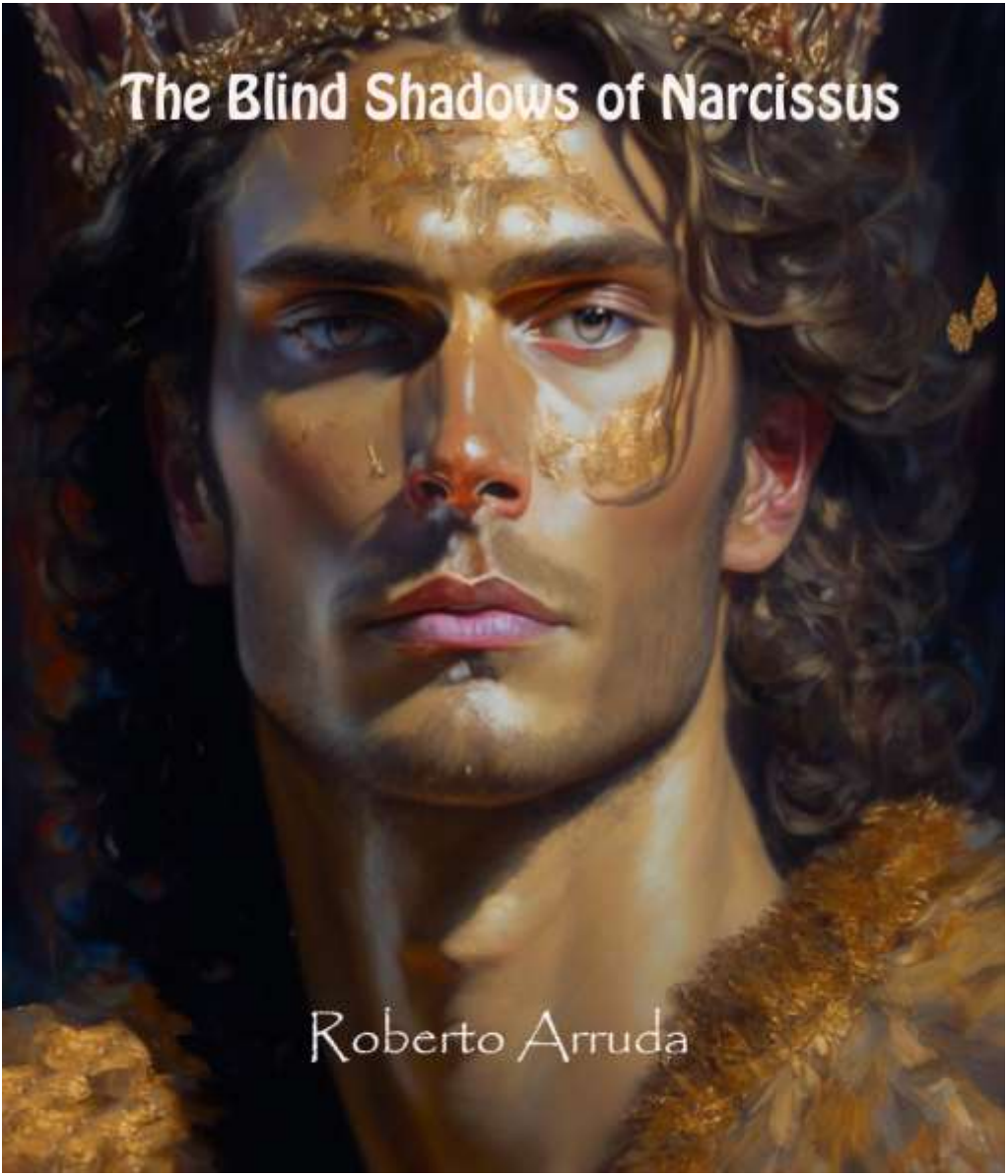
The Blind Shadows of Narcissus
Roberto Arruda

THE BLIND SHADOWS OF NARCISSUS

(a psychosocial study on collective imaginary)

Roberto Thomas Arruda, 2023

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Other recent works by the author

" Moral Archetypes– Ethics in Prehistory" (2019) PDF format https://philpapers.org/rec/ARRMAI - edited book, 146 pages.

"Cosmovisions and Realities - the each one's philosophy" Terra à Vista - 2023. PDF format https://philpapers.org/rec/ARRCAR - edited book, 220 pages.

"Early Buddhist Concepts - in today's language " (2021)-PDF format: https://philpapers.org/rec/THOEBC-2. Edited book, 226 pages ;

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents		3
Acknowledgments		4
Remarks		6
Abstract		7
Title I – Conceptual Framework (on which grounds we will think)		10
Chapter I	Introduction: Reasoning, biases, and beliefs	11
Chapter II	Reality	28
Chapter III	The imaginary	43
	Conceptualization	43
	The collective imaginary	58
	Values of the imaginary	65
Chapter IV	The gradient property of truth	70
Chapter V	The blind shadows of Narcissus.	96
	Introduction, concept and nature	96
	Collective blind imaginary and social constructs	115
Title II – Factual Analysis (facts expressing our concepts)		124
Chapter VI	Primal constructs from the blind imaginary	125
	Animism and divinization	125
	The immortality	145
	The anthropomorphic gods	153
Chapter VII	The anthropocentric Universe	160
	Conceptualization	160
	Attributions	167
	The overvaluation problem	175
	The sectarian fragmentation	176
Chapter VIII - The present days "Post-everything" thinking (conclusion)		179
References and Bibliography		190- 228

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To all the intelligence existing in the Universe.

To Glória, ever and again.

To Prof. Scott Plous for his admirable effort in favor of Social Psychology.

To my brother, Fernando Mourão Flora, a living disciple of Lacan.

"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it."

(Mahatma Gandhi. 1869 – 1948)

REMARKS

This work will adopt the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association Referencing Guide) Style 3rd edition1 for quotations and citations. Exceptionally, we may apply the APA (American Psychological Association) Style in some citations.

This paper's formatting features will follow most of the European and North American Universities' corresponding guidelines, complemented, when necessary, by the ABNT-NBR rule #14724.

Since this study is research-based, in-text block quotes are often employed to understand better-referred theories and doctrines. However, irrespective of such need, we looked at all times to strictly observe the corresponding guidelines and limits recommended by The American Psychological Association (APA)- 2019.

[1] MHRA Style Guide - Modern Humanities Research Association- 1 January 2013•120pp - ISBN: 978-1-781880-09-8

ABSTRACT

This work will approach essential questions about the collective imaginary and its relations with reality and truth. First, we should face this subject in a conceptual framework, followed by the corresponding factual analysis of demonstrable behavioral realities.

We will adopt not only the methodology but mostly the tenets and propositions of the analytic philosophy, which for sure will be apparent throughout the study and may be identified by the features described by Perez[2]:

> *Rabossi (1975) defends the idea that analytic philosophy can be identified by considering certain family resemblances. He suggests the following family traits: a positive attitude toward scientific knowledge; a cautious attitude toward metaphysics; a conception of philosophy as a conceptual task, which takes conceptual analysis as a method; a close relationship between language and philosophy; a concern with seeking argumentative answers to philosophical problems; search for conceptual clarity.*

[2] Perez, Diana Ines, "Analytic Philosophy in Latin America," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/latin-american-analytic/ (retrieved on May,29,2020.)

These core concepts involve cultural, social, religious, scientific, philosophic, moral, and political contents belonging to each and collective existence.

In this paper, we will not debate or demonstrate. Our purpose is not to systematically methodize, criticize, or bring anything to evidence.

The present work is based on analytical reflection. We will speculate as comprehensively and profoundly as possible and express the results of our thoughts. Notwithstanding the subject's multidisciplinary nature and the methodological openness to accepting contributions from any field of science, this work belongs to psychology and ontology, or, in other words, social and ontological psychology.

The free methodology guiding such reflections embraces and considers everything approaching coherence with philosophical and psychological epistemology. This methodology does not pursue evidence but looks for the interrelation among existing evidence of any nature and magnitude, inferring a coherent meaning to the real things.

Many of the great thinkers at any time never searched for demonstrations, theorizations, or systematizations. These thinkers just thought, meditated, and could approach the truth with the enlightenment of their humility.

They will be our reference and the example to be followed. Indeed, we will not find the truth, but we may be sure about something: in many moments, we will get close to the truth, and in all moments, we will retreat from untruth and lies.

This paper's main scope is to observe how some of humankind's essential evolutionary attributes, like creativity, imagination, and association, can become a hazardous sickness, sheltered in the misty shadows of intelligence.

TITLE I

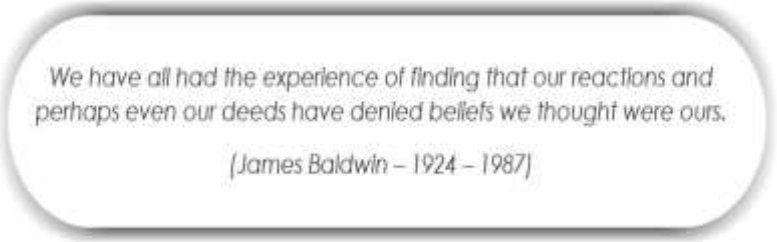
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

(on which grounds we will think)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

REASONING, BIASES, AND BELIEFS



We face a multidisciplinary study and will always be surrounded by three core concepts: reality, truth, and the imaginary. Nevertheless, first, we must hold the proper epistemological tools to conceptualize each of them at the appropriate time.

This conceptualization means selecting from the innumerous existing studies and theories coherent foundations, able to attribute acceptable cogency to our claims and conclusions, the same way that it means disregarding many other ideas and concepts whatsoever.

This cognitive triangle means the confluence of the most debated and not consensual meanings of humanities, an intriguing, dangerous, and very inviting road.

Any living human dives into this unknown sea of uncertainties every day of his existence, each one by his true nature and situation. These concepts are not the expression of something belonging to phenomenology surrounding humans but intrinsic properties of the being, sometimes resulting in rational or mental activity, emotional statuses, and other triggering behavioral patterns.

Epistemology, metaphysics, psychology, neurosciences, and history will help us understand the intrinsic elements of these conceptualizations as independent and interrelated matters.

Mellone, S.H ([3]) analyzed the methodological approach that we will adopt:

> *Frequently, it is pointed out that the habit of isolating and abstracting one inquiry from others within the "magic sphere" of philosophy is a fruitful source of error and confusion.*
> *Philosophy, like Wordsworth Cloud, moves all together: we cannot isolate and come to a conclusion upon one problem without thereby prejudicing our conclusions about others.*

[3] S. H. Malone - Psychology, Epistemology, Ontology, Compared and Distinguished – *Mind*-New Series, Vol. 3, No. 12 (Oct. 1894), pp. 474-490 - Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Mind Association" - https://www.jstor.org/stable/2247848 - retrieved on Apr. 27, 2020.

> *Without denying this, it is just important to remember that philosophy, unlike the cloud, must be a whole of parts that can be intelligibly distinguishable just because they are related or connected together*.

The author sees these interrelations as structurally aggregated to the method and sustains that "The parts of philosophy are not unrelated inquiries but differences of the method within the One inquiry."

Thus, our first challenge is always to maintain consistent and coherent interrelated reasoning, guided as long as possible by critical thinking.

Justine M. Kingsbury and Tracy A. Bowell, [4,] both from the University of Waikato, approached this central cognitive problem, implicating all of us, in a paper published in 2016.

Both authors consider that in our every day and superficial perceptions, it is usual to keep in mind that anyone should impartially submit his perceptions and understandings of reality to compare with the evidence. Subsequently, they should confirm or modify their content from the correspondence or incoherencies arising from this comparison. In other terms, we should, in general, expect from persons the practice of at least a basic and straightforward concept of critical thinking in their lives and behavior.

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[4] Kingsbury, Justine M., and Bowell, Tracy A. "Thinking critically about beliefs it is hard to think critically about" – (2016) – at the University of Windsor, OSSA Conference Archive. Retrieved on Apr.28, 2020, from https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2255&context=ossaarchive

However, this critical thinking attribute faces many barriers, often prevailing on the rational analysis, "even when the beliefs in question are every day and inconsequential." (op. cit). The authors focused on individuals' and social groups' cognitive processes and critical thinking and referred to the most significant "barriers." These "barriers" are our "old fellows" in social psychology and epistemology: the biases and the beliefs. Indeed, keeping personal biases and beliefs apart from critical thinking is not a simple or easy task. Realistically, we could understand this as a wish or scope rather than an available and accountable reality. Nevertheless, we should accept the challenge of removing our methodology and all our biases and beliefs to achieve consistency in our reasoning. The reason is not that biases and assumptions could be wrong or not, but just because, primarily, they belong to the realm of the unique properties of each self or social group, and, being so, they are part of the scope of our inquiries and not a cognitive element of our methodology.

An extensive analysis of human biases and beliefs is not the purpose of this work and would not fit this brief introductory Chapter. However, considering the study's progress, we should bring back to memory, as closely as possible, those selected as the most commonly occurring in the contexts we will analyze. The research corresponding to each of them may be found in the references.

Individual biases have been the subject of uncountable studies and experiences, mostly from 1960 onwards, conducted with rigorous phenomenological methodologies, and revealed the origin of many deconstructions of the individual cognitive processes and the enormous difficulties in coherently conducting perception and reasoning.

a) The Confirmation Bias. Means preferentially noticing and over-rating the significance of evidence in favor of our current belief - Wason, P. C &Johnson-Laird, P. N. (1972) ([5]) - (Koriat, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1980)[6],

b) The Dunning-Kruger Effect (also known as the superiority illusion). It arises from one's inability to perceive one's lack of skills or capacities and from an external misperception of people of high ability (Kruger, Justin Dunning, David (1999) [7].

c) Belief Perseverance. It is the persistence of a belief, although evidence has denied the reasons for holding it. (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975)[8],

d) The "my-side" and "one-side" bias. It is the tendency to give higher evaluations to arguments that support one's opinions than those that refuted his prior positions, as well as to prefer a one-sided to a balanced argument (Keith E. Stanovich &

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[5]Wason, P. C., & Johnson-Laird, P. N. (1972).” Psychology of reasoning: Structure and content. Harvard U. Press.” – at Apa PsycNet – retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1973-08484-000

[6] Koriat, Asher & Lichtenstein, Sarah & Fischhoff, Baruch. (1980). Reasons for Confidence. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory. 6. 107-118. 10.1037/0278-7393.6.2.107.

[7] Kruger, Justin;Dunning, David(1999). "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments."Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.77(6):11211134CiteSeerX*10.1.1.64.2655*.doi:10.1037/00223514.77.6.1121.PMID10626367

[8] Ross, L., Lepper, M. R., & Hubbard, M. (1975). Perseverance in self-perception and social perception:
Biased attributional processes in the debriefing paradigm Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,
32(5), 880–892.https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.32.5.880

Richard F. West- 2008)[9].

e) The causal attribution (Attribution Theory). Means- the process of someone making an inference about the causes of people's mental states or behaviors. (Mehmet Eskin – 2013)[10] (Heider, F., 1958)[11].

f) The Misperceptions and misunderstandings in the individual psychological or social construction of reality (Viviane Burr, 1995)[12]

g) The Ambiguity effect is the resistance to understanding and accepting alternatives that results are still unsafe or unknown. (J. Baron 1994)[13]

h) The continued influence effect is the tendency to prioritize misinformation in memory that has already been corrected, disregarding such corrections. (H.M.Johnson, C.M.Seifert 1994)[14]

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[9] Keith E. Stanovich & Richard F. West (2008) "On the failure of cognitive ability to predict my side and one-sided thinking biases, Thinking & Reasoning,14:2,129167, DOI:10.1080/13546780701679764

[10] Eskin, Mehmet (2013)– "Problem-Solving Therapy in the Clinical Practice." (2013)– Elsevier - ISBN 978-0-12-398455-5 – DOI https://doi.org/10.1016/C2011-0-07817-1

[11] Heider, F (1958) "The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations." N.York: Wiley.

[12] Burr, Vivien (1995). "An Introduction to Social Constructionism." Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy; Vol 7, No 3 (1995); 267-267. 7. 10.5195/jffp.1995.375

[13] Baron J (1994)." Thinking and deciding." Cambridge University Press.ISBN978-0-521-43732-5

[14] Johnson HM, Seifert CM (November 1994). "Sources of the continued influence effect: When misinformation in memory affects later

i) The anthropocentric bias is the tendency to use human properties and nature to reason about unknown or unfamiliar phenomena. (Ben Mylius 2018).[15]

j) The Anchoring Bias. Expresses the tendency to rely on initial information, which works as an "anchor' to the formulation of subsequent

Social biases affect groups' interactive perception and reasoning in a determined situation, causing deconstructions in collective perception. Unlike individual biases, social ones constitute an influence from the group to the individual, affecting his cognitive processes.

a) The Ingroup Bias: the tendency to behave in favor of others belonging to the same group as the agent – irrational "esprit de corps" (MB Brewer – 1979),[16]

b) The Group Attribution Error: the tendency to understand that the collective decisions prevail over the individual opinions, even when these outcomes underestimate available information or evidence (Scott T. Allison and David M. Messick – 1985),[17]

Inferences".Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition. 1420–1436.doi:10.1037/0278-7393.20.6.1420

[15] Mylius, Ben (2018) – "Three Types of Anthropocentrism" - https://doi.org/10.5840/envirophil20184564 Retrieved on Apr.29, 2020

[16]. Brewer, MB (1979) – "In-group bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis."- American Psychological Association Psychological Bulletin 86 (2), 307 - https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1979-25967-001

[17] Allison, Scott T and Messick, David M. – (1985) "The Group Attribution Error" – Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 21(6): 563-579

c) The Crowd Effects: a behavioral disturbance induced by the group's anonymity, provoking the crowd's individuals to lose their sense of self and personal responsibility. (Gustav Le Bon- 1895)[18] and (Jaap van Ginneken – 1992)[19],

d) The Authority Bias: the tendency to obedience to any orders given by someone considered an authority, even though they believe that there is something wrong with those orders, and even when there would not be a penalty for defying them (Milgram, 1963)[20],

e) The Cheerleader Effect: a belief in holding stronger personal attractivity when acting in a group than when acting alone (Walker D 2014)[21]

f) False Consensus Effect: the situational pervasive cognitive bias in social inferences, when people tend wrongly to see their own behavioral choices and judgments as relatively usual and appropriate to existing circumstances (Marks and Miller – 1987),[22]

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[18] Le Bon, Gustav (1895)" Psychology of Crowds." Sparkling Books edition. Sparkling Books, (2009).

[19] van Ginneken, Jaap (1992) "Crowds, psychology, and politics" (1992). Reviews: History cooperative journals 99-3; Cambridge Journals Abstract 2942744

[20] Milgram S (October 1963). "Behavioral Study of Obedience."Journal of Abnormal Psychology. 67(4): 371–8. doi 10.1037/h0040525.PMID 14049516

[21] Walker D, Vul E (January 2014). "Hierarchical encoding makes individuals in a group seem more attractive." Psychological Science.25(1): 230–5. doi 10.1177/0956797613497969.PMID 24163333

[22] Marks G, Miller N (1987). "Ten years of research on the false-consensus effect: An empirical and theoretical review."Psychological Bulletin.102(1): 72–90.doi:10.1037/0033-2909.102.1.72

g) The System Justification Theory (or status rationalization): the adoption by individuals of the belief that the justification of the status quo may assure and satisfy many underlying needs, albeit the system could be disadvantageous to others (Jost, J. T., & van der Toorn, J. - 2012)[23],

h) Self-serving bias: the self-serving bias is the tendency to attribute all positive events to their character and attribute adverse events to external causes and factors (White & Plous – 1995),[24]

All these cognitive accidents affect, in one way or another, the content and conclusions of our study, and many of them are causal or determinant relative to the facts and contexts we should analyze.
We highlight one as relevant to understanding some collective behaviors, which are the subjects of the factual analysis we will consider in Part II.
We refer to the long-held belief bias, firstly referred to by Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard in1975 as the "believe perseverance bias," and recently researched in a profound study conducted by Geoffrey L. Cohen[25] Stanford University on the

[23] Jost, J. T., & van der Toorn, J. (2012). System justification theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), Handbook of theories of socialpsychology(p.313343).SagePublicationsLtd.https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n42

[24] White, Jonathan & Plous, Scott. (1995). – "Self-Enhancement and Social Responsibility: On Caring More, but Doing Less, Than Others." Journal of Applied Social Psychology. 25. 1297 - 1318. 10.1111/j.1559-1816. 1995.tb02619. x.

[25] Cohen, Geoffrey L. Stanford University –"Identity, Belief, and Bias" https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/cohen_chap_hanson.pdf - (to appear in J. Hanson Ed., "Ideology, Psychology, and Law") – retrieved on May,29,2020.

social psychology of identity and belief.
Besides his discoveries, one of the findings of his research confirms other already researched biases and extends their conclusion referring to many social constructs:

> *People often persist in long-held beliefs, even in the face of that that invalidates them. In a classic study, opponents and proponents of capital punishment reviewed the same.*
> *Mixed scientific evidence concerning the ability of the death penalty to deter would-be murderers. Each side saw that evidence as, on the whole, confirming their prior*
> *beliefs (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). They tended to accept the research that supported their prior beliefs and denigrate the research that contradicted those beliefs. As a consequence, they reported that the evidence made them even more extreme in their beliefs. The tendency to evaluate new information through the prism of pre-existing beliefs, known as assimilation bias, is robust and pervasive (Kahan, 2010; Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004; Tetlock, 2005; cf. Gerber & Green, 1999)*

.

Biases are always situational and causational elements of the incoherence of individual or social cognitive processes. Unlike this, beliefs are not situational, albeit often subject to outcomings of such inconsistencies. In contrast, beliefs can be a coherent product of evidence, critical thinking, and an absurd expression. Therefore, biases always contain mistakes or improprieties, and beliefs are not theoretically value- attributable "per se."

All our flawed beliefs and ignorance come from our biases, and evidence and critical thinking born all our knowledge and coherent beliefs. Both follow the same process, growing from very different seeds. The fertility and coexistence of these opposite grounds of consciousness are a part of the dialectic human paradox.

Human beliefs are among the most intriguing subjects of science and philosophy. They could be seen as comparable to the bones of our physical bodies: beliefs are the skeletons of the self.

The intricate and delicate web of psychological, neuronal, and behavioral elements of a human being's identity revolves around the pillars of his beliefs. In this sense, beliefs are causal when understood as a system, as we will later assume.

If we could use Occam's Razor strictly, we should say just the following:

"Beliefs are a memorized system of situational value attributions outcoming from one's experience."

Nevertheless, we should observe this subject more extensively because we do not have Occam's abilities.

There are different standpoints for the analysis of beliefs. When we observe them as a process, we start by finding that each individual, in daily life, attributes values to absolutely everything related to his phenomenological experience. Psychological and neuronal processes determine this attribution, occurring since the individual is born.

These attributions are kept in memory and will rest there forever or until a new and different experience eventually.

could come and modify the corresponding attributional register. Pure sensations and ideas like warm, cold, beautiful, ugly, cheap, expensive, tedious, and exciting, many, few, start the value attribution process. Everything related to everything one has experienced feeds an immense, unique individual databank.

By saying "everything that has been experienced," we mean that the cognitive contents feeding the attributional register we are talking about are not limited to factual, empirical experience but contain all the attributions coming from the imaginary and the collective unconscious. Contexts and representations like imaginary or alternative worlds or entities and projection of revolutionary ideas may assume the forms of a belief system. Likewise, many of our core beliefs are not a consequence of a rational and analytical process but are the heritage of collective experiences and are uncritically accepted (Richard – 1993).[26]

These uncountable registers do not exist in isolation but embody a notably complex system of continuing interrelated and comparative information, from which outcomes can be attributed a specific value about any situation involving the individual perceptive processes.

These outcoming value attributions are called beliefs and referentially command everything in human behavior. They are the skeleton of the self.

[26] Richard W. Paul “The Logic of Creative and Critical Thinking “ First Published September1,1993,Researchrticlehttps://doi.org/10.1177/00027642930370010 04 - retrieved on May 05,2020

Lewis[27] emphasizes the evaluative and directional nature of such outcomes:

> *Beliefs are our brain's way of making sense of and navigating our complex world. They are mental representations of the ways our brains expect things in our environment to behave and how things should be related to each other—the patterns our brain expects the world to conform to. Beliefs are templates for efficient learning and are often essential for survival.*

The belief formation process called neurosciences' attention in the last decades, triggering many research pieces on humans and primates. These studies showed that belief formation corresponds to fundamental brain processes of attributing affective meaning to reality, which can capacitate individuals to elaborate on their choices and make decisions.

From the exact research emerged the conclusion that the outcomes of these neural processes can have an empirical, relational, or conceptual nature, as exposed by Rüdiger & Angel:[28]

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[27] Lewis, Ralph M.D. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center Toronto https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/experts/ralph-lewis-md retrieved on May 03, 2020

[28] "Belief formation – a driving force for brain evolution" - Rüdiger J.Seitzab & Angel, Hans-Ferdinand https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bandc.2020.105548 Retrievedfromhttps://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278262619303860 on May, 03,2020

> *Empirical beliefs are about objects, and relational beliefs are about events, as in tool use and in interactions between subjects that develop below the level of awareness and are updated dynamically. Conceptual beliefs are more complex, being based on narratives and participation in ritual acts. As neural processes are known to require computational space in the brain, the formation of increasingly complex beliefs demands extra neural resources. Here, we argue that the evolution of human beliefs is related to the phylogenetic enlargement of the brain, including the parietal and medial frontal cortex in humans.*

These studies' findings bring the beliefs, while a neural process, to the realm of the biological factors influencing the human brain evolution, which, to an extent, is still undeciphered.

A corollary of all these process features assumes that our behavioral contexts are dynamic in the face of a continuously changing phenomenology because of the inseverable interdependency among the sides of the triangle of *experience- reasoning- beliefs* (Usó-Domenech & Nescolarde-Selva – 2016)[29].

Due to these causal elements' interdependency, we can have several combinations in any belief origin.

When we analyze the variable upshots of the process, we can observe that they contain inescapable "connecting dots" and "filling-in gaps."

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[29] Usó-Doménech, J.L., Nescolarde-Selva, J.-"What are Belief Systems?" - Found Sci 1,147–152 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-015-9409-z

These processual "holes" are filled up by other elements in the human cognitive structure, such as extrapolations, biased assumptions, and similarities to previously recognized patterns, which are not necessarily coherent with reality. In our neural processes, no space can be left empty, and where emptiness occurs, our brain fills it with supposedly similar contents.

These core features are a way to understand the imperfection or loss of our beliefs' accuracy resulting from a process prone to error. (Lewis – 2018)[30].

Observing the systems drifting from beliefs' interrelations dynamic, we adopt the following concept proposed by Usó-Doménech, J.L., & Nescolarde-Selva, J:

> *"Belief Systems are structures of norms that are interrelated and that vary mainly in the degree in which they are systemic. What is systemic in the Belief System is the interrelation between several beliefs.*
>
> *Belief systems are the stories we tell ourselves to define our personal sense of reality. Every human being has a belief system that they utilize, and it is through this mechanism that we individually, 'make sense' of the world around us."*[31]

[30] Lewis, Ralph- (2018)- "Why We Care Even If The Universe Doesn't"- Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

[31] Usó-Doménech, J.L., Nescolarde-Selva, J.- "What are Belief Systems?". Found Sci21,147–152 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-015-9409-z - retrieved on May,3rd, 2020

From UC Santa Barbara (2016), Jim Logan, referring to Noah E. Friedkin's paper "Underlying Beliefs Change" contributes to several approaches we should consider.

We understand A group or collective belief system as a dynamic model setting a collection of attitudes, opinions, certainties, or cognitive orientations towards a person or statement, influenced by related and pre-existing beliefs in other issues. "There is an underlying cognitive consistency that links multiple beliefs."
In this direction, UC Sant Barbara led an extensive study with interdisciplinary and international collaboration, reaching mathematical models focusing on two processes: the interpersonal influence system modeling one's beliefs, and the other relates to the process of belief changes.
We should add to the author's reasoning and model a core element of these processes: the assertion that belief systems' existence does not depend
entirely on their committed believers. "*The believers do not wholly contain the belief system*; *in fact, they are unlikely to be aware of more than a small part of it and, knowingly or unknowingly, they must take the rest of the belief system on faith*." (Usó-Doménech, & Nescolarde-Selva – op.cit.)

In the same direction, many studies concluded that some logical inferences about beliefs are possible if we know other related beliefs held by the same individual or group. This underlined consistency and proper dynamic are core elements to understanding the whole system, mostly when discussing social institutions such as religion, politics, and the economy.

We will perceive such underlying when we analyze these central human organizational systems' frequent and continued conflicts. All conflicts between groups historically

registered such as war, cultural and religious strife, and revolutions are:

> *"A battle between belief systems. Symbols emerge strongly in such conflicts: they may be revered objects like stones, writings, buildings, flags, or badges; whatever they may be, they may symbolize the central core of the belief system. When people become symbols, the real person may become obscured behind the projected symbolic image or person." (Usó-Doménech & Nescolarde-Selva -op.cit)*

The concepts exposed in this Chapter are among the reasons why we may consider the individual human identity as the unique construct of each subject instead of a pre-existing and abstract "essence." The identity arises from the psycho-neural processing of all our logical and perceptive consistencies, inconsistencies, experiences, and inherited cultural references.

This assertion is consistent with phenomenological evidence rather than only a postulate of existentialism, as it has been at the corresponding times of Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

In principle, these are the crucial elements and "pitfalls" being processed and acting in our minds, which we will confront when facing the endless question: "What, at last, could mean reality?"

CHAPTER II

REALITY

Social psychology offers analytical and experimental knowledge of our biases, beliefs, and interactive situational behavior. In doing so, qualitative attributes such as "wrong, "false," "misunderstood," "illusionary," and "real" designate the output of experiments and reasonings.

However, we will consider that (i) These attributes do not belong to the sphere of psychology. They are metaphysical subjects, and only the proper philosophic thinking and methods can treat their contents. (ii) All these subjects integrate a vast labyrinth of philosophical studies, discussions, trends, and conceptualizations and do not have any universal meaning indistinctly applicable to all sciences and humanities.

In Kantian metaphysics, reality is taken into account as a category distinguished from but closely related to another category: the actuality (or existence)[32]

As widely known in metaphysics, categories are indivisible, but observe a category from their entities' sides. It is possible to analyze its content in distinct ways. From the cosmological side, we will understand that it is not precisely the same as observing from the human individual's side. It means a subtle, perceptive variation in the same category.

Despite being in the same category, the perception of reality from different angles favors incorporating its signification into various scientific and philosophical issues.

This fact explains why we frequently find references to the inner (or interior) reality distinguished from the outer (or external) reality in psychology. In principle, we should not care too much about using this dichotomy because it is not a denial of the category's unicity but a handy methodological tool, allowing many inputs to the study of reality coming from distinct scientific approaches. Instead, however, we should focus on the several meanings of such conceptual dualism, primarily by psychoanalysis, once possible misunderstandings.

The dawn of psychoanalytic ideas started with Sigmund Freud's (1856 – 1939) studies and the exposure of concepts of mental processes' mechanisms working as a psychological

[32] Warren, Daniel (2013)- "Reality and Impenetrability in Kant's Philosophy of Nature" –Routledge

construct of reality. From then on, the ideas of a "psychological reality" and a "physical reality" occupied relevant positions in psychology and philosophy, with each concept considered in separate orders.

In 1891, Freud's "On Aphasia: A Critical Study "proposed the theory of the connection between these two orders: the "thing presentations" and the "world presentations."

Psychoanalysis focuses on the "three layers" topological concept of mind and the complex constructs arising from the unconscious as containing only "thing presentations": *"a continuous phantasy-life which acts to defend against or to fulfill in imagination our basic instinctual desires."*[33]

In "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), Freud asserted that the pleasure principle and hallucinatory satisfaction in the earliest stages of life dominate the subject. The failure to obtain such satisfaction forces the infant to "represent for itself the real state of the external world." Originally unconscious thought is split: one part remains under the control of the pleasure principle and constructs fantasies; the other part, with language, becomes conscious and capable of judging whether a representation belongs to internal, psychic reality, or the external reality of the world.[34]Conflicts between philosophy and psychoanalysis was an expected effect in the face of Freud's ideas.

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[33] Casey, Edwards (1972) – "Freud Theory of Reality: A critical Account" – Review of Metaphysics. 25(4):659-690

[34]InternalReality/ExternalRealityEncyclopedia.com.https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries- thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/internal-reality external-reality- retrieved on May,08,2020

Anteceding Freud, since the pre-Socratic period, philosophy has always sustained and justified the structure of the reality category as *Physis* and its core elements, such as "being," "absolute," form," and "mind." Therefore, the modern ground of Scientific Realism became the understanding that the world demonstrated by science is the real one, irrespective of what we think it could be

Some of Freud's inconsistencies in his approaches to concepts of reality motivated strong rejections related to his theories' incursions in metaphysics:

> *Freud never mentions the fact that he has taken a number of contradictory epistemological positions; each position is presented as though it were the only one to which he had ever subscribed. Two conclusions are drawn from Freud's inconsistent treatment of the subject of reality. First, that Freud was unable to arrive at a firm decision regarding the ability of the human mind to know reality; second, that psychoanalysis is not competent to resolve philosophical problems*[35]*.*

What arises from the many discussions deriving from the psychoanalytic approaches to reality is the finding that these theories anyhow melted categorical.

[35] Reines Alvin J. "Freud's Concepts of Reality and God: A Text Study" Hebrew Union College Annual.Vol. 61 (1990), pp. 219-270. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23508177-Page Count: 52 – retrieved on May,08,2020.

philosophical concepts with individual causalities of perception – what does not make sense.

Anyhow, psychoanalytic ideas evolved to more elaborate forms under the modern theories of the psychological constructs of reality, such as the theory of the three levels of reality, based on the hypothesis that" any ontologically different level has its proper form of causality." Each one of these levels is called a "stratum of reality," generating new categorical "series" (or sub-categories) expressing three different strata: the psychological, social, and material.

However, as with psychoanalytic ideas, the "theories of the level of reality" return to the same inconsistency as Freud's thinking: melting individual causalities of perception with the category itself. Poli (2006)[36] expresses justified attention to this subject:

> *To avoid misunderstandings, it is convenient to start from the distinction between levels of reality and levels of interpretation.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *The problem of the levels of reality should be kept as separate as possible from the problem of the levels of interpretation. Although confusion between the two is not infrequent, trading one for the other is to blur or confound ontological dimensions with epistemological*

[36] Poli, Roberto (2006) – "Levels of Reality and the Psychological Stratum" - Revue internationale de philosophie 2006/2 (#236), pages 163 - 180

> *ones. Whatever the relationships between ontology and epistemology may be of opposition, connection, inclusion, or anything else, they are replicated in the difference between (levels of) description and (levels of) reality.*

Thus, the "psychological construction of reality" should be carefully interpreted because it may contain a hidden misunderstanding.

Through its psychological and cognitive functions, the human mind is a structure that can interpret reality accurately or not and project yet inexistent but possible realities, as well as constructs that never could be a part of reality.

Therefore, a "psychological construction of the perception of reality" exists, which does not ever mean a causal element of the reality category.

Cognitive-linguistic research suggests that language plays a core function in this process. Starting with Avram Noam Chomsky's (1928) findings and later with George Lakoff (1941), Mark Johnson (1949), and other notable studies from several cognitive psychologists, the perceptive processes of reality become better understood from their essential semantic grounds.

On the other hand, if we insist on the assumption that our mind is a causal element of reality and take this concept to its logical extremes, we can arise to some simpleton and

pseudo-philosophical assumptions often repeated in our literature, as follows:

a) "Only what I perceive is real. What I do not perceive does not exist." In other terms: "The existence of the Cosmos could depend on what is going on in the brain of the individuals, it does not matter if these brains are in a skull or a Vat."

b) "Everything that I psychologically construct is real." In other terms: "We could have so many different realities and universes as human individuals."

The study of reality cannot despise our psychological constructs and misunderstand them as something they are not. More important than these psychological concepts are the contributions of Quantum Physics to our notions of reality.

In 1803, a notable scientific study known as the "Young Experiment" (Thomas Young, 1773-1829) determined a crucial turn in science history, demonstrating that the light structure is not made of particles but instead of waves.

Young's experiment has been followed, completed, and amplified during the subsequent one hundred and fifty years by many scientists with different studies and experiments in the same direction, as Michael Faraday; Gustav Kirchhoff, Ludwig Boltzmann, Heinrich Hertz, Max Planck, and Albert Einstein. In 1924 Max Born used the name "Quantum Physics" for the first time to denominate these theoretical bases, and in 1926 Max Plank's hypothesis that light is made of tiny, indivisible units, or quanta, of energy started to be called "photons" by Gilbert Lewis.

From then on, the new scientific findings grounded in these theories grew exponentially and changed in a short lapse.

of time, many core concepts related to almost everything we knew before. Sciences and philosophy suffered a strong impact as far as their structural conceptualizations are related. We should start again all our questions about the structure of matter, the idea of continuity of matter, the still unknown functions of our brain, the human cognitive processes, the cosmological interrelations between bodies and energy particles, the notions of time-space relations, and many others. This subject is quite endless.

We should consider the influences of quantum physics in the subjects sustaining our assertions about reality: the physical world, the matter, and the findings in neurosciences affecting our notions of mind, cognition, and psychological constructs.

Everything we know about reality comes from the philosophical approaches existing up to the present and available "state-of-science" evidence. Unfortunately, quantum mechanics fundamentals imposed an entirely new sight of what we understand as the category of reality, and many of the resulting revisional questions still do not have an answer.

Thus, everything we already considered about this subject refers to reality "as we could apprehend it to the present," which looks as few compared to the elements of the quantum universe to be known. Michael Epperson[37] observes the nature of reality through the lenses of the relational realism imposed by the quantum structures:

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[37] Epperson, Michael (2020) – "Relational Realism and the Ontogenetic Universe" Angelaki doi: 10.1080/0969725X.2020.1754029 https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2020.1754029 - retrieved on May,20,

> *Reality is no longer merely the object of local measurement but also its product. Thus, any coherent, ontological interpretation of quantum theory must include a conceptual framework by which objectivity and subjectivity, actuality and potentiality, global and local, being and becoming, individuated fact and process of individuation, are no longer understood as merely epistemic, mutually exclusive category pairs descriptive of an already extant, closed reality – but rather as mutually implicative ontological categories explicative of an ontogenetic, open reality-in-process.*

Some scholars overstated their first reactions, as we were in the front of an entirely unknown and overwhelming reality, where everything we knew should be thrown away, drowned in an ocean of photons, gravitons, quarks, and hadrons.

However, critical thinking and logical analysis have shown that we are in the same old world, immersed in the same reality, and facing many things that we did not know before, which imposes the revision of several of our assertions and beliefs. The universe changes continuously, not because of our knowledge or ignorance of quantum mechanics. What has changed is our ability for a better apprehension.

Ananthaswamy[38] (2018) comments on the repercussion of these findings:

> *If nothing else, these experiments are showing that we cannot yet make any claims about the nature of reality, even if the claims are well-motivated mathematically or philosophically. And given that neuroscientists and philosophers of mind don't agree on the nature of consciousness claims that it collapses wave functions are premature at best and misleading and wrong at worst.*

Fundamental physics theories are intended to be as accurate as local. Unfortunately, quantum mechanics contains nonlocal correlations that we do not know about, which indicates that constructions of reality cannot be limited to deterministic and straightforward projections from physical perceptions.

Some authors attributed this problem to quantum mechanics, but fundamental physics is more consistent and demonstrative when considering the macrocosm we knew before and the microcosm we are exploring. The reality did not change. We live the same reality that we ever lived. Our perception changed and turned some part of the unknown reality into demonstrated reality, as Peter Rowlands annotates

[38]Ananthaswamy,Anil2018In"ScientificAmerican"https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/what-does-quantum- theory-actually-tell-us-about-reality

In his work:[39]

> *Many people would say that current physical theories give us problems in defining the meaning of physical reality. However, it may be that we are effectively looking through the wrong end of a telescope. We are treating our sophisticated 'high level' theories as to the fundamental language rather than looking at the more basic elements from which they are constructed.*

The position expressed by most authors indicates that a recommended epistemic stance in front of our models and theories is adopting the world's characteristics and reality as the sciences propose them, whether these models are observable or not.

These theories and approaches to reality, sometimes divergent or opposed, offer essential elements as the starting point for our reflection. Nevertheless, in its majority, the core concepts of the studies reviewed in this Chapter are related to reality as a unique, stable, and permanent category: the entire reality, the reality in its ontological integrity.

This belief is the inheritance of our traditions, where reality is a closed concept, not admitting different measures or degrees as containing the nature of an absolute category. However, the logical dichotomy so frequent in our traditions,

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[39] Rowlands, Peter - "Are there alternatives to our present theories of physical reality?" Department of Physics, University of Liverpool, - Inhttps://arxiv.org/pdf/0912.3433 – retrieved on May,09,2020.

is a surpassed and insufficient formula in the face of contemporary critical thinking.

The evolution of science slowly corroded this trend to the absolute and the immutable, the "or-or" thinking, bringing to evidence the variable and unstable nature of everything.

Our observation of the world inevitably reveals that everything can be variable, changeable, imperfect, approximate, and relative. What is really at the moment "A" can be differently real, relatively real, or unreal at the moment "B." Everything in the Universe has the potential to change and virtuality.

Thus, to understand our world, we need to achieve teleologically oriented concepts of reality. In other words, we should adopt concepts of values and categories, such as reality, with the perception of their finalities relative to our existence. Reality, as well as any other category or entity, is a finalist; it becomes just an abstraction when it does not achieve this quality.

This standpoint is called "open reality," as explained by Ropolyi[40]

> *The openness means that a being is considered not only as actuality but as actuality together with its potentialities. This means that an open reality can be considered as a complex of the*

[40] Ropolyi, László – "Virtuality and Reality—Toward a Representation Ontology" -*Philosophies* 2016, *1*, 40–54; doi:10.3390/philosophies1010040

reality in full and its numerous potential versions (of course, this is a very Aristotelian idea).

Consequently, we propose sustaining a demonstrable open-reality model, where science and philosophy should jointly endorse everything we understand for evidence and coherence.
There is no natural cognitive division of reality, as we have seen before, but Inkpen & Wilson (2013) admit the use of classification frames as a logic

tool for analytical reasoning:

> *Division of Reality is undertaken by researchers working with a* unique *interpretative context with associated versions of kinds and entities. The above discussion suggests that these kinds and entities do not correspond to reality as it is but rather to reality as a useful framework for the researcher. Classification practices reflect this view of reality. Classification is based o usefulness to a researcher rather than determining the absolute structure of reality. Classification of Reality, therefore, became a mean to serve the researcher or group of researchers' ends. A classification is a research tool, like any other: it is an aid to interpretation, rather than an absolute statement about the nature of reality. (Inkpen & Wilson – 2013)*[41]

[41] Inkpen, Robert & Wilson, Graham – "Science, Philosophy and Physical Geography"-Routledge, 2013

Thus, for their teleological purposes, we assume that social psychology may adopt the following classification of reality, envisaging a better and more analytic construction of its experiments and conclusions:

We can take reality as the system aggregating all the known and unknown entities, bodies, particles, energies, vibrations, properties, assertions, and phenomena of any nature that could be reasonably demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes.

Existence and demonstrability are the core properties of the category "reality."

For methodological purposes, we will adopt the following glossary:

1) Known Reality:

It means everything reasonably demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes, including conclusive theories, mathematical formulations, and models.

2) Unknown Reality (or Latent Reality):

Everything that might exist and could be reasonably demonstrated by experience or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes has not yet proceeded.

3)Unreality:

a) Essential unreality: everything whose existence, possibility, or probability can be denied by experience

or other coherent and cogent cognitive processes (Popper's falsification principle).

b) Circumstantial unreality: a constructive mental projection of something whose existence can be denied but which possibility and probability cannot be denied. This is the realm of the coherent imaginary, such as consistent hypotheses and creative projections.

c) Accidental unreality: some specific types of essential unreality that can be distinguished for their unique characteristics.

c.1) Error or illusion: a false assumption of reality caused by cognitive defects.

c.2) Fantasy: a constructed and projected mirror stage of perception that is phenomenologically inexistent.

c.3) Lie: an intentional forgery of reality

b.4) Delirium and hallucination are disruptive mental constructs caused by severe disturbances in attention, consciousness, and cognition, precluding logical association between the elements of reality.

In this paper, we will use these words strictly according to the meaning given in this chapter.

CHAPTER III
THE IMAGINARY

42

CONCEPTUALIZATION

"Mundus Imaginalis": the realm of the imaginary, belonging to the universe of the "circumstantial unreality" or, not so correctly, a sort of meta-reality, is a vast subject to be explored. We must face this challenge, attempting to attain acceptable concepts that are indispensable to ground the

[42] Excerpt from the lyrics of the song "Imagine"- (1971) John Lennon, (1940 - 1980)&YokoOno(1933)Retrievedfromhttps://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/imagine.html on May,13,2020.

We will face numerous questions about social constructs in the future. No social constructs exist without reality, the imaginary, and their intriguing relations.

In a very simplified and introductory approach, we should say that the imaginary is a constructive, modifying, cognitive, emotional, and mental process, starting from perceptions of the existing reality and generating a new projected and reflective image, different from the elements applied in the process.

To better understand this intricate web, we should consider several different approaches from diverse standpoints, disclosing essential features of this subject. Each one of these approaches is a substantial contribution to the efficient learning of what the imaginary means. The noticeable difference among these assumptions should not mean an excluding opposition but a complementary conceptualization. There is no proper place for "philosophical schools of thought in such an expansive cognitive universe."

In Cartesian thinking, imagination is the encounter between the essence and the body, the "res cogitans" and the "res extensa." This concept is implicit in Descartes' "mind-body" understanding of reality.

Because of his dualistic concept of imagination and some comparative references to their qualities expressed in his works, Descartes has often been misunderstood and taken as someone who minimized the qualities of imagination or, at least, left it by the side of his thinking.

Indeed, some of his assertions could sustain this conclusion. *"I consider that this power of imagining which is in me, since it differs from the force of understanding, is not*

required for the essence of myself, that is, of my mind," he said.[43]

Lyons D. J[44] corrects this inappropriate interpretation:

> *For Descartes, the difference between external reality and the idea we have of it is not routinely described in favor of the external world. The mind can, in a more affirmative sense, produce ideas not only of the external world as it exists but as such a world might exist, and thus opens towards possibilities and towards the future.*

Cartesian thinking did not shelter a perception of dynamic integrative and constructive processes between the elements of his dualistic interpretation of human cognition.

This discussion became effective with Hegel's (1770 – 1831) theories.

Hegel understands the imaginary as being a mental activity or process starting from the concept of "image," From this central assertion came the contemporary name of the process and the foundation of almost all studies and theories related to the theme.

As Descartes did, Hegel argues that this cognitive activity uses two different elements:" the thing of the external world" and the "internal content of the mind. "However, for Hegel, both elements are diverse versions of the object: the first.

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[43] René Descartes – "Meditation" 6, AT VII 73

[44] Lyons, John D. "Descartes and Modern Imagination "-Philosophy and Literature, vol. 23 no. 2, 1999, p. 302-312.Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/phl.1999.0043.

is the sensorial comprehension of the object and its features as they exist in the world, and the second one is the internal content of the mind, composed of many subjective ingredients. These two elements are initially idealized in their independent determinacy but, through their dialectic interaction in mind, lose their particularity, resulting from this process, a new and idealized synthesis of the heterogeneous elements.

This idealized synthesis is the image (*das Bild*), and the imaginary is everything related to it.

Theories of the imaginary attained a remarkable increment with the first edition, in 1940, of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905-1980) "The Imaginary"[45] Jonathan Webber states: *"Sartre's The Imaginary" is the most sustained and detailed account of the nature of imagination in the Western philosophical literature."*[46]

Wulf, C (2019)[47] describes the outcomes of this process, focusing on its content:

> *This can be understood as a materialized world of images, sounds, touch, smell, and taste. It is the precondition that people perceive the world in a historically and culturally influenced manner. The imagination remembers and creates, combines, and projects images. It*

[45] Sartre, Jean- Paul "The Imaginary- a phenomenological psychology of the imagination" – Routledge London, 2004.

[46] Webber, Jonathan – Philosophical introduction to 2004 Routledge edition of "The Imaginary."

[47] C. Wulf (2019) "The mimetic creation of the Imaginary." Aisthesis 12(1): 5-14. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-25617

creates reality. At the same time, reality helps the imagination to create images. The images of the imagination have a dynamic character structuring the perception, memory, and future.

The French philosopher spent more than ten years of research and studies establishing the foundations of his theories. His work carries many virtues, once elaborated profoundly and analytically under a rigorous methodological structure.

One of these virtues is that Sartre successfully aggregates many valid but still sparse concepts and ideas from several philosophers, straightening them interactively in a logical structure and sustaining his ideas in an extensive and composite theory. In addition, he gave coherence and logical unicity to several fragmented approaches, reinforcing the essential relation between psychology and metaphysics, as Bergson (1854 - 1941)[48] did before.

Sartre's statement that "Someone who, in the act of reflection, becomes conscious of having an image, cannot be mistaken" is affirmative that remits to Descartes' "cogito": I can be mistaken about the existence of everything; however, I can be sure that I exist since I think."[49]

His theory assumes that the apprehension of reality occurs in images: the apprehended objects lose their proper meaning,

[48] Bergson, Henri – "Matter and Memory" (2011)- Digireads.com Publishing **ISBN:**9781420939385

[49] Webber, Jonathan – op. cit

and particularity, become a synthesis in a new form and no longer exist in a free state.

In this reasoning, the presence of Hegel's theories is manifest, giving Sartre's thinking an undeniable dialectical nature.

Sartre also accepted Edmund Husserl's (1859 - 1938)[50] phenomenological philosophy and their related cognition concepts. For the German philosopher, all consciousness is the consciousness of something and has an intentional structure. Unlike capturing reality, perception, imagination, and cognition voluntarily focus on something exterior cosmological subject. Such is the materiality and phenomenological particularity of consciousness, the principle from which derives one of the essential axioms of modern psychology: consciousness is a situational act.

Grounded in these ideas, Sartre structured his theory of the imaginary. Perception, conception, and imagination are the forms of consciousness given to an object in our minds.

In our cognitive processes, elements of the phenomenological environment offer our experiences' material content, as from the form will be given by knowledge, purposes, expectations, and emotions, which we understand as attitude. These elements' interaction will set the reflected image, offering the object's definite form and meaning. As such, the image is a reflected structure.

The theory insists on underlying the several differences between perception and imagination, not only by the fact of being them two diverse elements of the mental process in

[50] Edmund Husserl," *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology,"* tr. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1962)

the face of phenomenology but also because of their contents and results

Emphasizing these distinctions, Sartre indicates that: a) In a perceptive process, the object's knowledge occurs due to the experience. Experience precedes knowledge. In the imagination, experience succeeds knowledge.

b) Perception supposes observing all the perceivable object elements, unlike imagination, which is possible with just a "quasi-observation" based on only some of their elements or properties.

c) The perceptive process establishes a linear relation among the objects, irrespective of any subject's knowledge. Imagination is characterized by its constructive nature, in which the only ties between the objects are those determined by the subject, as they are imagined to be.

d) Imagination differs from perception because of its feeling of spontaneity.

e) In imagination, the experienced object does not necessarily have a meaning "per se" since it is possible to obtain this meaning, or part of it, from other objects.

In reflecting on Sartre's theory, we should remember that his numerous references to" knowledge" do not have the epistemological content we often suppose. When using this term, Sartre mainly refers to beliefs and opinions, which implicitly aggregates the axiological concept of values to the structure of the imaginary. Such an assumption indicates the need for a parallel substantial study.

Finally, we should also consider that the Sartrian imaginary structure is not limited to these cognitive and emotional elements but aggregates sensorial and kinaesthetic dynamics. This links the imaginary realm to his Theory of Aesthetic Appreciation and offers an understanding of perception's semiotic.

The observation of the imaginary through other lenses, not strictly ontological, sends us to outstanding contributions given by psychologists Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) and Jacques-Marie Émile Lacan (1901 —1981)

Psychoanalysis is not the best way to understand the social and ontological dynamics of the imaginary. However, as we have learned from Sartre, the imaginary theories send us to value theories, which we will discuss. As far as the process of the imaginary involves opinions, desires, wishes, affects, and emotions, it will be inevitable to question these elements' structure, mainly when attributing values to the imaginary, questions such as emotional disorders, illusion, insanity, delirium, and hallucination may arise.

Precisely for this reason, the contribution of psychoanalysis is essential.

In his book" The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung), Freud approached the imaginary," written in 1899 and first published in 1900.[51]

The author grounded his understanding of imagination and dreamed symbolism in the general ambit of his Theory of the

[51] Freud, Sigmund –"Interpretation of Dreams" - 1994 - Barnes & Noble ISBN 1566195764

Unconscious, from which the Theory of the Oedipus Complex would later emerge.

Initially, the Freudian theory assumed that any dream's content and form result from "wish fulfillment" – the involuntary satisfaction of a desire through mental processes.

Under such understanding, imagination does not start strictly from observing an existing object or experience (the manifest content) and from many unconscious symbols and representations used to express this hidden desire (the latent content).

Later on, Freud agreed that the causal element of dreams was not only the wish for the fulfillment of desires but that other symbolic contents could play the same role, as he exposed in his essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (Enseits des Lustprinzips) -1920[52]

With this step ahead in his theory, Freud agreed that every dream in its origin is somehow linked to the phenomenological reality and the particular experiences of the subject in the face of such reality.

The dreamer could select any part of his experience in elaborating a dream. The theory considers four possible sources: a) Mentally significant experiences, b)A mental construct of the combination of several recent and significant experiences, c)A recent and not significant experience which represents in the process other recent and significant ones, d) A recent and not significant experience which represents, in the process, the internal, memorized, and significant experiences.

When Freud assumes a distinction between "image building" and "analytic activities," the first one as an internal

[52]Freud, Sigmund -." Beyond the Pleasure Principle*" (The Standard Edition)*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1961.

constructive process, and the second one as the external interpretative activity; he connects his theories to the foundations of ontology and critical thinking, achieving the maturity of his ideas. Later, the philosopher's theory was criticized, mainly because the corresponding research lacked scientific rigor and the current study did not sustain many ideas. However, even though some of these criticisms could proceed, his work's importance is still the same, and his theories integrate modern psychology as fundamental tenets. We may find this integration in Lacan's notable works on the imaginary.[53]

The French psychologist understood that dividing the psyche into three structures corresponding to psychosexual development orders (or layers) is possible: the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic.

The Real (R**)** order is a state of nature in which content is exclusively the need. In this state, we only need and look for the satisfaction of our needs without recognizing the differences between ourselves and external reality.

This state exists only in early infancy and persists until linguistic abilities start. This moment determines the definite separation of the person from the state of nature, albeit it will continue playing an influential role for the rest of his life.

The imaginary (I) is the order starting from the individual's perception that his body is different from the external reality and different from his mother's body. The primal need is

[53] Julien, Philippe – "Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary"- NYU Press (1994) ISBN-10:0814741983 ISBN-13:978-0814741986.

gradually replaced by demand, which causes sensations of anxiety and loss of the natural order.

In what the author calls "the mirror stage," the demand and the beginning of the linguistic abilities determine the individual's difficulty recognizing his image as a definite and complete self. Such difficulty is because the image of the self is a fantasy that the individual creates as compensation for his losses. Lacan designates this image as the "ideal ego," the fundamental narcissism of an individual making a fantasy image of himself and his object of desire.

Initially, Lacan used the term "imaginary" closer to the idea of illusion, referring almost exclusively to the relation between the ego and its specular image as inconsequential. Then, in 1953, he conceptualized the imaginary as one of the three orders, meaning the ego's formation in the mirror stage.

For our study's purpose, it is interesting to note that Lacan's imaginary is not substituted or undone by the following order (the symbolic), despite its intermediate state. On the contrary, the imagination persists throughout the individual's life and always intervenes in psychological activity. This brings the Lacanian concept near Sartre's ideas about the processes of imagination. In the same direction, the definition of the mirror stage also maintains some harmony with the Sartrian concept of reflexive image.

These similitudes, however, are just "sparse touching points" of very different approaches, as Dylan Evans[54] explains:

> *Lacan has a Cartesian mistrust of the imagination as a cognitive tool. He insists, like Descartes, on the supremacy of pure intellection, without dependence on images, as the only way of arriving at certain knowledge. It is this that lies behind Lacan's use of topological figures, which cannot be represented in the imagination, to explore the structure of the unconscious.*
>
> *This mistrust of the imagination and the senses puts Lacan firmly on the side of rationalism rather than empiricism.*

The symbolic (S) order contains the transformation of the demand in desire, which is structurally tied to the language and the narrative, and the existence of the narcissism of the imaginary is also essential.

Language has both symbolic and imaginary aspects. The signified and signification are part of the imaginary order, but their semantic and semiotic functions belong to the symbolic structure.

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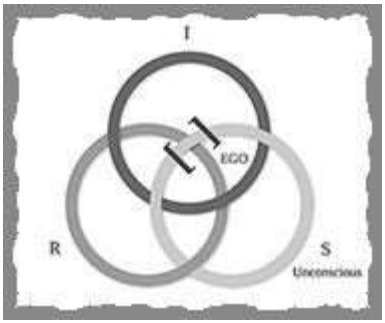
[54] Evans, Dylan "An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis," London: Routledge, 1996.-Retrieved from," Order." http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/lacan-orders.pdf on May 19, 2020.

Here, the social interrelation starts. When the subject enters into language and relates himself to society's rules and behaviors, actions and reactions take place in the psychodynamic structure, defining his actions. Language, behavioral rules, social, power, and kinship relations encircle and control the subject, his images, desires, satisfaction, agreements and disagreements, and acceptances and rejections.

Lacan Used a Borromean knot[55] to explain the relationships among the three orders of the psyche. Mathematically, the Borromean knot consists of three topological circles that are non-transitively linked in a cyclic ternary, so removing any of them will leave the other two unconnected.



Using this famous mathematical construct to explain his tripartite topological theory of the psyche, he offered a reading of his ideas' object-oriented ontological description.

The three orders (R –I -S -) are connected to construct the psyche as a unity, but they are not directly tied to each other, and the absence of any of these orders would immediately undo the whole construct.

Lacan has a Cartesian mistrust of the imagination as a cognitive tool. He insists, like Descartes, on the supremacy of pure intellection, without dependence on images, as the

[55] Hoedemaekers, Casper. (2008).” Toward a Sinthomatology of Organization?”. Ephemera. 8.

It is the only way of arriving at specific knowledge. This lies behind Lacan's use of topological figures, which cannot be represented in the imagination, to explore the structure of the unconscious.

This mistrust of the imagination and the senses puts Lacan firmly on the side of rationalism rather than empiricism.

If we intended to find a concept or feature of the imaginary that could be considered acceptable to most philosophers and psychologists, this would be the assumption that the imaginary is a creative and constructive process.

However, even being a common assumption, the nature of the creational attributes of human imagination is still seen from diverging angles, as Glen Dayton[56] considered:

> *Freudian psychologists prefer to see creativity in reductive terms, as a discharge of pent-up conflicting emotions, usually in some form of ego regression. Humanistic psychologists, on the other hand, view creative behavior not as regression to earlier primary process thought, but on the contrary as a deliberate, open encounter between the aware self and its surrounding environment.*

[56]Dayton Glenn C., "Perceptual Creativity: Where Inner and Outer Reality Come Together" - First published: December 1976 https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2162-6057.1976.tb00147. Retrieved on May, 19,2020

Inna Kucherenko[57] alleges that contemporary Russian philosophy also tends to understand imagination and creativity grounded in a phenomenological interpretation and that *"to say 'imagination' means to say' creativity (Katrechko, 1999)".* This approach, states the author, *"can be traced in the work of B. P. Vysheslavtsev (2010), J. Golosovker (1987), A. F. Losev (2003), S. Borchikov (in Katrechko, 1999). S. Borchikov defines imagination as the mental capacity of sense-consciousness with the object's content, form, embodiment, and corresponding epistemological functions".*

Finally, referring to the conceptualization of the imaginary, it is interesting to consider that modernly, the "reflective nature of the image" pursuant the phenomenologists, or the "mirror stage" of its development, as per the more idealist psychologists, is understood as components of a mimetic process as exposed by Wulf[58], which is intentional and projective: a creative act**.** :

> *In mimetic processes, the outside world becomes the inner world, and the inner world becomes the outside world. The imaginary is developed, and the imaginary develops ways of relating to the outside world. Again in a mimetic loop, this, in turn, affects the inner world of the imaginary. These processes are sensory and governed by desire. All the senses are involved, which means that the imaginary has*

[57] Kucherenko, -Inna Imagonautas 2 (2) / 2012/ ISSN 07190166 – "Imaginative Constructionism in the Social Theories of Randall Collins" / pp. 119 – 130

[58] Wulf, C. (2019) "The mimetic creation of the Imaginary." Aisthesis 12(1): 5-14. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-25617

> *Multiple layers. Since there is an intermingling of images, emotions, and language, these processes are rooted in the body and, at the same time, transcend the body as they become part of the imaginary (Wulf [2014]; Hüppauf, Wulf [2009]; Paragrana [2016])*

In this reasoning, we found the conceptualization of the imaginary realm we will adopt.

THE COLLECTIVE IMAGINARY

Beforehand, here we have a semantic question to be solved.

Our academic literature offers thousands of titles related to the social imaginary.

"Social imaginary" is a term used in sociology since Cornelius Castoriadis (1975)[59] introduced the concept in sociological studies. Charles Taylor (2007)60 consolidated its use in his widely known "Secular Age."

Taylor defines social imaginaries as "*The way in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these*

[59] Castoriadis, Cornelius (1975) - "The Imaginary of Society -" The MIT Press (1998) - ISBN-10:0262531550 - ISBN-13:978-0262531559

[60]Taylor, Charles, (2007) "A Secular Age"- Harvard University Press; Kindle Edition ASIN: B002KFZLK2

expectations." Under this definition, it is possible to understand the meaning of social imaginary as mainly sheltering the social structure and its forms, generally describing several internal elements of the society as a whole, without any considerable element able to offer an ontological apprehension.

According to Herbrik and Schlechtriemen (2019)[61]," *The social imaginary appears only at the fringes of sociological debate. It does not belong to the canon of sociological concepts and is accordingly not included in introductions to or dictionaries of sociology (cf., for instance, Farzin and Jordan 2008)."*

Thus, this is a secondary and somehow vague concept for sociology, albeit referenced by many authors. Indeed, sociology lacks an ontological concept of the imaginary, even because, in the face of its material object, it is not the appropriate scientific field for such a task.

Numerous sociologists expressed concerns about the vagueness of some proper core concepts in contemporary sociology, which reduces its methodologies' accuracy[62].

Another designation we should pay attention to is "collective behavior."

[61] Herbrik, Regine and Schlechtriemen, Tobias - ·Editorial for the special issue "Scopes of the Social Imaginary in Sociology" in the ÖZS - https://doi.org/10.1007/s11614-019-00370-3

[62] Cole, Stephen (Editor) "What's Wrong with Sociology"? Transaction Publishers; 1 edition (2001) ISBN-10:076580039X ISBN-13:78-0765800398

> *The expression collective behavior was first used by Franklin Henry Giddings (1908) and employed later by Robert E. Park and Burgess (1921), Herbert Blumer (1939), Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1957), and Neil Smelser (1962) to refer to social processes and events which do not reflect existing social structure (laws, conventions, and institutions), but which emerge in a "spontaneous" way. Use of the term has been expanded to include reference to cells, social animals like birds and fish, and insects, including ants (Gordon 2014). Collective behavior takes many forms but generally violates societal norms (Miller 2000; Locher 2002).*
>
> *Collective behavior can be tremendously destructive, as with riots or mob violence, silly as with fads, or anywhere in between. Collective behavior is always driven by group dynamics, encouraging people to engage in acts they might consider unthinkable under typical social circumstances (Locher 2002)[63].*

A third commonly used expression with sociological meanings is "collective imagination." Peter Murphy (2012)[64] introduced this expression, which focuses on the rational,

[63] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_behavior - retrieved on May 22, 2020.

[64] Murphy, Peter – "The Collective Imagination: The Creative Spirit of Free Societies "–2012 – Routledge - ISBN-10:140942135X - ISBN-13:978-1409421351

critical or ideological media of oppositional creativity. The opposition historically shapes social institutions and projects reactions and movements envisaging social, political, or economic changes. We can compare Murphy's concepts with those exposed by Castoriadis.

Besides these sociological contents, the expression is also more popularly used in marketing research and similar works as a synonym for consumer expectations referring to products.

Many other terms, such as "social change," "group behavior," "social creativity," and "social imagination," are currently used in diversified literature without any ontological content.

Misplacing these many terms and expressions in academic works could mean an unacceptable lack of coherence and consistency, which must be averted.

This study does not discuss these concepts, contents, or ideas. We are circumscribed to the environment of social and ontological psychology concepts and methodologies.

We shall attain the psychosocial and ontological conceptualization of the collective imaginary, whose grounds are the theories of personality, behavior, belief, and experimental findings on situational interactions among individuals. Unlike a general social structure, it means the output of the dialectic interaction among multiple and specific belief systems, acting as a behavioral determinative element.

Hence, diversely from sociology, we will focus on how the belief systems are collectively formed and not what is formed

belief systems can determine specific social structures, institutions, or other external elements.

Furthermore, we claim that Freud, Yung, and Lacan's "collective imaginary" is a designation emerging from concepts minted in psychological studies and literature. Scholars and researchers should employ this designation exclusively with its ontological signification given by psychology, avoiding misplacements.

As we have assumed, each individual carries his unmistakable system of beliefs. The word "system" derives from the assumption that anyone has uncountable beliefs, experiences, and emotions related to himself and the surrounding environment. All these elements are linked, molding an extraordinarily complex and structured web that supposes an internal hierarchy based on the subject's attributions of values.

The content of any individual system of beliefs aggregates phenomenological and experimental contents and all the subject's imaginary universe.

Because of our nature of "zoón politicum" and "animalis socialis," all the individual systems of beliefs interrelate in the social net surrounding the subject.

Therefore, the imaginary is not limited to the individual cognitive and emotional mental processes but also a social phenomenon. Everything occurring in our mind has a social layer, as Freud considered, or a symbolic order, as Lacan states. Communication among individuals through many means, from the physical touch to the

abstract symbolism, language, and uncountable semiotic elements are essentially a shared experience

In the realm of our shared existence, all interactive activity transports the full content of our individual belief system and its immanent elements as our imaginary and value-attributive hierarchy.

As with the individual ontogenesis of the imaginary, constructing the collective imaginary means a dialectic process through which different individual belief systems are processed as antithetic constitutive. This theoretical opposition synthesizes the processed elements, a new projected and reflective image differing from personal systems.

Since the individual identity cannot exist without a belief system containing the subject's imaginary, human society is impossible without the collective imaginary.

Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the collective imaginary does not correspond to the sum or coincidence of the content of two or more individual belief systems. Unlike this, it results from a dialectic process of opposition and transformation: a collective act of creation in Sartre's language.

Such a creative and reflective image is the layer of our evolutionary process and is characterized by three intrinsic attributes: experimental, unstable, and continued. We mean that all humans' experiences with the external environment are present in the collective imaginary's ontological root for experimental. For unstable, we understand that all human experiences are subject to continuous changes and different outputs, imposing constant variation in the

collective imagination's constructive process. For continuity, we mean that the collective imaginary is a continuous process of creation and transformation, acquiring historicity and transmissibility to different time-space situations.

When we focus on these attributes given to the collective imaginary, we can understand more precisely what Carl Yung[65] meant for the "collective unconscious" and its archetypes and the Lacanian Symbolic Order concept of desire.

In the collective imaginary, expectation replaces desire and, despite several particularities, plays the same role. The expectation may have many forms of expression, from the physical to the symbolic ones, and due to its cultural consistency, it is not limited to the group's empiric experience. When the constructive process meets a lack of experimental elements essential to its consolidation, it aggregates other unreal images related to but not belonging to the expectation itself. In this way, the collective imaginary builds the image of a future since it is a projective process, overwhelming the present experience.

A consistent idea of the mechanism of the relation between expectation and experience as a cultural process is science fiction:

[65] Jung, Carl Gustav – "Psychology of the Unconscious" - Dover Publications (2003) ISBN-10:0486424995 ISBN-13:978-0486424996, and "Man and his Symbols" Dell; Reissue (1968) ISBN-10:9780440351832, ISBN-13:978-0440351832 ASIN:0440351839

> *Jasanoff (2015b, p. 337) refers to science fiction as a "repository of sociotechnical imaginaries, visions that integrate futures of growing knowledge and technological mastery with normative assessments of what such futures could and should mean for present-day societies." Similarly, Miller and Bennett (Miller and Bennett, 2008) argue that the narrative-based stories of science fiction offer useful tools for long-term thinking about technology and constructing futures. This points to a potentially powerful and, so far, not well-understood source of novelty in the political imagination. Art and cultural phenomena can provide essential inputs to or trigger for political imagination processes*[66]

Beyond its fictional resources to construct the image of a future, the imaginary offers the foundations for anything else we understand as social identification elements, such as language, culture, politics, and religion, as a response to the collective expectation.

VALUES OF THE IMAGINARY

[66] Milkoreit, Manjana (2017) - - "Imaginary politics: Climate change and making the future" -. Elem Sci Anth, 5: 62. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.249 - Domain Editor-in-Chief: Anne R. Kapuscinski, Dartmouth, Associate Editors: Kim Locke, Dartmouth College, US; Alastair Iles, University of California Berkeley, US

In ontological terms, the collective imaginary does not value the attributable because it is an attribute in itself, not an object or being.

In their turn, the elements individuals engage in its construction can be qualified and transmit their qualities to the resulting images.

Everything related to human existence and evolution is related to the imaginary, in one way or another, since it is a constitutional attribute of our species. In the same way birds fly, viruses frequently change their genetic codes, and some mimetic bugs pretend to be leaves; men imagine and link their imaginary structure to others' and continuously change their knowledge, feelings, living, being, and believing patterns.

Civilization, culture, society, religion, art, history, intellect, science, philosophy, aesthetics, technology, present and past, space and time, me and them, mine and yours, evil and good, hope and despair, love and hate, heaven, and hell, yes or no, and any forms of human life are direct or indirect products of the collective imaginary.

Everything is the product of imagination, from the most sublime chords of a perfect symphony to the most horrendous cruelties of a stupid war. Ignorance and hallucination are sons of imagination, in the same measure as wisdom and critical thinking.

When we attribute values to anything, we do not qualify the imaginary from where it comes, but its products. We attribute values to the law, rules, moral codes, and behavioral.

principles from our imaginary because they are only objects or external entities resulting from the process.

The experience and choice in the imaginary precede any attribution of value, as existence precedes essence. We imagine, and thus, we become. "I imagine; therefore, I am, and I am as I imagine."

Nevertheless, everything we commented on in this Chapter and what the referred writers said about the imaginary is timidly superficial. Instead, we have an empirical observation and inferential interpretation of mental processes' behavioral results, whose elements and features we vaguely know as being externally unobservable facts.

We talked about the shadows on the wall in our Platonic Cave, with some feeling that science has abandoned us. The traditional belief from the Greeks gradually looked like an obstinate refuge to our blindness to philosophy's independence.

However, some images are slowly coming from our "outer world."

Recently, neurosciences have made the human brain's structure and activities a core subject to address the millenary mysteries of the body-mind relation problem.

Despite being a relative determinist, cognitive and ontological neuroscientist Peter Ulric Tse(2015)[67] from Dartmouth College assumed that physics provides evidence.

[67] Tse, Peter Ulric ": The Neural Basis of Free Will: Criterial Causation" (2015) The MIT Press (1602) ASIN: B015X3Y176

for ontological indeterminism and criterial causation among neurons.

Once physics provides evidence for ontological indeterminism, a physical basis for robust free will is possible. *"Neuronal Criterial causation permits a degree of self-determination that meets the high standards, without permitting, of course, a 'causa sui' free will, which is impossible." (op. cit)*

We may follow the author's reasoning and surprising conclusion:

> *I argue that the core circuits underlying free choice involve frontoparietal circuits that facilitate deliberation among options that are represented and manipulated in executive working memory areas. Playing out scenarios internally as virtual experience allows a suprathreshold option to be chosen before specific motoric actions are planned. The chosen option can best meet criteria held in working memory, constrained by conditions of various evaluative circuits, including reward, emotional and cognitive circuits. This process also harnesses synaptic and, ultimately, atomic level randomness to foster the generation of novel and unforeseeable satisfaction of those criteria. Once criteria are met, executive circuits can alter synaptic weights on other circuits that will implement a planned operation or action.*
>
> *[…]*

> *However, given a set of such innate parameters, the brain can generate and playout options, then select an option that adequately meets criteria or generates further options. This process is closely tied to voluntary attentional manipulation in working memory, more commonly thought of as deliberation or imagination. Imagination is where the action is of free will*.

Assuming that the human imagination's neuronal process is the nativity of our free will, Tse can provoke all sorts of grumblings of many radical determinists living in their nutshells of deep science.

Radical determinism is undoubtedly all that science, philosophy, psychology, and humanity do not need.

CHAPTER IV
THE GRADIENT PROPERTY OF TRUTH

If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.

(René Descartes. 1596 – 1650)

In philosophy, truth is a property attributable to cognitive processes. Although truth is a noun in its logical content, it transports a quality attributable to another noun because it does not exist "per Ipsum" or in the abstract.

This property is mainly related to the category of reality, and this relation occurs in two interdependent directions: ontologically, no object or entity attains to be a part of reality without being able to be true. Similarly, truth does not exist as attributable property without an object or entity belonging to reality. This is not a conflict or paradox but just the attainment of the existence of two ontological layers when the quality belongs to the essence of the being: the real object or entity cannot exist without the quality, and the quality does not exist without the object to be qualified by attribution. In this way, we define the nature of essential properties. Truth is one of them.

Traditionally, the study of truth offered three cognitive tracks: philosophy, sciences, and religion. In philosophical studies, this subject has been dissected by epistemology and ontology for millennia, promoted by the concepts of reality, correspondence, and coherence. In sciences, truth is the material tenet of realism, expressed by the demonstration of equivalence. In religion, truth is the belief in a mirror of gods' wishes and voices, materialized in all the forms of revelation.

In this study, we should consider the philosophical and psychological conceptualization of truth, sheltering all the existing influences of scientific evidence.

Until some decades ago, a scheme of philosophical study on truth was relatively easy to propose. All the theories were widely known, and the literature was prolific regarding opposition and debates. Moreover, many scholars contributed with didactical analysis and interpretations to understand more hermetical texts or theories.

Initially, we will adopt this traditional scheme by briefly visiting the prominent existing theories. We argue that they all offer valuable concepts, insights, and standpoints, making a profitable study of truth. Furthermore, these theories are not reciprocally opposite or excluding; they are just different references and standpoints of the same things.

We should put aside the frequent and vicious tendency to philosophical sectarianism, the most sterile demonstration of intellectual narcissism. We believe philosophical "isms" are a sophisticated form of obscurity. In the first moment, they are used to distinguish methodologically one concept or theory from the other, but very soon, they

become personal beliefs and convictions, and what before was debate becomes a competition, and what once has been questioned becomes aggression. We should say that when we start reading a philosophical text containing evidence of sectarianism, polarization, or intentional hermetical language, we immediately put it aside. They can teach us very little.

Our philosophical tradition considers the property of truth under primordial and widely known theories: correspondence, coherence, semantic, deflationary, and pragmatic theories**.**

The correspondence theory has been vaguely referred to in Greek philosophy by Plato and Aristotle in his *Metaphysics.*

The first modern empiricists sustained the basic ideas of this theory, which, in its origins, was founded on a strict and inflexible dichotomy, stating the identity between the proposition and the fact. It was known as the *identity theory of truth*. When a proposition is true, it is identical to a fact, and a belief in that proposition is correct (Moore -1899; 1902 and Russell - 1904).

Later, after 1910, both philosophers changed some fundamental elements of their theory. The most important thing came from adopting the idea of belief to replace the proposition concept.

"A belief is true if and only if it *corresponds to a fact"* was the fundamental claim that sustained the theory, whose designation changed to *the correspondence theory of truth*. Some critics of the theory questioned the nature of "fact"

taken as an essential element of the correspondence concept. Dowden[68] raises the question:

> *And what are facts? The notion of a fact as some sort of ontological entity was first stated explicitly in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Correspondence Theory does permit facts to be mind-dependent entities. McTaggart, and perhaps Kant, held such Correspondence Theories. The Correspondence theories of Russell, Wittgenstein, and Austin all consider facts to be mind-independent*.

Both conceptions of the empiricist theories are centered on the property's object and not on the property itself. Despite this feature, the correspondence theories are undoubtedly ontological structures insofar as a fact (an object or entity belonging to reality) must exist to establish the relation of correspondence.

Glanzberg,M (2018)[70] appends that:

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[68] Dowden, Bradley - Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy - https://www.iep.utm.edu/truth/-retrieved on May,27,2020.

[70] Glanzberg, Michael, "Truth," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), Retrieved on May,27,2020 https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/truth/

> *The modern form of the correspondence theory seeks to round out the explanation of correspondence by appeal to propositions. Indeed, it is common to base a correspondence theory of truth upon the notion of a structured proposition. Propositions are again cast as the contents of beliefs and assertions, and propositions have structure which at least roughly corresponds to the structure of sentences.*

A significant assertion of modern correspondence theory indicates that this property consists of a degree of correspondence in the relation between object and proposition or object and belief.

Through observation and experimental refinement, the theory accepts that the human mind holds the ability to acquire the objects and entities' consciousness. These core ideas deviate from whole or pure concepts of truth and open our research to empirical relativity analysis.

The coherence theory is a monistic idealist conception of truth, as opposed to the dualistic ontological structures of empiricism. Harold Henry Joachim (1868—1938) proposed it in his book *The Nature of Truth: An Essay* (1906)[71].

"Truth in its essential nature is that systematic coherence is the character of a significant whole," stated the author (op. cit).

[71] Johachim, H.H. "The Nature of Truth: An Essay"-, Nabu Press, (2009) ISBN-10: 1141268205 - ISBN-13: 978-1141268207

Joachim always claimed that truth has this monistic nature: what is true is complete truth, as an indivisible and unique property. Therefore, beliefs and variable attributions or judgments cannot fully understand the truth; they are just fragmented approaches.

Thus, the truth of a proposition results from its interaction with other propositions. Beliefs in themselves mean independent systems comparable in their qualities. One belief can only be coherent if it belongs to a cohesive system of beliefs.

Joachim did not accurately explain the meaning of his idea of "systematic coherence," which he distinguished from mere "consistency." Later, other philosophers argued that coherence is a property demanding at least logical consistency. For some rationalist metaphysicians, this logical consistency means that a proposition is true if and only if it "is consistent with all other true propositions" (Bradley, op. cit). In neo-classicism, the coherence theory emphasizes that truth is not a content-world relation. Instead, it is exclusively a belief-to-belief relation.

Charles Henly[72] analysis of this theory indicates how it moves away from any empirical or experimental notion of the objects and entities:

> *In effect the coherence theory abandons objects as they actually are as the ground of truth for objects as they are constructed or constituted by the belief and theory*

[72] Hanly, Charles, 'The Concept of Truth in Psychoanalysis'. http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/hanly91.htm - retrieved on May,28,2020

investments that govern their observation and the way in which they are experienced by observers. The mind must, as a matter of psychological and epistemological inevitability, subject the objects which it seeks to know to the conditions under which it is able to know them.

Tarski's Semantic Theory - The semantic theory of truth started in the first half of the Twentieth Century with the Polish philosopher and mathematician Alfred Tarski's works[73].

His multidisciplinary theory contains an audacious and profound incursion, starting in first logic and growing with philosophical, linguistic, semiotic, and mathematical structures and theoretical inter-related constructions. On the one hand, his work conceives a model theory based on mathematical logic. However, on the other hand, he brings a unique philosophical approach to the ontology of truth.

The reason for the extension and complexity of the semantic theory is only a brief glance at it fits in the limits of this study because any informal presentation of Tarski's

[73] Tarski, A. 1936, Über den Begriff der logischen Folgerung. In Actes du Congrès international de philosophie scientifique, Paris 1935, fasc. 7: Logique, Paris, Herman, p. 1–11; Eng. tr. in Tarski 1956, 409–420.
Tarski, A. 1944, The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics., Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 4, 341-395; reprinted in Tarski 1 Collected Papers, v. 2, Birkhäuser, Basel, pp. 665¬–699.
Tarski, A. 1956, Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics. Papers of 1923 to 1938, Oxford, Clarendon Press; 2nd ed., Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis,
Tarski, A., 1956a, The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages. In Tarski 1956, 152–278 [Eng. tr. of Tarski 1935].
Tarski, A., 1969. Truth and Proof. L'age de la Science 1, 279–301; reprinted in Tarski 1986, v. 4, 399–422.
Tarski, A., 1986, Collected Papers, v. 1–4, Basel, Birkhäuser

theory would not succeed. We recommend consulting the Chapter's references to get appropriately involved with the semantic conception of truth.

In this summary, we may say that one of the theory's core concepts is the idea of semantic **satisfaction**. The argument considers that a language carries a proper definition in its expressions and constructs. Such content should satisfy or fulfill the property of truth and the relation between an object or entity and a predicate function. Furthermore, this satisfaction should be mathematically demonstrable and accurate. The strength of the language, in turn, is a relevant element that makes semantics a truth bearer. The philosopher intended to reduce semantic concepts to physical concepts, envisaging semantics' configuration as a scientific subject. To justify this reduction, Tarsky refers to the property of compositionality, excluding any contextuality of a statement since the truth can only emerge from its constituent parts. Lumpkin gives an approach to this conceptualization[74]:

> *In "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics," AlfredTarski's purpose is to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions for a sentence to be true, and to ground semantics in logical notions. Semantics is not a panacea for philosophical problems à la Wittgenstein, but a "modest science" concerning the relation*

[74]Lumpkin, Jonathan, "A Semantic Conception of Truth" (2014). *Senior Honors Theses.* Paper60.https://scholarworks.uno.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=honors_t heses – retrieved on May,28,2020

> *between linguistic entities and the world. By defining semantic concepts in logic, we can be more convinced that our language can be the best mirror to the world possible; we would not inadvertently build our sciences upon meaningless linguistic concepts*.

Hodges [75] explains that "*Tarski's definition of satisfaction is* compositional*, meaning that the class of assignments which satisfy a compound formula FF is determined solely by (1) the syntactic rule used to construct FF from its immediate constituents and (2) the classes of assignments that satisfy these immediate constituents."*

Indeed, Tarski insists on the assertion that the concept of satisfaction, usually applied in mathematics, is an efficient tool for defining truth.

To better understand the semantic theory of truth in its mathematical contents and features, we suggest a comprehensive study involving the following items, as exposed by Wolensky[76]

(A) Truth as a property of sentences;

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[75] Hodges, Wilfrid, "Tarski's Truth Definitions", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/tarski-truth/

[76] Woleński, Jan – "The Semantic Theory pf Truth", in https://www.iep.utm.edu/s-truth/ (University of Information Technology, Management and Technology Poland) - retrieved on May,01,2020

(B) Relations between truth and meaning;

(C) Diagnosis of semantic paradoxes;

(D) Resolution of semantic paradoxes;

(E) Relativization to languages;

(F) T-scheme (A is true if and only if A);

(G) The principle BI of bivalence;

(H) Material and formal adequacy of a truth-definition;(I) Conditions

imposed on a metalanguage to obtain a proper truth definition;

(J) The relation between language and metalanguage;

(K) The truth-definition itself;

(L) Maximality of the set of truths in a given language;

(M) The indefinability theorem.

The Deflationary Theory of Truth emerged during the Twentieth Century with Frege, G[77]. (19180 "Thoughts," followed by the works of many other philosophers, such as

[77] Frege, G., 1918. 'Thoughts', in his Logical Investigations, Oxford: Blackwell, 1977.

Quine, W.V. O[78]. (1970), Ramsey, F.P79(1927), and Ayer, A.J. (1935).

At its core, the theory emphatically denies the existence of the property called "truth." The deflationary concept understands that all traditional theories initially suffer distortion by assuming grounds that do not exist. Searching for truth is an attempt to discuss something not there or anywhere. Everything about truth tends to be a useless theory about nothing.

In its structure, the deflationary theory manages several syntactic and semantic linguistic elements through several sentential and propositional discussions, concluding that the assertion that a statement is true is to assert the statement itself**.** The reasoning considers that the proposition "I smell the scent of violets" is the same as the sentence "it is true that I smell the scent of violets, bringing into evidence that the attribution of the property "truth" did not add anything to the semantic context (Ferge, op.cit.).

According to deflationary ideas, binomial truth-falsity is treated as something that originated from propositions that are deniable or demonstrable independent of the implicit presence or absence of any linguistic attribution of the property.

In their modern presentations, the deflationary theory applies numerous methodological tools. One of the most important

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[78] Quine, W.V.O., 1970. Philosophy of Logic, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

[79] Ramsey, F.P., 1927. 'Facts and Propositions', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 7 (Supplementary): 153–170.

[80] Ayer, A.J., 1935. 'The Criterion of Truth', Analysis, 3: 28–32

is the "equivalence schema," as explained by Stoljar and Damnjanovic:[81]

> *In recent times, however, the deflationary theory has most often been presented with the help of a schema, which is sometimes called the equivalence schema:*
>
> *(ES) <p> is true if and only if p.*
>
> *In this schema, angle brackets indicate an appropriate name-forming device, e.g., quotation marks or 'the proposition that …', and occurrences of 'p' are replaced with sentences to yield instances of the schema. With the help of (ES), we can formulate deflationism as the view, roughly, that the instances of this schema capture everything significant that can be said about truth. Theories that depart from deflationism deny that the equivalence schema tells us the whole truth about truth. Since such theories add to the equivalence schema, they are often called inflationary theories of truth.*

Many derivations of deflationary thinking emerged during the last decades so that the theory somehow had its unicity

[81] Stoljar, Daniel and Damnjanovic, Nic, "The Deflationary Theory of Truth," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/truth-deflationary/ - retrieved on May, 05,2020

crumbled in endless and polarized discussions. Some beacons have been preserved or become acceptable for most of the theory's variations. Thus, besides the "equivalence schema," other methodological elements have been aggregated to most of the several presentations of the deflationary argument, such as the theory of Meaning, The Disquotation Thesis, The infinite Conjunction Thesis, The Generalization Thesis, The Truth Predicate, and The Connection Thesis.

The fact is that the deflationary theory of truth initially looked like a very trivial theory or an inconsistent construct of ideas and opinions. However, it slowly awakened a crescent number of oppositions from the traditional theorists and composed discrepancies among the many presentations of its content to become one of the most endless and polarized discussions and modern philosophy conflicts.

It is duly impossible to enter profoundly into our study's labyrinth of such debates. For this reason, our choice is to adopt a generalized and understandable critique, able to contribute efficiently to our reflection, such as that circumspectly exposed by Anil Gupta[82]:

> *Deflationists think that truth is a simple concept, one that has a simple analysis. The analysis the deflationists offer is simple, but unfortunately, it*

[82] Anil Gupta "A Critique of Deflationism"- PhilosophicaL Topics- vow. 21 NO. 2, SPRING1993.https://cpb-us w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/9/177/files/2010/10/A-Critique-of Deflationism.pdf.Retrieved on May,.29,2020.

makes truth far too complicated—it attributes to truth a vast ideology. We examined several attempts to get around this problem, but none resulted in a plausible account of the meaning of 'true.' Now we are left with questions: What does our understanding of 'true' consist of? How can one explain the meaning of 'true using a limited ideology? It is a fact that we understand truth attributions even when the truth is attributed to a sentence (or thought or representation) that lies beyond our conceptual resources. JYñai, do we understand by such attributions? We seem to grasp something general about what it is for a sentence (or thought or representation) to be true. But what is it that we understand? Once we overcome the spell of deflationism, we are no longer inclined to brush these questions aside with simple answers. We regain our original sense that there is something very mysterious about truth and that an exploration of this mystery may illuminate the nature of our thought and our language.

PRAGMATIC THEORIES OF TRUTH

"Truth of a belief is determined by evaluating how well the belief satisfies the whole of human nature over a long period: how well does it work?"[83]

[83]TruthQueensboroughCommunityCollege.https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/INTRO_TEXT/Chapter%205%20E pistemology/Truth.htm- retrieved on Jun,01,2020

This principle summarizes the pragmatic central approach to the truth

This philosophical approach's denomination came from the Greek "pragmatikós" (meaning practical) and started to be employed in our literature from 1580.

Pragmatism started with the "Metaphysic Club," an ironic denomination given by the mathematician and logicist Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 -1914)[84], the psychologist William James (1842-1910)[85], and the jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841 – 1935)[86] to their group of philosophical studies, at the end of XIX Century.

The proposers of pragmatism and many of their followers did not formulate something structured as a theory. Unlike this, they preferred to define a concept or criteria of truth that should express "clarity." Around this central idea, everything about pragmatism has been proposed, elaborate and discussed by many contemporary philosophers who added a significant contribution to the numerous studies, consolidating the meanings of

[84] Peirce, Charles Sanders "Reasoning and the Logic of Things" (1898). Edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner (1992)/" Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking" (1903) Harvard "Lectures on Pragmatism" in a study edition - Edited by Patricia Ann Turisi, 1997

[85] James, William. Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. New York: Longman Green and Co., 1907.

[86] Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1995). The Collected Works of Justice Holmes (S. Novick, ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.ISBN 0226349667.

pragmatism, like John Dewey (1859 -1952)[87] and Richard Rorty (1931 - 2007)[88]

Given its history of formulation, pragmatism has been understood in different ways: as an attitude of mind, a method of investigation, and a theory of truth. Indeed, pragmatism is all three.

As an attitude and a method of investigation, pragmatism resembles some tenets of analytic philosophy:

> *"Conceptual analysis as a method; a close relationship between language and philosophy; a concern with seeking argumentative answers to philosophical problems; search for conceptual clarity."*[89]

As a theory, pragmatism claims that truth is not a category attributable to any object or entity other than our beliefs. Therefore, there is no such "ultimate truth" or any other meaning for truth before or beyond our beliefs; its semantic

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[87] Dewey, John -- "Collected Works of John Dewey, Index 1882 – 1953" Edited by Jo Ann Boydston - South Illinois University Press. 978-0-8093-1728-8 11/26/1991

[88] Rorty, Richard- "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature". Princeton University Press, (1979). / "Consequences of Pragmatism."- Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (1982) / "Objectivity, Relativism and Truth": Philosophical Papers I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991

[89] Perez, Diana Ines, "Analytic Philosophy in Latin America," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/latin-american-analytic/ (retrieved on May,29,2020.)

structure, and its effects. In any case, truth outcomes from our beliefs. Truth cannot become transcendental; only our beliefs are truth-bearers.

Belief is an action rule; thus, it is an original starting point for our thoughts. The content of our beliefs means the configuration of habits so that, by the particularities of each belief, we can distinguish several modes of emerging actions.

"True is the name for whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons" (James. op. cit). The implicit value of truth is its usefulness, the feature of having a useful (pragmatic) application in the world.

Three core components help observe how truth can qualify our beliefs: inquiry, satisfaction, and agreement with subsequent experience. Notedly, Ramsey (1903 – 1930)[90] links truth to human inquiry.

The inquiry corresponds to the content of our belief and means the only truth bearer. The inquiry corresponds to the semantics of our beliefs and experiences, as well as the only manner of expressing its meaning:

> *The inquiry is a special case of semiosis, a process that transforms signs into signs while maintaining a specific relationship to an object, which object may be located outside the trajectory of signs or else be found at the end of*

[90] Ramsey, Frank, P. (1930) -"*On Truth"*, ed. by Nicholas Rescher & Ulrich Majer, Dordrecht, Kluwer. Cited as OT. DOI:10.1007/978-94-011-3738-6

> *it. The inquiry includes all forms of belief revision and logical inference, including scientific method*[91] *- (Pierce, op. cit)*

"The satisfaction of an inquiry is the end of truth," an assumption that introduces a concept of correlation or identity to the property. However, this understanding cannot be misused with the conceptions of correspondence with reality formulated by traditional theories. Here, the correspondence of truth is established exclusively with the belief itself.

Satisfaction signifies the experimental fulfillment of a belief.

The confrontation between the inquiry and its results (or between the belief and the experience) aims to resolve the doubts and concerns in mind, which nature is inquisitor. From this process, belief and knowledge arise, envisaging reasonable belief and establishing future cognitive behavior habits.[92]

From there, we can deduce that, in its essence, the pragmatic theory of truth depends on sheltering a theory of learning in its structure, as well.

The principle of satisfaction sculpts the widely known maxim of pragmatism: *"it is useful because it is true" or "that it is true because it is useful'.* Truth is what satisfies the intellect. In truth,

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[91] Pragmatic theory of truth | Psychology Wiki | Fandom. https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Pragmatic_theory_of_truth - retriebed on Jun,01,2020

[92] Dazzani, Maria Virgínia Machado "O Pragmatismo de Peirce como Teoria do Conhecimento e da Aprendizagem" – UFBA – Caderno Digital Ano 14 – nº 10 – V10- (UFBA) – Jul/Dez 2008, ISSN 1806-9142 – Free translation by the author.

the intellect finds rest and contentment that is its own good or end."[93]

Sometimes, these maxims' nuclear content is misunderstood and seen as similar to utilitarian ideas, resulting in a false perception. Utilitarianism is a moral-ethical system based on objective behavioral utility; pragmatism is based on normative truth.

The agreement with subsequent experience, in turn, indicates that the configuration of truth is not a subtle and isolated result of our beliefs. Instead, a time-related process of our experience determines truth. Pragmatism sustains the quest for "truth itself" and rejects the idea of objective certitude. For this reason, the truth of our beliefs arises from a process involving the prompt fulfillment of our beliefs and our future experiences and actions.

William James assumed that pragmatic theory intends to merge our beliefs to consolidate scientific evidence related to successful human action results, which is critical to understanding the traditional epistemology of pragmatism.

The submission of truth to a time-related process involves two concepts: fallibilism and naturalism. With fallibilism, pragmatic theory accepts cognitive problems and related limitations, and naturalism refers to observing our biological and social elements.

[93]PragmaticTheoryanoverview|ScienceDirectTopics.https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/pragmatic-theory. Rertrieved on Jun,01,2020

With[94], denying an "objective, concrete truth," the pragmatist epistemology takes truth as a possibility. In this direction, Susan Haacs (1993)[95] sustains that justification comes in degrees according to the pragmatic theory.

With its features, pragmatic epistemology, in its numerous versions, influenced the modern jurisprudential, economic, psychological, linguistic, and learning theories.

The meeting point of these theories, and many others, is one of the central ideas of pragmatic epistemology: the notion of "common sense," resulting from our experiences, which have preserved its contents throughout the expositions to new experiences, occurring in subsequent times. "They form one great stage of equilibrium in the human mind's development, the stage of common sense."

Many pragmatic concepts are spread around in philosophy and sciences, whether expressively or implicitly, irrespective of the structure or nature of the corresponding objects. It is challenging to accurately say which elements are or are not pragmatic in philosophy and science.

CONCLUSIONS OF THIS CHAPTER.

These theories can help us reflect on the "mystery of truth, "as Anil Gupta said (op.cit.). None exhausts the subject and never will. For this reason, we will not strictly or entirely adopt any of them. On the other hand,

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[94] Capps, J. A Common-Sense Pragmatic Theory of Truth. *Philosophia* 48, 463–481 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-019-00099-z

[95] 481 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-019-00099-

we will not deny or discredit anyone because if we observe all these theories from a compatibilist and not a reductionist standpoint, we will readily perceive that all of them have something to tell us. However subtle it may be, any of these theories offer an assumption, a concept, an attempt to demonstrate, a comparison, a belief, or a simple fragment depicting a reasonable, coherent proposition. It does not matter if theorists consider these chosen elements or fragments trivial, mainly because no one can demonstrate that trivial reasonings cannot express the truth nor that hermetic, composed, and elaborate theories can always tell us what truth is.

From our analytic position, we should not be afraid to employ these elements methodologically or arrange them in a system. We are not constructing any theory, proposing theorems, formulas, or dogmas, or demonstrating something unknown from science or philosophy. We are just looking at all the elements we have critically, analytically, and coherently, searching for our best understanding of reality. All the assertions, beliefs, and theoretical contents that will be put aside in our analysis should not be understood as denied. Still, they should not be considered the best element for that specific proposition we affirm.

Resulting from the analysis of all these cognitive treasures offered by our philosophical literature, our assumptions about truth are the following:

1 – We conceptualize truth as a conventional property given by common sense to the degree of proximity to reality attributable to any cognitive mind process.

2 – We argue that any essential property is subordinate to its corresponding object or entity's nature and substance. This is the reason that reality subordinates the truth.

3 —We argue that pure truth does not exist naturally, cognitively, rationally, or socially. Pure truth only exists as a theory. In the realm of our mind, pure truth cannot be proved. What we know as truth is only a relative attribution.

4 – We argue that we exist in an open reality since we accepted the arguments. That truth is subordinate to reality, and through the same assumption, we declare that truth is unstable and subject to variations. Reality is situational, time-space relative, and can change abruptly.

Irrespective of the fact that this assertion starts an endless debate, the assumption of truth's relativity is not new. Jack W. Meiland (1977)[96] comments on how this concept was considered, for instance, by Husserl:

> *The notion of "relative truth" became especially prominent in German thought in the later nineteenth-century when "historicism" and "relativism" flourished as a paradoxical consequence of the work of Kant and Hegel (paradoxical since both Kant and Hegel are themselves "absolutists"). This notion was employed by theoreticians in the fields of metaphilosophy, philosophy of history, and the philosophy of logic. Thus, Edmund Husserl felt obliged to examine the concept of relative truth in his critique of psychologism in logic*.

[96] Meiland, Jack W. - "Concepts of Relative Truth" - The Monist 60 (4):568-582 (1977) https://philpapers.org/rec/MEICOR

Husserl understood that modern and recent philosophy leans strongly toward specific relativism, involving relative truth notions.

5 - We argue that truth can exist in theory but not in the abstract. We can theorize the truth because, in theories, we use concepts and ideas related to reality, which may be material or not, like numbers. In pure abstraction, the construction considers only logical principles with no reference to any object belonging to reality.

We cannot think about truth without thinking about a referential and real object or entity, even though this reference could be vague or not explicit in our reasoning or considered in its most generalizations.

Objects are non-mental and non-sensible in abstraction, lacking any paradigmatic objects necessary to attribute qualitative properties.

6 – We argue that truth is conventional and not conceptual.

Any ontological concept of truth, surpassing the content of a simple convention, takes us to the challenge of solving numerous and complex problems because the truth bearer, in any case, must fulfill the criteria of demonstrability, coherence, probability, and reasonability of its content.

Scientific evidence of the bearer is needed to fulfill the criterion of demonstrability.

We should investigate the bearer's logical structure as far as we consider coherence, involving, as the case could be, its mathematical validity and all its intrinsic elements with progressive and regressive methods, including its historic grounds.

Determining the probability of the bearer demands, in each case, the development of adequate mathematical models and corresponding analysis and critique.

The bearer's reasonability depends on its cogency with all the available knowledge about its context, which means a very composed critical task.

Without fulfilling all those criteria, any attribution of truth, surpassing a convention's content, is reduced to simple suppositions. Such fulfillment imposes grading and accurately determining all these essential components and their exponential combinations. A truth bearer can demonstrate different and variable degrees (or intensities) of each criterion (possibility, probability, reasonability, and coherence) so that any conceivable mathematical model intending to solve these variants would suppose the processing of billions of inputs for any single output. Moreover, in logical terms, these uncountable models would undoubtedly raise a relative output in any case.

This is an impossible task to propose in the realm of our mind, primarily related to our everyday experience and the corresponding brain and mental states. The achievement of any ontological concept of truth beyond the idea of a convention is just a challenge to artificial intelligence projects, in no way related to our ordinary existence.

7 – We argue that what we understand by truth results from a convention grounded in common sense.

In the face of the impossibility of a conceptual construct of truth in the realm of our minds, instead of adopting any concept of ontological property, we establish a variable

attribution of value to the elements of reality, emerging from the pillars of our experience. This attribution is a social convention, in the same way as the legal norm and the moral tenets are, which we understand as the generalized acceptance of attribution of value resulting from the consciousness we may sustain with science, philosophy, history, and most experience.

Like many other mental and cognitive constructs, attribution of truth occurs intuitively and with a considerable margin of error.

Everything we have for this attribution is a distorted image of truth, an approximation, a vague idea intensively influenced by bias, expectations, and beliefs. That is why so many shades of truth exist in the human experience. Truth is **a** variable and gradient property.

Our conventions on truth are a continuous cognitive process determining uninterrupted inclusions and exclusions of inputs and outputs from the interaction of individual and social experience. This results in common sense, a systemic, analytical, and critical construct.

For this study, we adopt the concept of common sense as proposed by Capps (2020)[97]:

> *By "common sense," I don't mean to refer to a specific philosophical position, such as Scottish common-sense realism, Peirce's critical*

[97] Capps, J. A Common-Sense Pragmatic Theory of Truth.*Philosophia*48**,**463–481 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-019-00099-z

common-sensism, or Moore's position in "A Defense of Common Sense" (thanks to a reviewer for raising this question). I take common sense in a non-theoretical (common sense?) way: "common" in the sense of widely shared, or, as argued below, a generally accepted baseline. But also "common" in the sense of "ordinary," hence the connection with ordinary language philosophy. (In this sense, one could argue that ordinary language philosophy is a post-linguistic turn version of common-sense philosophy.),

8) And, finally, we argue that, theoretically, if we could attribute actual values to reality and bearers under any logical scale, we would find the truth as a determined point in a simple slope gradient formula,

$$m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1} = \frac{\Delta Y}{\Delta X}$$

where m= the grade of truth, y= the reality according to common sense, and x= the bearer.

CHAPTER V
THE BLIND SHADOWS OF NARCISSUS

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

(Plato)

INTRODUCTION, CONCEPT, AND NATURE

The blind imaginary is as ancient as humankind, and since Plato has been observed by philosophy. So many different names have been given to this subject, which is not so usually discussed as a construct, as we intend to do in this study.

Like reality, the imaginary shows some patterns, repeated and very similar effects in the presence of the same causes. When we start reflecting on these persevering effects in human behavior and come across their probable causational origins, we perceive the existence of many distinct entities that carry a real identity and intrinsic organization despite being composed of the same substance as many other entities. If we observe a galaxy with a telescope, we will see its solar systems as detached points or areas seemingly independent, to which we attribute an identity. This perception is just an illusion because they are only stars, planets, and asteroids floating in the

immensity—but we call them solar systems and give them proper names when we understand that they are linked in a unique and adequately organized structure.

Everything related to human behavior is linked to the imaginary in one way or another. Observing its interior and substances, we can perceive unique organized structures and constructs with a genuine nature or identity in the same way we see the solar systems.

One of these imaginary structures calls our attention to being at the center of all the subjects explored in this study's factual analysis. We can give this structure any name we wish, but here, we will call it "the blind imaginary."

We should understand the blind imaginary as the attitude of denial of conventional truth and reality, scorn of evidence, disdain of science, knowledge, and demonstration, and desertion of intelligence and critical thinking in favor of a convenient and meaningless imaginary.

Considering its ingredients, we shall see that the blind imaginary is neither a category nor a quality like truth. In the same way, it is not a lie because the lie is an act of forgery of truth, as much as blinding imagination is not the opposite of the truth since this opposite should be an attribute, which is not the case. We are discussing an attitudinal structure capable of determining behavior: a systemic action and a primal behavioral model.

We use the word "systemic" here because the structural framework of this behavioral model contains the hierarchically organized interrelation of all the elements of our experience, our emotions, cognition, mind, and neuronal.

states, as well as all our biases, desires, and beliefs. The qualities of all these elements will reflect the model, like our cognition's sufficiency and coherence or absurdity, our fears, desires, and neurosis, the degree of mental and psychological sanity, and the neural and neuronic dysfunctions, besides uncountable situational ingredients.

On the other hand, such systemic action involves value attributions.

In all attributive processes that we can find in social psychology, the attribution of truth is solely objective: it refers exclusively to a particular object, external to the subject, that is qualified. Unlike this, in the blind imaginary, the accurate attribution is preceded by and grounded in a subjective attribution of value given to the subject by himself, affording him the power to determine by his discretion the values attributable to anything.

The subject, in itself, becomes the meta-reality.

It follows that, with this narcissistic structure of the critical process, accurate attribution loses its logical meaning and importance as long as it no longer expresses any analytic content related to equivalence, demonstrability, or coherence of the object in the face of reality.

While holding his self-attributed power of attribution, the subject ceases to be submitted to evidence, science, and critical knowledge whatsoever and

Immersed in his imaginary world, he elaborates a reflexive image of reality that better satisfies his desires, anxieties, and fears.

Evidently, everything related to cognitive blindness shelters both conscious and unconscious elements Lacan describes in conceptualizing the psyche's second order (or second ring): the imaginary. Therefore, we should look to this universe with a multidisciplinary and flexible inspiration.

The flaw-projected image of reality sustaining the model does not admit the methodic doubt or logical criticism. It becomes a subjective dogma in an existential layer where cognitive blindness enshrouds intelligence. As we will discuss, the result is the most vulnerable mind state that a subject can offer to social domination mechanisms and processes. Domination flourishes in ignorance.

We should also consider specific components of the behavioral model's structural framework to widen our understanding of its nature.

One of these components is our mental and psychological capacity and intuition for the illusion, which has been extensively researched by social psychology as an influential element of information processing, not only as a cognitive disfiguration or psychological interference but also as a

phenomenon depending on neurological functions which should be adequately studied, as Myers[98] commented:

> *Social psychologists have explored not only our error-prone hindsight judgments but also our capacity for illusion – for perceptual misinterpretations, fantasies, and constructed beliefs. Michael Gazzaniga (1992,1998, 2008) reports that patients whose brain hemispheres have been surgically separated will instantly fabricate - and believe - explanations of their own puzzling behaviors.*

In the structural framework of the behavioral model of the blind imaginary, another core component is significant discomfort in the subject's emotional state. This discomfort will be the starter of the forthcoming formulation of the model. For sure, the starter may vary indefinitely, but in most cases, it is resumed to anxiety caused by unsatisfied desires or fear for existing or expected pain imposed by elements of reality.

Responding to the starter's presence, the subject's psyche unconsciously takes two primary processes: a defense mechanism and narcissism stimulation. Both processes are bearers of our most primal instincts, denominated by Freud as Eros and Thanatos.

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[98] Myers, David (2012) – "Social Psychology" McGraw-Hill Education; 11 edition ISBN10: 0078035295 ISBN-13: 978-0078035296

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The defense mechanisms of the self are the first primary process. They have been exhaustively studied since the last decade of the XIXth Century, when Sigmund Freud, in the dawn of psychoanalytic theory, published the article "Psychoneurosis of Defense" (1894), starting one of the most extensive and controversial theoretical grounds of the modern psychology. The fact was his (and anyone's) first scientific approach to the defense of the ego, followed by many changes and revisions by Freud himself and many of his followers, mainly his daughter Anna Freud (1895 – 1982). The defense theories do not retain some parts of Freud's first ideas, but no defense theory exists without the Freudian background.

The modern understanding of defense mechanisms is less focused on their psychoneurotic origins and offers aggregate functional and teleological perspectives.

Rui C Campos (2018)[99], in his work "The Definition of Defense Mechanisms and their Assessment: Some Contributions," explains the different interpretations given by those who came after Freud:

a) Anna Freud (1946;1965) understood that all the identified defense mechanisms could represent proper forms of adaptation since they were moderately used, helping individuals manage their reality's requirements and challenges.

b), Unlike this opinion, Haan (1963) sustained that all the known defense mechanisms of the self, under any

[99] Campos, Rui C. "The Definition of Defense Mechanisms and their Assessment: Some Contributions"- Revista Iberoamericana de Diagnóstico y Evaluación – e Avaliação Psicológica. RIDEP · Nº50 · Vol.1 · 149 -161 – https://doi.org/10.21865/RIDER50.1.12

circumstances were associated with pathological states of the personality, acting as mismeasured responses of the individual.

c) With some variations, Vaillant (19781;1977) and Cramer (1998;2000;2006) claim that some of those mechanisms can be primitive, immature, and pathologic, while others could be mature and adaptative.
Vaillant (cit.) took care of classifying them into four levels:
a) the pathological, where the subject is distancing from reality to such a degree that other persons start considering him as insane; b) the immature, identified as causing behavioral patterns more frequently observed in adolescents; c) the neurotic ones, as those exposing behavioral patterns coinciding with the clinical description of neurosis; d) the mature mechanisms, as being those with a constructive intention of a problem- solving.

Objectively, the defense mechanisms aim to protect the individual from excessive anxiety and the self from direct aggression.
This opinion is an intermediate position, balancing Anna Freud's and Haan's assumptions.

d) Finally, Campos considers that, from an appropriate teleological standpoint, Ihilevich and Gleser (1969)[100] sustain that the defense mechanisms can distort or manipulate reality. The distortion happens when the subject's resources are insufficient to manage internal conflicts or external threats as soon as the perception identifies painful experiences that could be imposed on him. As we said before, we call these perceptions "starters."

[100]Gleser, G. C., & Ihilevich, D. (1969). An objective instrument for measuring defense mechanisms. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33*(1), 51–60.https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027381

Our study states that psychodynamics is the most critical shape of the self's defense mechanisms. However, there are many, and the psychoanalytic literature continuously aggregates more specific types and descriptions.

We will focus only on seven of these mechanisms, listed in the following table, because they are sufficient for our analytical purposes.

TABLE 1 — PSYCHODYNAMIC EGO DEFENSE MECHANISMS

REPRESSION	is the withdrawal from consciousness of an unwanted idea, affect, or desire by pushing it down, or repressing it, into the unconscious part of the mind
REACTION FORMATION	is the fixation in consciousness of an idea, affect, or desire that is opposite to a feared unconscious impulse. A mother who bears an unwanted child, for example, may react to her.
PROJECTION	is a form of defense in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person, where they then appear as a threat from the external world
REGRESSION	is a return to earlier stages of development and abandoned forms of gratification belonging to them, prompted by dangers or conflicts arising at one of the later stages
SUBLIMATION	is the diversion or deflection of instinctual drives, usually sexual ones, into noninstinctual channels. Psychoanalytic theory holds that the energy invested in sexual impulses can be shifted to the pursuit of more acceptable and even socially valuable achievements, such as artistic or scientific endeavors
DENIAL	is the conscious refusal to perceive that painful facts exist. In denying latent feelings of homosexuality or hostility, or mental defects in one's child, an individual can escape intolerable thoughts, feelings, or events
RATIONALIZATION	is the substitution of a safe and reasonable explanation for the true (but threatening) cause of behavior.

Content source: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica.Article Title: Defense mechanism.Website Encyclopædia Britannica inc. Date Published: January 31, 2020. https://www.britannica.com/topic/defense-mechanism -Access Date: June 15, 2020

More recently, psychologists and psychiatrists faced the challenge of analyzing some behavioral patterns that were still unknown until 1974 but repeated in various events occurring in the following decades: the widely known "Syndrome of Stockholm." Initially, researchers interpreted the syndrome as a new defensive mechanism of the ego because of its features

Studies identified this behavioral pattern as a captive individual's psychological response that establishes an empathic relation with his captors' ideas and desires. In other words, a whole act of adhesion is an identification with the aggressor.

The first researchers on this pattern understood that the behavioral model contained at least three layers: a) the captor actively threatens the captive's life; b) after the situation "a" the captor demonstrates that he had reconsidered his intention of killing the captive, and decided preserving his life; c) the relief of the captive's extreme fear and anxiety is transposed into feelings of gratitude toward the captor, establishing the empathic relation.

However, the literature, methodological research, and experiments on this pattern are still scarce. Moreover, most information referring to the facts and behaviors comes from the mediatic literature and cannot be helpful to psychological research.

Namnyak M, Tufton N, Szekely R, Toal M, Worboys S, Sampson

EL. (2007)[101] accepts that "*This suggests an identifiable pattern of experience and behavior may exist amongst victims described by the media."* Nevertheless, on the other hand, they state that the available material is few:

> *There is little published academic research on 'Stockholm syndrome,' although a study of media reports reveals similarities between well-publicized cases. This may be due to reporting and publication bias.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *We did not identify any validated diagnostic criteria for Stockholm syndrome in any of the papers reviewed in this study, although a few papers offer suggestions for potential criteria (2,12,13. A large discrepancy regarding the definition of Stockholm syndrome exists between the documents reviewed.*

Summarizing, irrespective of the many possibilities of the existence of still unresearched forms of defensive mechanisms of the self (and the Stockholm syndrome could be one of them), we will consider only the seven forms in our Table for all methodological purposes.

In the face of their descriptions, it becomes apparent that any one of the defense mechanisms can play a determinant

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[101] Namnyak, M & Tufton, Nicola & Szekely, R & Toal, M & Worboys, S & Sampson, Elizabeth. (2008). 'Stockholm syndrome': Psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth? Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica. 117. 4-11. 10.1111/j.1600-0447.2007.01112. x.

role in formulating the behavioral model, resulting in blind imaginary constructions.

Narcissism is the second primary process in constructing the blind imaginary model.

Narcissism is often referred to in many trivial forms because it is related to many typical behaviors widely known in our daily interpersonal relations. Therefore, we can find hundreds of superficial understandings about narcissism in the literature and any dialogue in our social lives.

In our reflection, what matters most is understanding the content and structure of narcissism rather than the academic elaboration of all possible conceptualizations. For us, "how" it is and works is more relevant than "what" it is or could be.

Our first notions of narcissism came from psychoanalytic thinking.

Freud (1914)[102] proposed two interrelated notions of narcissism: P*rimary narcissism*, which originated in early infancy, and *secondary narcissism*, resulting from adapting the primary one to the external conditions. In Freud's words (op.cit.)

> *I may point out that we are bound to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts, however, are there from the very first; so there*

[102] Freud, Sigmund, "On Narcissism: An Introduction", (*1914)* - 1925 C.P., 4, 30-59. (Tr. C. M. Baines.

> *must be something added to auto-erotism—a new psychical action—in order to bring about narcissism.*

Freud understood that the child is born without a notion of individuality, which would mean the *ego*. Hewitson (2010)[103] explains the context of this period,

> Primary narcissism is a first state, prior to the constitution of the ego and therefore auto-erotic, through which the infant sees his own person as the object of exclusive love – a state that precedes his ability to turn towards external objects. From this ensues the constitution of the *ideal ego*.

Laplanche and Pontalis (2004)[104] synthesize the Freudian concept, assuming that "*primary narcissism denotes an early state in which the child cathects itself with the whole of its libido."*

S*econdary narcissism* corresponds to the following state, beginning with the child's first interactions with the external reality. When this happens, the ideal ego experiments with the exposition of external objects and stimuli. The auto-erotic ego loses this condition, starting to be related to the elements of the outer world's sociability and acquiring the content of individuality. In this stage, the subject creates an image of the *ideal self,* which returns to the ego to be

[103]Hewitson, Owen -What Does Lacan Say About the Mirror Stage? – Part I https://www.lacanonline.com/2010/09/what-does-lacan-say-about-the-mirror-stage-part-i/ retrieved on Jun,09,2020

[104] Laplanche and Pontalis, "The Language of Psycho-Analysis", London: Karnac, 2004

pursued and achieved. Through this process, the *ideal ego* converts into the *ego ideal*.

Comparing these two concepts, we can assume that their relationship mirrors the representation between reality and its idealization. As Lacan argued in the analysis of "first order," the personality's initial stage occurs without relation to the outer world. In this layer, called "reality," the subject experiments in a kind of perfect state in which he is the center of his "self" and the non-relational universe, having his needs naturally satisfied. In the following order, Lacanian, "the imaginary," the *ideal ego* gains an interrelated structure in which the *ideal ego* seems forever lost. Revisiting Freud's "On Narcissism: an Introduction, Sophie de Mijolla-Mellor (2020)[105] glosses:

> *The person, as Freud wrote, seeks to regain the narcissistic perfection of its infancy under the new form of the ego ideal, which is deferred as a goal to be attained in the future. Thus, the ideal ego could be seen as the nostalgic survival of a lost narcissism, while the ego ideal appears to be the dynamic formation that sustains ambitions towards progress*.

The Freudian dichotomic idea of narcissism has been relatively kept aside by subsequent studies, which focused on an integrated interpretation. Melanie Klein (1882- 1960) abandoned the idea, and many others definitively

[105]Mijolla-Mellor,SophiedeMijolla-Mellor https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/ego-idealideal-ego - retrieved on Jun,10,2020

questioned its content, arguing that, once based on an auto-erotic situation, primary narcissism cannot be accepted appropriately as narcissism.

Philippe Julien (1995)[106] argues that when Lacan formulated his mirror stage theory (the imaginary), he unified the understanding of narcissism in the following way:

> *In the mirror stage, Lacan compressed the two phases into one. At the very moment, when the ego is formed by the image of the other, narcissism and aggressivity a correlative. Narcissism, in which the image of one's own body is sustained by the image of the other, in fact, introduces a tension: the other in his image both attracts and rejects me*

Narcissism constitutes a causal element of many personality disorders, named "NPD" (Heinz Kohutin 1968)[107]. Several psychopathic and sociopathic states become a part of the diversified taxonomies brought by studies and experiments in several fields. Given the abundance of this material, a complete classification of its content is needed in

[106] Julien, Philippe "Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary"-NYU Press; Revised ed. e(1995) – ISBN:0814742262

[107] Kohut, Heinz (1968). "The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders: Outline of a Systematic Approach."The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. London, England: Taylor & Francis.

the present. Aaron L Pincus, Mark R Lukowitsky (2010) [108] sustain that the criterion about pathological narcissism and its phenotypic themes (narcissistic grandiosity and narcissistic vulnerability) should be classified *"into revised diagnostic criteria and assessment instruments, elimination of references to overt and covert narcissism that reify these modes of expression as distinct narcissistic types, and determination of the appropriate structure for pathological narcissism."(op. cit)*

These pathological configurations of narcissism are particularly interesting to our reflection at most; given their ability to provoke severe distortions of critical thinking, what is a condition to formulate any blind imaginary content?

In the present, pathological narcissism expresses two phenotypic themes: *grandiose narcissism* and *vulnerability narcissism*. These technical concepts do not belong to social psychology; we should follow them literally.

Stathis Grapsas, Eddie Brummelman, Mitja D. Back, and Jaap J. A. Denissen (2020)[109] explain the *grandiose narcissism:*

> *Grandiose narcissism (hereafter: narcissism) is a personality trait marked by beliefs of personal*

[108] Aaron L Pincus, Mark R Lukowitsky - "Pathological Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder" -Annu Rev Clin Psychol..2010;6:421-46 -doi: 10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.121208.131215.PMID: 20001728

[109] Grapsas, Stathis; Brummelman,Eddie;. Back, Mitja D , and Denissen, Jaap J. A. 'The "Why" and "How" of Narcissism: A Process Model of Narcissistic Status Pursuit' -Perspect Psychol Sci. 2020 Jan; 15(1): 150–172-. Published online 2019 Dec 5.doi:10.1177/1745691619873350 -PMCID: PMC6970445 -PMID:31805811

> *superiority and a sense of entitlement to special treatment (Krizan & Herlache, 2018; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Narcissists (i.e., individuals with relatively high levels of grandiose narcissism) tend to go out of their way to impress others: They often groom their appearance to grasp others' attention (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010), brag about themselves (Buss & Chiodo, 1991), and showcase their talents and abilities in front of others (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). At the same time, narcissists are often combative toward others. In such instances, they are often perceived as confrontational, insulting, belittling, and intimidating (Holtzman, Vazire, & Mehl, 2010; Morf & Rhodewalt, 1993; Reijntjes et al., 2016).*

The understanding of *vulnerable narcissism* we took from Czarna, A.Z., Zajenkowski, M., Maciantowicz, O. (2019)[110]:

> *Vulnerable narcissism, rooted in a brittle sense of self, is associated with low self-esteem and reflects defensiveness and insecurity. It involves feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and negative affect (Cain et al. 2008; Campbell and Miller 2011; Miller et al. 2011; Pincus and Lukowitsky 2010). While arrogance and open displays of dominance and grandiosity*

[110] Czarna, A.Z., Zajenkowski, M., Maciantowicz, O.*et al.* "The relationship of narcissism with tendency to react with anger and hostility: The roles of neuroticism and emotion regulation ability".*Curr Psychol* (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00504-6 - retrieved on Jun,10,2020

> *characterize grandiose narcissism, the vulnerable form is described by self-reported feelings of inferiority, depression, depletion, shame-proneness, and high reactivity to evaluative events (Kaufman et al. 2018). Vulnerable narcissists' social behavior is marked by hostility, arrogance, social avoidance, and a lack of empathy (Dickinson and Pincus 2003; Hendin and Cheek 1997). narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability together (Krizan and Herlache, 2018).*

Looking for the relation between narcissism and critical thinking processing, evincing its influence on the formulation of the blind imaginary, a meaningful correspondence with the concepts of emotional intelligence (EI) has been established by Zajenkowski Marcin, Maciantowicz Oliwia, Szymaniak Kinga, Urban Paweł (2018),[111]who conducted an accurate experiment arising to meaningful results.

In the first step, the authors define the connection between emotional intelligence (EI) and critical thinking:

> *Emotional intelligence was defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189) as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this*

[111] Zajenkowski Marcin, Maciantowicz Oliwia, Szymaniak Kinga, Urban Paweł "Vulnerable and Grandiose Narcissism Are Differentially Associated With Ability and Trait Emotional Intelligence" Frontiers in Psychology-VOLUME 9 - 2018 https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01606 - DOI=10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01606 ISSN=1664-1078 Retrieved on Jun,10,2020.

information to guide one's thinking and actions. In their model four branches have been distinguished: Perception of Emotions(the ability to identify one's emotions accurately, as well as to recognize emotions of other people based on various contextual cues), Using Emotions to Facilitate Thinking (the ability to use emotions and moods to support and guide intellectual processing), Understanding emotions (skills necessary to comprehend and label basic and complex emotions), Managing Emotions (the ability to monitor and modify own emotions in order to enhance emotional and intellectual growth). Within this approach, EI is measured similarly to cognitive intelligence via performance tests (Mayer et al., 2003).

The experiments conducted by the authors demonstrate that both phenotypic themes of narcissism *(grandiose narcissism* and *vulnerability narcissism)* are positively associated with trait EI. On the other hand, trait EI and ability EI correlate with weak links. The study concludes, "*Our results are consistent with this view and indicate that the two types of narcissism are important correlates of trait EI. These findings suggest that narcissism may play a substantial role in understanding EI at both the conceptual and measurement level*" (op. cit).

Hence, from all these studies and opinions, we can infer that narcissism can be a normal adaptative process of the self and a severe pathologic state of the personality. In its pathological and very usual state, narcissism can interfere with the critical thinking of the subject, provoking essential

distortions of his imaginary psyche's processes and considerable impairment of his emotional intelligence (EI).

Besides the self's defense mechanisms, our illusions, cognitive dysfunctions, biases, reflected images, beliefs, fears, desires, and many situational ingredients, narcissism can become our guide to the blind imaginary or, in other terms, to "the blind shadows of Narcissus."

Emerging from all these questions, Christopher Herbert[112] assumes the existence of an open conflict between narcissism and science (or between knowledge and fantasy), as Freud declared since the beginning of psychoanalytic thinking:

> *Freud portrays the history of science as a series of parallel revolutions, each in its own domain inflicting chastisement upon the retrograde influence of what he terms human "narcissism." The mandate of scientific thought, according to Freud, is to abolish all the fallacies that arise from anthropocentrism, from ascribing a privileged position in the natural world to human values or a human point of view. Copernican astronomy, Darwinian biology, and now psychoanalysis all give expression to this paramount motive of*

[112] Herbert, *Christopher* " Science and Narcissism " - Modernism/modernity - Volume 3, Number 3, September 1996 -Johns Hopkins University Press – retrieved on Mai 03,2020

science, "the destruction of narcissistic illusion."[113]

COLLECTIVE BLIND IMAGINARY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

We have conceptualized the blind imaginary as a behavioral model resulting from primal processes. These processes can be individual or collective because life is, in all cases, a shared process. It is immensely challenging to distinguish what is inherently personal in our lives and what exists in our existence that has been elaborated with others, from others, like others, for others, and even against others. We are ontologically relational and interdependent entities, virtual subjects. As entities or beings, we are part of a system structured as movable and existing in continuous movement.

Hence, when we reflect on our behavioral models, we may have the illusion that we are thinking about our individual selves when facing a collective object. Nevertheless, our identities are one of the most questioned matters of our current state of science. Under the lenses of quantum physics and the theories of continuous matter, even our biological bodies have their reality under revision.

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[113] Sigmund Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 17, trans. And ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 140.

We are not stating that individuality does not exist. We are just questioning if we ever thought it was when the evidence indicates that it is limited to the variables of some pieces of a system that, in principle, does not need anyhow to consider what we believe that our individuals are.

Therefore, we consider the distinction between individual and collective behavioral models semantically possible but worthless.

On the other hand, social constructs are relevant because they represent the ontological systems where our existence occurs and our behavioral models, working as causational elements of human action. Thus, we can observe our models' meaning and effects inside social constructs, such as the blind imaginary.

We adopt a constructivist position in this study. We agree with Alfred Schutz (1889 – 1959) in the assumption that society is a product of human individuals' interaction through interpretive webs, where they create the world in which we live. In the same way, we accept Berger and Luckmann's (1966)assumptions, sustaining that the foundations of social structure arise from the principle that society is a human product and objective reality. We embrace Frederick Bartlett's (1886–1969)[114] argument as how humans use prior knowledge to make sense of new phenomena: the pre-existing mental structures or *schemata*. Jean Piaget's (1896– 1980) theory of intelligence is grounded in this concept when he states that "cognitive development is an adaptive process of schema correction employing assimilation and

[114] Bartlett, F. C. (1932). Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology.Cambridge University Press.

accommodation. We assimilate new information by fitting it within existing cognitive structures".[115]

Constructivism is a vast subject in sciences and humanities, but what matters to our study is the underlying assumption that all our social reality is the consequence of our experience gathered in cognitive and behavioral models, in which the pre-existing mental structures are used to interpret the current reality.

We will locate our study's object, the blind imaginary, on this theoretical ground as a behavioral model hypothetically related to a social construct. Since there are uncountable social constructs, it is pretty logical to look for the most universal and primal one, considering that we assumed that what we are discussing is a primal behavior system, starting from and acting through primal emotions. We should use the same ontological and epistemological structures as spare pieces of the same puzzle to establish the correlations between our behavior model and this referential primal construct. If all these parts fit together in a logical image, our reasoning should be true.

The structure of our reasoning shelters the following assertions:

The most universal and primal social construct we know is the collective unconscious, and situating our model in this

[115] Mitcham Carl & Ryder Martin (2005) - Social Constructionism (2020) - Encyclopedia of Philosophy
https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/sociology-general-terms-and-concepts/social-constructionismRetrieved on Jun 14, 2020

construct, will show how it interacts and influences the whole construct itself.

To summarize our reasoning, we will consider the original and straightforward Freud-Jungian conceptualization: the collective imaginary content is instincts and archetypes. Instincts are natural elements that cannot be modified, and archetypes express all our primal emotions and constructed knowledge independently of any individual experience in the present.

We will find uncountable primal emotions and their variations in the collective human unconscious, which could mean an endless taxonomy to be deciphered by our study. However, on the other hand, it is logically possible to gather all these emotions in a few large groups, which permits objective observation and adequate comparison with other entities.

Attempting to reach this atomic taxonomy, we assume that the collective unconscious holds two main groups of primal emotions: fears and desires. Furthermore, each of these two groups occupies different directly interactive layers.

The first is the group of fears, gathering three core and universal emotions: the fear of mortality, natural forces, and the fear of the unknown. Next, we name the layer occupied by this group, the layer of perception and emotions.

We call "starters" the three core universal emotional causes because they are the starting point to the complex dialectical process of forming the collective unconscious social construct.

The second group is the group of desires, gathering three core and universal emotions: the desire for immortality, the

desire for domination and the desire for knowledge. This group occupies three layers: reason, imagination, and creativity.

We call all three core universal emotions "opponents" because they are the rational and cognitive human reactions, or answers, in the face of the threat imposed by the "starters" and corresponding intense discomfort.

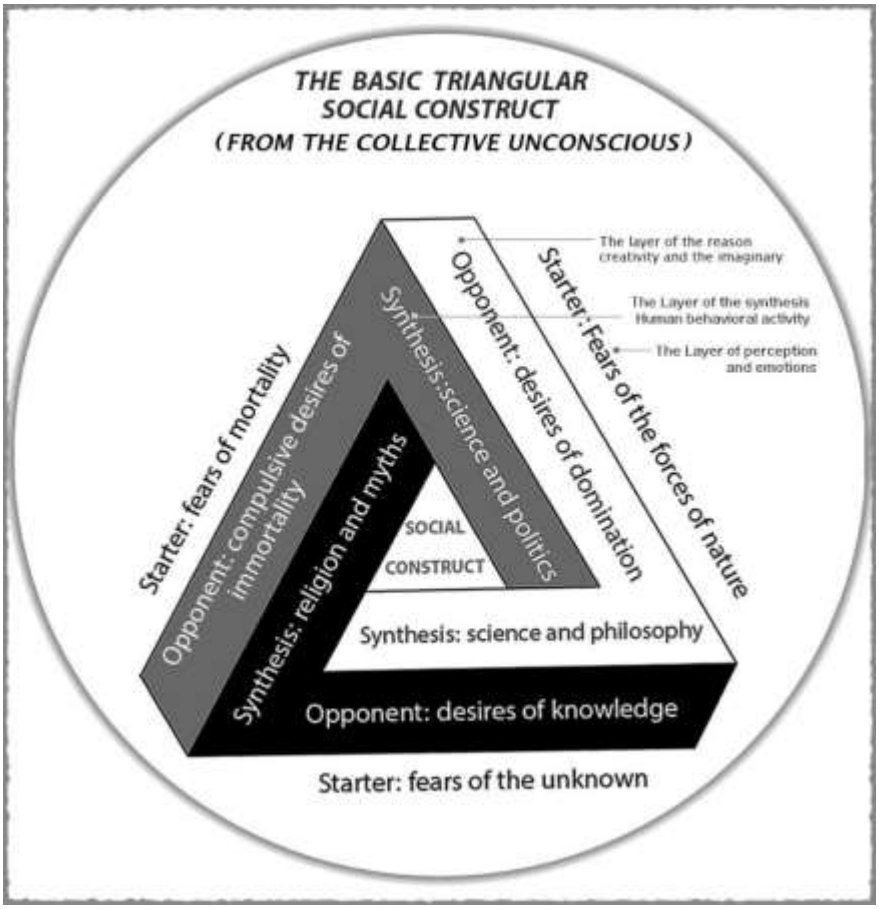
These two layers are interactive antagonists, corresponding to the thesis and the antithesis of the collective imaginary social construct's phenomenological dialectic formation.

We call the third and last layer of the structure the layer of human behavioral activity synthesis. From each dialectic confrontation among the "starters" and the "opponents," a synthesis will arrive in the form of related human activity. The dynamic and continuous interactions of all the human activities resulting from the process will constitute the structure of the most basic and primal human social construct.

As we did with the starters, we may aggregate these syntheses in a few vast groups, which permits its objective observation and adequate comparison with other entities: the group of science and philosophy (natural sciences and critical thinking), the group of science and politics(technology and humanities), and the group of religion and myths (theology and theological cosmology). Finally, we give this synthetic result the name of the basic triangular social construct from the collective unconscious.

Once here the structure of our reasoning is presented in its most succinct form, and its complete demonstration does not fit in the limits of this study, we elaborate a graphical

explanation aiming to expose the foundations of our conclusions as comprehensively as possible.



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Observing our graphic representation, we may allege that:

a) In our cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes, we can refer to all the elements and resources held by our basic

social construct. All these elements are engraved and available in our collective unconscious as schemas, preexisting mental structures (Bartlett, 1932).

b) In the mentioned processes, the subject may thoroughly preserve the schema and directly determine his reasoning and action, as the graphical representation shows.

c) Similarly, the subject can adapt the schema to new information or emotional and cognitive statuses existing in the present. This means a correction of the schema, employing assimilation and accommodation. "We assimilate new information by fitting it within existing cognitive structures" (Piaget, op.cit.). The adaptation does not modify the schema as a pre-existing mental structure but aggregates new and compatible elements to its structure in the context of an individual cognitive process.

d) The schema can be influenced by the subject's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes not only for the assimilation and accommodation of new experiences, as Piaget mentions in his theory of intelligence. The influence can also unconsciously reject, deny or arbitrarily neutralize some schema contents under the command of particular fears and desires.
In this case, the collective unconscious offers the opponent's distortion unrelated to any consistent, rational element. As a result of this adulteration, the opponent, on its respective layer, loses any cognitive and rational content linked to reality. The desires for knowledge are substituted by the images of the subject's imaginary, moving away from the discomfort of his fear or dissatisfaction.

This unconscious act of substitution denies science and logic and obstructs effective cognitive processes because they cannot accommodate the subject's desire.
The adulteration of the opponent determines a flawed synthesis of the process: the blind imaginary behavioral model.

e) This model is an antisocial structure because it neglects the schema and will never become part of a social construct, even if it results from collective behaviors. Furthermore, the model shows a narcissistic context in which the subject desires to overcome all the existing experiences and analytical tools belonging to human activity.

f) Observing the graphical presentation, we can understand that the fear of mortality is the only one of the three starters that cannot evolve from the opponent to a scientifically demonstrable synthesis. The synthesis of this starter's confrontation with its opponent will remain in the imaginary context, and its expression in human activity will be only the religion and the myths: the mystical-magical cultures.

For our graphical demonstration, we used the image of the "Penrose Triangle" intentionally[116] for three reasons: a) the

[116] 1)The Penrose triangle, also known as the Penrose tribar or the impossible tribar, is an impossible triangular object, an optical illusion consisting of an object that can be depicted in a perspective drawing but cannot exist as a solid object. It was first created by the Swedish artist Oscar Reutersvärd in 1934. Independently from Reutersvärd, the triangle was devised and popularized in the 1950s by psychiatrist Lionel Penrose and his son, prominent mathematician Roger Penrose, who described it as "impossibility in its purest form." It is featured prominently in the works of artist M. C. Escher, whose earlier

structure of our reasoning is tripartite, which means an ideal triangle; b) the Penrose triangle is a tridimensional image and, because of this feature, can visually represent the dialectic interaction of the three different layers of the construct better than an explicit image would permit; c) the Penrose triangle is physical and mathematically impossible (it is just an illusion and not a real figure), as our model of the basic social construct. Our model can be confirmed only in theory because, in the real world, uncountable distortions make its existence impossible in the pure form of our study.

depictions of impossible objects partly inspired it. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penrose_triangle - retrieved on Jun 15, 2020

2) Penrose, L. S.; Penrose, R. (February 1958). "Impossible Objects: A Special Type of Visual Illusion". *British Journal of Psychology*. 491): 31–33. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8295.1958.tb00634.x.PMID13536303

3) Basic image credited to Tobias R. – Metoc - Own work, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2520370

TITLE II

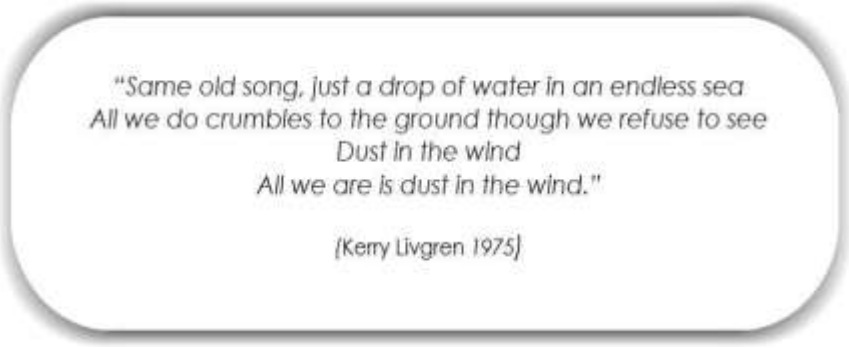
FACTUAL ANALYSIS

(facts expressing our concepts)

CHAPTER VI

PRIMAL CONSTRUCTS FROM THE BLIND IMAGINARY

ANIMISM AND DIVINIZATION



117

When our most remote ancestors observed themselves and the universe in its tremendous forces, from the baseline of their instincts and rudimentary knowledge and consciousness, three painful fears started haunting their minds and feelings: the superiority of nature, the unknown, and death. When they asked themselves for the first time: "Who are we, and why are we here?" they could only infer

[117] Excerpt from the lyrics of the song "Dust in the Wind."

they were a tiny piece of a scary whole and were here just to breathe, breed, and bleed.

Uncountable millennia afterward, and in the realm of advanced scientific spatial research, with sophisticated equipment reaching the limits of our solar system, these questions remain, as well as the fear and the pain. The three primal fears are amongst the archetypes we can study in the modern archetypal psychology started by James Hillman[118] (1926 – 2011)and his followers.

The shadows of this original triangle reside forever in our collective unconscious.

For any sensation of fear invading our minds, we immediately react with the origination of a desire that content can neutralize, overcome, or at least control the undesired discomfort. This instinctive reaction is one of the most primal defense mechanisms of the ego, which we can analyze in Chapter V with our graphical model of the collective unconscious's basic social construct.

The "defensive desire" is an automated and unconscious function of our imagination and can vary in many ways, as it is fundamentally situational. Indeed, the pleasure principle is our psyche's object, but fears are the starters of many of our desires.

Factually, our ancestors reacted with a complex structure of desires imaginarily capable of facing these scary realities. These desires were numerous and correlated in an imaginary

[118] James Hillman (1983) – "Archetypal Psychology" - Uniform Edition, Vol. 1 (Spring Publications, 2004. Original 1983.)

system, which demanded an abstract baseline or platform for its stability: our first and metaphysical puzzle.

Our minds elaborated for this teleological finality is the abstract and vast transcendency concept, weaving a concrete behavior model.

In philosophy and psychology, transcendency can be semantically understood as a property of excelling, surpassing, or going beyond the limits of material experience. It means a state of being or existence above and beyond the borders of reality. The concept shelters a nuclear idea of superiority concerning what is being "transcended": elevation above truth, superior excellence, and supereminence above apparent reality.
This imagined superiority intends to deviate from primal fears and unblock the mechanisms commanded by the principle of pleasure.

> *"It is of the essence of imaginative culture that it transcends the limits both of the naturally possible and of the morally acceptable.",* wrote Northrop Frye (1912 – 1991)[119]

The baseline of transcendency is the context originating all the mystical-magical cultures and actions known in human history, which have survived into modern cultures in many forms.

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[119] Sutton, Walter & Foster, Richard – "Modern Criticism, Theory and Practice. " – The Odyssey Print NY – 1963 – p.303

All our experiences, beliefs, desires, fears, language, religion, arts, and uncountable semiotic elements are engraved in our collective unconscious. It is our universe of symbols, replacing our conscious experience and perception of reality since it is inhabited exclusively by imaginary projections.

Rejecting the naturally possible (Freye, op.cit.), any transcendental object or entity is not subject to the demonstration or submitted to evidence or necessary coherence. Instead, transcendental objects are made exclusively of imaginary elements, emotions, desires, biases, and beliefs, often unconscious, in a state of being above and beyond the limits of material experience.

In its psychological texture, transcendency floats between ambivalent feelings, evidencing the inconsistency of its contents. On the one hand, a sense of domination, of supereminence above apparent reality, is always present. On the other hand, as a mental process, transcendency is an act of submission to what an individual or group initially believes is unattainable. In his theory, this scenario configures a cognitive dissonance in the meaning given by Festinger (1919 -1989). It is noticeable that this dissonance is why the idea of transcendency does not have the psychosomatic effect of eliminating the anxiety caused by its starter but only limiting this anxiety to a tolerable level, in which other defense mechanisms can work.

For factual analysis, the baseline of transcendency is the essential primal construct of the blind imaginary. The extension is the conceptual condition of all the other imaginary structures, where reality does not limit or control our narcissism.

A**nimism** is the first substructure of transcendence and has vast factual and phenomenological contents. Social psychology can be understood as an ontological concept and a behavioral model.

The word "animism" (from Latin "animus" or "anima" = soul) entered the modern literature vocabulary through the research of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832 – 1917)[120], meaning "*A belief in numerous personalized, supernatural beings endowed with reason, intelligence and/or volition, that inhabit both objects and living beings and govern their existence. More simply, it is the belief that 'everything is conscious' or that 'everything has a soul.'"*[121]

Conceptually, animistic thought is sustained by the belief of some transcendental conscious entities (such as souls or spirits) sheltered in everything in the surrounding world, irrespective of living forms or inanimate objects expressed by its corresponding natural forces. The relations between humans and these entities come from their natural involvement in the shared universe to which they belong.

The teleological nature of animism has been perceivable since the first research. James Frazer. (1854 – 1941)[122] noted that animism looked to gain ascendancy over spiritual forces

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[120] Tylor, Burnett E. – (1871) – "Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom" -(l920) London, Ed. John Murray

[121] A History of Animism and Its Contemporary Examples - Edited by Matthew A. McIntosh https://brewminate.com/a-history-of-animism-and-its-contemporary-examples/ - Posted on *March 31, 2019 – retrieved on Jun 21, 2020* - Originally published by *New World Encyclopedia*, 11.18.2016,

[122] Frazer, James G– (1890) "The Golden Bough; a Study in Magic and Religion"

through magic, in a certain way the spirits could help solve many kinds of daily human life problems, desires, and difficulties. In our terms, animism is one of the many expressions of the utilitarian idea of transcendency moved by the desire to dominate natural forces. A defense mechanism started with the fear of natural elements and a product of the blind imaginary.

Primarily, the consciousness of the species' identity and singularity was not as specialized and elaborated as it is now. Wulf (2019)[123] argues that:

> *In ancient times, people, animals, and the environment were part of living nature, the Physis. They were generally perceived as similar to each other. They were stimulated by the power, the dynamics of nature, the Physis;*

In this assertion, we can detect animism's mimetic nature, resulting in the indistinction between species, elements, and natural accidents in elaborating the imaginary expressions of transcendency and the attribution of power and abilities. The multimorphic appearance of animist objects was not only the extrapolation of reality but rather the miscegenation of their components as perceived by primitive man. In natural history, the mimetic phenomena

[123] Wulf, C. (2019) The mimetic creation of the Imaginary. Aisthesis 12(1): 5-14. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-25617

represent defensive mechanisms, as we can see in many animals and plants. In a certain way, these biological mechanisms are probably still engraved in our genome.

These creations of the imaginary have never been systematically organized by formal religions or doctrines, as the text edited by Matthew A. McIntosh[124] notices:

> *While the term "animism" refers to a broad range of spiritual beliefs (many of which are still extant within human cultures today), it does not denote any particular religious creed or doctrine. The most common feature of animist religions is their attention to particulars, as evidenced by the number and variety of spirits they recognize. This can be strongly contrasted with the all-inclusive universalism of monotheistic, pantheistic and panentheistic traditions. Furthermore, animist spirituality is more focused on addressing practical exigencies (such as health, nourishment, and safety needs) than on solving abstract metaphysical quandaries. Animism recognizes that the universe is alive with spirits and that humans are interrelated with them.*

[124] A History of Animism and Its Contemporary Examples - Edited by Matthew A. McIntosh https://brewminate.com/a-history-of-animism-and-its-contemporary-examples/ - Posted on *March 31, 2019 – retrieved on Jun 21, 2020* - Originally published by *New World Encyclopedia*, 11.18.2016,

In many forms and instances, these imaginary creations survived from their primal origins to the present day, engraved in religious, cultural, political, linguistic, and behavioral structures with the same original meaning of a defensive answer to the same fears and unsatisfied desires.

Indeed, it is relatively uncommon to talk about modern animistic structured cultures because other forms of social organization replaced them. However, on the other hand, we cannot find any modern Western or Eastern religion, culture, language, or social organization without the heritage of animism and its original transcendent myths that, in the present, correspond to the idea of "the sacred."

Paolo Bellini (2018)[125] commented on Gérard Bouchard's work "The Mythification Process" (2017), where these elements are visible with the meaning that we mentioned:

> For Bouchard, the sacred is essentially synonymous with unquestionable, untouchable, intangible, inviolable and transcendent, so that it is juxtaposed to the profane both in the sense of referring to a supernatural divine order, which could be immanent and in the sense of identifying a mere transcendent dimension at large, which can be embodied in an ideology, in a philosophical conviction or in something that

[125] Bellini, Paolo - "The Collective Imaginary of Modern Civilization" (2018) - *Philosophy and Public Issues (New Series)*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2018): 17-29 Luiss University Press - E-ISSN 2240-7987 | P-ISSN 1591-0660

> exceeds the limits of possible experience in a Kantian sense.

For this reason, all the existing traditional religions and cultures bear the imaginary image of sacred things as defensive mechanisms to express and preserve their beliefs, convictions, or ideologies. Therefore, in modern times, we have places, living and dead persons, texts, words, objects, gestures, dances, rituals, animals, sounds, geometric forms, symbols, and even food, symbolizing sacred or transcendental entities or meaning their materialized expression.

The borders between reality and imaginary transcendency have never changed.

Anthropology, philosophy, and ontological psychology have considered animism with the core concepts we discussed. However, when considering a direct relation between reality and the imagination, these concepts prevail in a dualistic model of mind, matter, and soul (anima).

Beyond this ambit, and based on the most recent findings in physics, Nick Herbert (2002) [126]proposed the idea of "quantum animism," once taking into account that, in his opinion, consciousness is an integral part of the physical world, which Is permeated by the mind in all its levels. The physicist argues that:

> *Many primitive peoples organized their lives around a doctrine we call "animism," the belief*

[126] Herbert, Nick (2002). "Holistic Physics – or – An Introduction to Quantum Tantra". https://southerncrossreview.org/16/herbert.essay.htm - retrieved on Jun 19, 2020

that every object possesses sentient "insides" like our own. The quantum consciousness assumption, which amounts to a kind of "quantum animism", likewise asserts that consciousness is an integral part of the physical world, not an emergent property of special biological or computational systems. Since everything in the world is on some level a quantum system, this assumption requires that everything be conscious on that level. If the world is truly quantum animated, then there is an immense amount of invisible inner experience going on all around us that is presently inaccessible to humans, because our own inner lives are imprisoned inside a small quantum system, isolated deep in the meat of an animal brain. We may not need to travel into outer space to inhabit entirely new worlds. New experiential worlds of inconceivable richness and variety may already be present "at our fingertips"--worlds made up of strangely intelligent minds that silently surround and interpenetrate our own modes of awareness.

Werner Krieglstein (2002)[127] explains that the quantum animism proposed by Herbert differs fundamentally from all ontological concepts and behavioral models sustained by our traditions. We have ever understood that animism proposes that some imaginary spirit inhabits a body or

[127] Krieglstein Werner J. "Compassion: a New Philosophy of the Other" 2002

object, which expresses the spirit of this dualism. In its turn, quantum animism derives from the fact that every natural system has an inner life, a conscious center, from which it directs and observes its action.

Indeed, we should take into account these arguments in our analysis. However, for this study's purpose, we must consider that we are discussing very different ideas despite Herbert using the term "animism" as we do. Our discussion is grounded in concepts of ordinary realism and employs the corresponding logical assumptions. Transforming these concepts to the quantum reality realm will become meaningless, as Heisenberg proposed. Similarly, if we try to insert a quantum meaning of animism under an ordinary realistic formulation, we will not find any reality.

Perhaps these different approaches could be adjusted ahead of time, considering that both, in principle, reject the blind imaginary or cognitive dissonance as bearers of reality.

Divinization is another factual context that expresses the concepts that we discussed in the Chapters of Part I.

The roots of divinization are primal, and we can find uncountable expressions of the phenomenon in archaeological remains of the Neolithic.

In ancient philosophy, the idea of divinization (or theosis) is repeatedly referred to in the Platonic tradition, and from the third century AD on, has been adopted by the Christian tradition, with St. Athanasius Doctrine of Divinization, as resulting from the syllogism: *"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St. Athanasius,* De inc*., 54, 3: PG 25, 192B).* A such syllogism cannot be taken as a

logical structure once its premise is just an imaginary assumption.

As a religious idea, divinization has spread by many Western and Eastern cultures and traditions, remaining up to the present as a fundamental belief or a dogma in some religions.

Out of its mystical nutshell, which we will not discuss in this work, divinization is a social phenomenon scientifically studied by history, social psychology and psychoanalysis being our focus.

In the madness of our blind imaginary, creating gods is not enough. We make gods to become like them or one of them. The inherent meaning of divinization is precisely this.

Divinization is a persistent myth resulting from a supreme expression of pathologic narcissism of grandiosity. It shelters the obsessive desire for power and domination, setting the historical meeting point of the political absurd with the raving religiosity. In human history, both have walked side by side since the first civilizations. Ideology and the physical force of weaponry sustain the political form of divinization; dogmas, myths, and beliefs are the weapons in the religious form. Both are mechanisms of control and domination, often existing in an association.

We can find uncountable examples of this delusional association. However, a few words expressed one of the most recent and insane: *"Our Führer is the intermediary between his people and the throne of God. Everything the Führer utters is a religion in the highest sense"* (Paul Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's chief minister from 14 March 1933 to 30

April 1945, and chancellor of the Third Reich in its last days)[128]. On 1 May 1945, the author of this phrase and his wife, Magda, committed suicide, not without, before killing their six children, aged 4 to 12 years old.

In this study, we are not discussing the insanity of a group of persons. This is just an example. Instead, we are referring to the madness of humanity, powered by the blind individual and collective imaginary.

When we attempt to understand how an unthinkable scenario like the Nazi nightmare could happen, we often take the way of our biases and superficial observation and perceive it as something related to a specific historical situation, cultural and racial features of a determined race or people, or the madness of governors. The flawed result is that we acquire the belief that Nazism and the divinization of horror are episodic things belonging to an external reality, very different and far from ours.

Contemporary sociopsychological experiments offer relevant information conducting to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

One of the Nazi tragedy's principal elements was the collective obedience to absurd commands, which made possible the practice of one of the most horrendous genocides of history. German soldiers and officers and the people gathered in crowds unconditionally accepted Hitler's divinization and blind obedience to all his commands, irrespective of their sanity or morality.

[128] Winkler, Martin M. (2001). "Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture". Baltimore, United States and London, England: The Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 0-8018-8268-0.

When we watch available images of that period, all the characters look hypnotized and submerged in a fanatic trance of contemplating their fake god.

A notable social psychologist from Yale University, Stanley Milgram, a son of Jewish immigrants surviving from the holocaust, looked to answer these questions for many years. He researched the behavior of German officers accused of genocide by the Nuremberg War Criminal Trials and perceived that they were unanimous in sustaining their defenses on the argument that they were only following orders from their superiors - what they declared as being their duty.
Holding this evidence, Milgram wanted to investigate whether Germans were particularly obedient to authority figures, as this was a common explanation given before the court.

The psychologist's interest was researching how far ordinary people would obey orders involving harming and pain to another person and how easily they could accept committing meaningless atrocities.

Then, during the '60s, the psychologist conducted an experiment focusing on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience to understand the kind of obedience prevalent during the Hitlerism period.

Milgram looked for male candidates to participate in a study of learning at Yale University. They were 40 males, aged between 20 and 50, whose jobs ranged from unskilled to professional, from the New Haven area. The participants were involved in an experimental context in which they believed they were acting as teachers of a supposed student who should be punished with electric shocks each time he gave wrong answers to the participant's questions.

They were induced to believe that the experiment was related to the importance of punishment in learning systems. Each time the "student" committed a mistake, the "teacher" should apply a progressive electric shock from 15 to 450 volts that he believed was real, and he could observe the "student's" crescent suffering and the screams of the victims. In the case of the participant's refusal to administer a shock, the experimenter gave a series of orders to ensure they continued.

There were four commands, and if one was disobeyed, the experimenter announced the next one: 1. Please continue, 2**:** The experiment requires you to continue, 3: You must continue, 4: You have no other choice but to continue.

The result was the following: all the participants took the punishment up to 300 volts without the experimenter's interference, and 65% continued the punishment to the highest level of 450 volts, stimulated by the experimenter's commands.

Saul McLeod summarized the conclusions arising from the experiment[129]:

> *Ordinary people are likely to follow orders given by an authority figure, even to the extent of killing an innocent human being. Obedience to authority is ingrained in us all from the way we are brought up.*

[129] McLeod, S. A. (2017, February 05)." The Milgram shock experiment". Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html - retrieved on Jun. 24, 2020.

People tend to obey orders from other people if they recognize their authority as morally right and/or legally based. This response to legitimate authority is learned in various situations, such as the family, school, and workplace.

Milgram summed up in the article "The Perils of Obedience" (Milgram 1974), writing:

'The legal and philosophic aspects of obedience are of enormous import, but they say very little about how most people behave in concrete situations.

I set up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person simply because he was ordered to by an experimental scientist.

Stark authority was pitted against the subjects' [participants'] strongest moral imperatives against hurting others, and, with the subjects' [participants'] ears ringing with the screams of the victims, authority won more often than not.

The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding an explanation.'

Despite many discussions arising from Milgram's conclusions, we should concentrate on the experimentally demonstrated assumption that collective behavior's severe madness (such as divinizing stupidity and obedience to absurd commands) is not a German episodic sickness. Indeed, it means a weakness of humanity, at any place and time,

resulting in the disruption of consciousness by the action of the blind imaginary in attributing divinity, superiority, and domination to persons, groups, and objects.

Other meaningful sociopsychological experiments and theories confirmed this conclusion, as the deindividuation phenomenon, as explained by Tom Postmes and Felicity M.Turner.[130], as well as many other pieces of research *on "extreme forms of mass violence and human suffering, have shown how previously ordinary and reasonable people can commit atrocious acts of cruelty and violence. The question of how this transition occurs has been documented by a number of theorists." [131].*
Besides Milgram's and other experiments, contemporary history has shown us that we did not have one sole recent holocaust. Instead, our history collects horrors like the Red Khmer, the Albanian Genocide, Kosovo and Sarajevo, the tribal and religious wars in Africa, and the cowardly massacre of the native population in North and South American colonization.

Milgram and subsequent studies have dramatically shown that we do not need to wear a Nazi uniform with an iron cross on the chest to become monsters. On the contrary, the monstrosity needs our narcissism to exist, and no one is free from this anathema – mainly if divinizing banalities and aberration.

Beyond these universal political-religious mechanisms, we can find divinized narcissism anywhere, at any time, and

[130] Postmes, Tom & Turner, Felicity M., "Psychology of Deindividuation" in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition), 2015

[131] Bick James Hardie- (2020)" MassViolence and the Continuum of Destruction: A study of C. P.Taylor's Good" (art) - Int J Semiot Law https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09718- - retrieved on Jun 28, 2020

the situational context of our daily life trivialized under individual or collective configurations. The obsessive and unconscious desire for resemblance with the imaginary divinity dictates all humans' semiotic reference codes. Anyone going far from mediocrity and reaching personal performances, understood as unachievable by common sense, is symbolically divinized by the collective imaginary in a sort of "bias of divinity." We do not need to look for them in the books of history. We can find them next door.

Very beautiful persons, athletes, billionaires, fighters, movie and TV stars, jet-set characters, politicians, and "heroes" are taken away from their human conditions and conducted to their divine thrones with the graces and rituals of fame. To those, the welfare offering is thousands of times higher than an ordinary man could ever attain. Every divinity should receive offerings, and the counterpart is the determination that they will never be humans again: they are condemned to be beautiful, rich, powerful, and dominant forever. They will no longer be accepted as humans, so they should build up an *alter ego* corresponding to their divinity and live under its domain. We need them to construct our narcissism's mirror images to avoid the tragedy of facing our ontological insignificance. Without our myths to be desired, we are just ourselves, which means a very undesirable task.

We can quickly change our myths but cannot live without them. For the same reason, divinized persons are not dominant from many angles because they are reflected as slaves of our narcissism.

Changing our myths is something driven by our exact needs and feelings, and it means a process of diversification of our emotions.

We created polytheism in our ancient social organization

Inspired by this need for expressional diversification, we could invent a divinity for each core necessity we could have.

Hence, the subsequent advent of monotheism was not a conceptual or structural change but rather a hegemonistic process to enforce and assure religious consistency and domination by unifying several beliefs.

During the 4th century BCE, Alexandre's territorial domination introduced notable cultural miscegenation and fusion of cultures, favorable to a tendency toward religious syncretism. With the development and influence of the Jewish-Christian traditions on Western civilization cultures, this syncretism finally converted into monotheism.

However, the seeds of our primal imaginary structures, related to animism and polytheism, survived in our collective unconscious. Our imagination consciously expresses the exact needs and feelings through "superheroes" and other characters of science fiction literature in the present technological civilization.

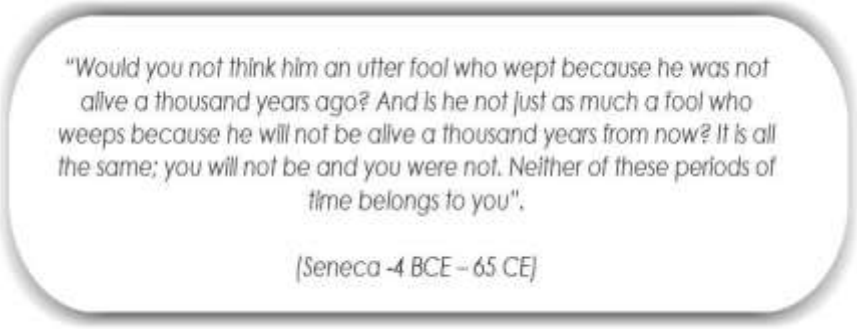
The significant difference with our primal polytheistic heritage is that now, this is a conscious product of our creative imagination and no longer a deep, naive belief in divinity. We know that our heroes or polymorphic gods are not real: they do not exist. However, despite their unreality,

our minds need them to express our fears and desires, as well as hope and despair, without submitting any kind of belief.

In this layer of mature fantasy (employing Anna Freud's expression), we do not want to believe in our heroes' reality; we want to express through them that we hold a definitive desire to keep our hope that our limits are not those we know. This is an evolutionary feeling engraved in our genome.

Divinity does not need to be a reality, or perhaps it should not be; it can be just a projective representation of our fantasies, which is possible only under our imaginary conscious creation. Nevertheless, without such consciousness of reality, divinization cannot mean a symbolic expression of rationality; it becomes only madness.

THE IMMORTALITY



132

In Jungian thinking, immortality is not really to be discussed. In a commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower," he wrote:

> *As a doctor, I make every effort to strengthen the belief in immortality, especially with older patients, when such questions come threateningly close. From a correct psychological perspective, death is not an end,*

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[132] Seneca "On Taking One's Own Life." In *Epistulae Morales* II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 175." apud" Sherefkin, Jack; Schwarzman, Stephen A. (2016) - Immortality and the Fear of Death - New York Public Library. - https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/02/04/immortality-fear-death - retrieved on Jun 26, 2020

> *but a goal and life's inclination toward death begins as soon as the meridian is past* [133]

We can better understand this pragmatic argument as expressed by the young French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662)[134]

> *The belief in the God of Christianity—and accordingly in the immortality of the soul—is justified on practical grounds by the fact that one who believes has everything to gain if he is right and nothing to lose if he is wrong, while one who does not believe has everything to lose if he is wrong and nothing to gain if he is right.*

These pragmatic understandings about mortality result from the perception that the fear of death has ever been taken as something unbearable. For Saint Augustine, the fear of death makes a happy life impossible. The meaning of an authentic life includes eternity and happiness. Hence, we must confront the fear of death to achieve happiness. Nevertheless, how can we face it?

Pascal suggests the most straightforward solution: just adopt a dogmatic religious belief in immortality, yet it is harmless: the believer has nothing to lose and much to gain. Once

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[133] Jung, C.G.- Yates, Jenny (Introduction) – (1999) "Jung on death and immortality" - Princeton University Press - Princeton, New Jersey

[134] Pascal, Blaise, and T. S. Eliot".Pascal's Pensées". New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958.

denial is the most common way of treating the fear of death absent a religious belief in immortality. In Pascal's words, *"To be happy, he would have to make himself immortal, but not being able to do so, it has occurred to him to prevent himself from thinking of death."*[135]. Jung's pragmatic approach also means an implicit denial. Besides simple denial, we can find other ways to confront the fear of death. Ancient philosophy, stoicism, epicureanism, and skepticism treated this fear as something irrational; the therapeutic properties of philosophy could neutralize that. This proposal's foundation asserted that the fear of death results from false beliefs that could be removed by rational reasoning. Lucretius (99 BC – 56 BC), a Seneca's predecessor, sustained that if we do not hold any fear of our past, referring to any time before our birth, the fear of the absence of a future life after death becomes absurd because both are the same thing. This reasoning became known as the "symmetry argument," which we can find in modern philosophy through the works of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 —1860) and David Hume (1711 –1776).

From our short outing to Western philosophic traditions, we deduce that irrational beliefs have always approached death and immortality, pragmatic behaviors, or mental processes imagined to be efficient in controlling its psychologic effects like fear, unhappiness, and anxiety: "Do not discuss it," "Just forget it," "This is not your business," "Believe strongly on the contrary," "Deny it."

However, contemporary philosophy and modern psychology cannot be blind or simply "therapeutic."

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[135] Sherefkin, Jack; Schwarzman, Stephen A. (2016) - Immortality and the Fear of Death - New York Public Library. - https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/02/04/immortality-fear-death - retrieved on Jun 26, 2020

In the face of one of the most relevant human ontological questions: "Are we immortal? "Will we live another life after death?

The answer is no. We will not. We are mortals, definitively mortals. Such is our nature, beauty, meaning, and tragedy.

We can start uncountable research and the broadest studies, employing all the aggregate human knowledge and all the millennia of scientific and philosophical learning. We will not find the most simpleton syllogism coherent with reality to support any affirmative assumption about our desired immortality. We may cling desperately to many fantasies, myths, and beliefs; we can adopt many therapeutic tools and means, and we can go ahead with surgical interferences in our brains to forget what we know or to input what we want. Still, our mortality will be the same, ever, to anyone.

Once and for all, we cannot bear the idea of death. Even the suicidal, in one way or another, is stuck to an image of perpetuation and immortality in his thanatological expression of narcissism.[136]

Humans are the unique species on Earth endowed with their nature's full consciousness, hauling imaginary and frightful projections of their own death in permanent conflict with their survival instincts' strength.

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[136] Sher, Leo - Psychiatria Danubina, 2016; Vol. 28, No. 3, pp 307 Letter to Editor © Medicinska naklada - Zagreb, Croatia NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER ANDSUICIDEhttp://www.psychiatriadanubina.com/UserDocsImages/pdf/dnb_vol28_no3/d nb_vol28_no3_307.pdf - retrieved on Jun 16,2020

Being rational in their consciousness, humans become irrational in the face of the dread imposed by death's idea. This ultimate conflict cannot be solved as the tragic paradox of existence. There is no rational answer to death; we will always face it with the utmost emotions and fantasies. When we open our eyes to death, we close the ways to critical thinking, and even if we elaborate on the most convenient rationale assumptions or beliefs, our emotions will always stay the same.
Death is the only definitive and unacceptable human reality. When we think about it, instantly, all our cognitive and psychological resources, the defense mechanisms of the self, and the power of our imaginary are summoned, like a fussy army in despair, standing up to an enemy which cannot be defeated.

In this state, confronting our egos' nothingness, we invent eternal souls, gods, angels and demons, rewards and punishment, hells and heavens – just for us, humans, and not for any other form of life. In our minds and emotions, we are the center of the universe.

Thus, everything can die, except us, immortal beings like the gods that we created just to make us immortals – this is our dogmatic and insane fantasy, commented by Edward Chandler:[137]

[137] Chandler, Edward *Beyond Atheism – A Secular Approach to Spiritual, Moral, and Psychological Practices*, available on Amazon on 2/14/2019. In https://www.edchandlerandbeyond.com/the-blog/2019/1/21/anthropocentrism-relationship-with-religion-and-prejudice-blog2 – retrieved on Jun 16,2020.

It is quite narcissistic to view humanity, amongst all life forms, as God's pet species, so special that our immediate universe, as well as a blissful afterlife, were created by God, solely for our benefit. This is anthropocentrism cubed.

Hence, we understand that the idea of the human individual's immortality is devoid of any rationality.
Albeit sometimes presented under the appearance of logical theories, structured reasonings, and pseudo-scientific frameworks, our fantasies of immortality do not resist simple confrontations with elementary critical thinking. On the contrary, we create and insistently defend theologies and theories in a desperate attempt to believe that what we know that we know about our finitude is false. For this reason, all these constructs are inherently dogmatic: they cannot be critically discussed; otherwise, they would not exist.

The shadows of the primal dread devour our rational abilities. Death is our last sickness. The afterlife's belief or faith is cosmologically absurd, scientifically impossible, biologically grotesque, and logically incongruent.

Garbed with intractable irrationality, our fantasies of immortality are nothing else than delirium, the supreme expression of our narcissism.

The beauty of life is not a demented image of immortality. The beauty of life resides in precisely how it is for everything living in the Cosmo, in its ongoing and evolutionary changes and movements, where absolutely nothing is forever. The

utmost human rationality is the formulation of our ontological harmony with this immensity.

In the present state of science and culture, it is possible to change Adam's ribs for the quantum understanding of scientific cosmology, the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil for accessible modern Universities, and narcissism for pure contemplation.

Jack Sherefkin & Stephen Schwarzman(op.cit) comment as follows:

> *For the bioethicist Leon Kass, there are important virtues that arise from our mortality. "Could life be serious or meaningful without the limits of mortality? Is not the limit on our time the ground of our taking life seriously and living it passionately?" What if what is most important to us is inseparable from our mortality and finitude? If we were immortal, how could we be brave or noble or any of the virtues that require risk and the threat of death? The Homeric gods, eternally youthful and beautiful, live shallow, frivolous lives.*

We stay with the consistency of the concepts discussed in the Chapters of Part I, related to reality and truth, and can see them reflected in the millenary wisdom of a rubai:

"One moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One moment, of the Well of Life to taste –
The stars are setting, and the Caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing –
Oh, make haste!

(*Ghiyath al-Din Abu'l-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahim Al-Nishapuri al-Khayyami -*
1048 – 1131 - Quatrain XXXVII – translation (Edward Fitzgerald, 1839)

THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC GODS

The other's god is false; we know it for centuries. In the same way that my country is the best one in the world just because I was born there, my faith is the right one, the only following the true scriptures, the one that saves, etc.

We all know the endless litany inverting a religious premise: it is not the case of "an elected people" anymore, but of "a god chosen by my Narcissus." He is elected by me because he is the most adequate to my universe. He adapts to my playpen, and my behavior sculpts the form of the divine.

If I am a conservative, my god is it as well, and I still say that I am it because of him. If I hate sex, my god says what I think in a way that the creator becomes the creature. We format god to our image and similitude, and that is the reason why I will ever use god in the low case because I admit here the traditional idolatry of sacralizing an object.

(Leandro Karnal) free translation.

138

If, on the one hand, in our search for facts expressing the concepts adopted in this study, we could not find divinity in

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138 Karnal, Leandro - "O deus errado" (article) Journal O Estado de S.Paulo, May 3rd, 2020 – retrieved from https://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,o-deus-errado,70003290304. Free translation.

humans; on the other hand, we found many humanities in gods.

Many similarities exist between divinization and anthropomorphism, and many of the assumptions that we took before could persist untouched. In a significant part, this is true. However, there is a determinant difference between these two phenomena: divinization means attributing divinity to humans, and anthropomorphism means attributing humanity to the divine**.** They are two very close, similar processes going in opposite directions.

The phenomenon is duly primal, giving human attributes to the idea of the divine, often including human forms, mental and emotional states, interests, and moral principles emerging from the social experience and needs.

From the most ancient rituals and religions, anthropomorphism spread through all religions and mystical-magical cultural expressions in any historical period in two ways: as a literal belief in the nature and form of the divine or as a didactical tool to facilitate religious teaching, the "explanations on god's nature."

As a literal belief, religious anthropomorphism is the seed of every superstition and mystical-magical culture and belief, kept under irrational mysticism, despising any kind of confrontation with reality and critical thinking. It is the realm of dogmatism and sectarianism.

When seen as a didactical tool to facilitate religious learning, anthropomorphism becomes a fictional discourse or methodical rhetoric of persuasion. Many contemporary theologians support this practice under the preposterous argument that

> *Anthropomorphism cannot be eliminated without eliminating religion itself because of objects of religious devotion must-have features to which humans can relate. For example, language, widely considered a human characteristic, must also be present in deities if humans are to pray to them.*[139]

The argument could be replaced by the following: *"Without telling lies, we cannot explain what we say is true."* In other terms: *"Humans are so stupid that to tell them about the divine, we need to talk like we do with idiots."*

The modern "didactic-theological" fallacy around humanized images of the divine could never be reasonably sustained.

Since ancient philosophy, Xenophanes (560–478 BCE), the creator of the Eleatic School, has always rejected anthropomorphic ideas, confronting Plato's assumptions. Once, he said, "Should the animals have the ability to paint, they would represent their gods in the form of animals, that is, as their own image."

For many centuries, the idea of the divine's simplicity prevailed among many prominent thinkers in the Jewish-

[139] Guthrie, Stewart E - "Anthropomorphism" - Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.PublishedApr15,008,https://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropomorphism - retrieved on Jun 27, 2020

Christian and Islamic theological traditions. This argument is known as the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (DDS), as explained by William F. Vallicella:[140]

> *According to the classical theism of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, and their adherents, God is radically unlike creatures and cannot be adequately understood in ways appropriate to them. God is simple in that God transcends every form of complexity and composition familiar to the discursive intellect. One consequence is that the simple God lacks parts. This lack is not a deficiency but a positive feature. God is ontologically superior to every partite entity, and his partlessness is an index thereof.*
>
> *[…}It is to be understood as an affirmation of God's absolute transcendence of creatures. God is not only radically non-anthropomorphic but radically unlike creatures in general, not only in respect of the properties he possesses but also in his manner of possessing them.*

A theological discussion does not fit this study because we analyze the collective human imaginary as a social-epistemological subject of psychology under empirical methodology. However, as far as religious beliefs become influential in cognitive processes and behavioral models, we

[140] Vallicella, William F. (20129)- "Divine Simplicity" – in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/divine-simplicity/ - retrieved on Jun 27, 2020

are not talking about religion or theology anymore but about demonstrable reality.

However, the anthropomorphic gods survived to the present day and often hold corporal human shapes or even acquire a fully human body.

In modern times, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) sustained that this is a persistent tendency that collaborates with distorting our perception of the world. The development of the historical process attests that the writer was right.

As a projection of our collective imaginary, anthropomorphic divinity exists exclusively because of humans. In this conception, humanity is the ontological reason for the divine's existence.

The conceptual content of anthropomorphic divinity is not cosmological or ontological. Instead, divinity is something utilitarian or pragmatic.

In common sense, gods exist to care for humans, giving them life (which should be eternal) and writing their destinies (which should correspond to each one's desires). They should fill our ambitions, smooth our fears and suffering, provide miracles when reality insists on being adverse, and write or dictate revelations and normative texts to regulate human behavior, even though for everyday economic or political purposes. Gods should accept human imperfection, forgive our stupidity, cruelty, and bad faith, and divinize us daily. To all humans, a paradise should be promised, assured, and paid for in advance by total submission and obedience.

When the gods act, humans declare, trust, build temples, or insert their names on currency bills and other political symbols.

However, gods should be dominant as the human governors, mindlessly obeyed by the crowd of nonprivileged humans. Gods should keep an accurate accounting system related to any human act or intention for eternity to judge them for the slightest disobedience rigorously and, when the case will be, condemning humans to a hell that could not ever be imagined, even by Adolf Hitler, because of their miserable lives.

Gods should be able to hate, play tricky games, lie, threaten and manipulate, cover up truth and intelligence, discriminate and accept misery, promote revenge, and also bless war power and war promoters to accomplish the incumbencies given by humans.

In the believers' mind, the same way anthropomorphic gods are the relief imagined by men, they are the executioners of their horror.

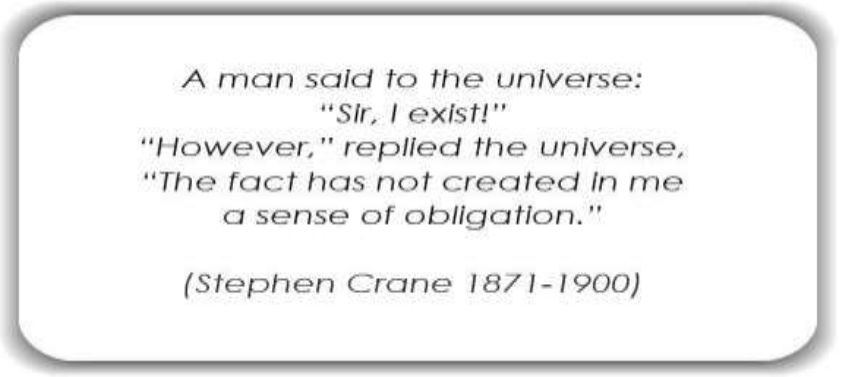
Under these conflicting beliefs, gods would not be necessary if humans did not exist, and the universe would proceed without them. For all these reasons, we often hear people say that gods are neurotic entities when these anthropomorphic gods do not exist; what exists is the divinization of our madness. Anthropomorphic gods are a collective construction of the blind and narcissistic imaginary.

In looking for any approach to the divine, it should rigorously put aside anything related to humanity and any kind of understanding or representation of our reality.

Our science, epistemology, and philosophy are human-centered. Scientific cosmology is just beginning, and theology has become a rhetorical and ideological anthropocentric discourse over the centuries. Without any rational structure or support, we cannot resort to our imagination because we know that we would lie to ourselves once more in the universe's darkness under unwitnessed loneliness.

For the moment, we are alone. All we are is dust in the wind.

CHAPTER VII
THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC UNIVERSE



141

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Humans know they mean everything to themselves and almost nothing to the universe.

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[141] Crane, Stephen - "War Is Kind and Other Poems" - Dover Publications (2016) - ISBN-10: 0486404242 / ISBN-13: 978-0486404240

We live in an anthropocentric universe. Anthropocentrism is the epistemic process through which humans have seen the world and others and sculpted the reality related to themselves. This universe is the cradle of our imaginary, the realm where the self tries its first steps.

Scared and facing the external reality, the primal men started a culture inferring that "everything exists around us, humans; thus, we are the meeting point of the universe; we are the center." The mirror image resulting from our observation of the cosmos bears a teleological imaginary feature: "Everything is related to humanity," in the same way that a child supposes, in the first exposures to the external world, that everything perceivable somehow refers to him.

Everything in the universe has a center, a gravitational reference, and even ideas or atoms. Seeking instinctively for their existential center, our remote ancestors could find only themselves in such an immense cosmos; therefore, men became their center, the absolute owner of their loneliness— this epistemological process results from nature and not from human wishes or options.

In this scenario, anthropocentrism relates to the most intense and universal manifestation of our behavioral paradigm's collective imaginary.

So is our nature, made of instincts and millennia of empirical experience. So are we.

This "centralist" origin of anthropocentrism induces the rough and mistaken idea that it refers fundamentally to an attitude of human superiority and disdain for the non-human universe. For sure, anthropocentric behavior can express pathological narcissism, as any other structure of the

human imaginary. However, this is not a feature or usual anthropocentrism content, whose origins are related to fear and solitude, unlike pride and disdain.

Some trivial expressions relate anthropocentrism to prejudice, religion, sectarianism, philosophical doctrine, moral contravention, ecological destruction, or just foul language.

These are superficial, biased, fragmented, and very simpleton ideas leaving aside the matter's structural complexity and unduly limiting its content and extension.

Hence, anthropocentrism is frequently misplaced in many studies, mainly when the reasoning considers it a specific object. Under this flawed perception, many writers refer to anthropocentrism with their personal or cultural biases, expressing their rejection as they talk about disrespect to a moral code, a kind of stupidity, a political crime, or a religious blasphemy. No one of such ideas is science-supported; they are just ideological banalities devoid of any value.

Anthropocentrism is a part of the human psycho-biological condition, existing irrespective of critical thinking or voluntary action. No individual is without a self and a collective unconscious in the same way that no humanity is without anthropocentric attributions to reality.

Anthropocentrism is a quality, an attributable property, and not a logical object in itself.

Regarding logical syntax, we need an object to shelter this property, making possible the qualitative attribution, which science and philosophy understand to be the paradigm**.** The

concept of this referential object is defined by Martyn Shuttleworth and Lyndsay T Wilson[142] as follows:

> *A scientific paradigm is a framework containing all the commonly accepted views about a subject, conventions about what direction research should take, and how it should be performed.*

This concept emerges from the traditions of Plato and Aristotle and is one of the core pillars of any methodology, as structured by Thomas Kuhn.[143] The author considers the theories we make about reality within a paradigm and understands that it contains and determines:
a) what is observed and measured, b) the questions we ask about those observations, c) how the questions are formulated, d) how the results are interpreted, e) how research is carried out, and f) what tools are appropriate.

Foucault's (1926 – 1984) contributions and the incorporation of language and semiotics as components of its structure enriched the paradigm methodologically.

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[142] Shuttleworth, Martyn and Wilson, Lyndsay T – "What Is A Paradigm?" - Philosophy of Science - https://explorable.com/what-is-a-paradigm - retrieved on Jun 30, 2020

[143] Kuhn, Thomas –"The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" - Second Edition, enlarged - International Encyclopedia of Unified Science - Volumes I and II Foundations of the Unity of Science Volume II number 2 – in extension://ohfgljdgelakfkefopgklcohadegdpjf/http://www.turkpsikiyatri.org/arsiv/kuhn-ssr-2nded.pdf - Retrieved on Jun30,202

The concept of paradigm became applicable to fields other than natural sciences.

Hence, to start understanding anthropocentrism, we should determine which paradigm we refer to in advance.

We should attend to Kuhn's criteria in this direction: "What is observed and measured?" In social and ontological psychology, which is the case of this study, we observe a human collective behavioral model related to determined time-space and cultural situation, which context anyhow receives the influence of humans' value concerning the external phenomenology. What questions do we ask about this model? We ask how this model's causal elements exist and interact and how the process's results influence individual and social perception and cognition. How are these questions formulated? They are based on the mind-body evidence, which can be observed in the model's expression (behavior). How are the results interpreted? They are submitted to the current conceptual structures offered by natural sciences and psychology. How is research carried out? The applicable methodology of social psychology carries it. Finally, what tools are appropriate? They are the linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and behavioral analyses.

We need all these tools to define a paradigm to which anthropocentrism can be attributed. In our reasoning and arguments, the compatibility between the behavioral model (paradigm) and the attribute must be present to avoid the most irreparable misunderstandings. For this reason, we should initially understand that the quality (anthropocentrism) is not related to how men treat the cosmos or the surrounding nature and their elements but how they understand themselves and how they express this understanding.

In many cases, we can find this logical error, mostly in original texts related to ecology, referring to the human behavioral model as an attitude of aggression and expression of human superiority. In anthropocentrism, humans only define attitudes referring to themselves, which can bear, as a consequence, the disdain for everything else. This attitude is not necessarily ostensible as aggression, and we can study it with the help of psychoanalytic and psychosocial methodologies.

The individual or collective behavioral model intrinsically involves two elements as components of our paradigm: the imaginary and the collective unconscious's information. The imaginary is a time-relative component and can change continuously; the collective unconscious elements are archaic and do not change. We can observe this more clearly in the graphic representation in Chapter V, page 82, considering that our paradigm is a social construct.

Once sheltering the collective imaginary, the paradigmatic behavioral model will be ever subject to the influences of cognitive and emotional deflections relative to reality, which we already discussed, including expressions of pathological narcissism or even madness.

These possibilities of fundamental changes in the paradigm are called "paradigmatic shift" by Kuhn, as having the property of promoting the evolution of science:

> *The successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual*

> *developmental pattern of mature science. (op.cit.)*

Considering all these principles and concepts, we will call our object "the human behavioral paradigm," enabling us to analyze how we can attribute anthropocentrism.

Ben Mylius[144] proposes three forms of attribution:

> *Here are three summary definitions, which I will flesh out in what follows. 1. A paradigm is* ***perceptually anthropocentric*** *if it is informed by sense-data that a human being has received through their – human – sensory organs. 2. A paradigm is also* ***descriptively anthropocentric*** *if it, in some way, begins from, takes as its reference point, revolves around, focusses on, is centered around, or is ordered according to the species Homo sapiens or the category of 'the human.' 3. A paradigm is also* ***normatively anthropocentric****: a. in a passive sense, if it constrains inquiry in a way that somehow privileges Homo sapiens or the category of 'the human'; b. in an active sense, if it either a. contains assertions or assumptions about the superiority of Homo sapiens, its capacities, the primacy of its values, its position in the universe, etc.; and/or b. if it makes* prescriptions

[144] Mylius, Ben - "Three Types of Anthropocentrism "in https://www.academia.edu/36367171/Three_Types_of_Anthropocentracism - retrieved on Jun 30, 2020

> (shoulds/the oughts) based on these assertions or assumptions. (emphasis ours)

Mylius's approach means proper support to our analysis once we find many factual shreds of evidence of the three definitions in our paradigm's structure, enforcing any attribution of anthropocentrism we could express in our research.

ATTRIBUTIONS

The literature about anthropocentrism's attribution is abundant, but unfortunately, only a few of these papers have an academic origin and format. During the last four decades, the theme became one of the preferred subjects for pseudoscience, pseudophilosophy, pseudo-psychology, and weekend ideologies. The matter is often considered a trivial political-religious-economically contaminated literary subject, which recommends circumscribing our study to traditional academic sources.

Reflecting on Mylius's (op. cit) reasoning, it is not difficult to deduce that it is impossible to understand the human behavioral paradigm entirely immune to anthropocentric value attributions to reality in any form: the perceptual, the descriptive, or the normative. It is pretty evident that, as long as human existence, desires, and fears participate actively in this relation attribution of value, humans will ever

perceive, describe, and establish norms in such a way that could satisfy their wishes.

Such a conclusion reduces the anthropocentric attribution of values to an immanent and often adequate model to protect humans from the threat of their most intense primal fears: death, the natural forces, and the unknown. Thus, arguing that humans should put anthropocentric attributions on the side is absurd, as intending that individuals must abandon their egos, collective unconscious, or defense mechanisms.

In conclusion, attributive discussions cannot focus on anthropocentrism but on the extent to which its attributions can provoke relevant discord with demonstrable reality to the detriment of rationality, coherence, and truth.

Considering that our paradigm's anthropocentric attributions adopt the same processes as our imaginary constructions, we should embrace the same analytical concepts for both. We will conclude that anthropocentrism, as the imaginary, cannot be an object of valuation; it is just a natural process. It is not good or bad or anything else; it just exists.

We may evaluate the process's outputs or the behavioral model concerning demonstrable reality, rationality, coherency, and truth.

When the outputs are rational and coherent, anthropocentrism will mean a contributive element to the human evolutive process in any form. However, when they shelter obscurity, incoherence, and the absurd, they should be considered blind imaginary products, with all the cognitive and behavioral consequences discussed in Part I.

Many philosophers and scientists are concerned about this logical possibility sustained by any factual analysis. The central concern relates to the persistent overvaluation of humans in anthropocentric attributions. Christopher Herbert (1991)[145], observing culture and science states at the end of the nineteenth century, comments:

> *The indictment of anthropocentrism was hardly original to Freud. Around the turn of the twentieth century and in the following several decades, it was proclaimed with a frequency that seems to signal some noteworthy cultural perturbation. One writer after another identifies anthropomorphism or anthropocentrism as precisely the antithesis, the nullification, of science. "Anthropomorphism plays a considerable historic role" in the genesis of physical thinking, admits the mathematician Henri Poincaré in 1902, "but it can be the foundation of nothing of a really scientific or philosophical character."*

Freud understood anthropocentrism as a threat to scientific thinking and argued that the sciences had humiliated humankind on three occasions: Copernic's, heliocentrism, Darwin's theories of evolution, and psychoanalysis.

[145] Herbert, Christopher. "Science and Narcissism." Modernism/modernity, vol. 3 no. 3, 1996, p

We can infer from Freud's argument that he held a wrong interpretation of anthropocentrism, which was related and limited exclusively to its outputs, which expressed human pride and feelings of domination. Anthropocentrism is much more and very different than this content limited to narcissism. Additionally, the assumption that science humiliates humans is a mistaken premise; science has ever enriched and expanded the human experience, and the resulting technology rapidly incorporates into ordinary life. Contrary to that, scientific knowledge is among the most intense human desires and means a response to the unknown's primal fear. Humans have never been proud of being ignorant, which is what history tells us. What humiliates and frightens men is the power of nature.

What obstructs science is not anthropocentrism but mysticism and sectarianism fed by the blind imaginary and protected by many false beliefs and biases to sustain insane fantasies and delirium. However, being centered on themselves does not mean that men become irrational, stupid, or necessarily ignorant to the point of despising science and critical thinking.

Freud believed that human presumption and anthropocentrism would decrease in the 20th century. He thought a convergence of sciences would lead to such a result. He was wrong; humanity took the time he mentioned to use science to explore and colonize outer space—and there is nothing more anthropocentric than this. Moreover, where men are prouder of themselves is precisely deep science.

> Freudian thinking about anthropocentrism most lacks an understanding of Kuhn's principle of the "paradigmatic shift." In the Freudian view, no correspondence would happen between scientific advances and the human behavioral paradigm structure. The contrary has happened: all our behavioral models, and consequently,

our paradigm, changed profoundly in the face of all new scientific findings.

Unlike Freudian reductionist positions, which often focus on anthropocentrism's narcissistic ingredient, modern attribution theories tend to an ontological and teleological argument, approaching objective and scientific realism.

We can observe the expression of this trend in W.H. Murdy's[146] text:

> *Anthropocentrism is proposed as a valid and necessary point of view for mankind to adopt for consideration of his place in nature. […]. Anthropocentrism is consistent with a philosophy that affirms the essential interrelatedness of things, and that values all items in nature since no event is without some effect on wholes of which we are parts. […]. An anthropocentric belief in the value, meaningfulness, and creative potential of the human phenomenon is considered a necessary motivating factor to participatory evolution, which, in turn, may be requisite to the future survival of the human species and its cultural values*.

[146] Murdy, W. H.- "Anthropocentrism: A Modern Version" -*Science,* 28 Mar 1975 -: Vol. 187, Issue 4182, pp. 1168-1172 -DOI: 10.1126/science.187.4182.1168

This evolutionary analysis, exempted from situational biases and carried on by many current theories, makes the discerning attribution of anthropocentrism possible. However, its cognitive and emotional deviations and eventual pathological ingredients can be considered external to the core concept's attribution core.

We should consider that, during the last 30 years, anthropocentric attributional concepts have stimulated many conflictive approaches in philosophy, sociology, economics, and natural sciences in response to the crescent environmental problems arising from human productive activities.

Many of these recent approaches are indiscriminately biased, fomenting ideological conflicts and political anxiety from all parts. Moreover, the conceptual confrontation induced a flawed dichotomy between the human and the environment, or the human against the natural in a trivial description.

Once being rhetorical and merely discursive, most of these approaches did not offer any consistent contribution to contemporary thinking and, in many cases, sheltered pseudoscience and specific economic, religious, and political interests, up to the point where we often feel the existence of two sects: the anthropocentrism, as the realm of the irrational planet predators, and the ecologism, the universe of the sage saviors. None of them can appropriately say what anthropocentrism means.

We looked for logical elements amid this turmoil because they exist and were selected for our reflection because of their interdisciplinary nature and logical consistency, an academic paper produced by Pasi Heikkurinen (University of Leeds,

Sustainability Research Institute, UK), Jenny Rinkinen (Lancaster University, Department of Sociology, Demand Center, UK), Timo Järvensivu (Aalto University School of Business, Department of Marketing, Finland), Kristoffer Wilén (Hanken School of Economics, Department of Marketing, Finland), and Toni Ruuska (Aalto University School of Business, Department of Management Studies, Finland)[147].

In their paper, the authors consider the current lack of organizational theorizing from an ecological perspective, which was noticed since the 1990s, *"when the relationship between organizations and the natural environment attracted scholarly attention (Shrivastava, 1994; Gladwin et al., 1995; Clair et al., 1996).",* what contributed to the dichotomic perception we mentioned:

> *Despite the severity of the ecological challenge, and particularly the significant role that the organization of production has in the climate crisis (Barnosky et al., 2012; IPCC, 2014), ecological questions have remained at the periphery of contemporary organization theory, as reviewed by Cunha et al. (2008). Rather than focusing on the non-human and material aspects of the world, organizational inquiries have tended to emphasize the role of humans and non-material aspects of the organization (Fleetwood, 2005; Orlikowski, 2010). It follows that organizational studies are inclined to reproduce the anthropocentric and antirealist*

[147] Pasi Heikkurinen, Jenny Rinkinen, Timo Järvensivu, Kristoffer Wilén, and Toni Ruuska - Organising in the Anthropocene: an ontological outline for ecocentric theorizing - Journal of Cleaner Production – Volume 113,1 February 2016, Pages 705-714 - https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.12.016

> *philosophical tradition of science, as the human experience is favored at the expense of the non-human world. The absence of an ecological perspective on organizing human activity seems likely to lead the way deeper into the Anthropocene with unpleasant consequences not only for the human species but also for the ecosystem as a whole.*

Applying their methodology, the authors sustain ecocentrism's conceptualization as the subordination of human organizational structures to the planetary ecosystem, not related to human values supposedly overestimated by the anthropocentric attribution, in an antirealist ontological model.

> *The current research indicates that the new geological era of the Anthropocene calls for a new ontology to guide the organization of human activities. The ontology proposed here takes a realist and ecocentric turn to avoid the pitfalls of the antirealist and anthropocentric approaches. Drawing from object-oriented (Harman, 2002, 2009) and ecological philosophies (Naess, 1973, [1974] 1989), the study proposes three essential qualities common to all objects, namely autonomy, intrinsicality, and uniqueness. The ontological outline formed by these three points responds to the critique of ecocentric organization studies.* ***It demonstrates how to avoid the human–nature dualism*** *by considering each thing an object while still arriving at an ecologically relevant*

view of reality. (emphasis ours)

THE OVERVALUATION PROBLEM

In every conceptualization or theorization related to anthropocentrism, considering human overvaluation, we will face an irresolvable problem: the dilemma of valuing the human and the non-human since, ontologically, both are necessarily opposed or compared to the other.

Any conception of anthropocentrism assumes that humans attribute a higher value to themselves than they should; a quantitative referential scale must be applied. Otherwise, the conceptualization will be nothing more than a vulgar fallacy.

If we had a mathematical model for this comparison, any theorization would be possible. However, mathematical and value theories do not offer this solution. In any traditional ontological analysis of anthropocentrism, we shelter the concern of rejecting human overvaluation, and we employ an argument involving quantitative elements that we cannot demonstrate.

We will never arrive at mere discursive conceptualizations unless we insist on human evaluative arguments. We will insert the absurd question of humanity's value in our logic formulas before the universe.

Consequently, the most trustworthy instrument for understanding anthropocentrism is its consistent observation as a behavioral model with all the corresponding implications.

THE SECTARIAN FRAGMENTATION.

We used to study anthropocentrism's "centralist" ideas in a generalized assumption, probably because we insistently seek a theorization.

However, the most potent and relevant manifestations of our collective imaginary through anthropocentric attributions are not those expressed by this general perception of humankind as the center of the universe. Contrastingly, to become universal and time-space relative, anthropocentrism is a multi-fragmented behavioral model.

This assumption means that the anthropocentric paradigm is divided into behavioral particles, each keeping the same structure as the general paradigmatic model but directed to particular objects.

In this process, the imaginary construction does not elect men as the center of themselves but designates men as the center of other men. As the center of themselves in their narcissism, humans desire to become the core of other humans. Any domination and subjugation process follows this model that harbors politics, ethics, law, economics, and religious organization. *Homine dominatur homo*.

Each of these micropsychological universes becomes a unique anthropocentric model. If we observe this in

individuals, we will find the seeds of love and hate. If we analyze this in the collective imaginary, we will understand sectarianism better.

Each sect is the center of its members: families, groups, nationalities, religions, races, cultures, and social and economic statuses. The social fabric is a complex web of sects on many different levels. Every sect member is continuously referred to as its core because everything in the universe must have a center. Finally, as in any anthropocentric paradigm, the remaining external universe does not matter when men defend their sects.

We can recall Domèmech's (op.cit.) words quoted on page 18:

> *"Every human being has a belief system that they utilize, and it is through this mechanism that we individually, 'make sense' of the world around us."*

From the sectarian fragmentation of our behavioral paradigm emerges one of the paradoxical features of human nature: the ambivalence between anthropocentrism and misogyny. We are dualistic animals, taking nature as our center and protecting it as our identity. Nevertheless, with the same intensity, we despise the humanity existing out of our sects, and in some circumstances, we hate being humans ourselves.

As it happens in our imaginary, the anthropomorphic behavioral model contains all the causational elements of any output: from the grandiosity of arts and sciences

to the most pathological narcissism and complete madness of war and destruction.

Attempts to convert anthropocentrism into an ethical element to be classified and qualified or into a demonstrable metaphysical theorem are meaningless. Anthropocentrism is immanent in humanity and empirically everywhere, in any form. Everything that is human passes through an anthropocentric process before becoming knowledge, emotion, creation, belief, or madness. We are self-centered animals, like all the others. The only difference is that we know it.

Our cosmology is limited to our situational reality and primarily to our lives. Such limitation emerges from the fact that we are our sole reference.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESENT– DAY "POST-EVERYTHING" THINKING (CONCLUSION)

Our reflection's concepts significantly influenced humankind's natural and cultural evolutionary odyssey. We can observe that the most primal interactive experiences, reality, truth, and the imaginary frame our existence and everything related to our knowledge and reasoning, our creativity and fantasy, the lights of our intelligence, and the darkness of our ignorance.

We took this triangle as the center of our reflection because we will define how we see the world around and inside us and understand our existence from its observation and interpretation.

Each of us will process a different and unique critical synthesis from everything discussed, which will be a valuable result irrespective of its content. It will necessarily involve revising our core reasonings, beliefs, and desires. Revisiting and discussing reality, truth, and the imaginary is impossible without silently reflecting on our innermost universe.

For this reason, we initially declared that this study was based on reflection rather than on demonstration or theorization,

even systematically grounded on theoretical principles of social and ontological psychology and philosophy.

Whatever the output of each reflection, we are all presently involved in an emerging context that compels us to reflect further, decide, and invite the use of everything we have discussed.

The present day's complex empirical dynamics provoke unprecedented cultural contexts, which we will call "post-everything thinking."

Technological cycles determine our history. It has been that way since the instrumental use of stones and the discovery of fire's domination. It will remain so until the death of the last individual of our species.

These technological cycles determined uncountable consequences in human knowledge, emotions, beliefs, values, behavior, and lifestyles.

The technological cycles are sinusoidal, considering their beginning (with discoveries and very new available resources), development (with its gradual absorption by society), and descent (with new research related to its substitution by better alternative). Such description is a utilitarian concept of history but, independently of the doctrine it came from, expresses a demonstrable reality.

The length of human history's technological sinusoidal cycles decreases exponentially once each new technology reflects the probabilities of accelerating new correlated discoveries, developments, and uses in a multiplicative "retro-powered" model.

Let's go back to Kuhn's paradigmatic shift principle. We will understand how the speed of technological development determines changes in our behavior models, which, in turn, will evaluate new technological expansions and so on:

> *The successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual developmental pattern of mature science. (op.cit.)*

During the second half of the twentieth century, a new sinusoidal cycle started with digital and nanotechnologies, quantum physics, neurosciences, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, robotic engineering, cosmological findings, biology, and mathematics. This technological wave's stunning consequences on humanity occurred in forms, timing, intensity, and amplitudes never seen before and not immediately adaptable to our imagination. This cycle is just starting, and a forecast of its intensity is not yet achievable.

In only two generations, a negligible time in historical terms, humans experienced more substantial changes in their lives than our predecessors faced in millennia. We were unprepared to face this catastrophic impact but are progressively noting that we can.

The technological impact determines concomitantly social, psychological, emotional, cognitive, mental, and biological intense transformation.

Besides the magnificent results for the benefit of humanity, this cycle imposes on each of us the painful and sometimes desperate daily task of adaptation to survival. Frequently, this is carried out without any possibility of critical thinking engagement.

All our rational references and beliefs, whatsoever, suffered from the impact of measuring that their foundations have been changed or deconstructed by the incoming technology.

For millennia, since our species' most primal stages, we understood our existence as being involved by the macrocosm's immensity, starting with the atom and ending beyond the amplitude of our imagination. Suddenly, quantum physics arrives and tells us that the other direction, inside the minimal atomic known particle, starts a microcosm as immense and unknown as the cosmos we knew before. Moreover, neither universe has the structure and constitution we believe in. We perceive that the spiritualists should not look for god in the core of the galaxies, surrounded by the most luminous celestial bodies and centers of energy, but in the smaller sub-atomic vibrational particle, called by the scientists "the particle of god," which could be the seed of everything, fitting in the micro-universe of any cell of our body.

In our daily lives, we assisted the linguistic change restlessly to shelter. We expressed an unimagined world: robots invading factories, hospitals, laboratories, and universities to replace astonished humans, war machines acquiring apocalyptic dimensions, and gigantic libraries and archives fitting in a piece smaller than our nails in digital form.

Submerged in two cosmoses, we learn in some minutes that matter, including our bodies, does not exist as we believed. We previously understood our bodies as a perceptive state of mind because the matter is as vibrational as continuous: my body and your body are the same things. Moreover, this state of mind does not create our wishes and beliefs; instead, it means an interactive result of the brain stating that our reason does not command us.

Additionally, when we think that we did not have sufficient time to process these so abrupt changes, science will ask us what we are talking about once all the concepts of time and space relations that we knew do not exist anymore, as well as all that before we understood for "me" and "the other."

We, the kids of the earth, felt abandoned by our own beliefs, humiliated by nature and its stringent laws, and imprisoned in the capsules of our limited and fragile knowledge and abilities. We felt betrayed by the gods we invented to our image and likeness, and we felt empty in our identities, where the wreckage of our egos and convictions floated on our melting narcissism. We felt like everything had gone and that our orphanhood determined that we should reinvent ourselves in a meaningless universe without knowing why or for what.

Human acceptance of change is difficult and resists authoritative statements of fact, as identified in applied psychological and sociological studies (Nyhan, Reifler,

Richey & Freed, 2014; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992)[148].

The resistance to significant and diversified changes imposes many cultural model elements' replacements and determines a new adaptative model's elaboration. Such "new culture" should be understood as Manadue and Cheer (op. cit) considered:

> *Culture has been defined as "the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them" (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. 8), or, more simply, as knowledge and behaviors shared within groups of interacting individuals (Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963).*

The recent technological wave's interpretation of social conduct changes indicates many models emerging as responses to such changes. Among them, there is a kind of response that could be seen as a sub-cultural model, which we will call "the culture of the post-everything," a spreading

[148] Menadue, Christopher Benjamin and Cheer, Karen Diane - Human Culture and Science Fiction: A Review of the Literature, 1980-2016 – First Published August 3, 2017, Research Article
https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017723690

cultural context deserves our attention because of its content.

The chaotic existential realm brought by the technological impact, anxiety, and fantasy proliferates, starting expressions of a flawed thinking pattern. We can describe it as the cultural expression of the nonetheless, like the rhetoric that we heard at the beginning of this technological revolution, during the '50s of the twentieth century: the speech of the "beatniks," from Jack Kerouak and his "The Road" (1957). The content is quite the same: "We are being killed and destroyed by technology, dominated by economic power, and our existence, much more than ever, is meaningless."

In this emerging thinking, the meaning of "post" is not limited to a chronological concept but mainly refers to our existential references' landslides and the frameworks of our knowledge, beliefs, and imaginary structures.

Several new and meaningless concepts were invented: "post-truth, "post-modern," "post-reality," "post-god," "post-ethic," "post-linguistic," "post markets," "post anything." They sound like magic words erasing our past as something old, useless and stupid, condemned to death because they did not sustain our beliefs, ideas, desires, fears, fantasies, and "selves" efficiently, standing up to the "new realities."

Invaded by this feeling of emptiness, our minds stop searching for evidence, coherence, and a structured perception of reality. The world around us starts looking like a sea of unrelated fragments. Our brains, conditioned to logical reasoning and problem-solving, cannot recognize these fragments as adjustable puzzle pieces; the truth and

the untruth, reality, and unreality become the same, and our creativity turns into chaotic fantasies.

In the realm of the collective imaginary, without any stable structures able to sustain an active connection with reality, ethical conduct and the perception of social values are replaced by the banalization of nothingness, sectarianism, aggressivity, and egocentrism in desperate narcissism.

Gustav Le Bon and Jaap van Ginneken (see Chapter I) studied the social conduct of the Crowd Effect hatches more often and banally, replacing reflection and free will with collective irrationality and severe deindividualization (see Chapter VI).

Under this cultural model's umbrella, many nihilist and radical determinist movements emerged opportunistically from all corners, like the hyenas devouring the carcass of human hope.

The "post-everything" culture becomes an intense and insane yell of our narcissism as being just a selfish illusion. When we face interpretative dissonances referring to a cultural structure or status, when it means an informal process using diversified semiotic elements, we can employ many tools to clarify the understanding of its content. One of these efficient tools is the analysis of the corresponding science-fictional outputs brought by the model. Science fiction is an intense, non-organized expression of the collective imaginary, offering conclusions that would be difficult to achieve with other semiotic structures, such as Manadue and Cheer (op. cit) reveal with their research:

Findings revealed that science fiction literature had been used in research across disciplines including theology, semantics, natural sciences, and education. Two characteristics of the use of science fiction in research became evident in the review: its role as a tool for advocacy and cultural insight and its effectiveness as an aid to learning and teaching. An unclear boundary between real science and science in the public imagination is problematic for research success, but the purposeful integration of fictional representations of science (both natural and social) into the research story has demonstrable benefits.

The analysis of the science-fictional material emerging from this cultural model confirms our assertions about blind nihilism, the scorn of current reality, irrational aggressivity, and the presence of the most pathological narcissism. For sure, these features existed before, but in the current cultures, they appear more extensively, and some destructive contents acquire extreme and dominating intensity, such as technical wars, robotic domination and slavery, genocide, disruption of liberty with digital control, and the extinction of humanity with the destruction of the planet. These themes did not exist before, at least with the current frequency and generality. Moreover, despite existing in a lower intensity in the recent past, they did not invade the children's literature and leisure, as it happens nowadays, seeding a nihilist and violent culture on immature minds, with social, cultural, psychological, cognitive, and ideological severe

consequences, which will only be measurable in future generations.

There is no such "empty new reality." With all its known and unknown facts and principles, the universe already existed before we arrived and will follow its evolutionary course, independently of our knowledge or existence. All our past is in the same place and form, engraved in our collective unconscious and present in our minds, emotions, and social models, despite anything happening today.

These flawed "cultures of the crisis" are temporary, only existing when the human experience faces extreme transformation, which is necessary and part of our evolutionary process.

The first scope of this study was critically analyzing our reality, grounded in concepts elected as coherent and rationally discussed in philosophy and psychology, with the possible exemption of our fears, desires, biases, and beliefs—a critical academic exercise from which we could obtain valuable instruments to interpret our lives and our universe better.

This scope attempts to understand that, In the present state of science and culture, we can stop looking to an imaginary abyss, leaving aside the emptiness of the "post-everything thinking" trends and the old darkness of the blind shadows of Narcissus. Instead, we can face our individual and collective existence and future with **"**pre-many things**"** thinking under the clarity of science, reason, creativity, and sound philosophy.

We all, even those rejecting existentialism, can choose. We can open the box of our imaginary – the door of our free will

– and participate with our creativity of the generation of the evolutionary alternatives that humanity has ahead, and how it is written in the genome of our species and not in the stars, on legendary books, or magical fantasies which sometimes we sacralize with our ignorance.

Humanity can be studied as we did and perhaps understood as we tried. However, this is not enough because humanity exists mainly to be lived and shared.

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