in this context, corresponds to the formation of signalling networks internal to living systems and in the domain of interaction with the environment mediated by the cellular membrane. These networks exchange ionic signals, much like the contemporary neuronal and glial networks of evolutionarily recent brains, including the human one. These exchanges can occur in a completely non-conscious modality, until a new step—the generation of feelings—occurs.

The generation of feelings occurs when the physical state of the sentient system is mapped in information patterns (mostly instantiated in ionic populations), and—the crucial step—when the result of the informational processing impacts back on (i.e., affects) the physical state of the system, generating the feeling—in this sense, an affective state. Although there is no scientific consensus about when this step happened during evolution, according to TAM it is possible that degrees of consciousness (proto-feelings) are instantiated in plants, since their tissues form a syncytium, where ionic patterns can be formed. With more reason, basic feelings—as hunger and pain—could be instantiated in animals without brains. It is hard to deny a degree of consciousness in intelligent insects such as bees and ants!

According to TAM, the mark of consciousness is the feeling. Systems limited to the first two aspects of reality can instantiate several mental operations and activities, such as attribution of meaning and intentionality, but in a non-conscious modality (that includes the Freudian *unconscious*). When there is a feeling relative to the content of the information and to the meaning attributed to the content, then there is conscious activity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While traditional symbols contain vertical and horizontal dimensions, respectively related to transcendence and immanence, in contemporary interpretation the vertical axis is often related to diachronic processes (as biological evolution and cultural history), while the horizontal axis relates to synchronic relations (as the interactions of individuals in society).

Contemporary human sciences, following the same traditions we reviewed, assume quaternary worldviews, as in the case of the example shown in Fig. 9.

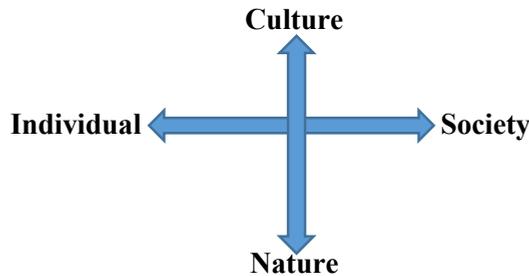


Fig. 9. Contemporary Quaternary Structure. The horizontal axis represents the interplay between individuals and society, common to several human sciences, and more specifically to social psychology, while the vertical axis represents an evolutionary process that begins with nature and unfolds itself into culture.

The above figure represents one of the possible interpretations of the quaternary structure in our contemporary context. Depending on the philosophical view that is assumed, different interpretations can be attached to the dimensions; for instance, in Sartre's philosophy the horizontal dimension relates to the deterministic world of objects (the *En-Soi*), while the vertical dimension relates to the intentional domain (the *Pour-Soi*; Sartre, 1984).

Although most contemporary philosophers do not explicitly conceive the vertical dimension in a theological perspective, it is possible to note a cognitive similarity between traditional interpretations (for instance, the *Exitus-Reditus* temporal process in Thomas Aquinas) and existential/hermeneutic interpretations that conceive the process of transcendence as an exercise of human freedom without guidance by a transcendent God; for instance, in the interpretation of Heidegger by De Waelhens (1955).

We conclude the essay by noting that old and new symbols are remarkably similar in that they express both the phenomenal structure of the conscious mind and the natural structure of the world of experience, thus reflecting a fundamental unity of reality, in spite of the possibility of diverging interpretations of the ultimate nature of reality.

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SYMBOLIC NATURE OF COGNITION

ABSTRACT

I propose here an image of knowledge based on the concept of symbol: according to it, the relation of representation that constituting cognition is a symbolization. It is postulated that both the representing conceptual model, i.e. a pre-linguistic entity acquired in cognition, and the true sentence it generates are of symbolic and not of mirroring (copying) character. The symbolic nature of cognition carries dialectical tension. We have at our disposal conceptual models and true sentences which symbolically represent reality. However, it is not possible to lift the symbolic disguise over knowledge, because precisely this disguise is its essence. Reality appears only as symbolically, non-imitatively encoded. The proposed here symbolic realism rejects the traditional adopted dichotomy between, on one side, realism and the absence of the subject's factors in the cognitive result, and, on the other, idealism and the subject as a factor which is viewed as inevitably leading to the idealistic nature of knowledge.

Keywords: symbol, symbolic epistemological realism, representation, mirroring nature of knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed here realistic image of knowledge, especially of representation—which constitutes the realistic idea of knowledge—is based on the concept of symbol. In other words, knowledge and its constituting relation of representation are grasped as a symbolization: the representation relation binds the cognized object, more precisely its ontic base, with its symbol, whereby the symbol offers a conceptual realistic representation of the object. Both the conceptual model, i.e. a pre-linguistic entity acquired in cognition, and the true sentence it generates are symbolic and not of imitative (mirroring, copying, imitating) character. The representation of objects by models, and subsequently sentences of a language, reproduces the objects—but in a symbolically coded, not copying way.

The symbolic epistemological realism I propose rejects the traditional adopted dichotomy between, on one side, realism and the absence of the subject's factors in the cognitive result, and, on the other, idealism and the subject as a factor which is viewed as inevitably leading to the idealistic nature of knowledge. This traditional dichotomy only take account of the most extreme positions, especially realism grounded in illusory beliefs about the mirroring nature of knowledge.

It is assumed here that the cognitive subject is a crucial factor in the constitution of the representation relation, and therefore also true knowledge. The subject is immersed in and not opposed to metaphysical reality; it does not function solely in the private immanent sphere, but has an ability to transcend it and to link itself with the world.

The sources of the symbolic nature of knowledge are founded in the specific properties of human cognitive powers as well as in the nature of reality. Symbols are created by the subject, which transforms the tangle of multiply-processed physical signals which reach it from the external reality. Reality-representing symbols are the basic tool in man's cognitive coping with this reality; coping consists in coding reality symbolically.

WHAT IS SYMBOL?

The thesis about the symbolic nature of the representation relation and cognition in general requires an explanation of the terms "symbol" and "symbolising." In philosophical and related literature "symbol" is used in a variety of meanings. There are mathematical symbols, cultural symbols—which are often conventional or metaphorical (divine symbols, the symbols of war, the symbols of the muses in ancient Greece, etc.), symbols as understood by Pierre Duhem,¹ and artistic symbols. However, neither of these meanings will help much in explaining the nature of representation and knowledge.

In my view much more appropriate is the concept of symbols introduced by Ernst Cassirer in his theory of symbolic forms. Cassirer's theory is broadly constructed as a theoretical fundament of culture as a whole: for Cassirer, symbols and symbolisation are an essential category of culture, which he understands in

¹ Duhem claims that the laws of physics are always symbolic, but it is unclear whether he means simply the conventional expression of these laws by means of mathematical symbols, or the real relation between the symbol and its object, because he states that the symbol, "is, rather, something more or less well selected to stand for the reality it represents, and pictures that reality in a more or less precise, more or less detailed manner. But applied to a symbol the words 'truth' and 'error' no longer have any meaning; so, the logician who is concerned about the strict meaning of words will have to answer anyone who asks whether physics is true or false, 'I do not understand your question'." This statement, in which Duhem grants scientific symbols the function of representing reality and denies the value of truthfulness to scientific knowledge, can be proven to contain an inconsistency. Cf. Duhem, P. 1954. *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory*. Wiener, P. P. (Trans.). Princeton, New Jersey (original French edition 1906), 168.

a very broad sense, and to which he counts cognition, including scientific cognition.² Rooted in the thought of Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling and Wilhelm von Humboldt, Cassirer's philosophy is a late, impressively developed version of Neo-Kantian transcendentalism. Cassirer also draws on the ideas and constructs of other members of the transcendental school, whose cognitive explorations certainly merit respect for their astuteness and independence from the restraints of commonsensical beliefs. In his symbolic forms conception Cassirer operates with a transcendental subject in the Neo-Kantian understanding,³ which brings him to subjective idealism. This in turn makes Cassirer's philosophy difficult to transpose to the form of realism—even if very weak—I propose here.

My reference to Cassirer's symbolic forms conception does not mean I accept his entire philosophy with its typically transcendentalistic approach to the subject and resulting idealism. All I want is to use fragments of it—rather freely and inspirationally, and only insofar as it is possible to examine his approach to the functioning of symbols in cognition in separation from its transcendental roots. I intend to “borrow” the category of the symbol and symbolisation in a way that would be helpful in resolving the issue of the nature of representation in cognition (with the omission of areas related to religion, mythology or art)⁴—and, in consequence, make the symbolisation category the fundament for the explication of the nature of cognition. I find inspiration in the central idea of Cassirer's symbolic forms theory, namely that the essence of the entire human-produced world has a symbolic character, and that human nature, and, in effect, the nature of the cognising subject, is the ground on which cognition becomes symbolic in its relation to reality. Finally—and this is the most risky undertaking of all—I transpose parts of Cassirer's thought (devoid of transcendental traits) onto new, realism-based philosophical ground with a different vision of

² Cassirer's symbolic forms theory was heralded in his *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff: Untersuchungen über die Grundfragen der Erkenntniskritik*. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1910. Translated as *Substance and Function*. Chicago: Open Court, 1923, especially Chapter VI: “The Concept of Reality,” 282–286. The theory is fully expounded in three volumes: *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Erster Teil: Die Sprache*. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1923. Translated as *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume One: Language*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955; *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Zweiter Teil: Das mythische Denken*. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1925. Translated as *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, vol. 2: Mythical Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955; *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Dritter Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1929. Translated as *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume Three: The Phenomenology of Knowledge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957. A new version of these ideas is contained in the monograph: 1944. *An Essay on Man*. New Haven: Yale University Press 1944.

³ Precisely, in one of the Neo-Kantian understandings. Heinrich Rickert, Hermann Cohen and Bruno Bauch propounded other conceptions of the subject.

⁴ This escapes unequivocal judgment as Cassirer (though not in all related declarations) tends to regard the symbol as a universal concept and not a family of sub-types specific for the various areas of human activity.

the cognising subject. One must remember that as a Neo-Kantian, Cassirer was an epistemological idealist, which he showed especially in the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, where he understands the relation between the object and its symbol idealistically: the object in this relation was not an object in metaphysical reality but one created by individual consciousness which is beyond the world. I not only pass over most of Cassirer's conception, I also supplement it with new and alien elements. I reject the thesis about the exclusively linguistic character of knowledge and symbols created in cognition. In Cassirer's view the representation relation binds objects of cognition with concepts, whereby it is debatable whether these concepts are linguistic objects or whether they appear in the earlier, pre-linguistic phase of cognition—i.e. whether they are primarily non-linguistic products of individual consciousness, or are permanently bound to linguistic expression.

It is crucial for these considerations that Cassirer's theory implies an explication of the relation of knowledge to the cognitive object which ignores the primary, self-suggesting and philosophically notoriously assimilated similarity (imitation, copying, mirroring) concept, and simultaneously rejects conventionalistic and pragmatistic solutions. Cassirer points to a third path, one that is absent in contemporary epistemology. He presents knowledge as a specific product of the transcendental subject. The means, organisation, method and, in effect, essence of cognition take their source in human nature and generate knowledge which operates with symbolic code systems. These codes are of subjective origin; they are universal, because they are implied by a transcendental subject constituted by the universal properties of human nature.

Cassirer discards the ancient-Greek, Empedoclean conception according to which there is at least partial identity, or similarity, between the object and the words that denotes it. This conception dominates the intellectual struggle with the nature of cognition over history, and was broadly discussed among others in the Middle Ages. The idea that knowledge imitates reality is deeply embedded in commonsensical lore, which does not even seek to question it, and transfers to those areas of philosophical thought which strive to prove that the nature of knowledge is realistic. Philosophers are well aware that the idea of knowledge as imitation is both naive and faulty, but its rejection usually leads them to reject the representation category altogether for an anti-realistic—today most often constructivist—position. Cassirer explains his rejection of the similarity idea as follows: "The obvious objection to this (Empedocles') thesis is the fact that when analysing the words of common speech we are in most cases completely at a loss to discover the pretended similarity between sounds and objects." At the same time Cassirer states: "The connection between *the symbol* and *its object* must be a natural, not a merely conventional one. Without such a natural connection a word of human language could not accomplish its task; it would become unintelligible."⁵

⁵ Cassirer, E. 1944, op. cit., 147–146.

Although the extensive, three-volume *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* offers a symbolic theory of culture it is hard to find in it a clear explanation of Cassirer's understanding of the symbol. Neither does *An Essay on Man* (in which Cassirer claims to have presented a shortened version of the content of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*) explicitly say how he understands symbolisation. Therefore, one must perforce search for the symbol concept he postulates in *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* in a broader context, or even guess at it, guiding oneself rather by the spirit of the concept than its letter.

In Chapter VIII of *An Essay on Man* entitled *Language*, which is crucial for my consideration, Cassirer, despite his initial declaration that his aim is to reveal the relation between the symbol and its object, gradually moves away from the symbolisation relation. He reflects on the phenomenon of naming things in language, which he sees as a human-important psychological phenomenon underlying the specific character of human cognition. He also reviews the condition of studies on linguistic flexion and structure, the uniqueness of human language, sensually (but not intellectually) impaired children, and in a variety of other areas. But he says little about the symbolisation relation itself apart from a few rather cursory comments. Cassirer mainly criticises the copying concept. Commenting Edward Sapir's findings, he states that human speech neither copies nor imitates a given or existing order. He also rather enigmatically declares that he ascribes to language "a rather productive and constructive than purely reproductive function." He observes that the construction of knowledge about the evolution of human thought primarily requires a definition of true human nature. Cassirer also suggests that the world of human language and the real world have grown together sufficiently to make distinguishing one from the other very hard: „Our perceptions, intuitions, and concepts have coalesced with the terms and speech forms of our mother tongue. Great efforts are required to release the bond between words and things."⁶ According to Cassirer, the coalescence explains strong attachment to the idea that imitation explains the nature of cognition. Interestingly, the transcendental idealism he presents in *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* is more covert in *An Essay on Man*, and some fragments of *An Essay on Man* even allow the impression (though without certainty) that he is moving towards epistemological realism.

More indications as to how Cassirer perceives the symbolisation relation can be found in his shorter works, among others in the essays *The Concept of Symbolic Forms in the Construction of the Human Sciences* and *Language and the Structure of the Objective World*.⁷ Here, despite the limitations indicated in the titles, his conclusions are more general and applicable to all sciences as well as commonsensical knowledge. In fact, Cassirer states this outright:

⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁷ Cassirer, E. 1923. "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form im Aufbau der Geisteswissenschaften" [The Concept of Symbolic Form in the Development of the Human Sciences]. In: *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* [Warburg Library Lectures]. Leipzig–Berlin, 11–39.

“Therefore, one should not ask about the meaning and motivating power of a symbol in any specific *sphere*, in art, myth, language; but about the degree to which language as a *whole*, myth as a *whole*, art as a *whole* carry within themselves the general character of symbolic formation.”⁸

In reference to von Humboldt, Cassirer first of all states that the word, which is essentially a symbol, is never a reflection of the object itself, but of an image created from it by the spirit. As Cassirer notes, von Humboldt proved that the creation and use of language involves all subjective impressions of objects. The creation of symbols belongs to the human spirit:

“... consciousness is not satisfied to simply *possess* sensual content, but *creates* it from itself. The force of this creation transforms the regular content of feelings and impressions into symbolic content. [...] Each (symbolic) form not only takes its beginning in sensuality, but is also permanently enclosed in the sensual sphere. It does not turn *against* the sensual material but exists and creates within it.”⁹

Thus, symbols are bound to sensual material and simultaneously permeated by subjectivity, carrying in themselves subjective factors presumably connected with human nature and culture. Symbolisation is a specifically human way of encoding mental states, also in the sphere of cognition. Cassirer postulates this marriage of objective and subjective elements in the construction of knowledge with even greater clarity in his essay *Language and the Development of the Objective World*.

Similarly to Kant’s views on cognition expressed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cassirer’s approach is neither “purely” realistic (because it accepts subjective factors), not “purely” idealistic, because cognitive results are co-created by the world, which according to Cassirer can also be perceived realistically.

Symbolic forms express human spirituality. One of them is language. According to Cassirer, because of the symbolic nature of language, language-related cognition is also of symbolic character. Symbolic forms “exhaust the deepest immediate content of consciousness.”¹⁰ Symbols refer to “some kind of all-embracing spiritual function.” Cassirer mentions this repeatedly, but fails to explain in more detail what this reference is.

Cassirer rejects the imitative, onomatopoeic and mimical functions of language:

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cassirer, E. 1923, op. cit.

“There is no longer any rationally justifiable similarity between a sound and what it denoted. [...] It is no longer the ‘thing’ itself, but the impression of it stemming from subjectivity or the form of the subject’s activity that constitutes what is supposed to find representation—and some kind of ‘appropriateness’—in sound. [...] Thus, what is taking place is no longer imitation of a sensually-perceived object, but very complex mental differentiation.”¹¹

Cassirer goes on to state even more clearly that symbolic languages discard “all forms of true imitation.” He opposes symbolisation to imitation, or creating copies; in its rejection of all resemblance to subjectivity, the symbolic expression “gains new spiritual content precisely through this distancing and withdrawal.”¹²

Against the dominating belief that imitation underlies the images created by knowledge, Cassirer shows that the notion of symbolisation as the fundamental category of human cultural endeavour is known in philosophy and not merely an ephemeral construct supported by him alone. It belongs to a tradition which today is completely forgotten or ignored, at least in epistemology. Cassirer quotes the German philosopher Friedrich Theodor Fischer—who “compared [...] the concept [of the symbol—MC] to an elusive and poorly-definable Proteus.”¹³

Cassirer circles around the relation between the symbol and what it symbolises, and this time switches to negation to list what the symbol is not. It is not a metaphor, a copy, an analogy, nor any version of similarity. Here, in general, he demonstrates his disagreement with the widespread tendency to perceive mental images as copies or mirroring’s of cognised reality which is so strongly present in commonsensical thinking. Cassirer’s positive claims, on the other hand, provide a general view but no distinct picture, and are not only difficult to define but even convincingly explain.

By the above I did not mean to depreciate Cassirer’s symbolic forms theory. I only wanted to show that the symbol category continuously escapes all efforts to define it, and especially to reduce it to one of the elementary relations dealt with by logic. Cassirer’s philosophy is an important counterweight to analytical thought, and not only. It frees philosophy from its encumbrance with commonsensical beliefs and philosophical reflection from the fetters of the imitation concept, thus initiating a fundamentally new approach to the reality-knowledge relation.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cassirer, E. 1927. “Das Symbolproblem und seine Stellung im System der Philosophie” [The Problem of the Symbol and Its Place in the System of Philosophy]. *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* [Journal for Aesthetics and General Art Theory], vol. 21. Stuttgart, 295–312.

The physicists Hermann von Helmholtz and Heinrich Hertz can—however with some doubts—be considered the pioneers in perceiving knowledge as essentially symbolic. Cassirer himself approvingly quotes Hertz’s explanations concerning science-specific symbols and symbolisation in his *Prinzipien der Mechanik (Principles of Mechanics)*:

“All natural-scientific reflection, all physical creation of conceptions and theories, exists because of a symbolic act: we create simulacra (*Scheinbilder*) or symbols of external objects in such a way that the thoughts which flow from these images are again always images of the natural consequences of the reflected objects.”¹⁴

Cassirer also shows approval for Kant’s postulate to replace the plain “imitational insight” perspective with that of an “architectural connection.”

Hertz and Helmholtz’s views are situated between a realistic and a conventionalistic approach to symbols. It is debatable whether Helmholtz’s views on symbols converge with Cassirer’s. In his theory of signs he maintains that observation does not effect in copies of the object but symbols or signs, and, more importantly, signs are signs in the same way as a name symbolises a human being. Helmholtz also maintains that the degree of similarity between the effect and object of observation is comparable to the similarity between a person’s official name and that person.¹⁵ His declarations show that he most probably—however, with some interpretational doubts—saw symbols not as realistically encoded reconstructions of the object, but as signs ascribed to it by convention.

Pierre Duhem’s convictions about the symbolic nature of knowledge (in whose favour he rejected the approximation truth conception) do not base on a realistic conception of symbols. Margaret Morrison notes that for Duhem symbols are not true or false; their value is determined by their usefulness. Which Duhem states *expressis verbis*.¹⁶

Contemporary epistemology makes rather rarely reference—even as a working hypothesis to be investigated—to the thesis claiming that knowledge symbolises reality, in a Cassirer’s sense of symbolisation. Epistemology ignores Cassirer’s and related views, as the contemporary epistemological debate is located between versions of imitation-based realism and pragmatist and constructivist (mainly socially constructivist) varieties of idealism.

¹⁴ Cassirer, E. 1927, op. cit.

¹⁵ Patton, L. 2008. “Hermann von Helmholtz.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/hermann-helmholtz/>.

¹⁶ Cf. Morrison, M. 2005. “Approximating the Real: The Role of Idealizations in Physical Theory.” In: *Idealization XII: Correcting the Model. Idealization and Abstraction in the Sciences*. Jones, M. R., N. Cartwright (Eds.), pp. 145–172, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 148. However, that Duhem is not consistent in his rejection of approximation truth. In fact he opts for it in the same part of his book from which the theses Morrison discusses originate. (Cf. Duhem, P. 1954. *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory*. Wiener, Ph. (Trans.). Princeton, New Jersey, 172).

THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF REPRESENTATION

The ability to symbolise appears to be a primary and inborn human trait rooted in human nature and its cognitive potential, as well as the specific character and organisation of the cognitive capabilities. This ability seems to be so primordial both to human phylogeny and ontogeny, that it could be worth investigating whether animals do not possess some symbolisation skills—even if in a much narrower less complex sense than humans. Symbolisation has permanently accompanied human existence. Through it humans constitute and define the outside world, in a sense “read” it by means of symbols. Evidences of the ability to symbolise can be found already in the animal world, in that animals communicate or express their knowledge (e.g. about impending threats) with the help of non-onomatopoeic sounds. One can also attribute symbolism to, say, mating dances, which carry information (about the existential states and intentions of animals), hence also knowledge. Such dances are rituals, which, after all, do not imitate desires and emotions, but presumably communicate them in a symbolic way. Of course, one may wonder if such seemingly symbolic communication in the animal world is not simply convention, but it is somehow hard to imagine animals creating and accepting conventions that are totally artificial and bound to their subjects merely by a specific contract. This appears to be an exclusively human ability.

It is most probably impossible to define symbolisation by use of logical means. This impossibility is the effect of the complex and polyadic nature of the symbolisation relation, whereby it is not even possible to say how many arguments it includes. The representation relation is primary epistemically but not logically. There are no grounds for the usually implicitly accepted belief that the fundamentals of cognition must be simple and its structure reduced to elementary logical rules and relations. Why? Human nature with its cognitive abilities, including the ability to symbolise, is complex, meandrous, multifaceted, flexible and still unfathomed, a complementary union of, among others, the biological and cultural dimensions, of which each is itself too complex for easy epistemological penetration. It is hard to imagine that a subject so complex cognises in an elementary, simple way. It is precisely the subject’s complexity, and the epistemological complexity it implies, that seem to enable the generation of specifically human knowledge.

If Cassirer’s comparison of symbolisation to Proteus is interpreted as acknowledgement of the arbitrariness of symbolic codes, then I would say that it is not quite accurate. The metaphor fails at least in the cognitive sphere as it is wrong in claiming that the forms of symbolisation are freely variable and hence not moulded by any conditions superior to them. Symbolisation and its sets of codes are determined by human nature (which includes biological as well as cultural aspects), which is why there is such a variety of codes that are created and applied. Symbols and symbolizing codes are different in different cultures,

culture domains and knowledge areas, and their set has changed over human history. However, despite this evident diversity, and in view of the limitations to the cultural flexibility of human nature, as well as its biological dimension (which is the same for the entire human species), one may postulate the existence of common, hidden, intercultural, biologically-rooted and non-arbitrary fundamentals of the human ability to symbolise reality.

Be this as it may, humans generally possess the ability to cognise by means of symbols and, after appropriate educational training, to understand symbolic codes. These codes generically resemble Cassirer's styles. At times—as in the case of the symbolic codes used in advanced physical theories—the education phase is especially important. For example, students learn to present the complexity of nature by means of differential equations, special functions or specific algebraic constructions, in general, to represent nature by objects that are quite different from it. And they know how to do this because they know the right codes. Contrary to the ability to symbolise itself, the various ways of encoding reality, or symbolisation systems, belong to the subject's cultural imprint.¹⁷

Learning how to use symbolic coding systems, including the mathematical systems in the advanced natural sciences, is fundamental to understanding science. Symbolic coding in science differs from field to field and also from symbolisation used in commonsense knowledge, and this difference is one of the specific features of science.

Symbolic codes are also acquired through cultural imprinting. Can one, therefore, assume that some symbols have a universal dimension and are identical for entire humanity, i.e. that there exists a universal core in all our diverse cultures? Of course here it would be useful to be able to refer to appropriate anthropological research, but such studies are somewhat scarce today, culture anthropologists rather focusing their attention on cultural differences and the way different cultures perceive reality. However, two arguments do speak for the existence of universal symbolisation codes. One is human nature, the source of culture, which, despite its flexibility and individualistic dimension (which makes people differ), possesses certain universal aspects. This implies that also different human cultures create similar symbolic codes, i.e. codes which possess some common features. The second is that people who live in different cultures are able to communicate, even if at times incompletely, without prior knowledge about the alien culture's symbolic codes. This, I think, shows that certain codes are universal and present in all cultures.

A strong argument for the claim that knowledge symbolises and not imitates reality is the nature of language, which appears in the final phase of the symbolic encoding and communication of knowledge—following the formulation of conceptual but still pre-linguistic models. In the creation phase of human language—the caesura between man's existence exclusively in the animal world

¹⁷ The broadest understanding of culture as the entirety of human-produced reality is used here.

and the emergence of an autonomous human one—language was to a considerable degree onomatopoeic. Here again we must rely on indirect speculation as existing historical data are scant and no fresh information sources appear to be in sight. As culture evolved, language gradually lost its onomatopoeic character and became a system of symbolic and not imitative signs. Contemporary languages (perhaps with the exception of small enclaves where primeval languages have survived in residual form among the remainders of primeval tribal communities) are abstract and symbolic—in the sense that they are not onomatopoeic and do not imitate the objects they represent. Nonetheless, they represent and communicate about objects. Linguistically expressed knowledge is symbolic in the same way.

The basic unit used in symbolisation is a concept which always appears in conjunction with other concepts and never alone. Symbolisation in the cognitive sphere involves the creation of conceptual models (which are structurally formed sets of concepts), and then the construction of sets of propositions which can be regarded as descriptions of the model or their transformations to linear conceptual streams. So propositions serve mainly to give the models an inter-subjectively communicable linguistic form.

As I have already suggested before, cognitive symbolisation is a fundamental ability as rooted in human nature, hence in the very fundamentals of human participation. But the symbolisation relation is not known to the subject, although the subject continuously refers to it and uses it to create, process and make use of knowledge in various ways. Operating with symbols resembles operating with the rules of Noam Chomsky's generative grammar—the subject has an innate and natural ability to create symbols of objects that are external to its consciousness, and to operate such symbols, and at the same time is unconscious of the symbolisation relation in the sense that it does not know its algorithm, i.e. what type of relation it is—if such an algorithm exists at all, which seems doubtful. Despite this, in symbolising reality in knowledge the subject uses the symbolic codes—i.e. the rules which govern the symbolic representation of reality—to form conceptual models and next the appropriate sentences of language. The application of symbols to representing reality in knowledge areas takes place automatically, beyond the subject's consciousness. A spectacular evidence is perceptual cognition: men while perceiving the world create symbolic images of it without the slightest consciousness of the symbolisation operations they are involved in. However, there are also differences between linguistic praxis and symbolisation. Grammatical rules operate beyond consciousness in linguistic praxis, but they can be summoned up to consciousness and defined. The relation of symbols to the objects they symbolise is unknown to the symbolising subject, nor, contrary to grammatical rules, can it be called up to consciousness. And not only because of its (probably) extreme complexity. Another reason is that symbolisation embraces a variety of ontological categories—it passes from the object in metaphysical reality to the sphere of uncon-

scious physiological conditions, and from there to the consciousness. The human being does not have cognitive access to all these spheres, hence is unable to identify the nature of symbolisation and is only aware of its result, not the path which leads to it.

It is impossible to determine the rules, and especially the algorithms, of symbolisation because it is too complex and takes place primarily in the sphere of non-consciousness.

The symbolic encoding concept is neither rooted in analogy, nor in metaphor (in fact, metaphor, like similarity, is very close to analogy¹⁸). Symbolisation is not an imitative way of creating conceptual and then linguistic representations of reality; it does not produce copies of reality.

Precisely this non-imitation of reality is the essence of symbolisation. This negative thesis, presented by Cassirer—as it has been demonstrated above—is in fact the broadest definition of the essence of symbolisation. Symbolisation, or, in a somewhat risky analogy, abstractness,¹⁹ which characteristically resigns all claims to imitation (copying, etc.), is the fundamental feature of human knowledge. A set of mathematical concepts or a stream of written or spoken mathematical symbols does not resemble the relations between gravitational masses or the structure of a photon swarm colliding with atoms in a crystal lattice. As a mathematical equation chalked on a blackboard, Hubble's law does not resemble the speed with which galaxies move away from each other. When we taste something sweet we imagine and experience sweetness, although we do not create sugar or anything else that is sweet in our consciousness. What we do create is a symbolic representation of sweetness. A linear series of signs written by Darwin in English, or the linear series of signs that are its Polish translation, do not resemble natural selection laws or the behaviours of biological species, although that is what they represent. But the representation is symbolic, not imitative. If we put aside some commonly upheld illusions, we will see the groundlessness of *de facto* claims that the human mind or human language contain, say, minimised versions of minor planetary movements or the planets themselves, only without certain of their original features.²⁰

The essence of cognition consists in creating by the subject objects that are fundamentally different from the cognitive object—symbols. It is only our strong-

¹⁸ In classic metaphor conceptions, especially Max Black's and its derivatives.

¹⁹ Here abstractness is understood in a sense which brings to mind the abstractness (non-realism) of painting. The similarity, however, is superficial and only informational, and I mention it here mainly for lack of more fitting terms with which to explain my point. One cannot claim that symbolic encoding in cognition resembles the creation of abstract artistic images as both differ too greatly.

²⁰ Structural realism supporters claim knowledge only represents relations (which are copies of relations which take place in the real world), and that the objects bound by these relations are concealed and not represented in cognition. This thesis appears impossible to uphold as after all relations connect specific types of objects. It is not possible to speak about relations without mentioning the objects they bind.

ly-rooted (but not too reliable) illusion that there is similarity between knowledge and reality. The fact that cognition encodes reality symbolically instead of copying it is difficult to accept—not only because of the pressure of commonsensical, natural beliefs raised to dogmas, but also for a reason which one may describe as existential. Because in accepting the symbolic nature of cognition, we must also accept that reality differs from how we represent it by symbols. We cannot “break through” symbolisation and access reality without symbolic mediation, see it as it really is. All we have to work on are specific symbolic “pictures,” which we do not know how to decode. To use a Kantian term, there is no path from symbols to reality as it is in itself. Symbols constitute knowledge, represent the world and at the same time function as a cognitive shutter or screen.

Thus, although the nature of cognition is realistic, reality remains inaccessible and unknown in commonsensical sense of the word, because it is not mirrored. On one hand, cognition reveals reality in symbolic representation, on the other it conceals it—the world as it is in itself remains a mystery. It appears in knowledge—both in the consciousness of the subject and in linguistic articulation—not as itself but in an encoded form, or in a symbolic disguise. We deal only with its symbolic representations, which imbues cognition with irremovable dialectical tension. Reality can be accessed by cognition, but not directly, nor by means of simple relations which can be decoded to pass from the symbol to its object. Reality as it is remains concealed behind a curtain of symbols which represent it.

The symbolic codes, which are the fundament of human cognition, appear in a dual role: they obstruct reality (in the sense that they do not allow access to reality as it is) and also reveal it to the cognising subject by creating its symbolic representations.

The cognitive symbolisation of reality does not rely on one symbolic code. There are many such codes, or symbolisation styles, for instance, the style of representing by mathematical concepts used in some natural sciences, economics, and to a limited extent even in sociology. The set of symbolic codes has not been constant either over civilisational evolution, or in individual cultures, or in individual scientific fields. New symbolisation methods are successively introduced into science, examples being the employment of differential and integral calculus to represent reality in physics, the introduction to physics of graph theory, imaginary, infinite and transfinite numbers, ether and phlogiston theory, strange particles, or cybernetic and synergistic systems. The concepts of probability calculus were at first regarded as an alien and strange distortion of the existing way of representing reality, as unreal representation with only instrumental value, as a short-lived conceptual trend and not an adequate and realistic means of representing reality.

Once the symbolic codes have been learnt and familiarised and the visions of the world which relate to them accepted, symbolic representations can be regarded as directly realistic representations of the imitative type and their sym-

bolic character is forgotten. For the cognising subject who bans the symbolic character of these representations from consciousness, they become the world itself—as it is in its metaphysical version. This appears to be the case in every area of knowledge. After sufficient intercourse with a given symbolisation code, the symbolic representations of reality this code generates become reality itself for those who create them. The means of symbolisation become “transparent,” invisible, and we forget about the distance which separates the cognitive result from reality. This removal of the symbolic character of cognition from our consciousness results from our strong need to perceive the world as it is. As I mentioned earlier, this need is dictated not only by cognitive but also existential needs. The subject becomes aware of the symbolic character of cognition only in certain situations related to creating knowledge, especially involving innovation or creativity, e.g. when physicists seek new ways of representing a class of phenomena. As the symbolic codes are gradually “tamed,” we cease to recognise their symbolic character. Once the cognising subject has removed the symbolic character of knowledge from its awareness, it ceases to perceive the reality it cognises as a mystery. In other words, the subject forgets that reality, although represented by symbols—hence cognized—remains in a sense alien and can be cognised, or symbolised, equally reliably in a completely different way. This allows the subject to subdue the existential fear stemming from its sense of living in an unfathomed reality which is different from what it imagines it to be, from the feeling that it is surrounded by a mystery it is unable to see through.

In general mathematical terms, representation limited to one symbolic coding (conceptual) system is a composite function, as well as an implicit function. It is impossible to present in an “unravelling” form that would meet the conditions of the analytical method.

The symbolisation of an object in perception—and presumably in other kinds of cognition—is a polyadic relation: the participants in the constitution of symbolic representations of the cognitive object are the subject in its various dimensions (body, mind, biological conditioning, cultural imprinting²¹), the physical carriers of perceptual information, and all the objects in metaphysical reality which interact with both. Because of these mediating factors the object is represented, and in no sense given. Moreover, in cognition the subject in no way “meets” the object, but deals only with indirect information which flows from it—the ontic base of cognition. The cognition of the object as it is, unprocessed and unconstituted by a cognitive act, is an illusion, guise—*Scheinbilder*, to use Cassirer’s term.

²¹ Cultural imprinting also consists in the imbueing of cognition with social factors because culture in the broadest sense is perceived as the entirety of the human-produced world. Although it is also true that social factors are codetermined by the biological dimension of human nature.

SYMBOLIC REALISM

Symbolic realism is a weak, border version of realism. Despite its clear inclusion of subjective factors and assumption that they are also present in symbolic representations of the world, it is not idealism, because it postulates cognitive access to the reality beyond the subject. The fact alone that the applied representation means are subjective in character and do not imitate reality does not make representation idealistic. The symbolic realism thesis states that human knowledge is not enclosed in the subjective sphere but, on the contrary, is the symbolic reconstruction of reality “external” to the subject and language. Symbolic realism considers the objects in this reality to be the ontic fundament of the cognitive object, and this is what gives it its realistic character. Here cognitive access bases on a symbolic function which really binds an object in the material world with a relevant cognitive result, and not just on the strength of convention.

Symbolic realism and symbolisation of reality in knowledge contests the common beliefs of epistemological realists. Symbolic realism does not provide any ready recipes for the fundamental transition from knowledge to reality and back. What is more, it claims that the specific form this transition takes is unknown to the cognising subject, among others because most of the cognitive process takes place beyond the subject’s consciousness. The unconsciousness of this function is why the relation of reality to knowledge is concealed and its form unfathomable. Therefore, cognition does not reveal reality as it is—stripped of symbols as it is not possible to pass from the value of the symbolisation function to its arguments. Cassirer, in the spirit of his idealism, calls them appearances, but if the symbol concept is rooted in realism, the meaning of the term “appearance” is different than in idealism, and ambiguous. On the one hand, symbolic appearances do not reveal being as such, but on the other, they allow cognitive access to it by simulating it in symbolic codes. Because of this ambiguity, this simulation of reality which itself remains concealed, symbolic realism can leave us with a sense of intellectual insufficiency, or even existential tension, torn between the symbolically coded cognition only possible—and the human desire, or even intellectual dream, to access being as it is. In this variant of realism, reality, although known, remains an eternal and never completely fathomable intellectual mystery.

The symbolic nature of cognition carries dialectical tension. We have at our disposal conceptual models and true sentences which relate to reality, i.e. are symbolic representations of it. However, it is not possible to lift the symbolic curtain over knowledge, because precisely this curtain is the essence of knowledge. We cannot say that reality is exactly as represented by results of cognition, because all we have to go on are symbolic, non-imitative appearances of reality. Reality appears in symbolic codes. This coding is irremovable because we do not possess the ability to decode and remove appearances, lift

symbolic curtains and access objects not through their symbolic representations but as they are given. We live in the world of our symbolic representations, which we constantly create anew. A world of unsurpassable, irremovable cognitive appearances, to which we are condemned by our human nature.

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HOW DOES “COLLABORATION” OCCUR AT ALL? REMARKS ON EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO UNDERSTANDING / WORKING WITH *THE OTHER*

ABSTRACT

Collaboration must be based on careful representation *and communication* of each stakeholder’s knowledge. Using a foundational logical and epistemological point of view, we explore how such representation and communication can be accomplished. We tentatively conclude, based on careful delineation of logical technicalities necessarily involved in such representation and communication, that currently *a complete representation is not possible*. This inference, if correct, is discouraging. However, we suggest two actions. First, we can strive to make stakeholders more aware of the incompleteness of knowledge representations. Second, moderating one’s certainty of “Truth” should increase each stakeholder’s humility, thereby promoting the efficacy of collaborations.

Keywords: cognition and perception, collaboration, communication, dialogue, epistemology, logic and foundations of mathematics, mathematical logic, overconfidence.

*The more I think about language,
the more it amazes me that people understand each other.*

Kurt Gödel (see: Stadler, 2001, 206)

OVERVIEW

If we wish to improve our understanding of collaboration, then one of the foundational efforts we could make involves improving our understanding of *how collaboration occurs at all* in any group setting whatsoever. In this paper, we attempt to make some progress in a foundational effort toward clarifying our understanding of collaboration. We do this by:

- (1) Describing an epistemological perspective, called *Explorationism*, upon which the investigation in this paper will be based;

- (2) Surveying some of the foundational insights and constructed machinery of contemporary logic and model theory, developing the notion of a *framework*; and
- (3) Investigating how these insights and machinery may help us to understand better the dynamics of human knowledge representation and communication, with a view toward improving collaboration.

In the process of this explication, we will uncover a potentially useful insight, which we roughly summarize as follows:

We seem to operate, possibly necessarily, within highly incompletely elaborated frameworks, which include relevant language predicates (which themselves are subject to an unclarity that is well described by Ernst Mach, presented in Section 1 below), logical rules of inference, logical assumptions, and domain-specific assumptions. One possibility, in our striving for “communication for collaboration” with others, would be to complete the elaboration of these frameworks routinely (and share these full elaborations). However, such elaborations may not be (at least presently) possible. Indeed, the best tactic (at present) may be to increase AWARENESS among all collaborators OF THE HIGHLY INCOMPLETELY ELABORATED NATURE OF ALL OF THEIR FRAMEWORKS.

Increased awareness may help us to be more sensitive to the nature of all narratives, more humble in our assertion of our own narrative, and more respectful of the narratives of others, which in turn, may well lead to collaboration that is more efficacious.

1. EXPLORATIONISM

In the paper “Conflict without Contradiction”, Faust (1999) introduces the epistemological perspective of Explorationism in which all of our knowledge is (so far) less than certain. Our daily epistemological work regularly involves us in an iterative process of knowledge collection, knowledge representation, knowledge analysis, action decision generation, and action implementation. In this process, each action implementation leads to an altered state of affairs, forming the basis for our “next” knowledge collection. What we are dealing with, in such a process, is *evidence*, confirmatory and refutatory evidence.

Ernst Mach, a spiritual forerunner (along with Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, and others) of the Vienna Circle, wrote on page 2 of his *The Analysis of Sensations* (1897):

“Colors, sounds, temperatures, and so forth are connected to one another in manifold ways, and with them are associated dispositions of mind, feelings, and volitions. Out of this fabric, that which is relatively more fixed [...] stands prominently forth, engraves itself on the memory, and expresses itself

in language. Relatively greater permanency is exhibited [...] by certain complexes [...] which therefore receive names, and are called bodies. Absolutely permanent such complexes are not."

From the perspective of Explorationism, these "labelings," as described by Mach, are both helpful and unhelpful. Such fuzzy labelings are helpful in that they are certainly very useful for the "rough and ready" ways in which we collect partial and fuzzy data, quickly make our decisions, and take our actions. Indeed, often in the unfolding of our daily lives, such data collection and action implementation is appropriate since more complete knowledge, even if indeed possible in the allotted time frame, is "not required for the triggering of appropriate action" (Faust, 2000, 479).

On the other hand, such fuzzy labelings are unhelpful in that they far too often give us an unjustified assurance as to the precision/clarity of our knowledge. Vagueness of our knowledge, if not heeded sufficiently, often leads to overconfidence regarding our knowledge (Lundeberg, Fox, Puncochar, 1994; Puncochar, Fox, 2004). We would highly recommend, in this regard, Russell's wonderful essay "Vagueness" (Russell, 1923).

Explorationism, then, seeks to draw our attention to aspects of knowledge representation and highlight the partial, tentative, *and* evidential nature of this knowledge. This non-absoluteness of our knowledge, as seen through the perspective of Explorationism, makes it clear that classical logic, with its purely absolutist view of assertion, cannot be used as a base logic for Explorationism. Hence, for a base logic for Explorationism, we must turn to an evidential logic that goes beyond the absoluteness of classical logic. We now turn to such logics.

2. LOGICS FOR THE REPRESENTATION AND PROCESSING OF UNCERTAIN KNOWLEDGE

We seek increased clarity about the nature of our knowledge, expecting to strive toward improved collaboration, which leads us to a need to use new logics for the representation and processing of uncertainty. One such logic is evidence logic (EL), as described by Faust in (2000). In that paper, the reader will find full details of its construction along with theorems and proofs providing an exact analysis of the structure of the logic. Here, where our goal is to develop the concept of a *framework* and see how this concept might help us better understand collaboration, we turn now to an explication of just those aspects of EL needed to clarify this concept of *framework*.

In any (current) language, there are unary predicates Px (for example "x is a chair"), binary predicates Pxy (for example "x is longer than y"), ternary predicates $Pxyz$ (for example "x and y are parents of z"), and so on. Let us here refer

to any such predications simply by P , and let us think of evidence levels e as ranging over all the numbers between $e = 0$ and $e = 1$ inclusive, with 0 indicating “no evidence at all” and 1 indicating “absolute evidence,” while $e < e'$ indicates that e' is a greater evidence value than e . Finally, let a subscript “c” denote that the evidence asserted is confirmatory while a subscript “r” denotes that the evidence asserted is refutatory. So, using a convention of annotating a predication with an evidence level currently associated with the predication, $P_c: .7$ asserts confirmatory evidence for P at the .7 level, while $P_r: .5$ asserts refutatory evidence for P at the .5 level; and since $.5 < .7$, the confirmatory evidence for P is greater than (by .2) the refutatory evidence for P .

While referring the reader to Faust (2000) for precise details, we make a few remarks to help motivate this logic EL for the reader. Clearly, the two predications above, if both are asserted, indicate some level of conflict: that is, the conjunction $P_c: .7$ AND $P_r: .5$ asserts evidential conflict (with some possibly asserting, as we do momentarily, that this is a conflict at the .5 level!). For an analysis of the nature of conflicting evidence in EL, see Faust (2007), wherein (as the reader might like to contemplate)

$P_c: e$ AND $P_r: e$ asserts an evidential glut at evidence level e
while

(NOT $P_c: e$) AND (NOT $P_r: e$) asserts an *evidential gap* at evidence level e .

Finally, consider how this logic EL allows a clear distinction between, speaking roughly, “absence of evidence” and “evidence of absence”: for example, while it is the case that NOT $P_c: .4$ asserts absence of confirmatory evidence for P , in contrast $P_r: .4$ asserts presence of refutatory evidence for P . This distinction is not possible in Classical Logic due to its rather thin explication of the concept of negation. Indeed, this example of a stronger knowledge representation available in EL is due in part to EL’s richer explication of the concept of negation, provided by the gradational confirmatory and refutatory evidence machinery built into EL.

Consequently, we are pleased to have EL available to use in our representation of uncertain knowledge. In addition, we are even more pleased that EL has all the salient features found in our “old and familiar” classical logic. Indeed, EL is a proper extension of classical logic in the technical mathematical logic sense that classical logic is properly embeddable into EL. Let us mention just two of these salient features, possibly the most important ones. These two characteristics, indeed converses of each other, provide the fundamentally important connection between the syntax and semantics of any EL language. As is usual, letting B be any set of sentences in any EL language, the syntax involves the notion of “provable from B ,” while the semantics involves the notion of “true in every model of B .” First, the Soundness Theorem roughly posits, “provable implies true”: more precisely, the Soundness Theorem asserts, “if a sentence S is provable from B , then S is true in all models of B .” Second, the Completeness

Theorem roughly posits, “true implies provable”: more precisely, the Completeness Theorem asserts, “if a sentence S is true in all models of B , then S is provable from B .” The fundamental importance of these two theorems is clear. The Soundness Theorem asserts our proof system is not too strong (never proving (from B) any sentence that fails to be true in all models of B !); while the Completeness Theorem asserts our proof system is strong enough (always proving (from B) any sentence that is true in all models of B !). Taken together, these two theorems tell us that the proof system of EL is “just right” in its relation to the notion of truth in EL.

Particularly relevant to our considerations here is that we note an important aspect of the notion of truth as defined in formal logic settings. In such settings, there are no ‘universal truths’! It is always with respect to a particular model that a sentence S is true (is the case) or is not true (is false, is not the case). With this perspective, one cannot escape frameworks and get to some sense of “universal truths”. *The best we can do is to say that a sentence S is B-true (for a set of sentences B) with a defined meaning that S is true in all models of B .*

With our logic EL, for representing and processing evidence, now available, we are able to give a rough description of the knowledge domains within which, we conjecture, collaboration occurs. Namely, a *framework* is any theory in any stipulated EL language. This precise encapsulation of our knowledge domains within our EL languages for representing and processing of our evidential knowledge, however formally beautiful, in fact seems to point to the largely unelaborated character of our knowledge. Let us now try to see both why this largely incomplete elaboration is so and how this understanding of largely unelaborated frameworks might help us improve collaboration.

3. IMPROVING COLLABORATION

Those individuals or groups who wish to collaborate each “bring to the table” their frameworks. Each framework, while complete in itself in accordance with the development in (2) above, is carried (and expressed!) by each individual and group in an only incompletely elaborated form. The completeness of the framework is embodied in the stipulation of the EL language to be used, the logical axioms and rules of inference to be used, and the other more specific axioms to be used. In contrast to this completed framework, the individual or group brings to the table only a meagre “incompletely elaborated” form of the framework—indeed, incompletely expressing the language they are using, the logical axioms and rules of inference they are using, the other more specific axioms they are using, and the theorems they are by inference asserting to be true.

A more preferable tactic would be to have each collaborator bring to the table a full framework. This, however, does not seem, in view of our considerations in (1) and (2) above, to be possible.

We posit a path forward, though, in our attempt to improve collaboration. Namely, we can strive to broaden understanding, by *all* collaborators, that collaborators carry with them and express to others only partial elaborations of their frameworks. Thereby, ways collaboration may be improved include the following:

- (a) the humility of each collaborator will be increased; and
- (b) the respect and tolerance of each collaborator toward all others will be increased.

Further, due to the realization of each collaborator that “their truth” is just “truth within their framework” and not “universal truth”:

- (c) each collaborator will understand that *no* collaborator is allowed to assert positions that are claimed to be *obviously true* for all collaborators.

Hence, any collaborator who is found to be asserting a position as *obviously true for all of us* should be questioned immediately and *not* allowed to make such an assertion.

The last mentioned possible improvement in collaboration may well be the most important. For one of the most dangerous ways in which collaboration breaks down is when individuals or groups of collaborators think that “their truth” is “universal truth” and further think that they have the right to impose (even through violent means) their truth upon others. We hope that a greater awareness of the framework dependence emphasized in this paper may lead to better collaborations built on less overreaching.

4. CONCLUDING SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

To provide an overview of these considerations, we paraphrase from Faust and Puncochar (2013) the following:

Explorationism is an epistemological perspective wherein all of our knowledge is (so far) less than certain, and naturally would come equipped with a *base logic* entailing machinery for representing and processing evidential knowledge. One such *base logic* is evidence logic (see Faust, 2000), which strives to deal with the phenomenon of the gradational presence of both confirmatory and refutatory evidence.

From this perspective, we have addressed questions surrounding sociological problem areas involved with strivings for efficacious collaboration, which we see as deeply infused with substantial epistemological factors. By defining a *framework* as any theory, in the technical sense this term is used in logic, in evidence logic, we attempted to see each sociological milieu as a complex web of largely unelaborated frameworks. This dearth of elaboration leads to both a lack of awareness of presuppositions and implications inherent within each framework and an overconfidence regarding the veracity and applicability of each framework. For example, some sociological milieus involve Belief Sys-

tems (see Faust, 2008), below which lurk poorly elaborated frameworks. This lack of elaboration allows believers to sometimes assert that their beliefs should apply to "the other" as well as themselves. We considered the possibility that, even when further elaboration of a framework seems infeasible, increasing the awareness of the framework and the highly unelaborated versions of the framework, which we routinely use, will help to improve processes of collaboration.

While we have intentionally avoided the use of "belief" in the main body of the paper, our reference to "belief" above was intentional due to its wide use in highly unelaborated forms. To emphasize the importance of *not* using "belief" in argumentation, let us consider how to avoid "belief talk". Let us define a belief as follows: agent A *believes* a sentence S if and only if A asserts S is true even though A does not know that S is true. We have given argumentation (of course to some extent inconclusive) elsewhere (Faust, 2008) that "all belief systems are unnecessary." In that paper, Faust argues that commitment is always sufficient, where commitment is defined as follows: agent A is *committed* to a sentence S if and only if A agrees to actions inferable from S. Both beliefs and commitments lead to action. However, while beliefs involve assertion of the truth of sentences that are not known to be true with certainty, commitments do not involve any such assertion. Indeed, important aspects of collaboration depend on whether the collaborators bring beliefs or bring commitments to the table, and we would suggest that interested readers might look to Faust (2008) for more ideas in this regard. Hence we would encourage this distinction between "belief" and "commitment" be proffered to collaborators, emphasizing the advantages of minimizing beliefs and maximizing commitments in any collaboration process.

We conclude with a quote from Russell's essay "Vagueness" read before the Jowett Society, Oxford (1923, 84):

"The influence of symbolism on philosophy is mainly unconscious; if it were conscious, it would do less harm. By studying the principles of symbolism, we can learn not to be unconsciously influenced by language, and in this way can escape a host of erroneous notions."

Russell clearly points to a need, as we discussed here, to be as mindful as possible of the incompletely elaborated character of our frameworks in our collaborations within all of our "villages" (viz., our neighborhoods, universities, countries, and even the Global Village itself).

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Jean-François Gava

**THINKING UNDER EXTREME CONDITIONS:
FROM POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY TO THE FORCING
OF POLITICS.
A CONTEMPORARY REFLECTION ON BOOK VI
OF PLATO'S *REPUBLIC***

ABSTRACT

According to Aristotle, rhetoric stands in the midst of reason and violence. In contemporary coordinates, this means that there is a mode of action extraneous to reason, which is violence. Up to now, one could plea that the very exercise of reason was nothing but action, autotelic activity. Thus the opposition between action and thought was a fake one. Repatriating à la Oswald Ducrot all reason to practical reason allowed us to think on thought as acting. This was the answer to the impracticability of violence. However, action as a mere discourse conceived as auto/hetero transformational practice in itself will not help. We need to take back into consideration action as something extraneous to pure/practical reason, to discourse. But this is not violence of the old type. Both the old irenism of the workers' movement and the armed counter-state as the specular image of the state, supposed to wipe away the latter from the historical stage in the name of universal emancipation, are impracticable.

Modern barbarity will soon get rid of the human species unless a new form of violence is found able to compete with the state, without turning into a new form a state. This new form is authoritative, legitimate intimidation. But what are the conditions to speak out authoritatively? Are they not distinctive state conditions? Moreover, does authority lie in the *form* of discourse? If not, because consentment has superseded mere submission, which are the authoritative sources of discourse which, though neither overtly nor primarily conflicting with the state, nor with corporations, could somehow not completely coincide with the interests of it and even work against it, though like it? We would like to examine all those questions.

Keywords: reason, violence, political philosophy, Plato.

According to Aristotle, rhetoric is a ramification of dialectics and moral, or political science (*Rhetoric*, 1356a); it stands halfway between analytical science and political science (1359b), of which it is composed. In contemporary coordinates, this means that, if we accept to extend the realm of action to the whole reason, by “rhetoricizing” in a way every discourse, there is one mode of action extraneous to reason, which is violence. Up to now at least, one indeed could plea that the very exercise of reason was nothing but action as auto-telic *activity*. Thus the opposition between action and thought was a fake one. Repatriating all reason to practical reason allowed us think of thought itself as acting (in a wider than the theatrical sense, of course). This provided the solution for the non-practicability of violence: for violence was the answer of those who thought of thought itself as non-action, thinkers could reply: look, thinking, practising rhetoric, is acting, we thus do not need violence any longer.

But some ultimate results of climatology¹ teach us that action as mere discourse, conceived *in a very broad sense* as pacific and common empowering practice, will not help, being not sufficient. We need to take back into consideration action as something extraneous to reason conceived as a discourse—were it theoretical, for even theory should be held as a peculiar practical gesture. This is not, however, violence of the old type. Both the old irenism of the workers’ movement (pretending to transform society through the political play²) and the armed counter-state as a specular image of the state, supposed to wipe away the latter from the historical stage in the name of universal emancipation, are technically impracticable.

Modern barbarity will soon get rid of most part of the human species (not to talk of other species) unless a new form of violence is found able to compete with the state, without turning into a new form a state. This new form is authoritative, legitimate intimidation. Of course, intimidation does not go without language. But language includes some forms (imperative) that preclude any contribution (were it a persuaded judgement or just admiration³) from the audience: the imperative mode is incompatible with any invitation to contribute elaborating this common language whose initiative belongs to the speaker and that we here above mentioned as *discourse*. Thus, the imperative mode must be regarded here as the explicitly *violent* mode of language, the side of language by which it overflows its discursive dimension and by which it is immediately adjacent to violence.

As Hans-Jürgen Krahl Krahl, Theodor W. Adorno’s assistant teacher, put it: “Die Massen sind in der autoritären Leistungsgesellschaft von Erziehung,

¹ See McPherson, G. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6SwCZayVP8>.

² As if state politics was anything but organized violence by the intra-specific predators—the ruling class—against the ruled one.

³ cf. Perelman, Ch., 1983, “Rhétorique et politique,” in: *Cadmos*, sixième année, no. 22, été, 71–76, contrasts judicial-political discourses (where judgement and thus persuasion of the audience are aimed at) and epideictical discourses, where only admiration is expected.

Manipulation und exekutiver Indoktrinierung so sehr auf Autoritäten fixiert, dass sie zunächst für ihre Aufklärung selber Autoritäten – und zwar solche, die sich als kritische Autoritäten begreifen – nötig haben.”⁴ But do masses need authorities of the philosophical kind? If not, how could philosophers fake current authorities while disclosing radically anti-systemic orders? This is the problem we would like to address in this paper.

First of all, in the case we could find how to fake current authorities while disclosing an anomalous order, or *mot d'ordre*, it would be useful to identify what current authorities are. They certainly are not of the philosophical kind, or, at least, they are not a fake of the philosophical kind, the one which pleases and flatters current powers or current institutional(ized) violence, and consequently the related drives of masses. In his *Republic*, Plato indeed puts it this way in section 499 c: “there is no chance for a city to ever become perfect,” unless, Socrates-Plato adds,

1) the useless and naughty philosophers—become such because they are good seeds grown in an bad ground—are *forced* by circumstances to “care” effectively about the actual city, i.e. to *force* it to listen to them; or

2) the current leaders all of a sudden become divinely inspired.

Let us not take into consideration the second option and let us just halt to the first, which, surely, is not easy neither.

What Socrates-Plato tells us here first is that philosophers will not undertake political action—undoubtedly of a very special kind, though—unless they are forced to do it. In other words, whereas a philosophical inquiry about the ideal city—the fair city, says Socrates-Plato—does not require the philosophical inquirer to be forced to undertake it, political action is not an action as delightful as weaving the philosophical discourse. Why is it so?

Because philosophers are reluctant to exert force, at least to exert a force that is not the specific force of reason, or discourse. They thus must be *forced to force* (masses must listen to them). But why are philosophers who talk to masses considered to be forcing them? In other words, are philosophers, by doing so, not doing their ordinary job? No, and precisely because they are not, Socrates-Plato says they would *force* masses to listen to them, to listen to what would be all but a delightful talk. Philosophers talking to masses do not talk the way they talk to fellows or, at least, even if they wove the same discourse, this discourse would not be accepted the way fellow philosophers (or apprentice philosophers) do. This does not mean that speaking out the truth necessarily receives good reception from fellow philosophers or apprentice philosophers, but that, at least, fellow philosophers pretend to be *ready* to listen to the truth—to truths in general, rather.

⁴ “Masses in the authoritarian administered society are so much obsessed with authorities by education, manipulation, and indoctrination that they even provisionally need authorities for their own enlightenment—and certainly such authorities which understand themselves critically” (our translation, <http://www.krahlstudien.de>, lastly consulted in 2010).

Masses are not ready to listen to truths; hence, says Socrates-Plato, they must be forced to. Philosophers thus seem to be craftsmen performing services that nearly nobody wants or needs—nobody except happy few ones; but even then, we have suggested that those few might *only be pretending* to be ready to buy ideas, good ideas. A very unattractive and uncertain “job” indeed, much like art—and one should add: craft ('arts and crafts' indeed, according to William Morris). This does not mean that philosophy is a craft which does not provide any satisfaction to the craftsman, of course; but, that is to say the least, the kind of satisfaction it provides is shared by few, if any.

Is it possible then to force anyone to listen to something she/he does not want to hear? This is highly dubious. It thus seems necessary—in order to force masses to listen to something they do not want to listen to—to act in such a way as to make them *feel like* they are listening to something they *want* to listen to, *while this is not the case*. In section 499 e, Plato argues that one must not quarrel masses in order to make them do what one wants—but to encourage them, to make them feel able to do “it,” whatever “it” might be. In the latter case, Plato says, “masses will change their mind.” In order to achieve this, it is enough that masses get pleased by frequenting philosophers. But again, how to achieve this?

Before trying to answer this question, let us go a step back. Are we sure philosophers could ever *achieve the position* of forcing masses? Indeed, where does the constraint forcing philosophers to force masses comes from, from themselves as particularly acute witnesses of the global stake? Does it come from the ruling classes and their leading strata? That is hardly likely, apart from “divine inspiration,” according to Plato—or to Martin Heidegger, according to whom “only a god could save us.” This would presuppose the becoming-philosophers of the rulers: a miracle, a transfiguration, a transubstantiation. Does it come from the rulers insofar as the philosophers provided their own strength to them? Again, unlikely contamination. Note that even if we would have come up to this point, masses would not have to be forced the way they would have to be forced without the support of the ruling classes and leading strata, for they would be forced the usual way: not by a force rival to that of the ruling classes and leading strata.

Only philosophers thus perceive *clearly* this constraint and are unlikely to make feel its urge to rulers and leaders acting on behalf of the rulers. So, again, how could philosophers ever *achieve the position* to force masses? Not only the latter do not want to listen to them, but, thus, ruling classes and leading strata do not help them to achieve the position to force masses, which would be, although the most improbable, the most easiest way. We just saw why: if philosophers could rely on the force pertaining to the ruling classes, the job would be done.

In the matter of force, though, nothing gets accomplished without the support of the ruling classes and their leading strata—unless masses cease to give any love to their oppressors and leaders, but then our whole problem is assumed to be solved, for only philosophers could cure masses of their love for their

oppressive leaders. Now the *coup de force* that the philosopher is supposed to do must have as a main effect to make masses sweep the current ruling class and its leading strata, according to Plato—philosophers-kings must replace those current ruling and leading staffs. To be more precise: they must sweep the bad leading class, which *in this case* is also just a ruling class, *which it ought not be, for a good leader is not a ruler*.⁵ It then seems that on the road to the *impossible* goal of convincing those who do not want to let themselves be persuaded—to be free, that is, according to Plato, to accept to obey only the right and righteous leaders—one must fulfil the *impossible* condition of arming philosophers against the armed class—leaders armed by their auxiliary stratum of warriors (internal or external first, always internal eventually—first co-opted, then hereditarily part of it).

Anyway, everyone can see that persuading is not necessary if one gets armed enough to force. Forcing to agree is a double bind. Agreeing is then, if not useless, ancillary. As Niccolò Machiavelli put it, a good leader must be feared but also loved. Force comes thus first—if possible. But as force is far from reach, let us go back now to persuasion. We just suggested that forcing *straightaway* to agree was a *contradictio in terminis*, but there are several other ways to “force to agree”—to make masses act in one’s own direction as if it were theirs: scheming. Still in his *Republic*, Socrates-Plato argues a couple of times that *proper* leaders should also lie (V, 459 c, for instance): to masses but also to their own fellow warriors, such that even in a fair city where moderation suggests to craftsmen-peasants that their leaders are fair ones, those craftsmen-peasants would agree that even their fair leaders should have the right to lie. If lying is allowed in the fair city, no doubt it would be also allowed, according to Plato, in order to achieve this fair city. Let us just remember that Plato does not go that far, for he does not tell us (or not precisely enough) how to reach the fair city; and though he does not think it is impossible, he believes it is difficult enough not to deserve further thinking, while this further thinking is allegedly the object of the present paper.

Nonetheless Socrates-Plato gives us a hint: to *encourage* masses instead of quarrelling them (499 e), so that masses find it even pleasant for frequent philosophers. That is what we have called scheming: indeed, every political leading stratum—which in our present times is of course different from the ruling class, whereas in Plato’s times the latter and the former were only one—encourages masses to act in its own interest—re-electing them—as if it were the masses’ own. But we already dismissed the hypothesis that the philosophers’ party, the

⁵ In fact, the question is not clear in Plato: in the ideal city, leaders and warriors rule the craftsmen, as reason and heart do with desires, but as moderation in a fair city is the paradoxical virtue of the craftsmen and peasants, the stratum of desires—along thus with reason and heart for the first two ruling classes—there is no need for submission (or domination), for the latter stratum (craftsmen and peasants) *agrees* with their own being ruled—which means that it is no longer ruled as an external principle: consent has replaced submission.

party of the virtual philosophers-kings, borrowed the channels of political communication. They will not be forced to reign by the current leading strata, even less by the ruling class itself. The question comes thus now to this: how to *take* those channels without borrowing them politely from the current leading strata, whilst using not bare force but scheming?

Notice that we discretely shifted from a “politically leading stratum” to “leading strata” in general. We did so because we thought it was accurate, of no consequence for Socrates-Plato’s premises. The plural stands because we take into account the mass communication media, which did not exist at the times of Plato, as an organ of separate communication between leaders and masses. So, if the politically leading stratum (no longer thus the Platonic leading class) shuts its parties/its party’s doors to philosophers-kings, by no way the other leading stratum, that of the mass media, will lend its channels to them.

At this stage we could think of the hoax. But the hoax aims at deceiving its audience up to the point where the deception gets revealed, either by the hoaxer herself/himself, or because it could not help not being revealed. In both cases, the satisfaction of the hoaxer is limited, she/he has made a work of art, but not changed *world*—even if she/he has changed *the* world. In the first case, she/he herself/himself reveals that what was said was not meant, and only aimed at parodying the current leading strata and ruling class’ way of thinking/acting. In the second case, the message was really meant but as the hoaxer pretends to talk on behalf of the leading strata and/or of the ruling class, the latter surely will denounce the content as fake, say as not really theirs—as foolish and fake. Even in the latter case, it is an achievement for the hoaxer, because, while deceiving the guard dogs of the communication channels,⁶ she/he could anyway disclose a sincere message to vast masses. In the first case, the victims were at once the rulers/leaders and the masses; but this is precisely why the hoaxer has to reveal her/his hoax: one cannot leave the masses believe that one really meant, or approved the behaviour one only *pretended* to incite to. This way is, it seems, a way to quarrel the masses: “how fool you are to believe this! just as fool as each time you believe discourses of the same kind, without anyone to disapprove,” says the hoaxer. There is no way that the masses do not feel quarrelled.

Let us then turn back to the second case: speaking out the truth as if it came out of the rulers/leaders’ mouths. What must be avoided for the virtual philosophers-kings, as we saw, is to be denounced by the rulers/leaders as usurpers. An easy way is not to pretend speaking on behalf of them. How else to take hold of the official communication channels, if not by usurping? By making representatives of the rulers/leaders speak out the truth themselves, without deceiving them. Is not it just squaring the circle again? *We must identify the elements of the leading strata that are not elements of the politically leading strata; they*

⁶ “Guard dogs” is precisely how Socrates-Plato qualifies the warriors, the stratum auxiliary to leaders: in our present time, both political and media leaders are auxiliary to the ruling class.

must not be neither part *sensu stricto* of the mass media. Just as Karl Marx, in order to explain surplus value, sought a commodity which was at the same time part *and not part* of the circulation process, and found a “commodity” whose exchange would entail the production process getting started, so we must find representatives of the mass media leading stratum *which are not representatives*. Note at this stage that the hoax’s scheme is abandoned. No one gets deceived here, so no one will belie the truthful discourse—which still can of course be disavowed, but that is a different story. The careful reader will argue that we just made a plea for scheming: indeed, but we will see that *this kind of scheming does not entail saying anything else but the truth*—what makes this scheming strategy no doubt very special.

Another halt is needed here. We said that virtual philosophers-kings should seize the communication channels that no leading stratum would lend them spontaneously. Why is it so? Ordinarily, masses trust the leading strata as such because those strata are supposed to *ultimately care for them*, no matter whether this or that representative reveals his/her indignity, no matter how sharply different fractions of those leading strata disagree and argue one with another (or seem to be doing so) about what should be done to sweep current evils away. Ordinary life would be unbearable to most people most of the time if it was clear to them that those strata actually could not care less about them and that their apparent disagreements are just a disguise of their rough battle for power into what would be just another arena for another kind of competition, a non-market competition between various bunches of legal gangsters. So, whatever the actual messages released by the communication system might be, the silent primal message which lies behind them all is: “we ultimately care for you.” No matter how harsh the hardships and sufferings ordinary citizens actually bear; even if—and precisely when it appears that everyone close to them who should have most cared for them has proven untruthful, “we ultimately care for you”: “we,” the furthest, are the closest, for “we” are ultimately responsible for shielding “you” from the hazards of existence.

The ultimate discourse of power is thus: “somebody out there cares for you,” if and when no one else at hand does. In extreme situations, nonetheless, the trouble, being so intense, forces masses to doubt the truthfulness of the leading strata. They feel they must rely on powers stronger than barely human powers; their faith shifts beyond the sphere of human affairs. Remember that, according to Socrates-Plato, philosophers-kings will not be listened to unless extreme conditions forces them to force people to listen to them,⁷ unless *divine* inspiration takes hold of the current leaders. Divine inspiration will not very likely take hold of the current leaders, but we might reasonably stress that it is precisely when conditions are extreme, like at the present time, that divine inspiration

⁷ And we already know that only *scheming* one might tell people what they do not want to listen to *and be listened to still*.

comes—the urge to speak out the truth fiercely. Now inspiration comes to the philosophers-kings, who feel alone that conditions are extreme—and thus the urge to make a move. Constraint and divine inspiration in Plato are thus both aspects of one and the same situation—only that inspiration comes to philosophers, not to current leaders. If we bear in mind that the masses, in extreme conditions, look for a protection beyond the sphere of human affairs, we understand perfectly clearly that they await a god, to put it like Heidegger.

On the one hand, thus, philosophers feel the *urge* to speak out the *divinely* inspired truth to masses; on the other hand, masses desperately wait for a *god* to tell them it cares for them. How can those two drives meet? Speaking out *the divinely inspired truth*—“nobody out there cares for you, now you along with the rest of nature are the god, and henceforth you alone can awake from your reverie, to rescue yourself from numbness and henceforth avoid being driven to death”—must come down to the *by the masses alleged gods*.

Who are the latter? We now come back to the point of the representatives *who are not representatives*. We saw that in extreme conditions, even masses start to feel that their leaders might not be truthful to their alleged mission. We asked whether representatives of the leading strata, especially of the mass media stratum, could do the job of speaking out the truth. Can the communication business betray its masters (ruling class and politically leading stratum)? In the Platonic terms, can the watchdogs be untruthful to their shepherds? Not more than the politically leading stratum itself can be to the ruling class. This was thus just another wrong way. For sure, betrayal can come from every side, but what we are looking for are elements from whom betrayal toward their own industry (be it corporate or political) is *the less* unlikely. *In fact, this betrayal mustn't be felt as such by those who are the less unlikely to be “guilty” of it.*

So, what are those elements? The mass communication media might in the end not be the worst way, for part of their business goes far beyond processing (good) news—or bad news, but the bad news are processed in order to broadcast the good news that the evils of the bad news have been beaten by the Big Other “out there,” to put it like Slavoj Žižek after Jacques Lacan. A part of their business is to sell Art and Science, soon become Show Business and Technology in capitalist conditions. But the wedding between art and science, on the one hand, and modern capitalist industry, on the other hand, is unnatural. Intelligence cannot cooperate with death-in-the-process, to put in the young Hegelian terms of Jena, back to the 1801–1805 period—but under usurped clothes. Intelligence serving the modern Megamachine, according to Mumford Lewis, is just a sham; weaving links cannot cooperate with the job of systematically disintegrating. That is why, regardless of how far those two poles of human intelligence are sold to disintegration, there are remains of the sense of caring, of taking care of the vital links that are the honour of human intelligence. Science must not be reduced to Technology, neither art to Show Business. Their respective industry leaders are “only in it for the money,” but artists and scientists are not. They

serve beauty and truth, and love to be glorified for this, for they know their task is *divine* and that gods *should* be honoured. So the masses do honour them. Of course, here again, the good reasons are deceived, because that good reasons should be honoured does not mean *that they might actually be in present conditions*—back to Plato: philosophers are hated as useless and naughty. But this is what show business artists (and scientists) do not (or only scarcely) know.

Never mind: artists of the show business and scientists of the high tech industry believe they are gods, and so do the masses. We hold what we need. The former think their mere existence means caring for the world, the latter also believe it. The former *are not the leading strata*, though they work for them—High tech industry and Show business; they work for them, *while not really working for them*, for they work first, in their view to keep the world as one—they work for beauty and truth. Now the point is: is not there any difference between the two? The artists could not care less about the variety of particular discourses, because the one and only “discourse” is their acting itself, their physical grace—were it to illustrate evil itself. Somebody out there cares for the world, beyond human boundaries: this is the divine essence of art. Artists are not in it for money but for glory. They think they rule the hand that feeds as lords do servants, not the other way round. The point is that they do not feel any allegiance to any other power than their own.

But as to whether scientists could as easily be driven to hold a paradoxical discourse—“there is no progress, except in disintegration”—we are less sure. For artists, “somebody cares for you” is vague enough, and so true, whoever it might be that cares actually—themselves, in the end. The point for them is to embody divine characters, so as to *be* them, literally. For scientists, the ones who care for masses *could not be anything without industry*. This is why we immediately turn now to what is left of Science, when we put aside Technology. There is something radically useless in the modern embalming of science and intelligence by the Academic Industry—of which Technology is not the whole: the Humanities. The Humanities are exactly in the same position as artists. We, humanities scholars, are artists of mind games, instead of merely sensitive games. Until recently, we even got paid although what we did not get sold on the market place—not on “free” markets, at least. The glory we lacked was the evidence of the all too divine mission of ours: instead of the salary of glory, we held the glorious salary for thinking for thought’s sake, and hence held the world ready to pay for it. If, unlike natural scientists, we lacked some effective glory, we still could consider we were what we actually were after all: scientists.

But this is it. Not only rewarded scholars in the humanities progressively felt—when they did not know it straight—that they did not hold the world, that the “gratuitousness” of their mind games was not the last word of a world that was being torn apart, but they and their disciples were being paid less and less for it, if at all. Their allegiance to those supposedly pledging allegiance to them

disintegrated as fast as the world they thought they held did. This is why it seems that today scholars in the humanities, among which some hiding philosophers, are, just as show business artists, the only possible allied to philosophers urging to speak out the truth to masses in extreme conditions, through the mass communication channels.

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TRANSNATIONAL JUSTICE AND THE GLOBAL TAXATION POLICY PROPOSAL: AN INSTITUTIONALIST ADDRESS OF THE FEASIBILITY QUESTION

ABSTRACT

This work attempts to address some basic feasibility concerns in the global taxation policy proposal. In recent years, moral-political philosophizing has extensively advanced the idea of transnational justice through volumes of scholarly literature. In moving the discussions beyond an ideational level and projecting it onto a practical realm, moral-political thinkers have proposed a global taxation policy, the proceeds of the implementation of which are meant to cater for the global poor. This proposal is morally laudable, given that it would substantially benefit the global needy. Nonetheless, the proposal raises some basic feasibility concerns, such as the moral and legal justifiability of the proposal; the nature of the object to be globally taxed and how it is to be globally taxed; the nature of the globalist institution to implement the proposal; the legitimacy challenge of the globalist institution, and the challenge of practical implementation of the proposal by the institution. If the proposal is to succeed, the critical issues ought to be constructively addressed. Given that institutionalism necessarily emerges in the feasibility concerns, an institutionalist approach is advanced in this work to constructively address them.

Keywords: Feasibility question; global taxation; institutionalist approach; policy proposal; transnational justice.

“One great challenge to any morally sensitive person today is the extent and severity of global poverty. Among six billion human beings, 790 million lack adequate nutrition, one billion lack access to safe water, 2.4 billion lack basic sanitation (UNDP, 2000,30) [...] more than 880 million lack access to basic health services (UNDP, 1999, 22) [...] one billion are without adequate shelter, and two billion without electricity (UNDP, 1998, 49)”

(Pogge 2001, 9)

“How can severe poverty of half of humankind continue despite enormous economic and technological progress and despite the enlightened moral norms and values of our heavily dominant Western civilization?”

(Pogge, 2002, 3)

“Communitarians, neoliberal, realist and even some radical critiques take issue with the advocates of cosmopolitan social democracy on a number of important grounds: theoretical, institutional, historical and ethical. These critiques (sic) argue that that the project is fatally flawed because its principal arguments are inappropriate, impractical, irrelevant and invidious.”

(McGrew, 2004, 10)

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the field of contemporary political philosophy, one of the fundamental issues of intensive scholarly discussion is that of justice, which W. P. Pomerleau (2013, par. 3) describes as the most fundamental of all virtues for ordering interpersonal relations and establishing and maintaining a stable political society. At the transnational level, a veritable sub-set of the debate is between what one could call the compatriotists and the cosmopolitans. The former holds onto a domestic/national account of justice; it is expressive of a restrictive geography of morality, believing that talk of morality only reasonably applies in the relations among people within the state, but not outside of it. On the contrary, the latter supports a transnational extension of the purview of justice. Although, the present discussion does not mainly focus on the avowed debate between the two groups of proponents, with a view to proving whose argument is ultimately valid, the discussion nonetheless concerns the debate in a sense, since the present discussion is a systematic attempt to constructively respond to some of the challenges of feasibility raised by the compatriotists against the cosmopolitan project.

Reactive to gross transnational inequalities and poverty, as instantiated in the citations opening this present work, cosmopolitan thinkers, such as Charles Beitz (1999 (1979); 1975), Thomas Pogge (1994), and Allen Buchanan (2000) among others have in recent years developed a series of rigorous arguments in defence of the application of morality to transnational relations among states and non-state actors, showing in their respective works that the idea of transnational justice is as plausible as that of domestic justice. In the process of moving the discussions beyond the ideational level and giving them a practical dimension, moral and political philosophers have made a proposal for global taxation policy, the proceeds of the implementation of which are meant to take care of the global disadvantaged. Obviously, this proposal is morally laudable, the reason being that the end-point of the exercise could positively alter the unfortu-

nate conditions of the global disadvantaged. However, as Anthony McGrew (2004) has also shown us in the quotation earlier, the problem is that this proposal raises some critical feasibility concerns, such as the concern of moral and legal justifiability of the proposal; the concern of the nature of the object to be globally taxed and how it is to be globally taxed; the concern of the nature of the globalist institution to implement the proposal; the legitimacy challenge of the globalist institution, and the challenge of practical implementation of the proposal by the institution. As one could see, the last three feasibility concerns are directly global institution-related, while the first two concerns are indirectly so. Thus, it seems plausible to adopt an institutionalist approach to addressing the concerns in this work.

Given the foregoing, the task of the present exercise is to constructively address the concerns so as to put the global taxation proposal on a practically sound footing. The work is in six sections. Following the introduction and the problem statement in section 1, section 2 engages in some conceptual analyses; section 3 discusses transnational justice at the ideational level; section 4 historically examines global taxation policy proposals with respect to transnational justice as well as raises some fundamental feasibility concerns about the whole idea of global taxation proposal; section 5 constructively dialogues with the feasibility concerns, employing an institutionalist approach, and Section 6 summarizes and concludes the discussion.

2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

It is intellectually apposite to start the present exercise by fixing the meaning of each of four key terms that will frame the rest of the discussion in this study.

Transnational justice: This term is used in the present study to capture a specific understanding that extends the purview of justice across national borders. Thus, it is a conceptual opposite of the traditional thinking that limits the discussion of the concept of justice to the level of a bound state; a statist understanding of justice, which started in the history of Western political philosophy with the classical Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle. Specifically, the thinking of transnational justice somewhat evolved from Stoic philosophers, some of whom contended that the human person has an ontological moral dignity and worth, which ought to be recognized and promoted, regardless of the limits of national boundaries, or racial and religious divides. It must be noted that the so-called recognition and the promotion of the moral dignity and worth of the human person may not necessarily be mutually inclusive, since human dignity and worth may be recognized in the abstract without concrete and conscientious efforts made to promote them. Thus, the thinking of transnational justice is notionally not only concerned with negative duties towards the achievement of its theoretical contents; positive duties are required as well

towards the same effect. It does not only recognize in the abstract the moral dignity and worth of the human person across borders as well as urges us to recognize a negative moral duty, which entails refraining from taking steps that undercut the moral dignity and worth of rational beings. It is also committed to the recommendation of a positive moral duty to all to take concrete steps that would ultimately lead to the promotion of the moral dignity and worth of the human person. Moreover, it is by personal preference, but not by any academic convention, that transnational justice is interchangeably used with global justice in this work.

Global taxation policy proposal: This simply refers to the culmination of a series of calls by moral and political philosophers as well as other thinkers, who have argued extensively and defensibly that there ought to be a global taxation policy, the proceeds of the implementation of which are to take care of the global disadvantaged. This focus of the policy makes it a mechanism of redistributive justice across national borders. Furthermore, it could be argued that this proposal is both backward-looking and forward-looking. It is backward-looking in the sense that it is a systematic attempt to address the unfortunate conditions of the global disadvantaged whose present status could be largely, though not entirely, attributed to past unjust policies and other socio-economic factors beyond their possible control, be they domestic or transnational. It is forward-looking in the sense that it is also an attempt to bring the target people to a minimum threshold of well-being in the foreseeable future as well as cancel out any future re-emergence of the present unfortunate conditions of the global disadvantaged within the human society, through a moral re-engineering of the present global relations among peoples.

Feasibility question: The phrase conveys the skeptical temperament, emerging from some quarters, about (i) the present reasonability of the proposal for global taxation policy, and (ii) the ultimate practical implementation of the demands of the proposal for global taxation policy, given a host of complexities involved, both at the policy making level and the policy implementation level. The questions of reasonability and practicability of implementation are separately raised here because they may or may not be conceptually relational: what is reasonable to propose may sometimes be what is practically implemented; on some other occasions, what is reasonable to propose may be what is very difficult, if not totally impossible, to practically implement. The feasibility question generates some fundamental concerns briefly given above. Addressing these concerns is the focus of the present work.

Institutionalism: Discussions of transnational justice have broadly evolved over the years along what one could call the non-institutionalist and institutionalist divide, with both having, at least, two sub-sets. The basic claim of the negative non-institutionalists is that, in the international arena, no institution comparable to the state exists (Blake, 2001, 265). Since there is no existence of the analogue of state institutions to implement duties of justice at the global level,

then there is no much merit in talks about global justice. Thomas Nagel (2005, 115) shows something of this thinking when he notes the problem of theorising about global justice without a clear-cut insight of an implementing sovereign. The basic claim of the positive non-institutionalists is that the non-existence of the analogue of state institutions to implement duties of justice at the global level does not take away our sense of duties of justice to others across borders, given that there may be other anchors that provide support for the discussion, apart from institutionalism, such as an appeal to common humanity (e.g. Caney, 2009). On the other hand, domestic institutionalists contend that justice requires institutional membership, that it is only within a bound state that institutions required for implementing the duties of justice among co-citizens are existent. In short, justice requires a real, but not abstract, political community (see, e.g. Walzer, 1983, 28–30), which is taken as “one in which a government exists with the authority to make society-wide decisions [...] a society based on a hierarchical distribution of power, with rulers and subjects having different levels of authority and thus different types of political responsibilities” (Amstutz, 2013, 15).

Domestic institutionalists argue that co-citizens are collaborative to sustain the state through their legal compliance and financial contributions. These collective efforts enable the provision of important basic goods, such as security, a welfare system, and a stable market and property rights system, the grounds for the invocation of duties of justice among co-citizens, but not with foreigners. Thus, Michael Blake (2001, 258) notes that distinct principles of distributive justice apply only within the national context. However, global institutionalists argue that there is a sense in which one could state that contemporary relations among states have evolved an analogue of state institutions at the global level that make talks about global justice plausible. Examples of such transnational institutions are International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and so on (see, for example, Buchanan, 2000). Here, one could see that the non-institutionalists and the institutionalists converge and diverge in some areas. Both positive non-institutionalists and global institutionalists believe in the plausibility of talks about global justice; though, they maintain divergent approaches to bringing it into realization. Similarly, both negative non-institutionalists and domestic institutionalists believe that talks about transnational justice are implausible, and that duties of justice should not go beyond the level of a bound state; though, they come from different angles in asserting this stance.¹ It is noteworthy that this initial categorization is made to show that, though institutional approach is advanced in this work, there is also a non-institutional angle to the discourse. This present work adopts the global institu-

¹ For a discussion of non-institutionalism and institutionalism, relative to transnational justice, see (Nath, 2010, 167–181). The terms *negative non-institutionalism* and *positive non-institutionalism* are not Nath's (2010); they are the present author's.

tionalist approach, the reason being that moral prescriptions, at the transnational level, are best brought to the realm of praxis through effective transnational institutions. These may be extant ones; or, in the alternative, ones to be created, if extant ones are morally and legally found wanting.

3. TRANSNATIONAL JUSTICE AT THE IDEATIONAL LEVEL: FROM THE ANCIENT TO THE PRESENT

At the level of ideas, a host of moral and political philosophers as well as other thinkers, influenced by the former, have theorized extensively to foreground the concept of justice across borders. These philosophers and other thinkers, who could also be called cosmopolitans, have anchored their thinking onto a specific understanding of the human person as a being of ontological moral dignity and worth. In the ancient era, the Stoic philosophers located this ontological dignity and worth of the human person in the *logos* or reason, a property which the Stoics argued belonged to both the human person and God. Since only the human person has this property with God, it logically follows that human beings belong to a higher order among the existents of the empirical world. Furthermore, it was the Stoic idea that all human beings have this reason in common that led to the idea of universal brotherhood of all human beings (see Stumpf, 1994, 119); hence, the emergence of the concept of *cosmopolitanism*, which, according to Caney (2009, 388), affirms that persons are “citizens of the world.”

In the Enlightenment era, Immanuel Kant also deployed a reason-based argument to support the promotion of the moral dignity and worth of the human person across borders. According to him, all rational beings are persons and, therefore, they ought to be accorded equal dignity. He states further that:

“... rational beings are called persons inasmuch as their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves, i.e., as something which is not to be used merely as a means and hence there is imposed thereby a limit on all arbitrary use of such being which are thus objects of respect.” (Kant, 1981, 428)

From the Kantian moral prescription on the right treatment of all rational men, we can develop an argument to clearly show the connection between rationality and equality:

1. All rational men are persons.
2. All persons ought to be treated as objects of respect.
3. If we treat all persons as objects of respect, then they are of equal dignity.
4. Therefore, all rational men are persons of equal dignity (Badru, 2011, 107).²

² This argument has been revised as it appears. Thus, it is slightly different from the original in (Badru, 2011).

This argument is patently valid in the sense that if one accepts the truth of the premises (propositions 1–3), then the truth of the conclusion (proposition 4) necessarily follows since the conclusion is a logical deduction from the premises whose truth is accepted. On further consideration, we should also assume that the Kantian thinking also applies to rational human beings across state borders, since there is nothing in Kant's position that restricts the accordance of dignity to the human person to the territorial confines of any given state.

Apart from the reason-based thesis deployed so far to support the extension of principles of justice across state borders, some other moral and political philosophers and other thinkers in the present era have also systematically developed other theses, two of which are the "common scheme thesis" or the "global basic structure thesis" and the "common humanity thesis," to justify the extension of principles of justice across borders. The "common scheme thesis" emphasizes that there are ways in which the life prospects of modern human beings across borders are configured beyond their possible control by a set of transnational economic and political institutions, forming the global basic structure. The argument goes further that this phenomenon has established some form of community of interconnectedness within which the principles of justice could be reasonably applied. There are two basic interrelated claims here: (i) there is a global basic structure, an analogue of the domestic basic structure, which John Rawls (1971, 7) regards as the primary subject of justice; and (ii) that the global basic structure geographically and institutionally connects disparate peoples so much that the peoples so connected could jointly be subjected to the same system and principles of justice.

One of the proponents of the "common scheme thesis" is Allen Buchanan (2000, 705–706), who categorically asserts the existence of a global basic structure. For him, among the elements of the global basic structure are the following: regional and international economic agreement (including General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, North American Free Trade Agreement, and various European Union treaties), international financial regimes (including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and various treaties governing currency exchange mechanisms). He argues further that if there is a global basic structure then surely it is a subject of justice and a very important one (Buchanan, 2000, 705).

Similarly, Frank J. Garcia (2005, 2) lists five ways in which globalization has radically changed the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate over global justice. The ways are: (i) members of this global community are increasingly aware of each other's needs and circumstances; (ii) they are increasingly capable of effectively addressing these needs, and increasingly contributing to these circumstances in the first place; (iii) they find themselves involved in the same global market society; (iv) these members together look up to the same organizations, especially those at the meta-state level, and (v) the members want the organizations to provide regulatory approaches to addressing problems of global

social policy. From this listing, Garcia (2005, 2) concludes that in global relations we can begin to see that minimum level of “community” necessary to support relations of justice. One could see that Garcia’s idea of common community, as the basis for global justice, is related to the “common scheme thesis” in the sense that the global community that is open to all peoples is, at the same time, a form of common scheme of association, interaction, and participation of all rational human beings.

The “common humanity thesis,” however, stresses that, even if there is not much interconnectedness as we are presently witnessing on the global level, one still has obligations of justice to others because they are fellow human beings—with human needs and feelings, and human capacities for, and interests, in autonomy and well-being—and facts about interdependence do not, in themselves, determine the scope of justice (Caney, 2009, 391). Comparatively, the “common humanity thesis” is based on the undeniable fact of our common humanity, while the “common scheme thesis,” is institutionally grounded. Thus, if the truth of the “common scheme thesis” could be denied (as has actually been done by communitarians), then the truth of the “common human thesis” could not be denied in the same way.

We should note, at least, three basic things about the efforts of moral and political philosophers discussed so far. First, their proposals are largely at the level of ideas. Second, the first nonetheless, they are all morally laudable systematic efforts to move the application of justice principles beyond the borders of contemporary states in the world. Third, none of their morally laudable proposals, however, cogently addresses what one could call the fundamental realization concern: how the prescriptions of their proposals would be practically realized, for example, what is to be done to generate sufficient revenue to realize the prescriptions of the proposals, in our present non-ideal world, as well as the morally and legally legitimate transnational body through which the foregoing is to be done. Thus, they could all be aptly described as proposals without realization contents. The latter part of the next section discusses the issues involved in the fundamental realization concern, and the penultimate section attempts to address this significant concern.

4. TRANSNATIONAL JUSTICE AT THE PRACTICAL LEVEL: GLOBAL TAXATION POLICY PROPOSALS AND SOME FEASIBILITY CONCERNS

Among moral and political philosophers as well as other thinkers, there was a shift from the level of ideas to the level of praxis in the discussion of transnational justice when the whole issue of global taxation policy proposal emerged. This proposal was meant to practically implement transnational justice in the economic sense in order to address the unfortunate situation of the global disadvantaged. Historically, there have been various global taxation policy proposals,

such as the Global Resources Dividend (GRD), supported by Thomas Pogge; the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) or Currency Transaction Tax (CTT), advocated by James Tobin (hence popularly called The Tobin Tax); the Birthright Levy (BL), moved by Ayelet Shachar; the Global Land Resource Taxation (GLRT), supported by Hillel Steiner; the Carbon Tax (CT); Aviation Fuel Taxes (AFT); Email Taxes (ET); World Trade Tax (WTT); Fines for Ocean Dumping (FOD), and Tax on the International Arms Trade (TIAT), (see Armstrong, 2012; Paul, Wahlberg, 2002), and so on. Although, the noted global taxation policy proposals in practice may have different policy outcomes, levy outcomes, and spending outcomes, using the language of Paul and Wahlberg, they are nonetheless proposals with realization contents: they all state what is to be taxed and how it is to be taxed to generate revenue to practically realize the proposals, whether or not their realization prescriptions are actually feasible in our non-ideal world. To be sure, much skepticism has arisen as to whether the realization contents of the global taxation policy proposals necessarily and fully address the feasibility question, given that a proposal may theoretically have a realization content without necessarily addressing the feasibility question. At this point, the feasibility question requires some further elaboration beyond what we gave of it earlier.

The feasibility question that is raised against the whole idea of global taxation policy proposal generates sub-set concerns, some of which are: the concern of moral and legal justifiability of the proposal; the concern of the nature of the object to be globally taxed and how it is to be globally taxed; the concern of the nature of the globalist institution to implement the proposal; the legitimacy challenge of the globalist institution, and the challenge of practical implementation of the proposal by the institution. These will be examined one after the other

The concern of moral and legal justifiability of the proposal: The whole idea of global taxation policy proposal could be a subject of moral and legal questioning. Morally, if it is not to be internally inconsistent, then the whole idea should sit well with the idea of a just tax. This claim is advanced on two grounds. First, it is only a just tax (domestically or) globally that morally obligates peoples, corporations, or organizations to willingly pay up, and these may also be morally condemned if they do not. Second, if the proposal itself is not to run afoul of moral propriety, then it must support the idea that the tax to be globally imposed must be a just one and be imposed by a morally and politically democratic legitimate authority: It must not support the idea of an unjust tax to be globally imposed, by an illegitimate body, no matter the moral propriety of the ultimate aims of the tax. But, what are the principles of just tax? A tax is just only if: (i) it is imposed by a legitimate legislative authority; (ii) it is for a just purpose or course, and (iii) the tax burden is justly distributed within the tax jurisdiction (that is, the location of the object of tax) and potential tax payers (see Crowe, 1944). If we take the first principle as essential, and we agree with

Paul Wachtel (2000, 337) that a government's ability to tax depends on its ability to maintain its tax jurisdiction, and we also reasonably hold that it is only a morally and democratically legitimate government that has the authority, as distinct from mere power, to maintain its tax jurisdiction, then it is clear that the whole idea of global tax is morally suspect if we are yet unable to come up with a substantive body at the global level with both moral and politically democratic legitimacy to maintain a global tax jurisdiction, as well as authorize and collect a global tax.

Legally, the global taxation proposal is also problematic in the absence of a law to this effect. It is the existence of a relevant law that confers the requisite legal justifiability on the taxation and its collection. The point is that a proposal of such magnitude should be legally supported for it to succeed, even if the body that imposes the tax is morally legitimate. In other words, even if there could be a morally and democratically legitimate authority at the transnational level, such authority still needs to have an equally morally justifiable law to support the collection and distribution of the global tax. Some erring potential tax payers may still need some legal compulsion, apart from appeal to morality, to fulfill their tax duties. Two claims are being made here, which are not necessarily mutually inclusive. There should be a morally justifiable law to support the proposal, and this law should be enacted by an equally morally justifiable body. It is logically conceivable to have the latter without necessarily having the former. But, neither presently exists in the contemporary world.

The concern of the nature of the object to be globally taxed and how it is to be globally taxed: According to Chris Armstrong (2012, 8), there is disagreement, though, on just what should be taxed to provide the desired revenue. Although, a host of suggestions have been made on what to be taxed, and how the taxation is to be conducted (see: Armstrong, 2012; Paul, Wahlberg, 2002), the fact is still that each of the suggestions has its relative strengths and weaknesses (see: Armstrong, 2012). This fact invariably cancels out the privileging of any of the suggestions over the others. One could argue that some comparative analysis should be done so as to ultimately fix on the most economically viable of all the proposals; but, this also would not help us much to conclusively decide the case, since there would still be opposition from some quarters to any proposal chosen. The whole issue might even become the more confusing if the opposition is constituted by big businesses owned by powerful and affluent countries of the world, unless there is a transnational body with both moral and politically democratic legitimacy to compel their obedience to the prescriptions of the global taxation policy proposal.

The concern of the nature and the legitimacy challenge of the globalist institution(s) to implement the proposal: Global taxation policy proposal also has to contend with the twin feasibility concerns of what institution to implement the proposal and the corresponding legitimacy challenge of the institution. At the global level, we all know that the revenue generated (assuming it is generated in

the first instance) involves massive and coordinated redistributions to the global disadvantaged, given their number and geographical diversity, for the proper actualization of the proposal, and this fact takes the exercise well beyond any individual capacity: individuals might not be as efficient and coordinated as an institution would in redistributions of such magnitude (see Murphy, 1998; Shue, 1988). This fact necessarily calls for an implementing institution with a far-reaching capacity and scope to carry out the duties involved, a fact that is both recognized by both the compatriotists (though, they deny the present existence of such at the global level) and the cosmopolitans (who presently affirm at least a similitude of it at the global level). Simon Caney (2005, 40–46) has actually adduced five reasons to support the necessity of institutions in the realization of transnational justice: (i) to allocate roles and delineate who has which duties of global distributive justice; (ii) to arbitrate between competing jurisdictions; (iii) to secure a just form of cooperation; (iv) to enforce dictates of justice, and (v) to secure a fair distribution of duties in the realization of transnational justice.

However, to form such an institution is one thing; its legitimacy, which must be guaranteed, is quite another. According to Allen Buchanan (2010, 79), legitimacy of a government institution may be normative as well as sociological. For him, it is normative if, and only if, the institution has *the right to rule*; it is sociological if it is widely believed *to have the right to rule*. The two understandings are contextually relevant. Although, Buchanan does not note this, it could be said here that the sociological account might be a function of the normative account; an institution that has the right to rule (rather than only the power to rule) may also be widely believed by the people to have the right to rule. But, the relationship may not necessarily hold in the converse, given that the degree of belief amassed for something does not make it legitimate, if it is not legitimate in itself.

Expectedly, the issue of legitimacy has raised questions, which border on some moral and politically democratic grounds, against many extant transnational institutions, relevant to the prosecution of transnational justice. First, the moral legitimacy of contemporary international institutions to perform duties of global redistributive justice is being constantly queried. According to Kok-Chor Tan (2004, 26), global financial organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the G-8, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) usually covertly entrench the interests of big businesses and affluent countries by their policies, such as structural adjustments, conditionalities on loans, and emphasis on economic liberalization and open trade, which they recommend for developing countries. Thus, such institutions are morally less capable of ensuring transnational economic justice. Second, these institutions could also be queried on the basis of their insufficient political representation of the interests of the marginalized states in the developing world. The *Human Development Report* (2002:113) states that 46% of votes in the World Bank are held by seven countries: United States, United Kingdom, Japan, France, Saudi

Arabia, China, and Russian Federation. Similarly, 48% of votes in the IMF are held by the same seven countries. This simply shows that both World Bank and IMF are democratically illegitimate (as well as unjust) and, thus, are less desirable as institutions to promote transnational justice. On this account, Paul and Wahlberg (2002, 21) contend that we should oppose any plan that would put the monies in the hands of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or some other secretive agency unduly influenced by Washington. Omar Dahbour similarly notes thus:

“how exactly would the funds generated, for example, through global taxes, be distributed otherwise than through the very institutions (the United Nations, the World Bank) that have often been responsible for much of the problem in the first instance? [...] virtually all international institutions are complicit in hegemonic power.” (Dahbour, 2012, 51, 52)

Perhaps, reacting to Kok-Chor Tan’s (2004) critique above, and trying to exculpate the WTO *per se* from claims of being unjust, Teppo Eskelinen (2011, 49) contends that the trade agreements in the WTO are agreed on by consensus and the WTO is thus theoretically very democratic, and that the WTO also has dispute assessment bodies for resolving disputes related to WTO agreements amongst member nations. Eskelinen takes these to be quite impartial and he also states that some disputes have been settled in favour of developing countries. However, Eskelinen (2011:53) cannot but eventually agree that the democratic virtues of the WTO are controversial on some grounds: (i) developed nations with a large negotiation staff resident at Geneva could almost always out-negotiate those poor nations who could not maintain a large negotiation staff resident at Geneva; (ii) the developed nations who are members of the WTO could decide on a total withdrawal from the institution so as to impose a totally different set of rules that favour the developed nations, outside the WTO; (iii) the procedure of admission to the institution is usually laboriously tasking for would-be members from the developing world, apart from the fact that there are no transparent and reliable rules of admission, and (iv) in terms of the fixing of agendas for the meetings of the institution, the developed nations are usually fundamentally dominant (see Eskelinen, 2011, 53, 54).

The foregoing invariably leads to the argumentation for the moral re-engineering of the extant transnational institutions to realize the goals of global justice, or establishment of new ones which would do just that, if the existing institutions could not be sufficiently morally re-engineered to achieve the ends of transnational justice.

The concern of practical implementation of the proposal by the globalist institution(s): The global taxation policy proposal also runs into some basically practical implementation drawbacks on collection and distribution. In the present absence of a morally and democratically legitimate global body to

authorize and collect a global tax, it could be suggested that the tax be collected nationally. But, this has an obvious problem. To start with, according to Paul and Wahlberg (2002, 22), a system of collection based on national tax authorities would run into problems in states beset by national crisis, war, or a collapsing central authority. States like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan would doubtless not be able to collect taxes as part of a global tax regime. Also, the problem of corruption that is not mentioned by Paul and Wahlberg (2002) readily comes up. An overly corrupt state like Nigeria would still not figure in the equation, given that even the domestic tax for internal consumption is not being properly accounted for and expended, not to say collection of yet another tax for global redistribution. Even if the issues of internal crises and corruption were non-existent at the national level and a global tax were to be successfully collected at this level, how could the global tax so collected be massively re-distributed at the global level, given the number and geographical diversity of the recipients, in the present absence of a morally and democratically legitimate global body to uniformly and strategically organize the massive redistributions at the global level? The answer seems less than certain.

5. AN INSTITUTIONALIST ADDRESS OF THE FEASIBILITY CONCERNS

So far, we have seen that a transnational institution with both moral and politically democratic legitimacy is a prerequisite for the practical success of a global taxation policy proposal, since it figures fundamentally in the consideration of other feasibility concerns. This makes the institutionalist approach inevitable in the present context, a specific understanding of which will now be advanced. To iterate, the institutionalist approach becomes inevitable because it seems to be the only alternative up till now to actualize the taxation exercise in a coordinated way.

The present study proposes that at the transnational level, the United Nations (if it is to redeem its image from critics) should establish an institution to be called Global Institution for Democracy and Justice (hereafter GIDJ), with all the enabling transnational legal capacities to implement the global taxation policy proposal. The membership of the institution is to be made renewable, after a five-year period, and this is to give reasonably enough room for performance. How this institution addresses the feasibility concerns of moral and democratic legitimacy, what to be taxed and how it should be taxed, the moral justifiability of the tax, the practical implementation of the collection and distribution of the global tax, will soon be discussed.

The proposed institution with transnational capacities should have at least three organs. The first organ should be a Legal and Deliberative Forum. This should have two departments. The first department should be an *economic and*

legal forum, which should be composed of expert international economists (IE), international lawyers (IL), political scientists (PS), and international political and moral philosophers (IPMP); the latter would be primarily advisory to the former. Since the whole discussion is ultimately all about the generation and expenditure of revenue, which is an economic issue, it should be specifically reiterated that the IE are to play a good role in this department; they are to bring their professional knowledge to bear on what is to be taxed; how it is to be taxed, and so on. The IE are to act in conjunction with the IPMP, who are to constantly reflect on the moral dimensions of the taxation exercise and its collection. Here, it must be specifically emphasized that IE and IPMP should collaborate, given that economic reasoning, in spite of some argumentation to the contrary, essentially shades into moral reasoning (see Sandel, 2013, 121–140; Hausman, McPherson, 1993, 671–731). The emphasized collaboration of the IE and the IPMP in the present context, also accords with the position of Ethan B. Kapstein (2004, 79), who notes that, in tackling problems of international justice, both theoretical work and policy analysis might benefit from closer collaboration between economists and political philosophers. The IL, on their part, are to provide the requisite legal advice to the activities of the IE.

Generally, the experts in the *economic and legal forum* are to jointly deploy their diverse disciplinary knowledge and expertise to fashion out a reasonable and feasible template on which to make appropriate morally-based and legally-supported policies and decisions in defining what should be the best object of tax, among the host of global taxation proposals that have been made so far, and how it should be taxed; the best mode of collection and the scheme of effective and efficient distribution of the global tax to the target. The membership should be specially drawn from that of the second department, through democratic election.

The second department should be a *democratic, deliberative forum* where the representatives of all the nation-states of the world are to meet quarterly to deliberate on the reports generated from different parts of the world on the complexities that may arise in the practical collection and distribution of the global tax, and pass their reports to the first department to reflect on. The first department should critically reflect on the reports so as to know the extent to which the scheme of transnational taxation and collection has succeeded; how it has succeeded, and why it has succeeded as well as the constraints witnessed at every level and dimension of the scheme. In the final analysis, the two departments are to jointly decide on the best methods to address the intricacies and/or constraints that may arise in the prosecution of the scheme as well as build on the strength of the scheme.

The representatives of all the nation-states in the *democratic, deliberative forum* are to be tested experts in relevant disciplinary areas. They are to be selected from their various nation-states, after a series of democratically deliberative fora, where their functional competence is sufficiently established by their states of origins. It is from this process that the law that emanates from the first organ

is aptly designated “deliberative transnational law for global tax.” The process involved in choosing the members responsible for the law from different nation-states is deliberative; the scope of the law is transnational; and the tax is meant to be globally collected and distributed.

The extensive representation of the first organ gives the supporting law for global tax, which the members generate, a sort of cosmopolitan outlook as well as moral and democratic legitimacy across borders (or peoples). This is more so as each member of the first organ is to have equal voting rights, and important decisions are to be made, within the organ, on the binding basis of simple majority. Once an important decision has been taken in the democratic, deliberative forum, on the basis of a simple majority vote, the process in which all the members duly and equally participated, then the decision so taken becomes morally binding on all the members, including those who might have voted against the decision, since all the members may have equally agreed to the determination of significant decisions through a simple majority vote. Thus, three issues are addressed. First, the challenge of how to ensure consensus among the diverse members is largely resolved. Second, the global tax that is imposed after requisite deliberation in the first organ could be politically and morally justified on some grounds. Politically, it is not a unilateral imposition by just a group of members, representing their personal or national interests; rather, it is an outcome of a rational deliberation by a cosmopolitan group of morally conscious members. Morally, the global tax also has both deontological and teleological justification. It is deontologically justified in the sense that it globally emphasizes and affirms the moral duty of all to address the unfortunate conditions of the target, even if the effort were to ultimately fail to positively change their conditions. It is also teleologically justified in the sense that it is meant to achieve a specific result on the basis of which it would be evaluated in the final analysis: positive change in the life conditions of the global needy. Third, the issue of unnecessary domination (as we have in the Security Council, where some members have an over-riding Veto Power, which other members do not have) is addressed, given that decisions are approved on the basis of simple majority.

The second organ of the institution should be empowered with the means of practical enforcement as well as effective observation of the process of practical enforcement of the legal decisions of the second department of the first organ across borders. Thus, the second organ is designated, Executive and Observatory Organ. There is a fundamental point that is noticeable on the second organ of the GIDJ. Since the Executive and Observatory Organ are to be empowered with necessary capacities to implement the legal decisions of the first organ, then the normative aims of the GIDJ would be fully achieved. If this argument is accepted, then the likely problem of how to get sufficient legal backing for the prosecution of the decisions of the first organ is largely addressed. This organ also addresses the feasibility concern of practical implementation of the global taxation policy proposal.

The third organ of the institution is designated, Funds Organ, being responsible for the generation of funds for the operation of the institution as a whole. Funds for the operation of the institution could be sourced from transnational corporations, which are truly committed to the course of the institution, democratic nations, wealthy international philanthropists and foundations, which are truly committed to equal moral development of human persons, both within nation-states and across their borders. The operation of this organ is to be conducted with full consultation with the members of the Legal and Deliberative Forum.

To ensure the practical success of GIDJ, it is suggested that the operation of some organs of the United Nations, especially, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as well as its agencies be brought under the scrutiny of the institution. Other transnational bodies whose operation ought to be brought within the observatory focus of the GIDJ are International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. All these bodies in political and economic terms shape the welfare and life prospects of individuals across borders through their policies. It is only when such powerful transnational bodies are closely monitored and morally cautioned, if necessary, that the presently skewed global economic order is morally reinvented, and the course of transnational justice is promoted in the long run.³

It should be stated that the democratic processes involved in the choice of membership of the GIDJ, on the one hand, and in the choice of membership of specific departments within the GIDJ, on the other hand, make it difficult for the transnational institution to become autocratic in practice. The democratic processes also make the institution accountable, given that non-performance of members, over the stipulated period of time, translates to non-re-election for another period.⁴

6. CONCLUSION

In this work, we have made a systematic attempt to critically examine the issue of global taxation policy proposal within the context of transnational justice. We duly noted that, though, the prescription of the proposal is morally laudable since it would practically effect some policy change and raise the highly needed revenue to address the unfortunate conditions of the global disadvantaged, the feasibility question of the proposal, however, could still not be wished away, no matter how much we would like to. On this account, we raised some cogent feasibility concerns. We also made a systematic attempt to constructively address these feasibility concerns through the proposed Global Institution for

³ Much of the discussion in this section has been an adaptation of the chapter 5 of the author's unpublished PhD work.

⁴ I thank the reviewers, who raised the issue of accountability of the transnational institution here, to which I have responded.

Democracy and Justice (GIDJ) in order to put the whole discourse of transnational justice on a sound practical footing in the contemporary world. Ultimately, we could state that we have been able to show how the global taxation policy proposal should be systematically approached, if its normative prescription is to be practically realized.⁵

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Felix O. Olatunji

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

The importance of education can never be underplayed in any society as it is the most potent weapon given to man to transform, change and liberate him and society from the slavery of ignorance and backwardness. Education allows man to attain a rapid development in all ramifications. It should be known from the outset that universities in Africa are moulded on the foundation and systemic structure of the Western ideologies. There are salient multi-faceted and multi-dimensional barriers towards the pursuit of higher education in Africa. The aim of this paper is to examine the challenges of higher education in Africa, which hinders its process of producing a body of knowledge that will elevate the human condition and posit it for all-round development.

Keywords: university education, African society, challenges of development.

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Education is or has to be a process of the renewal of the senses of experiences for social continuity through the process of transmission that is in part deliberately instituted. This process involves the control and growth of both the immature individuals and the groups in which the individuals lives. Throughout history, as Gregory Cajete remarks, human societies have attempted to guide, facilitate, and even coerce the instinct of learning toward socially determined ends. The complex of activities for forming human learning is what we call education (Cajete, 1994, 25). According to Obafemi Awolowo, the importance of education can never be underplayed in any society, as it is the most potent weapon of man to transform, change and liberate him and society from the slavery of ignorance, disease, poverty and backwardness, and to attain a rapid socio-economic and political progress, prosperity, peace and happiness (Ogunmodede, 1986, 218). It is, in fact, the only power in the world greater than the forces of nature that man has now enslaved.

Through the centuries the foundation of universities was being devoted to the production of knowledge and cultural reproduction. The main universal objective of higher education was consisting in achieving the those two benefits in the best interest of their nations. It should be known from the outset that the Nigerian (nay African) universities are an off-shoot of the ancient academies which in the medieval and modern eras were being linked with the monastic system of Christian scholars. We should also be aware that universities in this part of the world were and are moulded on the foundation and systemic structure of the Western culture, thereby being guided by the Western forms of educational acquisition.

The classical conception of university is that of community of scholars searching for and propagating knowledge for its own sake. The modern conceptions significantly diverge from that. Attahiru Jega sees university as a public service corporation provided by the government, while another conception views it as an enterprise in the knowledge industry, selling whatever profitable academic services produce for whoever is willing and able to buy (Egbokhare, 2007, 59). With diverse opinions and views concerning university education, there is the utmost need to reaffirm the bi-roles of the university system, namely, the role of the universal development of human knowledge and that of applying it to the production of culture that satisfy the demands and aspirations of society.

In the view of Kola Owolabi, the essential purpose of the university is to produce the body of knowledge that will elevate the human condition, help communities to resolve the problems which prevent them from realizing its aspirations (Owolabi, 2007, 71). This essence has two forms—teaching and research. Though, teaching was basic in the early days of universities while research has been emerged and developed later. Thus, contemporarily each university community adopts the principle that its academics must not only teach, but also be engaged in a serious research, and, then, communicate the results of their research activities to the outside world (Kenny, 2007, 26).

Another, non-negligible aspect of university education is its universality in respect of the personnel and body of knowledge. Thus, the university must embrace all branches of learning, according to Joseph Kenny (2007, 26)—the arts, which is a story of man, the sciences as a story of nature; and religion as a story of God. These areas are significant for the development of both the recipients of university production and of society, in general; by taking parts in these and other fields of learning students are expected to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue to develop their liberal, synthetic and critical minds—for themselves as well as for the world around them.

University education would be at its best when its personnel is universal—both students and teachers come from various climes, races, nations, religions etc., without any imposed restrictions. This universality allows man to avoid the breeding and production of ethnic and racial chauvinists and even of religious

bigots as it is in many universities. University education ought to be freed from homogeneity, i.e. from the situation in which students and teachers from only a particular region, religion, race and or ethnic group dominate. Today, universities that lead both in research and in teaching are those which allow and owe their greatness to the latitude and in-take of both the students and teachers; this is reflected in great citadels of learning especially in the Global North.

Apart from the moral and character formation that university education bestows on its recipients, its social role is also significant. Universities are supposed to provide the high-level man's power for national development. The university functions in a socio-political, historical and cultural milieu; it is a collection of the scholars who share the mission of a crucial role playing by the university in the process of transformation of society. This process requires restructuring the university according to new values, orders of life and social structures. The university system is central to the process of social transformation by defining society's norms, values, ethos and stages. If this aim is not attained societies become disoriented as the "Ivory Tower" refuses to abide its values and objectives.

The university system should also be committed to promote social wellbeing and advancement. Arie Rotem and Naftaly Glasman notice that university generates critical factors needed for maintaining structures of society as well as adapting them to new social and cultural conditions because university is an institution which advances and spreads consciousness to the entire society (Arikewuyo, 2004, 15). Collective consciousness seems to be obviously necessary in society. But this seems to be a utopia in societies in the Global South, especially in Africa. These problems will be examined in the next section of this paper.

CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN AFRICA (NIGERIA)

In a sound educational system that will benefit recipients and society in general, students need to have the basic infrastructure and environment for active and purposive learning. They need to be educated not only as professionals but also as citizens acting intelligently and living in democratic society. In this aspect of the process of learning, students need to be acquainted with the complexity of the information that they will manage for the future. This will be impossible without the capacity of compiling, producing, applying and critically evaluating information extracted from their research activities. The process of doing this would make African education a rich and stimulating instrument of learning and knowledge production.

There are setbacks in the pursuit of higher education; perhaps, the most formidable task is the inadequacy to articulate the relationship between the mission of the university and the specific needs of university's political, social, econom-

ic and cultural environment, and the characteristics of a rapidly globalising world. The challenges and problems confronting university education in Nigeria are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional; some of them will be examined below.

The first challenge of the Nigerian university education is the globalising effect. Globalisation is a complex issue and it has become the reigning phenomenon in almost all fields of human interests and endeavours. It is the principal mirror by which different strands of human development and standards are being meaningfully measured. It is not a new concept for African societies, nay societies in the Global South. It has its precursors in the forms of slavery, slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The mass import of only Western ideas and goods into Africa has denied the idea of the autonomous African education; this has been supplanted and destroyed by enthroning Western culture. Education is seen as a process of socialisation, inculturation, and developing individuals' cognitive abilities; in turn, individuals use knowledge to improve themselves, their culture and society. However, today, schools have been potent instruments of westernization—teaching syllabi give priority to foreign ideas, activities and values. In consequence, people, becoming dazed and uprooted, despise their own culture. Joseph Nwizarh points out that the goal of education should serve the provision of the effective framework for the articulation of an appropriate public sphere of citizens who would be capable of exercising power over their political, economic and cultural lives as well as over the relevant conditions of knowledge production and acquisition (2001, 73–74). This is a great challenge to university education in Nigeria because the kind of adopted orientation is unsuitable for its cultural background, growth and development. It is not a crime to borrow some elements from other cultures if this does not imply the superiority of one culture to another. No separate, strictly isolated culture is sufficient for broad education because education is a process of acculturation through which the individual realizes his/her potentialities and thereby attains his/her self-fulfillment.

The issue of funding has been a source of the continuous crisis in the Nigerian educational sector. Various organisations, parents, labour unions etc. at various *fora* have pointed the attention of the government to the poor funding of the system. The effect of poor funding is evident in the brain-drain, a phenomenon that has seriously depleted universities in Nigeria. Over the past decades, due to funding and political imbroglio in the society and in “Ivory Towers,” as a result of gradual exodus of many lecturers, Nigerian universities have lost their ability to conduct exciting search for innovation (Ogu, 2008). Some academics transferred from academies to other sectors of economy, where professionals and scientists receive higher remuneration and greater social recognition, while some left the country for “greener pastures” where they were appreciated and recognized. It is seen today the result of the mass exodus of many experienced as well as young scholars fleeing from the dislocation of university life into more rewarding and challenging sectors of the social structure.

Another challenge of university education in Nigeria is the use of the Western-oriented cultural background to examine and analyse the African cultural ethos, thoughts and values. Kola Owolabi (2007, 78) points out that the crisis of the university in Africa today, and ever before, is precisely that of employing a Western-oriented institution to challenge and dethrone African values. But the failure of this institution to perform its allotted assignment is linked with the ambivalence of the African society about the foreign value system. The material benefits of Western modernity have been so highly evaluated that the very quest for authenticity cannot be fully effected by African universities without incurring the wrath of the ordinary people whose lives have been in a great extent dependent on modern culture. This ambivalence of the society in regard to Western culture is a justifiable excuse for our universities to neglect the call for cultural autonomy. The cultural autonomy may imply cultural insularity; African society cannot afford to pay the price. Here, Paul Harrison (1987, 55) avers that the today westernisation has spread into every nook and cranny in the Third World, and because of the discrimination practised against the non-westernisation it is proceeding with accelerating pace. It creeps down key arteries of indigenous society, poisoning it from within. So, the usage of the Western orientation in the process of developmental changes in Nigeria will continue.

NIGERIAN (AFRICAN) UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY—A WAY FORWARD

At this juncture I shall attempt to present the positions that must be taken into account in the process of rebuilding educational policies toward sustaining all aspects of the Nigerian society.

The first option would be a strict adherence to the provision of the university autonomy by using the criterion of best global practices. The Nigerian educational policies should be devoid of all the tele-guided attitudes of the governmental over-bearing on ivory towers. Longing for development in all areas of the society with overbearing policies of the government would diminish the capabilities of the universities to meaningfully contribute to the development of society.

Related to the above is the issue of funding; the issue of universities funding should be diversified by attracting private and individual sectors funding, and by not tolerating intended-funding agencies dictating or directing the programmes of fund allocation. Though the diversification is needed, the factor of appropriate funding by national and international development partners must form the core of the higher education development in Nigeria. Funding is central to the much needed internalisation of quality in higher education; so, donor agencies must consider this to be a priority in the institutionalisation of global competition of the Nigerian higher education. Universities like Oxford, Cam-

bridge, Harvard, Yale, and University College London etc. are great today because there are generously funded by individual and corporate donators. This fact must be taken into account for the overall interest toward the growth and development in African societies.

Gregory Cajete avers that “education is in crisis [...] with unprecedented challenges in the global community of nations desperately struggling with massive social, economic, and cultural change” (Cajete, 1994, 25). To solve this crisis, Joseph Nwizarh proposes critical education to adopt the role of facilitating a discursive and experiential understanding of life forces such that citizens may provide a critical assessment of facts others than those presented in the official culture. Critical education involves the articulation of strategic life-models and interpersonal rapport schedules within a context animated by culturally diverse alternative view-points.

Also important are the issues of indigenous education and the use of mother tongue in the dissemination of thought-patterns. Formal education may be valuable if it is in line with the nature of Africans, if it is closely linked with African social life both in material and spiritual aspects. Nobody can be adequately educated outside his/her cultural environment and cultural heritage; it is those two factors which set a necessary basis of education.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel declared that the individual derives his understanding and practice of virtue from the virtuous state of which he is a part, while Immanuel Kant’s ideal community consists of men who treat one another as ends rather than means. Kant’s famous categorical imperative states that we should always act as though our individual actions were to become a universal law of nature binding on all men in secular circumstances. The responsibility of these strata cannot be overemphasized and waved aside in the education of the individual (Olatunji, 2001, 50). In this respect Philip Ujomu claims that the fundamental task of education is to foster a sense of belonging and togetherness among various peoples and interests in the Nigerian polity. Only the imbibing of core values such as honesty, industry and dedication in the discharge of duties and responsibilities can ensure the achievement of national consciousness (Ujomu, 2001–2002, 41). Here, George Ehusani argues that the form of educational attainment Nigerians must have should be humanistic in nature, which will call for a serious breach of our present notion and idea about development. According to him, development must be a human fact. It must be an ongoing commitment to advance from the less human conditions of disease, hatred, crime, war, racism, poverty, oppression, injustice, corruption, faithlessness, hopelessness to the more human conditions of health, of love, peaceful co-existence, equity, justice, community fellow-feeling, faith and hope (Ehusani, 1997, 243). These attitudinal changes in university education would go a long way in straightening educational goals and objectives for the development of African society.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been focused on those areas of the Nigerian (nay, African) university system that must be attended in the best interest of all Nigerians. It is futile to theorise without participating in the real struggle for a new world order through sound and adequate education. The government alone cannot fund university education; individual donors and private establishments should be beckoned upon to support the building of a virile university system. What this suggests is that all stakeholders must be ready to contribute their quota in this struggle.

The systemic problems that affect all other sectors could be reduced if the university system elaborated a functional educational ideology. Such a right educational ideology being envisaged should be a culturally-defined construct appropriate to socialize individuals. The postulated ideology causes change that in time will create a profound transformation of the self and the whole society.

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German Melikhov

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOSE WHO ARE DISCORDANT WITH THEMSELVES

ABSTRACT

The article introduces an idea of practical philosophy, a philosophy which is aimed at changing a philosopher, not at developing philosophical knowledge. Philosophy is not another theory of being or knowledge, but a way of holding oneself in the state of being open (to truth). It is stated that this philosophy is based on differentiating the experience of the encounter (the entrance) and its conceptualization, that they are not equal. A philosophical concept not only points at the source of the philosophical thinking, but also eclipses it. The main obstacle for a philosopher is his/her own self, tempted by his/her own philosophy.

Keywords: practical philosophy, setting exercise, discordance, philosophical concept, the visit, the entrance, (self-) problematization.

The dissension among philosophers is quite amusing. I had heard about a famous philosopher who left a lecture of another great philosopher disappointed. He said that the lecturer's understanding of one famous philosopher's teaching is wrong, that it should be understood differently.

Psychological grounds aside, the source of the dissension lies within the philosophical concepts. Philosophers argue not because of philosophy itself, but because of teachings of their own. It is possible that such oppositions supply a philosophical tradition, which existence is fueled by individual thinking. However, let us not jump to conclusions. It is pleasant to think that discordant philosophers secure the tradition better than concordant. The question arises how the term "discordance" should be understood?

Are we disappointed by the fact that another philosopher is unwilling to see things the way we see them? A strange assumption. It leads to conclusion that another person is obliged to think the same way as we do.

The main obstacle for a philosopher is his or her own self, tempted by his or her own philosophy. No conception is capable of reflecting the whole truth. The

truth is deeply bounded with a human, a philosophical doctrine only hints at the truth. Every life is an individual case of the visit (of the truth). The awareness of it is an entrance. One can live not knowing that he or she is embraced by the truth. The entrance is awareness of your openness, awareness of the fact that there is truth out there that you live in presence of something simple yet deep, something that embraces everything and has a true being. This is the truly real thing!

The entrance has a beginning: the time and place of the awakening. Alas it has no end, it follows you through the whole life. The entrance is not an appropriation of the truth, not a development of “the theory of everything”; it is an experience of endless expanding of limits of your understanding, certain events (of openness) influencing the quality of our lives. The entrance is a life, actually.

The entrance is defined by the visit, therefore it cannot be made one’s property. It does not belong to us, we belong to it. It means that sometimes you yourself become an obstacle for you.

A philosophy is a thematization of the entrance, an attempt to hold yourself in the state of being open (walking down your path as far as possible). Philosophy is not another theory of being or knowledge. A philosophy can analyze things which existed long before philosophizing: the visit and the entrance. The philosophizing is an applied feature. It is just a setting exercise, a tool of “making yourself firm,” a technique to clear and improve your consciousness.

An important requirement to achieve openness is to betake the event of entrance, not to remember the theory. The entrance (or life) cannot be exchanged to an image or a notion. To be discordant with yourself is preferable to discordance with another person. Being discordant with yourself, one loses a very convenient thing: a developed mind-set. Reflective recall, methodical doubt, and phenomenological reduction are different variations of one way of expressing the discordance with yourself in philosophy.

Let us try to imagine the philosophy where a philosopher is considered as an indestructible obstacle.

It could be a philosophy based on the entrance. An experience of the visit of the truth precedes philosophizing. When did Descartes become a philosopher? When he saw a series of dreams important for him? Or when he started his famous meditations? Answer is obvious, at least for me: meditations only disclosed things which already existed within him, transformed them into concepts.

It could be a philosophy where philosophers avoid creation of a complete philosophy actual for every age. It could resemble the principle of Max Scheler: to make new and new hypothesis considering the entrance, to be consistent only in changing your previous points of view.

It could be a philosophy where philosophers interact with each other on principles of solidary (reflective) communication based on differentiation

between the entrance and its conceptualization. Real philosophical ideas are not universal truths, but successful or not successful attempts to problematization the entrance (hypothesis: “Everything is water,” “Thought and being are identical,” “Virtue is knowledge,” “I think therefore I am,” “God is dead,” “Back to the things themselves”). The aim of a philosophical communication is not to persuade another person and not to teach him, the aim is (self-) problematization making you able to understand better or to enrich the entrance experience (your or another person’s). The aim of a philosophical communication is to help yourself or others to move forward, to shift their opinions.

It could be a practical philosophy, a philosophy that influences a philosopher. A philosopher himself or herself who found the entrance would be the subject of the philosophy. Understanding a philosophical idea as a problematization of the entrance is a setting exercise. Philosophical ideas investigate not only different aspects of reality, but also us. We can think about the meaning of social interactions (like Karl Marx). Or we can think about our ability to interact with others and a cooperation as a part of these interactions. Philosophical ideas present us new aspects of our perception of the world, they allow us to express our discordance with ourselves, and they help us to broaden limits of our understanding.

It could be a philosophy where unexpressed is equally important as expressed, or even more important. Philosophizing is defined by a philosopher’s life, by the quality of his or her being, therefore, by the entrance. In philosophizing may be reflected the action of the entrance and its conceptualization. A philosophy requires certain depth, and depth is available for a philosopher who found the entrance. A person does not belong entirely to himself or herself, something to which he or she willingly entrusted his or her self highly influences a person. There are philosophers whose views are more interesting than their personalities. There is also a different type of philosophers: unexpressed in their philosophies is more significant than expressed. Ludwig Wittgenstein is a representative of this type. Wittgenstein’s philosophy never was a reason to justify his way of thinking and his behavior. The action of the entrance, which initiates a thought, has three indirect features. They, however, should be treated with great care because it is easy to get confused. Firstly, it is what Aristotle called “astonishment.” Astonishment is an experience that features the entrance. Astonishment also is another name for a miracle. “It is impossible, and yet here it is! How on Earth it can be?” Thus every philosopher speaks about the same, about something that astonished him or her once. A philosopher writes the same text, speaks differently about the same thing—about the entrance. Secondly, the action of the entrance is expressed through confidence: a philosopher feels presence. Because of this, he or she thinks of what he or she touched as of the first reality. Philosophizing is always drawn to the origins, to the source perceived by a reader or a listener as the reality, something genuine, even if a reader or a listener has entirely different set of worldviews. This impression of serious-

ness and genuineness of discussed matter in philosophical communication is a result of a philosopher's conviction. There is no contradiction with the original assumption: the conviction does not contradict the need to be discordant with yourself. A philosopher's discordance is bound with not the entrance itself, but with one of its hypotheses. Finally, it is courage of a philosopher who performs problematization and develops a specific understanding of a philosophy. In fact, a person has not much power of his/her own. The source of power lies in what a philosopher considers encompassing, in what he/she decided to serve for. Any philosophical concept can be debated, but the astonishment leading to exiting idea is undisputed, and deserves respect.

It could be a philosophy of people discordant with themselves. The discordance is a way of perceiving the entrance by the means of reflection and problematization of previous philosophical experience. Philosophical texts contain not only a certain message, but also signs of philosopher's actions (reflection and problematization). A philosopher struggles against a developed way of thinking which tempts him/her. Some people use philosophical texts as a source of ideas, while others view them as exercises in reflection and (self-) problematization.

People discordant with themselves are best at securing the philosophical traditions because they have a chance to remain in the state of entrance.

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The congress registration fee is 60 euros or equivalent and biannual dues for ISUD membership is 20 euros. Both registration fee and society dues will be payable at the congress venue. Inability to pay these fees and dues should not be a barrier to congress participation or ISUD membership. Please contact Professor Charles Brown at cbrown@emporia.edu or Professor Małgorzata Czarnocka at mczarnoc@ifispan.waw.pl for requests to waive these fees and dues.

Modest travel stipends for scholars from developing regions will be available on a competitive basis *Dialogue and Universalism: Journal of the International Society for Universal Dialogue* will publish selected papers presented at the Congress.

For additional information about the ISUD XI World Congress please contact Professor Charles Brown at cbrown@emporia.edu or Professor Małgorzata Czarnocka at mczarnoc@ifispan.waw.pl.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of philosophical and scholarly dialogue on the great issues of our times. We hope you will join us.

Professor Charles Brown Congress Organizer dialogueisud@gmail.com;
www.worlddialogue.org