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FORGIVENESS AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR INDIVIDUAL REBIRTH AND MODERN UNIVERSAL RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

The goal of this article is to introduce a narrative about forgiveness as the guiding principle toward what I call universal renaissance and universal humanism. This narrative is universal for two reasons: first, it can be applied to all individuals and nations; nobody should be excluded from offering or accepting forgiveness. Second, forgiveness is a very complex act, including human reason, emotions, feelings, and spiritual dimensions of our existence, and touching the whole existence of the individual.

Keywords: forgiveness, Renaissance, humanism, individual.

Our perception of the world, opened to the process of globalization, seems to be exposed to more universal and all-inclusive interpretation of our reality. Economy, trade, and politics increasingly transcend the state boundaries and operate internationally. Modern sciences focus less on dividing and atomizing, and more on connecting and synthesizing. Collaboration, interconnectedness, interacting, expansion, and inclusion appear to be the key principles of all modern activities. An increasingly complex interaction of personal, social, political, economic, religious, cultural, and other factors condition our daily life in the context of globalization, offering us a myriad of new and unheard opportunities for further exploration on one side, and on the other side, affects us by its crimes, violence, and cruelty on the global level.

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In this world of integration and interconnectedness, one of the ancient challenges remains the recurring request to create healthy relationships with people I share my life-space, to be in touch with nature that is my primordial life-sustainer, and to take care of the innermost dimensions of my life. Restoration of healthy relationships becomes crucial, especially when we have to deal with injustice and violence, inflicted on us by others. Even though it might sound paradoxical, the best way to come away from the human evil is our ability to forgive.

The goal of this article is to introduce a narrative about forgiveness as the guiding principle toward what I call universal renaissance and universal humanism. This narrative is universal for two reasons: first, it can be applied to all individuals and nations; nobody should be excluded from offering or accepting forgiveness. Second, forgiveness is a very complex act, including human reason, emotions, feelings, and spiritual dimensions of our existence, and touching the whole existence of the individual.

When forgiveness takes place, we are able to expand toward unprecedented dimensions of human existence; forgiveness enables us to perceive ourselves and the world around us in a perspective that allows us to be reborn; to rediscover new spiritual and intellectual potential; and to grow into what we are supposed to be: more goodness, more love, more friendliness, more togetherness, as Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu states in the foreword to *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (Helmick 2002, XIII). Through forgiveness we become more what we are supposed to be: *more human*.

Rediscovery of Forgiveness in Modern Times

Even though forgiveness, followed by reconciliation, presents two inevitable factors in our ongoing effort to become more human, the meaning of this term is not unanimously defined. At the beginning of the 20th century, the exploration of forgiveness stayed almost in the exclusive domain of religion, spirituality, theology, and philosophy. Despite his insightful exploration of the human psyche, Sigmund Freud

wrote nothing about forgiveness. Carl Jung, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, and Viktor Frankl, the founders of the mental health sciences, paid little attention to the phenomenon of forgiveness. Such neglect of forgiveness might be due to the traditional links between forgiveness and religious belief, or to the lack of reliable data about forgiveness, or to the fact that the 20th century was the bloodiest and probably the most unforgiving century in human history, perhaps leading people to conclude that forgiveness constituted little more than a nice sentiment (McCullough 2000, 3). Only toward the end of the past century we can trace an increased interest of exploration of forgiveness in the academic sphere first, and then in medicine, psychology, sociology, politics, education, and neurobiology. Nowadays the contemporary world talks about forgiveness almost at every step: forgiveness is the cure for personal and political wrongs, the road to eternal salvation, and the secret to mental and physical well-being. David Konstan goes even further when he claims that the modern topic of forgiveness is a completely new phenomenon, essentially linked to modern understanding of the self. Forgiveness is not a simple notion, but a constellation of ethical and emotional components, including remorse and personal transformation, that together constitute an essential part of modern moral consciousness. These related ideas are absent in classical thought (Konstan 2010, X).

There is no consensus about the meaning of forgiveness; philosophers, theologians, psychologists, therapists, as well as those in non-academic circles develop various interpretations about the importance of forgiveness, which causes additional perplexity in our search for its meaning. Our analysis and reflections about forgiveness, followed by varied practices of forgiving, are meaningful attempts to describe what is evident. Morton suggests that instead of having one concept of forgiveness, we should talk about territories of forgiveness, which vary in different times and cultures (Morton 2012, 4-5). Worthington's explanation of forgiveness is even more detailed; he distinguishes different types of forgiving, covering different processes. For example, we forgive strangers in a different way than our loved ones. Our experiences and definitions of forgiveness might change over time. Forgiveness also relates to the perceived level of injustice, which can additionally confuse our understanding of forgiveness. The decisive

factor in various processes of forgiveness presents emotional forgiveness, which is much more than an intellectual rumination about forgiveness; it is calling for replacement of negative, unforgiving emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions (Worthington 2006, 17). The Mayo Clinic defines forgiveness as "a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you might always remain a part of your life, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, more positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you" (Mayo Clinic Staff). At the beginning of his book *Forgiveness Is a Choice,* Robert D. Enright describes forgiveness as a process or path to freedom, where forgiving means much more than just accepting what happened, or ceasing to be angry, or being neutral toward the other, or making oneself feel good. Forgiving is an act of compassion, benevolence, and love toward the offender, even though we know that s/he does not necessarily have a right to such gifts (Enright 2001, 25).

This reflection does not intend to collect different definitions of forgiveness, compare them, and identify the best one among them; all of them have something important to say about forgiveness. Independent of their differences, all of them seem to be built on one core feature: when people forgive, their responses, thinking, feeling, doing toward people who have offended or injured them become more positive and less negative. This is a fact that modern psychology, therapy, medicine, neuroscience, politics, management, and pedagogy prove with their statistical experiments. Forgiveness helps victims of abuse, trauma, and bullying (Watson); predicts mortality and affects longevity (Toussaint); stabilizes blood pressure and improves cardiovascular outcomes (May); increases relationship satisfaction and decreases negative conflicts (Braithwaite); affects the productivity of an organization (Fehr). By summarizing different definitions of forgiveness, McCullough states that forgiveness brings an intra-individual and pro-social change toward a perceived transgressor (McCullough 2000, 9). The change in this case relates first of all to the forgiver, who gives up anger and the desire for revenge, commits him/herself to transcend bitterness and forego vengeance, and is willing to restore a moral relation with the wrongdoer

(Konstan 2010, 12-13). Even here a divergence of view arises, about what forgiveness means: some claim that we cannot forgive on our own, without recognition and responsibility on the part of the offender. Emanuel Levinas is an extreme defender of this position when he writes:

> There is no forgiveness that has not been requested by the guilty. The guilty must recognize his sin. (Levinas 1990, 19)

A failure to take responsibility adds insult to injury, and undermines the possibilities of trusting that the offender will not turn around and repeats the injury (Griswold 2007, 49). Those who disagree with the view that recognition from the part of the offender is a necessary condition for forgiveness argue that forgiveness is universal and independent from the wrongdoer and his/her gesture of repentance and apology.

No matter which definition of forgiveness we take, it is sufficient for our reflection to claim that forgiveness brings more positive than negative aspects to our lives. It qualitatively changes the life of the forgiver, and hopefully that of the wrongdoer as well. Forgiveness transforms the innermost core of being human so that it is able to expand in unprecedented dimensions of human existence, and to perceive one's own life differently, free from past burdens, grievances, blame, and wounds. In short, forgiveness makes us more what we hope to be: more human. If this is the case, then forgiveness has remained a relatively little explored potential for a more harmonious process of globalization. If there are so many positive aspects of forgiveness, why is it, then, so difficult to forgive, or at least embrace the process of forgiveness? Despite the growing interest in the study of forgiveness, this aspect lacks necessary attention.

Patañjali's Kleshas or Afflictions of Mind on the Way to Forgiveness

No matter how we describe it, the process of forgiveness always starts at the same point: with the forgiver. Once I make the decision that I am willing, strong enough, and mature enough to embrace the whole process, forgiveness can take place. This might sound like a simple step,

but it is not. Those who have a personal experience of forgiving or being forgiven are aware of the complexity of the act. What makes this step so difficult to understand and undertake?

As mentioned previously, there are different forms and levels of forgiveness: from forgiveness of myself, to forgiveness of somebody else, a group of people, and an entire nation. Forgiveness of myself remains the most difficult type of forgiveness because it presupposes a deep insight into my own life, way of thinking, emotions, motivations, past experiences, wishes, inclinations, family, social life, culture, religion, or in one word: my own *ego*. By ego in this case I refer to the identification with my thoughts, or to the convictions that what I think, believe, or simply hold in my mind, is necessarily true; I believe that the outside reality necessarily corresponds to my inner way of thinking and believing. Forgiveness of myself, as well as forgiveness of somebody else starts with allowing myself to believe that things can be different, which consequently means that I am able to distance myself from the present way of thinking and believing. In other words, because of my capacity for awareness, I create an additional space around my thoughts, beliefs, and ego. This is exactly the point of the greatest struggle: how to change or create a distance from my present way of thinking which is creating whom/what I believe to be true? Forgiving myself is the hardest form of forgiveness because it presupposes the transformation of my ego, and transcendence of my self- centeredness. It is hard because I play two roles simultaneously: wrongdoer and forgiver. It is hard because the voice of self-condemnation often seems incessant. There is no escaping from myself because I know all the information. It is hard because I have to face myself in reality.

Some of Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras*, a collection of 196 aphorisms about Ashtanga Yoga, offer us an insightful view into how to create an additional space around the *ego*. Patañjali is not the author but the editor of these aphorisms, bringing clarity and unity to Indian philosophical systems prevalent at his time.[2] These aphorisms are meant as

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[2] There is not much historical information about Patañjali, who supposedly lived around the second century BC. Some practitioners believe that he also wrote

preconditions for those who would like to start walking on the path of yoga because they open the yogi's mind for something bigger than him/herself. As such, these aphorisms have no direct connection with forgiveness. Nonetheless, they present a useful platform for our reflection about forgiveness, especially for how to open our mind to the reality of forgiveness.

In the middle of his book, Patañjali talks about *kleshas*, a term that can be translated as "obstacles," or afflictions of the human mind, or destructive and disturbing emotions hindering the yogi's practice (Sutra II.3). These *kleshas* are: ignorance, ego, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life. As afflictions of the human mind, they are blocking the agent from opening him/herself to a bigger reality, either to the benefits of yoga, or in our case, to forgiveness. *Kleshas* can be also considered as expressions of human suffering and inability to come into existence as a differentiated being. Prasada describes *kleshas* as "forms of unreal cognition," preventing us from having true knowledge (Prasada 2000, 91). In Patañjali's reflection, *kleshas* hold us in the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, i.e., in a perpetual world of un-change. Similarly, we could say that, in the context of forgiveness, *kleshas* keep us in a repetitive way of thinking, feeling, and acting, conditioning our present and future. Once I learn how to deal with these obstacles, I will be able to create an additional space in my mind, and become ready for a more soothing relationship toward others and myself. These *kleshas* have to be studied as a bundle of afflictions, or as interchangeable troubling forces, disturbing our inner equilibrium on the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels. The first two *kleshas*, ignorance and ego, combined with pride and arrogance, condition our intellectual level of existence, which includes spiritual knowledge as well. The third and fourth *kleshas*, our attachments and aversions, belong to emotions and feelings, which can create complex disharmony and psychosomatic disorders. The last *klesha*, clinging to life, affects more our instinctive level of existence.

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significant medical works on Ayurveda and Sanskrit grammar; all these together made him a Renaissance man of his time.

Because of the interconnectedness, the kleshas should be studied together; for our purpose, we will analyze them one by one.

The starting and the main obstacle is *avidyā*, which is generally translated as ignorance (Bryan 2009, 177), or nonwisdom and delusion (Chapple 1999, 57), or lack of spiritual knowledge (Iyengar 2002, 111). Patañjali describes it as "the breeding ground of the other *kleshas*, whether they are in a dormant, weak, intermittent, or fully activated state" (Sutra II.4). As such, *avidyā* creates the substratum for all other *kleshas*; once ignorance is dispelled, the other *kleshas* disappear (Bryant 2009, 177). In the state of ignorance or distorted perception of reality, the yogi is not able to perceive the true nature, either in him/herself or in others; his/her life is full of pain and sorrows. His/her lack of spiritual knowledge entails confounding the nature of the soul, which represents the joyful, pure, and eternal, with the body, i.e., with the painful, unclean, and temporary. The yogi exchanges the impermanent for the permanent, and mistakes pain for pleasure. Due to ignorance, the yogi lives in a conventional awareness, that is the opposite of true knowledge (Sutra II, 5).

Similarly, the process of forgiveness cannot start as long as ignorance, or my incapacity to perceive others and myself in a different way, holds me in the conviction that my present perception of reality is the only and best possible one. Because of my ignorance (delusion, nonwisdom), I firmly hang onto my past experiences, certain ways of thinking, unpleasant emotions, hurt feelings; I believe that they are so strong that there is nothing behind them and that perception of my reality cannot be different. In other words, the inability to see more deeply presents in me an obstacle on my way to perceive myself differently. Knowledge, followed by a different comprehension of reality, is only the starting point of a longer process, both in the process of forgiveness, as well as in Patañjali's reflection. Patañjali was not a rationalist who believed that desired change will automatically follow our having right knowledge; a deeper comprehension of reality is only the starting point of a longer process.

The second klesha is *asmitā* (Sutra II, 6) usually translated as ego, egoism, or self-centeredness, which Bryant interprets as the following. Imagine a person wearing spectacles to see clearly, but due to his mental

disorder, he refuses to remove them and believes that the spectacles are his very self rather than an instrument for better seeing. Ego entails doing something similar: it imagines that the mind and body, which are simply instruments allowing awareness to perceive the world, are the actual self (Bryant 2009, 186). Iyengar defines egoism as "the identification of the seer with the instrumental power of seeing" (Iyengar 2002, 114). Though there is a distinction between the seer and the seen, in ego they merge in oneness, which is due to *asmitā*. This affliction, consequently, prevents me to be in touch with my true self; instead of identifying myself with the true self, i.e., the subject of experience, I identify with the apparent self, i.e. the object of experience.

The person who is not able to forgive identifies him/herself with his/her experiences of being hurt by the wrongdoer. A mixture of emotions, feelings, thoughts, and actions can condition somebody's experience in such a way that s/he identifies completely with that experience; his/her experience becomes him/herself. When this happens, his/her ego prevents him/her from forgiving him/herself or the wrongdoer, and letting go of his/her wounds.

The inability to let go of anything is the expression of the third *klesha*, *rāga*, translated as attachment, desire, and emotional bondage to any source of pleasure (Sutra II, 7). As any attachment to pleasures prevents me from encountering something deeper in myself, so the attachments to my ideas, judgments, convictions, and prejudices block me from seeing the reality from a different perceptive. Through these attachments, I hope to experience in the present or in the future a certain pleasure from my past, which I keep alive in my memory. Therefore, the key ingredient of this process becomes memory (Bryant 2009, 189). Every form of attachment is a limitation to my freedom and a hindrance on my way to a deeper level of self-realization in the present and the future. Attachments are expressions of my desire for security. By removing attachments in me, I create in myself new dimensions of human flourishing, and become freer.

In view of forgiveness, attachments to my ideas, past experiences, emotions, feelings, and especially the inner wounds, present a crucial step in the process of forgivingness. A continuous remembering of past events or an ongoing recurring of certain narratives might be

expressions of my attachments to the "pleasures" of being wounded, right, or better than other my wrongdoer. This creates in me a sense of security, satisfaction, and self-realization, even though it does not allow me to grow in freedom and new self-confidence. In this perspective, the process of cleaning our memories becomes an inevitable step for creation of additional space around the ego.

The attachment to pleasures, past experiences, unfulfilled desires, or unhappiness in the present triggers recurring experiences of pain, sorrow, aversion, feeling of resistance, anger, frustration, and misery. In an extreme case, because of his/her strong attachments, one can come to hate him/herself, his/her family, others, and the surroundings. All this together defines the meaning of the fourth *klesha*, called *dvesah*, or aversion (Bryant 2009, 190). Iyengar states that pleasurable experiences from the past generate greed and lust, which strengthens attachment and stimulate a greater craving. One becomes absorbed by the pursuit of pleasure and addicted to gratification. At the same time, pain, sorrow, and misery trigger a chain of hate or aversion, leading to sorrow (Iyengar 2002, 116). *Dvesah* prevents me from stepping out of the comfort zone of my ego and from my facing the sensations of like/dislike in me.

By facing *dvesah* in the process of forgiveness, I learn how to face my attachments on emotions, ideas, past experiences, which are conditioning me in my way of thinking, and preventing me from different acting. When I resist or resent something in the present, when I struggle to forgive now, it is because I remember how these things caused in me pain in the past.

The last *klesha*, *abhinivesha*, translates as clinging to life or fear of death. This attachment is so strong that even wise and educated people cannot easily remain indifferent to the love of life and the urge for self-perpetuation, Patañjali states in Sutra II, 9: "[The tendency of] clinging to life affects even the wise; it is an inherent tendency." Carrere interprets *abhinivesha* in terms of the human desire to hold on to life, to seek security in the continuity and stability of what must be forever in flux (Carrera 2006, 114). Mehta describes this *klesha* as the human desire "to hold life in the framework which the sense of I-ness has created... in the network of the mind" (Mehta 1990, 115). Independently from our interpretation, *abhinivesha* points to the inherent human desire to live,

which can be translated also as fear of death. This fear is based on our memories of losing something, not being able to completely control one's own life, and finally dying.

By not being attached to my life, *i.e.*, my ideas, emotions, past experiences, and convictions that I am the master of my life, even the fear of losing my own identity diminishes. Once detached from clinging to my life, comprehension of my identity changes from something static to something that is in a continuous process of evolution and growth.

The process of elimination of *kleshas* softens and opens the yogi's mind for a yet-unknown reality of yoga; similarly, the process of elimination of afflictions in my mind prepares me for forgiveness. These *kleshas* should not be considered as a moral act; nonetheless, they are essential prerequisites of every moral action.

No Future without Forgiveness

Forgiveness Is a Choice is an inspiring statement of Robert D. Enright's book with the same title (Enright). Forgiveness, like happiness and compassion, is not something that will take place by itself, automatically, without my decision to be actively involved in the process. Forgiveness takes place when I decide to forgive, i.e., when I feel courageous enough to face the wounded parts of my existence and decide that my life should not be limited by the prison of those wounds. Forgiveness is much more than a single act; it is a process in which I deal with my past life, and by doing this, I experience something that changes the course of my life in the present and shapes my future. To a certain extent, we could say that forgiveness is a lifelong process, affecting each period of our lives, as illustrated in the biblical story of Jacob and Esau. These two brothers were already in a dispute before birth, as if nature had imposed their destiny to be an ongoing rivalry. Despite Jacob's ongoing struggle with Esau and his in-laws, Jacob reconciled with his God, himself, and his brother; his forgiveness and reconciliation became for him a redemptive act, leading him to the fullness of life and healing (Gerjolj 2012, 50).

If forgiveness is a matter of choice, then this choice is closely bound with our decision about what to do with our past unpleasant events and memories, which are playing a crucial role in our present life. Patañjali's *kleshas* remind us that afflictions of the mind are narrowly conditioned by memories of past events, which we keep alive in the present. The way we deal with our memories affects our present and future existence.

> In forgiving, people are not being asked to forget. On the contrary, it is important to remember, so that we should not let such atrocities happen again. Forgiveness does not mean condoning what has been done. It means taking what happened seriously and not minimizing it; drawing out the sting in the memory that threatens us to poison our entire existence. (Tutu 1991, 271)

This is one of the final thoughts from *No Future without Forgiveness*, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu's reflection about the forgiveness process in South Africa. A true forgiveness accepts what happened in the past, all of the past, without nursing grudges, blame, and grievances, anchored in our past. When we relinquish them in the present time, we make possible our future. Through forgiveness, we are willing to accept the uncertainty of the future, which is out of our control; nonetheless, our decisions in the present time affect our future. Hence true forgiveness is based on an all-inclusive view, in which the past, present, and future meet. If and how they will meet depends on our ability to deal with the *kleshas* in our mind and on our ability to renounce ourselves in our *ego*, conditioned by memories of unpleasant past events, grudges, and blame. Once they stop marking our present, we allow ourselves to be reborn, able to create new relationships with ourselves and the other(s), and to live a better life.

Let us take the process of globalization as an unprecedented opportunity for being in touch with others on the global level. This opportunity is conditioned by many factors: our past experiences and relationships with others, different kinds of power, our beliefs, and our present (dis)ability to create good relationships with others. Globalization, with its growth of interconnectedness and interdependency, challenges also my present identity and sovereignty. As my past events condition who I am in the present, so my present defines who I will be in the

future. This is true also for every individual, community, society, state, nation, religion, and so on.

Every relationship in the present automatically opens the space for self-evaluation and redefinition of myself. If I want to establish and keep a relationship with the other, the presence of the other will indirectly bring me to a re-evaluation of my own sovereignty and redefinition of my identity. Such a process can also be considered as forgiveness, even though it surpasses the context of disagreement. Forgiveness, as the renunciation of my sovereignty and redefinition of my identity, is an expression of my willingness to accept another as a partner in the relationship because I do not want to be alone. Once I accept somebody as a partner, Levinas writes in his *Totalité et Infini*, I also become obliged and responsible for him/her because I cannot pretend that I have not met him/her. This responsibility explains why forgiveness is not an easy step; it is much easier to remain alone and without any obligations. By being alone, however, I remain incomplete, imperfect, and unable to achieve my own completeness. Only when I accept my own imperfection, and acknowledge the imperfection of others, I open myself to life in fullness (Osredkar 2012, 190-1).

Referring to Levinas' reflection, *ego* can be taken as an illusion of perfection. My attachment to my *ego* makes it difficult to accept my own imperfection, incompleteness, and weaknesses; the presence of others automatically challenges these attachments, or holds me in the conviction that their presence is an unnecessary burden. Recognition and acceptance of my attachment to the illusion of being perfect puts me on the path toward freedom and fulfillment, which goes through the other. Forgiveness in this case reminds me that I am incomplete, imperfect, and weak; as such, I need to be with others. Recognition of being incomplete and in need of the other cannot be described as a single act, but as an ongoing event, continuously redefining the subjects in relationship. Accordingly, even forgiveness becomes an ongoing event, taking place in continuous search of a new reality, both in in me and in the others. By forgiving, i.e., being free from my attachments, I allow the others and myself to be different, changed, and reborn in the present moment, and open to a better future.

In the context of globalization, forgiveness becomes more than a moral imperative or theological dictum; it is the only means, given our humanness and imperfections, to overcome hate and condemnation, and to proceed with the business of growing and loving (Coleman 2015). So the process of globalization becomes the playground for our becoming more human, which is exactly what we are supposed to become. The past tensions and conflicts should not present unbridgeable obstacles. Jankélévitch's reflection can be very inspiring in this regard.

> …forgiveness extends to infinity…there is an inexcusable, but there is not an unforgivable. Forgiveness is there to forgive precisely what no excuse would know how to excuse… On this way to a better future, nothing should result as impossible. (Jankélévitch 2005, 156)

Conclusion: Religious *vs.* Secular Accounts about Forgiveness

We started our reflection with an urge to become more human, this time from a universal perspective. This urge, bound with an inevitable process of forgiveness and reconciliation, was a challenging task in the past, and has remained a challenge for each individual, community, nation, and religion with its dogmatic teaching in the present. The urge to become more human, together with the ability to forgive, introduces two evaluative criteria of success. Religions with their spiritual and dogmatic teaching are in a special way exposed to this urge and challenge. In the context of globalization, spirituality and religion that not only promulgates but also lives forgiveness and reconciliation will spontaneously excel because it will succeed – without losing its own identity – to integrate and include the otherness of the other. As such, it will contribute with something more meaningful to the world of globalization, immersed in conflicts and tension. Religion which will be able to forgive the past wrongdoing, and consequently to integrate and to include the otherness of the other, especially the wrongdoers, will excel because it will indicate an alternative way to the still fighting and opposing sides. Religion that promulgates reconciliation and forgiveness

will be opening new dimensions of dialogue on the universal level, and at the same time, indicate new horizons of becoming more human.

If, in past centuries, forgiveness was in the domain of religion and spirituality, especially of Christianity in the case of Western societies, this is not the case anymore. As previously discussed, in modern times the phenomenon of forgiveness slipped out of the religious domain and became the object of non-religious studies, from psychology to economics and political science. An essential difference, however, remains between religious accounts of forgiveness and what modern science understands by forgiveness. The latter comprehension of forgiveness does not refer to any transcending entity, for example God in Christianity, as the guarantor of forgiveness and absolution; the forgiver and wrongdoer are not invited to return to the Lord, as is the case in the Christian account; when forgiveness seems impossible for man, it is still possible for God.

The modern conception of forgiveness is not based on God, but on the moral autonomy of each individual who is in continuous search of moral transformation. David Konstan argues that the modern comprehension of forgiveness has its roots in the ethical thinking of Kant, who treats human beings as ends in themselves, able with their rationality to define what *the good* is. Consequently, forgiveness is not directed to God or a religious entity anymore, but to the fellow humans whom one has wronged. So we have a secular notion of interpersonal forgiveness, separated from a religious background. In spite of this separation, the agent of forgiveness still believes in new horizons and visions, which will take place through his/her moral transformation and change of his/her nature (Konstan 2010, 165-6).

While a religious account about forgiveness rooted in Christian tradition might seem unacceptable for a secular society and non-Christian world, the secular account surpasses boundaries of all religious accounts and can be understood, and hopefully accepted, by every reasonable person of good will. In agreement with Charles Taylor's reflection on modern times, here we have another example of how the secular world adopts certain principles and narratives originally grounded in religion, and reshapes their functionality by granting them an old-new meaning. While the Christian account argues that forgiveness is important because it brings us closer to fullness of

life, salvation, life with God, the secular account talks about forgiveness as something essential for a life of quality, either as individual or as community, brings us healing and inner peace, reduces depression, allows us greater self-acceptance, and creates more meaningful relationships. While the religious account is grounded in the Bible and tradition, the secular account finds its support in scientifically objective research and investigation. While the first one teaches that forgiveness is crucial for salvation of our souls, the second one regards forgiveness as an essential feature for the general well-being of the body, psyche, emotions, intellect, productivity, longevity, and the like. With the modern account, the necessity of forgiveness becomes something universal, transcending religious convictions, and deeply rooted in human nature. These two accounts should not be seen as two opposing accounts; they present two slightly different narratives about human ability to transcend oneself, and consequently to become more human. While the secular account seems to have a larger reach with its emphases on the utilitarian benefits of forgiveness, the religious account goes deeper and enables us to transform the darkest dimensions of human existence.

My willingness to forgive as well as my incapacity to embrace forgiveness are transforming my present life and affecting the future, regardless of what account of forgiveness I follow. Both accounts are based on the belief that forgiveness is possible and beneficial. Those who claim that forgiveness is not possible lose hope in humankind. Those who embrace forgiveness as a lifestyle are in the process of being reborn and bring new life to the present. Forgiveness is not an end in itself; it is only the beginning of something in the present moment with unknown dimensions in the future.

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THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY[1]

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Abstract

This paper attempts to understand the relationships among the various elements of the human person: body, mind, spirit, soul, ego, consciousness, and self as viewed from the Western philosophical tradition. The paper argues that in order to know the soul, one should know the self because it is the self – not the mind or body – that represents the human person. Moreover, it is important to understand the spiritual underpinnings of the self for the purpose of reconciliation.

Keywords: spirituality, mind, body, self, consciousness.

Introduction

The perennial quest for the metaphysical origin of the spirit, especially from the Western philosophical tradition, is a worthy quest. We are enamored with so many metaphysical conceptions and elaborative religious definitions of the spirit (*pneuma*), soul (*psyche*), mind (*dianoia*), consciousness (*syneidisi),* body (*soma*), self (*eme*), and I (*ego*) that sometimes we become confused with them. The confusion

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arises, specifically, when the soul is identified with the mind and vice versa. There is a long tradition of this identification such that the mind (*dianoia*) is called *psyche* (soul) and the attributes of the mind are labeled "psychological attributes," as in the usage of Peter F. Strawson (1963) and in the usage of the subject Psychology, which literally means the study of the mind or consciousness and not, strictly speaking, the study of the soul.[3]

It is preferable to identify the mind (*dianoia*) with consciousness (*syneidisi*) to identifying it with the soul (*psyche*).

To try to understand the metaphysical origin of the spirit, it is advisable to bracket all those existing definitions and then try to start anew. In the process, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the relationship of the mind and body with respect to the human person?
(2) What is the status of the body or mind in relation to the self?
(3) In trying to know the self, what is its relationship to the soul?
(4) How does the spirit or soul come into being?
(5) If spirituality is present in every human person, how can we harness it for the purpose of reconciliation? We hope to answer these questions satisfactorily in the foregoing discussions.

Mind, Body, and the Human Person (Question 1)

The human person is a unity. In the main – empirically speaking – it has two major aspects: the physical (body) and the mental (mind). Throughout the long history of philosophy – particularly, in the Western philosophical tradition – the human person, as mind and body, has been reduced, on the one the hand, to the body (the materialists) and the mind became the emanation of the body. On the other hand, there were others who were quick to reverse the observation and reduce the human

[3] Psychology should be the study of the soul (*psyche*) while the study of the mind (*dianoia*) (or consciousness, *syneidisi*) will only be its subset.

person to the mind (the mentalists, idealists, and spiritualists) and the body is simply the invention of the mind.

It is argued that when the human person dies, the body disintegrates while the mind – identified as the soul – leaves the body to dwell somewhere else: to heaven, to Hades, or to where it comes from, that is, its metaphysical origin. It is assumed that this "somewhere else" is spiritual in nature. There is no empirical evidence for this, but the fact that it is not physical, then the only logical conclusion is that it is mental or spiritual in essence. Many religions identify this spirituality to dwell in heaven while others simply call this spiritual dwelling – as what Keith Chandler (2001) said – the Cosmic Mind (see Gripaldo 2002, 211-16).

At least, two reactions to this view have come about. The first comes from Bertrand Russell (1962, 141-44; see Gripaldo 1971) who argued that this contest between the lion (materialist) and the unicorn (mentalist) as to who owns the crown is nothing but a "heraldic invention." The metaphysical origin is something neutral – neither mental nor physical – but from whence springs both mind and body. He (1956) called this metaphysical ground – the ontological ground of being – as "neutral monism."[4]

The other reaction comes from Strawson (1963, 81-113) who contended that the concept of the person is a primitive concept, that is, more primitive than the concept of mind or the concept of the body. Strawson agreed with Gilbert Ryle's (1979) view that the mind is not a ghost in a machine (body), but he gave equal treatment to both the body and the mind as aspects of the human person. This is the dual aspect theory of the person. Strawson affirmed that the material predicates (M-predicates) and the psychological predicates (P-predicates) are attributes of the human being and, as such, not one of them can represent the

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[4] The ground of being is neutral, but how Russell (1956) arrived at this ground was through an analyses of matter and mind from the perspective of the mind and in that sense it has been dubbed as *idealistic* or *mentalistic*. But, in my view, is there any other way by which we can arrive at anything at all except through the mind? Even the materialists on this version who believe that mind is condensed matter or the idealists who believe that matter is condensed mind have to make use of the mind to arrive at their respective *inferential* conclusions. For a discussion on this matter, see Stubenberg (2010, 2014).

human person. It is a mistake to say – in fact, a "category mistake"[5] (Ryle 1979, 17-23) – to argue that the mind thinks or the body runs. This perspective gives us the distorted perception that the mind or the body can represent in itself the human person. The human person is a unity and, therefore, the person thinks and the person runs.

But if the mind or the body does not holistically represent the human person, what entity, then, represents the person?

Mind, Body, and the Self (Question 2)

The *self*, the *I*, or the *ego* represents the human person. The ego ("I"), or the subject, is closely associated with the soul, but it is also closely associated with the mind. I will skip the discussion on this matter from the ancient and medieval periods, but I would like to begin with René Descartes, who started an interesting discussion on this issue during the modern period.

René Descartes

In using methodical doubt in his philosophy, Descartes (1960, 1-175) doubted everything, including his own existence and the existence of God. He discovered one indubitable fact that he could not doubt that he was thinking because to doubt was still to think. He concluded that for the subject to think was, therefore, for the subject to exist: "I think,

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[5] I interpret Ryle's notion of "category mistake" broadly as to include mistaking a *single* category or logical type (the body or mind) to represent a *collective* category of the human person without qualification, and vice versa. Strictly speaking, Ryle talks about not recognizing the whole collective category (the library, colleges, museums, etc.) as representing the single category (university). Broadly speaking, a category mistake occurs when one mistakes one category (mind or body) to represent the other category (human being), or when one does not recognize that one category (collective: buildings, etc.) to represent the other category (single: university).

therefore I am." Note that, for Descartes, the subject – the "I" – is *identical* with the "thinking thing," or the person.

There is an interesting twist in this conclusion. If the subject – the "I" – is identical with the human person, what significant parts of the subject would constitute the person? It was obvious for Descartes that the human person consists of mind and body. Since the body is physical while the mind is nonphysical, it becomes logical to infer that our conception of the soul, which in nonphysical, should be associated with our conception of the mind. It is apparent that a part of the subject – the bodily or somatic part – will perish when the subject dies, while it is also apparent that the other part of the subject – the mental or spiritual part (the soul) – will survive the subject's death. Notice that although Descartes reduced the human person to two entities, he thought that the mind or the "thinking thing" as conjoined with the body represents the human person. In this sense, while the human person is a unity of two substances, the mind or soul or self was primary, while the body was secondary. This view is, of course, different from the position of Strawson that the person as a unity is only one substance having both M-predicates and P-predicates.

This Cartesian dualism looks tidy and was upheld by British empiricist John Locke.

John Locke

Locke (1961, 7-133) tried to elaborate on the Cartesian substances. He wanted to elaborate on the qualities of the body, or matter in general, and the qualities of the mind. This way, we can understand the basic differences of the two substances. The criterion of the distinction is thru empirical perception. On the one hand, those qualities that can be verified by any perceiver must reside in the material object or physical body. These qualities are shape, size, solidity or weight, motion, place, and number. The object may change through time but these qualities remain in the object. We call these as "objective" or *primary* qualities. This means that the qualities or properties are in the object regardless as to whoever perceives them.

On the other hand, those qualities, whose existence depends largely on the perceiver, do not reside in the object, but exist only to the perceiver. These qualities are smell, taste, color, sound, and touch. The sea, for instance, may be "green" to one but "blue" to another. The banana may taste sweet to one, but not to the other. The sound one hears may be music to one but noise to the other. And so on. These qualities are not in the object although apparently the object has that power to generate these relative percepts. These qualities are called "subjective" or *secondary* qualities. Locke affirmed the person as a unity of two substances, but in this case, the soul – like in the case of Descartes – was identified with the mind.

The person who attempted to upset this dual balance was Bishop George Berkeley. He tried to show that the person is only one substance.

George Berkeley

The method used by Berkeley (1961, 135-215) in reducing the two substances to one hinges on the perceptibility of what there is. What is there outside oneself will exist only when it is perceived. This process enables the existence of what there is as relative to the perceiver: "To be is to be perceived." Nothing exists to someone unless it is perceived. When it is not perceived, then it is nonexistent. Locke's secondary qualities, for example, exist only because they are perceived by the person.

Berkeley's task, therefore, was to convert Locke's primary qualities to secondary qualities. Motion is not absolute but relative: the bus moves away from a person but moves towards another person. Motion, therefore, is relative to the perceiver. A coin may look circular from one person, elliptical from another person, or a straight line from a third person. The weight of an object may be light if lifted by a muscular person but heavy when lifted by a skinny one. The place of an object may appear left of the table from one perceiver or right of the table from another perceiver. A shape may be trapezoid for one, a parallelogram for another or a square for third one, depending on the angular position of the person viewing it. The perception of number depends on the accuracy of the computation of someone who perceives it: the volume of

an object may be nineteen square feet for an intelligent person but may appear as twenty square feet for a less intelligent one. One might object, in this case, that there can be an independent measuring stick to verify the speed of the moving object, the accuracy of the volume etc., but apparently this was not important for Berkeley, since those perceptions precisely no longer exist when not perceived by the perceivers.

In other words, if all qualities are secondary, what happens, then, with the "material object" out there? Berkeley is constrained to conclude that only the mind or soul as a substance exists while matter is an invention of the mind.

Puzzled by this conclusion, David Hume decided to analyze the concept of mind.

David Hume

Hume (1961, 307-430) believed that there must be an entity we call mind. If mind is the only substance, then there must be something that we can grapple with. Through introspection, he observed the processes of the mind. He noticed the changing patterns of the mind: from one emotion to another, from one passion to another, from one thought to another, from one feeling to another, from one taste to another, and so on. A person may like somebody, then get angry with her, and finally hate her. Hume's conclusion was clear and vivid: there is no such entity as mind. What we call mind is just a "collection" or a "bundle" of thoughts, emotions, passions, feelings, and other processes emanating from the body. The body is, therefore, the substance while what we call mind is just a physical emanation or an epiphenomenon of the body. Hume's conclusion is a graphic picture of reductionism which extinguishes the validity of the mind or soul.

According to Immanuel Kant (1950, 8), this skepticism of Hume "interrupted [his] dogmatic slumber."

Immanuel Kant

Kant (1966) said that the mind does not passively receive perceptions, but is the originator of these perceptions or of experience in general. Kant thought that Hume was looking for an object which can be observed. But experience consists of two parts: that which can be observed (the *phenomenon*) and that which cannot be observed (the *noumenon*). Every object of experience consists of the *phenomenon* and the *noumenon*. A chair, for example, consists of the observables: size, shape, volume, color, taste, solidity, smell if any, and so on. But underneath these observables is a nonobservable object that binds these properties together in one locality: the *noumenon* (the thing-in-itself).

Kant believed that what Hume was looking for was the *noumenal* mind but was frustrated in his introspective observations, for he could only observe the *phenomenal* mind – the ever – flowing thoughts, passions, feelings etc., which is a process and not an entity. Kant maintained that what Hume observed was the *empirical* ego or *empirical* mind, but not the *transcendental* ego or *transcendental* mind. Underneath the empirical ego, which Hume observed, is the transcendental ego, which Hume did not and could not observe, but which binds all those thoughts, feelings, emotions, and so on, together into the total experience of the person. Notice that there is one important element that Kant introduced: the ego, which he identified with the mind or self[6] (see Gripaldo 2006, 66-78).

Mind, Self, and Soul (Question 3)

We can accept Strawson's view that the concept of the person is primitive and prior to the concepts of mind and body. But we have to reconstruct Strawson because of the apparent confusion between the

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[6] Hegel, G.F.W. (1997, 2010) absolutized the *noumenal* self into the Absolute Spirit which uses individual human beings as instruments for the completion of the Absolute Idea through the historical process of the dialectics. He negates or renders illusory the self-autonomy of the individual soul, and I am not comfortable with that interpretation of the soul.

function of the mind and the functions of the soul. The soul or self, as representing the person, is the active originator of experience.

The main function of the mind or consciousness is to passively receive the mental states that emanated from the physical brain and even some unconscious mental states (not caught with our attention) surrounding an event (see Akintona 2012, 38-44). As originator of experience, the main functions of the soul are thinking, understanding, computing, knowing, evaluating, conceiving, reasoning (cognitions); being angry, joyful, fearing, hating, being jealous, loving (emotions); experiencing pains, itches, aches, throbs, tickles (sensations); smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, hearing (perceptions); acting, intending, trying, wanting (conations); and hallucinating, dreaming, seeing after-images, imagining (quasi-perceptions). It is a *category mistake* to take the functions of the soul as the functions of the mind (cf. Maslin 2001; see Gripaldo 2006, 8). Experience, in general, or the experience of the soul (*psyche*), consists of the physical (P-predicate) and the mental (M-predicate) experiences.

The mind, as a passive receptor of experiences (or psychological processes), does not have its own independent processes. So-called "mental" processes are, in fact, the psychological processes appearing in the mental or conscious receptacle.

If the soul (*psyche*) or the self (*eme*) or the I (*ego*) is the active originator of experience, we immediately notice that the soul is unobservable while the self is observable. How can that be? It is in this aspect that Kant is relevant.

The soul is the transcendental self or ego – the *noumenal* self – which cannot be observed. That self or ego – the "I" – that we observe in experience is the empirical or *phenomenal* self. The soul and the empirical self are one and the same. The soul and the empirical self as a unified entity represent the human person. When the soul actively works with the world, it manifests itself through the mind (the M-predicate) as an empirical self. The mind is the window by which the transcendental soul enters the world of matter as an empirical or a phenomenal self. The empirical self is all that we know about the person's soul. If, on the one hand, the empirical self is bad, vicious, vindictive, manipulative, and maliciously competitive, so is that person's soul. When the person is incurably evil, then we say that his or her soul – religiously or

metaphorically speaking[7] – goes to hell. On the other hand, if the empirical self is good, forgiving, compassionate, loving, understanding, and the like, so is that person's soul. When the person is invariably good, then we say his or her soul – religiously or metaphorically speaking – goes to heaven.

What is the role of the body? The body (the M-Predicate) is the physical executor of the decisions of the self. But the body also affects the self's decisions when the body does not receive the proper nutrients to grow, or is sick. The condition of the body can affect *radiantly* or *adversely* the physical and intellectual development and the decisions of the self. Moreover, the self's activities are generated through the mind via the brain. No mental process of the self – theoretically speaking – can happen without some kind of a corresponding brain process. It is highly probable that in the near or distant future the scientists will be able to identify the corresponding brain process for every mental process (or if not, then there is an element of the soul that escapes the brain-mental processes).

The transcendental self (or soul) is nonmaterial. In that sense, it is spiritual. But the concept of the spirit is all inclusive as it includes – as some would say – all of the entire universe (pantheism), or even more than the universe (panentheism) while the soul is generally limited to human beings or *probably* to some higher forms of animals in varying degrees of formation.[8]

Why does the transcendental self or soul need the mind? Because it needs a window or venue in the material body by which it can interact with the material world. And that window must be akin – not necessarily the same – in essence with the soul, that is, it partakes of the nature of the soul, which is nonmateriality.

When the transcendental self views events from the outside world, or even within itself (physical self) through introspection, the experiences would be colored by the genetic, bodily, and environmental development

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[7] The qualification "metaphorically speaking" is important to accommodate some nonreligious people who do not believe in a literal "hell" or "heaven," but used these terms in reference to their bad or good deeds while on earth before passing away.

[8] At least, it is believed that chimpanzees, bonobos, and orangutans have consciousness for passing the mirror test of self-awareness (see Allen and Trestman 2015).

of the self and, therefore, the soul's experiences would probably be in many cases different from another soul's experiences of the same stimulus.

How does the soul come about from the spirit?

The Metaphysical Origin of the Spirit or the Ontological Ground of Being (Question 4)

According to Bertrand Russell, the ground of being is neutral, neither mental nor material, but out of which both mind and matter come into existence. I find this as a good point of departure because it does not immediately attribute spirituality to the ground of being as in identifying it with Cosmic Mind or it does not immediately attribute materiality to this ground as some materialists[9] would say. The most that we can say about this ground of being is that it is a process that we can associate with the Heraclitean flux (see in this connection, Whitehead 1978). Physicist James Jeans (1958, 193) described the world of reality as a "deep-flowing stream." Its surface is the world of appearances, "below which we cannot see." Underneath "lie deep waters which we can only know by inference." Whatever activities are in the "currents below throw up some bubbles and eddies to the surface" which "affect our senses and so activate our minds."

This scientific description of reality metaphysically allows us to accept an active process underneath the world of appearances, which, in the least, is something *life-giving* or spiritual. In other words, the neutral ground of being is pregnant with the capacity to bestow life. One significant meaning of the term "spirit" (*pneuma*) is that it bestows life. It is a life-force. It is in this sense that the metaphor "the breath of air" or the "breath of life" becomes existentially meaningful. Even when we assume that the original beginning of life is through evolution or creation or through "creative synthesis" (see Sia 2007, 213-21) we cannot deny the life-giving force of the ground of being.

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[9] Materialism or physicalism views "that all facts (including facts about the human *mind* and *will* and the course of human history) are causally dependent upon physical processes, or even *reducible* to them" (see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, n.d.).

The breath (spirit, *pneuma*) from the process (the neutral ground of being) bestows life (air) to the self (soul) in its formative stage in a fertilized egg. In other words, in a fertilized egg the transcendental self (soul) is already present but latent. As it is, it is just like a formless seed, that is, a dormant thing without any personality, yet. It grows and develops with the growth and development of the fertilized egg (zygote) from the embryo to the fetus, the child, and the adult person. The transcendental self acquires its shape or form and full identity in its relationship with the type of body (*soma*) it is gestated and with the type of environment it is born into. When the transcendental self becomes *conscious*[10] which is the beginning of the development of the intellect (*nous*), it begins to deal with its body and the external world as an empirical self, that is, as a personality (or a person with a form). It is in this kind of relationship that the empirical self defines itself as to what it wants itself (himself/herself) to become in the empirical world as it carves its niche in the future. As the soul reveals itself to the world, it is significant to mention that the mind and brain do not produce thoughts. It is the *noumenal* self or soul, which is beyond time and space, that produces thoughts. The brain and mind only occasion the passage of the soul's thoughts to the external world through the empirical self. The empirical self appears to be within time and space but the transcendental self or soul is beyond time and space. The brain and mind are like a rubber platform by which the soul impinges its face as the empirical self to the world and withdraws from the platform when the brain and mind perish.

It is important to understand the place of the dormant soul in the fertilized egg. Its full development[11] depends largely on the condition of the body which embodies it. Firstly, there is a genetic endowment of the fetus from the parents' genes. Secondly, if the mother's body is nourished well, then the fetus is nourished as well and the dormant soul will develop normally in parallel with the normal development of the fetus and the child. However, if the mother is malnourished or is taking prohibited drugs, then this condition will affect adversely the

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[10] "Consciousness" is the state of awareness of items of experience that come into the mind, while the "mind" is the receptacle of the processes of the soul through the physical processes of the brain in the soul's dealings with itself and with the world.

[11] Barry Smith and Berit Brogaard (2003) argued that a human being begins to exist, biologically speaking, at sixteen days upon conception in the stage called "gastrulation".

development of the fetus and the dormant soul. The fetus might be aborted naturally. Or the fetus may be born blind as a child or born with distorted limbs, or without legs or arms. The development of the personality of the empirical self in this case, whether gloomy or radiant, depends largely on the loving treatment which the family bestows on the child and the compassionate understanding of the community-at-large. I know of some of this type of people who become successful in life.[12]

What is the form of the soul? Well, it is unextended in space and beyond time. It is difficult to picture the soul but, I think, it is reasonable to view the soul as imagined by artists as taking the *nonmaterial* shape of the *empirical self* or the living person before it goes to heaven or hell, or before it rejoins the ground of being. If we are familiar with the movie *Ghost* (Rubin 1990), then the soul takes the *nonmaterial* form of the empirical self.

Not all personalities, especially the normal child or adult, will develop radiantly. Some of these personalities are in conflict with family members, with some members of the neighborhood, or with some members of society-at-large. Causes of these conflicts may be racial, political, financial, and/or religious in nature. Since we are all humans, and have a common spiritual origin, we wish and hope to reconcile our conflicts for a better world.

The Need of Spirituality and Reconciliation (Question 5)

The presence of a living human being is a living testament of the underpinning spirituality of the transcendental self (soul) in the human person. It is important to understand this spiritual underpinning as the empirical self develops itself in the world of different selves. We are all spiritually living beings, but we differ in temperament, political inclination or ideology, religious conviction, social standing, and economic status in society. The differences we encounter in our experiences with the environment and our genetic endowment develop

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[12] Nick Vujivic was born with no legs or arms but swims, surfs, and plays golf and football. Tony Max, born legally blind, became the Canadian Visual Artist in 1957. Geri Jewell, born with cerebral palsy, was a famous actress who was given a National Rehabilitation Hospital Victory Award in 2006. Born with feet without legs, Eli Bowen became a famous tumbler and acrobat, and was called "The Legless Acrobat" in his circus. And many more.

in us a certain type of personality and, in some cases, our type of personality sets us apart from each other as individuals or as groups. Some of these can easily be reconciled, but there are differences which are difficult to reconcile, especially when hatred or political or religious ideology comes into contact with different members of society. I particularly refer to members of the communist and democratic countries or members of the Islamic, Christian, and Buddhist religions. But these members can coexist and live in harmony and tolerance. According to John Locke (1960), the (empirical) self needs other selves for self-sufficiency and survival. I may also add that groups – if they want to improve and enjoy a comfortable living – need the other groups to be truly fulfilled as social beings. In a manner of speaking, we all come from the same neutral ground of being that is pregnant of spirituality, and if we acknowledge this, then an individual ought to value not only his own spirituality – the principle of preserving the bestowed life (soul) in him or her – but also the spirituality of others.

There are ways by which spirituality may not be able to preserve life. But first we must clearly distinguish the concept of spirit from the concept of spirituality. The spirit (*pneuma*) is the life force that bestows life (soul, *psyche*) from the ground of being to animate the fertilized egg and to let it assume a normal growth eventually as a child and an adult. When the child becomes conscious, that is the time that it develops its own personality (as a particular empirical self) and spirituality – or the principle of preserving life – begins to work. But this principle must be recognized and acknowledged by the person, otherwise it may fail in preserving the soul. In a sense, one must be *self-conscious* of one's own spirituality and, by extension, of the spirituality of the others.

Reconciliaton between a Person and His/Her Situation

The physical body has a lifetime, and the soul is preserved naturally for as long as the body is taken cared of healthily. An abuse of one's body may lead to sickness or a lingering disease that will shorten the lifetime of the body. One ought to take care of one's health if one wants to value his life or soul, because *life itself is of the greatest value*. Arthur Schopenhauer (1909) underestimated the value of the Will to Live for considering it as evil, but it is dictated by the principle of the

spiritual preservation of life or the lengthening of the duration of the soul. Despite adversities of any kind (family problems, frustrated love affairs, and the like), a person may cling to life for as long as there is hope of recovery or improvement of one's situation. Otherwise, when things become hopeless, then the person may reconcile his or her situation with oneself and assume the stoical attitude of accepting the "Will of the Above" until the end of life (death). When the person cannot and will not reconcile his situation with oneself, then he or she clings to life like a madman and blame others for his or her situation until the last breath. The extreme case of reconciliation is to recognize and accept one's situation as hopeless and stoically negates his or her spirituality and commits suicide.

Spirituality and Reconciliation

In general, spirituality can be harnessed in promoting reconciliation between a person or group and another person or another group in a situation of differences when the following conditions obtain: (1) each person or group must recognize that life is of the greatest value and must be preserved not only for oneself but also for others; (2) differences come about because of different temperaments or different cultural outlooks at life[13] and should not serve as a hindrance for cooperating together or living in great tolerance and respect of these personal or cultural differences for a better world; (3) deeper differences involving hatred, vengeance, anger, envy, and the like should be checked by the first condition and forgiveness should be the best course as an enlightened self-interest, that is, for the sake of preserving one's bodily and mental health (see Gripaldo 2013, 2015); and (4) when all things fail, a person or the group has the right to self-preservation and hopes that others will recognize this right and may reconcile through a dialogue.

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[13] Temperaments may have a genetic beginning and may be tempered or hardened by one's experiences in the environment: home, church, neighborhood, and the like. Cultural differences are generally accidental in nature: if one is born into a Muslim culture, then most likely he will be a Muslim. The same holds true for Christian and other cultures. There are few cases, however, where one can choose later on one's culture (although some remnants of the old may still be apparent).

Conclusion

The soul as the *noumenal* self, in conjunction with the *phenomenal* self, enables us to identify it as representing the human person and allows us to regard both the mind and the body as aspects of the human person. The *noumenal* self needs the body and the mind so that it can interact with the physical world.[14] The ground of being exhales, so to speak, the breath (*pneuma*) of life (soul, *psyche*) to the fertilized egg to grow into a normal person. Spirituality is the *principle* that works within the person to preserve his or her life (or soul) despite adversities. In difficult situations, persons and others must be able to recognize this principle and hopefully reconcile their differences through peaceful means.

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SACRED SECULARITY AS SPIRITUALITY

VARGHESE MANIMALA[1]

Abstract

The title that we have chosen may look a little odd, but what we aim at is to look for new paradigms in the understanding of secularism and spirituality. There seems to be an urgent need to understand spirituality from different angles altogether. It is not a break with the past, but a development that is a must, for a history from which the need for new understanding and new expressions emerges. With regard to spirituality this applies as well, as there is nothing beyond the law of evolution and transcendence. Hence, nowadays the need to look at spirituality from various perspectives arises, and therein also comes the need for new paradigms, which may be able to give expressions to the aspirations of humankind with better relevance for the modern world. We need to realize that no absolute standard can be set for all times; and perhaps it is here that all religious institutions need to be humble enough to admit that they are always on search and it can never reach the final goal until the end of history, which is not in sight either. Thus, the Lord of history is challenging us to wake up and meet the world with its successes and failures and to build up a secularity that is sacred enough for the divine and the humans, and wherein all creatures can live in accommodation and caring for one-another in a spirit of solidarity and self-donation. This is the 'Sacred Secularity' to which we need to awaken ourselves, and may the challenge be addressed adequately by us.

Keywords: Sacred Secularity, spirituality, history, individual.

I. The Meaning of Secularity

The need to redefine the notion of 'Secularity,' as it has been understood differently in the past, especially in the West, arises, as a

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contemporary task. The sacred and secular have been looked at as opposed and irreconcilable categories; this approach is being questioned and now many have reconciled with the fact that we need to meet the sacred in the midst of the secular. The secular is the sacred and the sacred can be experienced in the secular. The 'Saeculum' is the locus where the divine is active and make its presence felt; hence God by His/Her presence sanctifies the Secular. Not only that secular is called to rise higher, but the very 'Sacred' immerses itself into the 'Secular'. For example, the Sacred becomes Secular in Jesus Christ, when God becomes human; the secular becomes sacred in the Eucharist, when bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Then God is encountered, not in some sacred ritual, but in the secular action of a common meal. It is unfortunate that we have sacralised it in a ritual with a special clerical priesthood, etc. The sacralisation of the secular becomes complete when the humans rise to a new life, full life with their bodies. Not only the human bodies are made sacred, but the whole Cosmos shares in this event-final freedom. The result is the communion with the whole of creation; a true unity is achieved (Amaladoss 2015, 241-42).

The term 'secularism' may be understood in two senses. In the 'West' it means 'non-religious' or at least separate from religion, while in the 'East', especially in India, secular and sacred are not opposed and separated. Hence, one can be religious and secular at the same time, if one is not exclusively religious, but open to the other, recognizing, respecting and accepting them. A particular religious system is one symbolic understanding of the secular, depending on one's historical and cultural context and also God's intervention. Perhaps, one of the reasons for the abandonment of religion is that they perceive it as alienating them from the secular, not as affirming it, by providing a transcendent dimension to it. Since the sacred has become the secular, it has a secular conscience; because it is in the needy other who makes me go out of myself that I discover the sacred. In this context it is good to remember that the traditional idea of the opposition of the Sacred and the Profane is to be seen in a different light. These are terminologies that came forth from an approach to spirituality, which was seen as something secluded and exclusive.

II. Spirituality as the Universal Prerogative

In the past spirituality was thought of as an exclusive prerogative of a select few called to be in a world totally alien to the ordinary mundane existence. It was considered as a special call granted only to a select few; thus a sort of exclusivism was developed. Spirituality was also thought to be unidimensional; however, today we understand spirituality has a multidimensional aspect, and there cannot be a single spirituality for the whole human race, or even for a particular society. Spirituality is highly personal, and it is characterized by the uniqueness of the personality. If in the past, spirituality was looked at as trying to cope with a special call, and be as committed to it in the best possible, when one is not even inclined to it, today we look at spirituality from the point of view available to God and one's fellow beings, which is considered as the bounden duty of every believer.

It is quite true that at times spirituality was used as an excuse to avoid one's social responsibility. Spirituality became a scapegoat and one could easily find alibis for avoiding the commitments one should fulfil as responsible citizens. Nation building and the integral growth of all is a must for spirituality. In India, for a better understanding of spirituality and commitment, they used the term *dharma*. Fulfilment of one's *dharma* in its various aspects is spirituality, and avoidance of one's *dharma* leads to chaos.

III. Spirituality as Search for Justice

Justice has to become a basic concern for any movement for authenticity. If spirituality is a search for authenticity, then, ipso facto, justice has to be a basis for spirituality. The basis is, for any sound society, justice, which involves a variety of factors. Quite often justice has been thought of as merely distributive justice, which means giving each one his/her due; but that becomes only a minimum of justice and it is not enough for a society's integral growth. It is here that the idea of

Paul Tillich's "Transformative Justice" comes into the fore.[2] Transformative justice is not being satisfied with the minimum, but offering each one what he or she requires to grow as an integral and mature human being. Tillich clearly shows the relation between Justice, Love and Freedom. True love and compassion are based on justice, and this brings about freedom. An authentic spirituality has to uphold these values; if not spirituality becomes fake. We need to acknowledge that global inequality is on the rise; and the market economy has ruined the life of many nations. The so-called advantages brought in by globalisation is only favouring the rich, the highly placed and the influential; the common man and the poor are left to their fate to eke out a livelihood for themselves in misery and desperation. Neo-colonialism is gnawing at the core of a just human existence; the sacrifice of humans at the altar of profit is being justified as the basis of the new economy, without which, it appears, it is impossible to move forward. In this only a few developed nations have a say, others are left in the lurch. Affirmation of justice alone is not enough; it has to be created and practised. Justice is a collaborative effort, and it is very much related to liberation. Salvation, liberation, bliss, realization, enlightenment, redemption – as well as justice, peace, human fulfilment – are not just individual problems. They call for collaboration, solidarity, a growing awareness of human and cosmic *interdependence* (Manimala 2009, 193). Hence, justice is not merely a human concern, but a cosmic issue that affects the religion as well.

Spirituality has to be understood as reconciliation, and any reconciliation can take place only on the basis of justice. Equality of the humans and also equality of creation becomes a basis for justice, and hence for spirituality as well. Unless injustice is denounced one cannot be spiritual. Consciously compromising with injustice is a betrayal of spirituality. Those who "rise up" to do battle for justice will rise up to new life as well. Spirituality is the urge to rise up to a new life. A true spirituality consists in denouncing the unjust social structures and

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[2] Cf. Paul Tillich's book *Love, Freedom and Justice*.

announcing the arrival of the Kingdom of justice, peace and joy; and thus awaken people to the struggle for liberation (339-342).

IV. Cosmotheandric Spirituality

Cosmotheandric Experience is the 'trinitarian' dimension of one's existence; it has now to be applied to spirituality, as our main concern here is spirituality and its relevance in a secular world. As mentioned earlier, the term spirituality is not to be taken in the sense as if in opposition to the secular or as meant for some elite group of people, and as we know this is a spirituality which tries to integrate both the secular and the sacred. The whole cosmos is filled with life and is life-generating. From a true religious sense the Earth is seen as reverberating with life from two perspectives, first is the solidity and hence the centrality of the Earth; the second is her receptivity and, accordingly, her expansiveness. In order to indicate these two aspects, the Indian tradition uses two terms – *bhūmi* for the first aspect and *pṛthvi* for the second. The Earth supports everything and also is an ever expanding horizon. Almost all branches of philosophy have looked at the cosmos as the given, and accept also the phenomena constituting the world as the starting point for thought. For the Christian Scholastics World was the primary source of knowledge. The empiricist philosophy as we know very much depends on the given world, even for idealist philosophy in order to transcend the world, first it has to acknowledge the world. Revelation as a source of knowledge, which on the face of it might appear to bypass cosmological laws, most often involves the cosmic dimension as sacrament, symbol, and hierophany. The Earth is not only grounding reality, she also brings forth realities; she is the womb of beings. She receives the seed from the divine and transforms it into abundant life. The Earth is the locus where the divine manifests its bounty and power to the human. It is through change that we grow and live, and the Earth, as the source of change, becomes the domain of faith (e.g., the farmer's faith, miner's hope, etc.). We have to discover this double symbolism of the Earth. The Earth has a soul, and thus she is alive; but we should also overcome the duality of the body and soul. The

Earth is not a corpse enlivened by a soul. This indicates that it has spontaneity with its own pattern and freedom. What is called for is the greatest respect for Mother Earth (Panikkar 1993, 137-39).

Another important aspect of this spirituality is that the relationship is thoroughly transformed; even with the Earth Man enters into a personal relationship. We can have an I-It relationship with the Earth, but that will not reveal the meaning of Life to us. Our relation with the world of things is deeper and more humane than we may be able to rationalize. Things have a face for us, they have a special language of their own, they put us at ease or make us comfortable. Naming things represents, from this perspective, a particular task. The proper name touches the very soul of the thing named. A personal relationship is not one-sided. It elicits a response and registers a certain initiative from the other side as well. Things are not indifferent to us, although in general we cannot measure their "personal" reactions. Yet at times we feel certain things "speak" to us and others repel us, that there are things we like because we are convinced they like us. The environment belongs to me and not only influences me, but is part and parcel of myself, even if not exhaustively so. My house, the things I use for many years, these have a very personal relationship with me.

In addition to this we also enter into a personal relationship with all our fellow-brethren. Together with things they call for entering into an I-Thou relationship. The basic feature of any I-Thou relationship is that we cease to put ourselves in an exclusively active attitude, that we learn to be passive as well. This is not the place to go into a detailed analysis of interpersonal relationship. We must also stress on cross-cultural relationship. As we know today no culture or civilization can isolate itself; hence, eastern and western cultures enter into a deeper relationship. A true spirituality calls for furthering of such relationship and maintaining it. Therefore we need a new cosmology. The modern Western world has undertaken a thoroughgoing 'deanthropomorphization' of the meaning of the word *God;* it has also 'deontologized' God. In the same process Man has equally 'devitalized' the Earth. The Earth has been left for dead by the same token that Heaven has been deserted. Man has been converted into an isolated being without partners, superiors or inferiors. Heaven has become a human project, a more or

less heuristic ideal; and the cosmos, little more than a condition of human existence. But neither Heaven nor the cosmos have any reality of their own. This is the radical humanism of our times. Perhaps modern Man needed to enter deeply into this excruciating isolation and solitariness in order to rediscover with a higher degree of awareness, on a new curve of the spiral, that the three dimensions – the divine, cosmic, and the human – all belong to the real and interpenetrate one another, so that everything has anthropomorphic features, as well as divine and material dimensions. A totally deanthropomorphized God would not be real, just as there can be no totally dehumanized universe. Thus a total integration of all the three is the new cosmology that is called for (Panikkar 1993, 144 -50).

We can now sum up the basic features of the cosmotheandric spirituality. The basic attitude of spontaneity is needed in such a spirituality; cosmostheandric intuition should be something spontaneous and not something forced upon. It has to germinate freely in the very depths of our being, and for this the proper soil is the myth. Such spontaneity entails that this spirituality keep itself independent, as far as possible, from philosophical and scientific hypotheses, because the criterion for the authenticity of a myth is its meta-philosophical and meta-scientific character. For many people today, God and science are no longer myths, but ideologies.

Another important aspect of this spirituality is that the Earth is neither inferior to Man nor superior. Man is neither the boss of this World, nor just a creature, a product of a cosmic womb. The Earth is also not "equal" to Man; Man and the Cosmos are ultimate, and thus reducible neither one to the other nor to a higher entity. The relation is non-dualistic; both are distinct, but not separable. Perhaps, the similarity is with that of our relationship with our body. Further, our relationship with the Earth constitutes part of our self-understanding. To-be entails being *in* and *with* the world. Our relationship with the world is on a par with our relationship with the various parts of our body; whatever affects the parts of our body affects us personally. Old concern of 'saving our own souls' does not any longer hold validity because we have come to realize that there is no such salvation today. The cosmotheandric

spirituality makes us aware that we cannot save ourselves without *incorporating* the Earth in the same venture – and God as well.

In this kind of spirituality the pan-monetary ideology is overcome. The goal of life is not just to earn money or to acquire commodities, but because human activity is part of human and cosmic life and sustains the entire organism. Money gives power, but power above all opens an uncertain future. The cosmotheandric spirituality sees fulfilment not so much in some future as in a wider space that incorporates the "three times."

Besides, this spirituality also overcomes the dichotomy between the so-called nature mysticism as a lower form of union with the World, and theistic mysticism as a supposedly superior form of union with God. God is here and now in the world as the creator and the "incarnation". The entire reality is committed to the same unique adventure. When we proceed with this attitude, such a spirituality will help the modern man to overcome the chasm between the material and the spiritual and between the secular and the sacred, the inner and the outer, the temporal and the eternal. This does not mean that differences do not exist, but of realizing interrelations and becoming conscious of interdependencies and correlations. Man is not living on the basis of a double citizenship, one here below and another above, or for later on. He or she is here and now the inhabitant of an authentic reality that has many mansions and presents many dimensions, but which does not slice human life into various sections, either in time or in space, or for the individual or for society. Service to the Earth is divine service, just as the love of God is human love. What is called for is an 'expatiating' of this spirituality in our life (Panikkar 1993, 150-52). Perhaps, the call of great saints like St. Francis of Assisi was towards the imbibing of this spirituality in which one sees an integration of the whole of creation and the divine, and this integration has made him attractive both to the theists and the atheists alike.

IV. Love for Mother Earth – An Eco-Centred Ethics as Spirituality

The sad aspect of the human search for ethics and morality is very much anthropocentric, and even very much male dominated. We need

to extend the notion of ethics to include other species and work out an ecological evolution which bases its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of recognition and cooperation. This we call symbiosis – the complex cooperative mechanisms which evolve between organisms and their environments. We do not find any meaningful ethics developed with regard to human being's relation to land, and to the animals and plants which grow upon it, although governments have enacted some regulations with regard to the forests, which are also continuously being violated especially by multinational companies. The extension of ethics to this third dimension is an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity. The land ethics simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals – the diversity of life in all its manifestations. Levinas' concept of 'interessence,' a being is linked to all entities whose interrelations are determined by each being's endeavour to maintain and expand its own existence, infers that if the nonviolent relation between humans is the trace of God, and that trace is 'proximity of God in the face of the other,' then the quality of that relation must inform all our interbeing. We know that the world-wide response to the loss of biodiversity has been extremely slow, even after the signing the agreement at the Convention on Biological Diversity. It calls for responsibility that goes beyond what I do to the attitudes which inform all relationships (Panikkar 1993, 54-5).

When a person is involved in environmental ethics his/her relationship to all aspects of life become transformed; many questions such as how I live, and what choices are being made with regard to life, consumerism, etc., arise. My choices involve overt and covert relationships, and a sincere and conscientious person will have to ask many questions to himself/herself as to how his/her actions affect others. My responsibility is universal and is not limited to those whose faces I can see. The complexity of our *interbeing* within an ecosystem is such that we cannot limit our responsibility to those who are nearest to us. World-wide webs of trade, pollution and resources connect us to others we never see or meet. In such a situation a particularly theological response would be that this issue which religions have neglected for long should be taken up as a priority especially in the field of

interreligious dialogue. The hostility between religions and consequent wars has been a contributory factor in the destruction of biodiversity. Religion is a major factor both in peace and war; and the challenge of religions is to make human beings more peaceful, and lead their followers to respect earth and the biodiversity. Here the Indian attitude of seeing as Mother Earth will be greatly beneficial (Panikkar 1993, 56)[3].

Today it is commonly acknowledged that the creation account in the Bible has been wrongly interpreted. It was thought that just because human beings were created at the end, Man is the crown and superior to all creatures, and that he is called to master and manipulate nature which was seen as opposed to him. Man was projected as the controller and ruler of the world having the power to deal with nature as he wishes. Ever since Francis Bacon, the relationship between human beings and nature has been continually described as a relationship of master to a slave. Up to now the creations of human history have led only to nature's depletion. Today we are becoming conscientious of the peril we are in, unless there is a different attitude being shown to nature. If the common catastrophe of human beings and the earth is still avertable at all, then it is certainly only by synchronizing human history with the history of nature, and if the experiment of modern times is carried out 'in accordance with nature' and not in opposition to nature, or at nature's expense. For the survival of the human beings and the whole of creation there needs to be a reversal of attitude. In order to arrive at a viable symbiosis between human society and natural environments, it is essential to 'cool off' human history, and to slow down its one-sided varieties of progress. Our understanding of time must be brought into harmony with the laws of life and the rhythms of nature, in the environment and in the bodily nature of human beings themselves. This is urgent because among human beings the progress of one group is always achieved at the cost of other groups. If technological progress is achieved at the expense of nature or the coming generations, this progress is illusory and fictitious. We stand in need of more systems of equilibrium in order to keep the advancing processes of history

[3] See also Varghese Manimala 2009, 551-54.

within bounds and to make them endurable. The relationship between progress and equilibrium in the human and natural systems must be brought into a coordinated, fluid equilibrium if the cost-utility accounts are to be set up realistically and honestly, and if the sum is to come out right.[4]

V. Ecology, Ecofilia, Ecosophyand Responsibility – Norms of Spirituality

We are using three important terms in our discussion – Ecology, Ecofilia and Ecosophy. All these are based on the Greek language: the first term coined from Eco + logos (έκο-λογός) = science of the earth, Eco + filia (έκο-ψιλία) = friendship with the earth, and Eco + Sophia (έκο-σοψία) = wisdom of the earth. In the first term there is a clear cut duality expressed namely the Earth is made an object of a subject's analysis; and hence there is a lot of imposition of the pre-suppositions of the subject on the object, and the analysis is done not with any prescribed ethics or norm but Earth as an object to be made use of. At present there may be some amount biological ethics being brought in because of the impending danger that may overtake us. In the second term, *Ecofilia* is a movement from reducing the Earth to an object reflecting our affinity towards it; the term *filia* means friendship. As we can guess, friendship is possible only between beings who can acknowledge one another as inter-subjective and inter-protective. A true friendship is not possible in a relationship of over-protection or domination. In friendship there is an assurance given: "I shall be there for you," and there is also a certain mutuality expressed in the notion of friendship; there cannot be a one-way friendship. Thus we find that in *ecofilia* there is a little more intimacy expressed. This leads us to the final term of our discourse – *Ecosophy*, the wisdom of the earth. Here it is not the subject who imposes a concept or a notion upon the object but the earth itself is inviting the human to learn from her, thus calling for an attitude of receptivity from the part of the human being. Wisdom is the result of enlightenment and

[4] See Moltmann 1989, 323 ff. Also Manimala 2009, 554-55.

an attitude of humility, and it will call for commitment. Wisdom is not so much the result of analysis and research but is more of intuition, and it is more a gift rather than an attainment. Hence, one remains always grateful for this gift, and that attitude makes one more receptive. The attitude of Receptivity is very much at the core of wisdom (*Sophia*). Wisdom also indicates a willingness to share and be co-responsible.

VI. Navasūtrāṇi for a Meaningful Ecosophy

Thinkers of Deep Ecology and other great masters have suggested various principles for maintaining a good ecological system with a diversity which we are unable to fathom. Following Panikkar's way of putting principles in the form of *sūtras* here I am attempting at nine principles (*navasūtrāṇi*) which should guide all our efforts at the restoration of the ecological balance. Not that they are exhaustive but are some basic principles we should adhere to.

1. The whole ecosystem is a chain of beings with interrelationship and inner worth. They are of immense value and no one has the right to disrupt this relationship or destroy their worth.
2. All need to respect the rich biodiversity and there should not be any priority or exclusive greatness attributed to any being as every species is unique.
3. Human beings are called to shepherd Nature and not to exploit it. They can make use of Nature for the satisfaction of their basic needs.
4. In the name of development and growth there should not be denuding of Nature because she is our Mother, and depleting of resources should be avoided as this places the future of the World in jeopardy.
5. Since the species are disappearing at an alarming speed policies that are adopted and found to be harmful should urgently be changed.
6. The norm of 'higher standard of living' should be modified to "respect for all forms of life and Mother Earth," and thus bring about an ecological balance.

7. In the wake of Global Warming an all-out effort should be made by all nations to reduce gas emission. This should not be seen only as a problem of some nations and thus minimize the efforts.
8. There should be an immediate reduction and stoppage of production of nuclear weapons and their sale. All chemical weapons should be destroyed forthwith, and no nation should be excluded from this responsibility. Without total disarmament life in its various forms is at the risk of extinction; the after effects of the usage of nuclear weapons are unpredictable.
9. A peaceful living in an ecologically balanced Nature is possible only through the acceptance and practice of *Ahiṁsa*. The term does not restrict the imperative of not harming other beings to the humans only; it is a principle which supports and promotes all forms of life. *Ahiṁsa* should be exercised not only among human beings but should be applied to the whole of Nature.

Aware of the fact that the whole ecosystem is in peril, it needs to be a shift of emphasis to the ecosystem, accompanied by the acceptance that the individual or the species can survive only within a viable ecosystem; there comes the urgency for a new ethical system based on relationships. The key quality in ethical relationships is responsibility, responsibility as a particular kind of responding to biodiversity in my species and in my ecosystem. My response is, consciously or not, shaped by my belonging there in a state of '*inter-esse*,' *interbeing*, in which my *inter-ests*, are contingent, on the reality of being sustained in an ecosystem I share not only with those of my own species but with myriads of others. How do I exercise my responsibility when I am part of so many different wholes? In what spirit do I respond? Perhaps, the short and veritable answer is non-violent response in the spirit of compassion. Response to the other in this way constitutes the ethical relationship required by biodiversity. Otherwise what will come about is destruction, and this destruction occurs at many levels: the personal, interpersonal, transpersonal and the communal, the individual and the systemic (Primavesi 1998, 52-3).

Emmanuel Levinas, one of the great contemporary philosophers of the West, gives a beautiful formulation regarding the responsibility for the quality of interactions. He holds that life's work consists in proclaiming the primacy of ethics. Taking for example the norm: "Thou

shall not kill," he shows that this norm implies "You shall do everything so that the other lives" (Levinas 1984, 53). As is well known, the image of 'the Face' has a predominant place in Levinas' philosophy. Face stands for what one cannot kill, or at least it is that whose meaning consists in saying 'thou shall not kill.' If true murder takes place, prohibition against killing renders murder evil; one may kill, but it is universally acknowledged that it is better not to kill. The moral law still has relevance because the face of the sufferer remains calling us to responsibility. This resonates well with Gandhi's advice: "Whenever you are in doubt, apply the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and weakest person you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be any use to that person." The moral law stands because the evidence of its violation is still there within the face of the sufferer.

VII. Spirituality as Involvement – Social Responsibility

Today spirituality cannot be thought of without social involvement, especially involving in fighting for the basic necessities of life for the whole human race, in a special way for the underprivileged ones. Thus Human Rights form a basic content of contemporary spirituality. Promotion of Human Rights has to become a central theme of our mission. Our mission has to include advocacy of human rights, and taking up the cause of the oppressed and the deprived. Although some nations and governments speak vociferously about human rights, they themselves do not mind violating these when it comes to their own advantage. Human rights are rights of all, and not of a few privileged people. The rights of the deprived and downtrodden are the first to be protected. Does our spirituality and mission take up this as a challenging task?

Fight against nuclear arms race and sale of weapons has to become part of our mission and spirituality today. The production and sale of weapons have become part and parcel of international dealings. Every company and all so-called Christian nations are engaged in this murky deal. Churches and religions seem to maintain a 'dignified' silence. Our conscience seems to have been blunted. It appears that organized terrorism of nations is approved. There has been an urgent appeal by

some leaders with a sense of mission and burning with a holy urgency. Pope Francis seems to be a unique voice, even though it may appear to be a voice in the wilderness, yet like that of St. John the Baptist it will be heeded to by conscientious people. For the World Day of Peace he was urgently appealing to people especially the youth to protest against nuclear arms race, and the wars that are going on. Peace cannot be brought about by war or arms race. There should be a humble submission before the all compassionate God that all of us especially the developed nations have erred and run away from their responsibility.

VIII. Fight for Gender Justice as Spirituality

Today we need to acknowledge with a great sense of guilt that 50% of humanity, namely women of all cues have been under oppression of various sorts, and their struggle for liberation has been met with obdurate resistance. A true spirituality can only be based on an equality of all persons without any trace of gender discrimination. Promotion of gender justice should become a part of our Mission today. All religions including Christianity oppress women and deny them their basic rights. Hence, the promotion of gender justice has to become part of our spiritual formation today. There is too much of male supremacy in all fields of life; women have to be offered their rightful position to fulfil themselves. Therefore our mission and spirituality has to be an all-inclusive one.

IX. Conclusions. Promotion of *Ahiṁsa* and a New Spirituality for a Sustainable Ecosytem

As a conclusion to this paper I would suggest the great Indian virtue of *Ahiṁsa* be promoted, and that we arrive at a new spirituality which will promote and make life flourish in its various forms. Very often *Ahiṁsa* has been interpreted in a negative meaning 'not to do any harm to humans,' but an integral meaning of the term is something different. It means not only the absence of doing harm especially to human beings but it means promotion of life. We can say it is justice in

praxis; justice is not giving what is his/her due but doing all that is required to give fullness of life. *Ahiṁsa* calls for wishing the good of the other in thought, word and deed, and doing everything one can to promote life. This is the meaning of *Ahiṁsa* especially in the Jaina understanding. Life is sacred and doing harm to life is a desecration.

The cosmotheandric spirituality tries to integrate both the secular and the sacred. The whole cosmos is filled with life and is life-generating. Man as the microcosm is a model but is not in a privileged position to dominate the Earth. The three worlds – Heaven, Earth and Man – share in the same adventure of life (Manimala 2009, 63). The Earth supports everything and also is an ever expanding horizon. The cosmos is a 'hierophany,' a sacred manifestation. The Earth is not only the grounding reality, but also brings forth realities; she is the womb of beings. The Earth is the *locus* where the great manifestation of life takes place, and it is the domain of our hope (e.g. the hope of the farmer, miner, etc.). After having discovered the double symbolism of the Earth we need to realize that she has a soul and is alive; but we should overcome the duality of the body and soul. The Earth is not a corpse enlivened by a soul; it has a spontaneity with its own pattern and freedom. What is called for is the greatest respect for Mother Earth (Panikkar 1993, 137-39).

Panikkar also shows the need to move from cosmology to '*kosmology*' although the distinction is not very clear to an ordinary reader. He says by *kosmology* is meant the science (in the classical meaning of the term) about the holistic sense of the *kosmos*. *Kosmology* (*kosmos legein, κοσμος λεγέίν*) is a "reading" of the *kosmos*, the disclosure of the world to our human consciousness by means of all forms of knowledge we may possess. Humans should try to hear and understand by attuning themselves to the music of the world, to the mysteries of the *kosmos*. On the other hand Cosmology, as Panikkar understands, is the result of the scientific *ratio* applied to the cosmos, which is open to the rational *logos*. *Kosmology* deals with how Man envisions the universe, how the *kosmos* displays itself to Man, and with the experience of the universe of which Man is a part helps to discover the real universe in which he lives. *Kosmological* is paramount, and also there will be conflicting cosmologies. In order to overcome this conflict what we stand in need of is an Emerging Mythos, and it will call for

'demythification' and a new 'remythification.' A mere scientific concept will not do, one should become capable of feeling and hearing the music of the universe. Panikkar's proposal is the cosmotheandric mythos.[5]

Another important character to be noted is temporality. The world is in movement and is not a dead reality. Being and Time are intimately connected; time is not an accident to Being; Being itself is temporal. Time is the peculiar way each being exists and lasts. Gradually Time became identified with its quantitative parameter under the assumption that there was a univocal correspondence of "measured time" to the richer reality of time. Temporality is a peculiar form of human existence and, as such, not just a freeway along which Man drives, but part and parcel of his/her own constitution. The past is not left behind, but accumulated in the present, the future is not just to come, but to some extent also effective (as hope) in the present. Time is the "Lord who works change in beings." Time created the Earth, in time is consciousness; and in time is life *(pṛāṇa*). Indian tradition expresses various aspects of Time by using words like *pṛāṇ, jīv-, jīvanam, āyus*, etc. (Panikkar 1993, 140-42). In time Man enters into a relationship with the Earth, which is thoroughly transformed, and it becomes a 'personal' relationship. We can have an I-It relationship with the Earth, but that will not reveal meaning of Life to us. Things have a face for us, they have a special language of their own; they put us at ease or make us uncomfortable. Martin Buber, the famous philosopher of inter-personal relationship, used to say that even a tree can have an I-Thou (personal) relationship with us. As it is clear that a personal relationship is not one-sided; it elicits a response and registers a certain initiative from the other side as well. Things are not indifferent to us, although in general we cannot measure their "personal" reactions. Still, at times we feel certain things "speak" to us and others repel us; there are things we like because we are convinced they like us. The environment belongs to me and not only influences me, but is part and parcel of myself (Manimala 2009, 64-5).

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[5] Panikkar proposes this in his famous book *The Rhythm of Being: The Gifford Lectures* to which we have referred earlier. He is very much aware of the meaning of the words he chooses and at times gives a new meaning and interpretation and also coins new words, not for the sake of neologism, to express his ideas better.

Our effort was to show how the whole cosmos is in a network of relationships, and these relationships sustain all. Friction or breakage of this relationship brings about unpredictable harm, and it calls for a tremendous effort to restore such a relationship. Harmony of all beings is something that has to be highlighted and human beings with all the great advancements bring disharmony into creation. Let us make a concerted effort for the reinstatement of eco-balance and arrive at a cosmological harmony. There are simple ways to contribute to this ecological equilibrium as Dr. Mathaai, the Nobel Laureate did, planting millions of trees to save the people and nature. She took it up as a life mission, and today we need such committed people imbued with a deep sense of all-embracing spirituality for saving our planet earth.[6] This calls for a counter-culture that will challenge the principle of maximum profit through exploitation and cut-throat competition, and unbridled development and progress. We need to overcome the 'globalization of indifference' and be aware that 'injustice is not invincible,' and that peace, justice and preservation of creation are interconnected; and this is the true spirituality to which we are challenged. We need to accept the past with gratitude and live passionately in the present and look to the future with hope, as Pope Francis challenges us.[7]

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[6] The contribution each one can make is very valuable howsoever small or insignificant it may appear to be in the sight of modern scientific minded person. Here I would like to refer to a small booklet in Malayalam: *Nohayude Kathayum Kathayile Rehasyangalum* by Prof. S. Sivadas (Ernakulam: Varna Press, 2012). It is a book meant for children, and the book beautifully illustrates through the story of Noah in the Bible how the whole ecosystem consists of millions of species with inter-relationship and inter-dependence.

[7] Pope Francis' new encyclical *Laudato Si (Praise be to You*) is, perhaps, enshrining this new Spirituality of Sacred Secularity.

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COSMIC CONFIDENCE IN INTERRELIGIOUS SPIRITUALITY

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Abstract

This paper presents and examines the interreligious philosopher-theologian Raimon Panikkar's proposal of 'Cosmic Confidence' in interreligious spirituality and another dialogue theologian Paul Knitter's critique on it. Their conversation is to be situated in a wider issue of the relation between pluralism and justice. The paper proceeds in three parts. The first part summarily presents the context and direction of Panikkar's pluralistic vision, particularly with a focus on his central insight of cosmic confidence. The second part indicates a challenge to Panikkar's cosmic confidence in terms of a preferential option for the poor – a spirit, of course, of liberation theology, but also that gets reflected in the challenge thrown by Knitter. And the final part deals with some implications of their mutual dialogue for the issue of pluralism, justice and reconciliation.

Keywords: cosmic confidence, Panikkar, spirit, theology.

Introduction

Reflecting on the need for cosmic confidence, cross-culturally, the seminal contribution of the philosopher-theologian Raimon Panikkar comes immediately to our mind. Panikkar has been one of the greatest scholars of the 20th century in the areas of comparative philosophy/ theology, cross-cultural philosophy of religion and interreligious dialogue and spirituality. Aptly styled, "the child of diverse cultures and the academic product of several disciplines," "the finest fruit of the East-West fecundation process," Panikkar, "one of the leading religious

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thinkers of our times," "a mutational man in whom the thinking of the new century has already begun," and "a pioneer and an apostle of interreligious dialogue,"[2] had all through his life one overriding concern: cross-cultural communication.

The real challenge to Panikkar, however, is the crucial question: What is the response of his cross-cultural and interreligious vision to the burning issue of justice, especially in a social context like in India? Stated differently, in a wider frame work, the important issue for our analysis is: what is the relation between pluralism and justice?

Let me begin the analysis with the words of Kenneth Surin: To "proclaim peace amid diversity" when there is really "inequality and oppression amid diversity" is to turn pluralism or dialogue into an ideological weapon (Surrin 1996, 184-5). Triggered indeed by this rather poignant statement, I propose to make a small reflection on the conversation that has taken place between two important dialogue theologians of our times: Raimon Panikkar and Paul Knitter, focusing of course on the issue of pluralism and justice.

In the first part, I summarily present the context and direction of Panikkar's pluralistic vision, particularly with a focus on his central insight of Cosmic Confidence. In the second part, I shall indicate a challenge to Panikkar's cosmic confidence in terms of a preferential option for the poor – a spirit, of course, of liberation theology, but also that gets reflected in the challenge thrown by Knitter. And in the final part, I shall show some implications of their mutual dialogue for the issue of pluralism, justice and reconciliation.

I. Panikkar's Pluralism

Clearly choosing pluralism over inclusivism, Panikkar appears to be a "radical pluralist," (Knitter 1996, 178) and this is explicitly evident in his conviction, which he has repeated time and again, that in our

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[2] Cf. Anthony Savari Raj, *A New Hermeneutic of Reality. Raimon Panikkar's Cosmotheandric Vision* (Berne, Berlin, Frankfurt, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang AG, 1998).

contemporary cross-cultural human situation, no single culture, no single religion, no single tradition, and no single person can even face – let alone solve – any of our human predicaments single handedly. We need a mutual fecundation, a cross-cultural sharing or even healing. The grounds for this pluralistic conviction of Panikkar, of course, are many and I now quickly indicate just two:

1. The first, a more immediate ground, is the prevalent context of Cultural Monomorphism.

Panikkar draws our attention to the western civilization's thrust toward a monolithic unity and universalization since the Greeks up to our times (Panikkar 1995, 147-50), which he calls the "colonialistic cultural monomorphism" which attempts to bring everything into one fold, one form, one bag.

This monomorphizing tendency has taken many avatars or incarnations in history: one truth, one God, one religion, one church, one king, one empire, one science, one technology, one world economy, one World Bank, one democracy, one development, one superpower, and now one world market and one net-work of everything. "Truth is one, and I alone have it" is its basic presupposition. "Outside the church, no salvation"[3] is another expression of the same mentality.

2. The second, and we may say, the ultimate ground for Panikkar's pluralistic proposal, is the very trinitarian nature and structure of reality, which he calls as the Radical Trinity.[4]

Panikkar works out an entire theology of religion in terms of an "advaitic trinitarianism," where the advaita inspires the trinity towards unity, and the trinity in turn inspires the advaita towards diversity (Panikkar 2010, 212-32).

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[3] This messianic syndrome of Christianity might have contributed to the colonial enterprises of western nations.

[4] For a more detailed study of this radical trinity, see Anthony Savari Raj, "The Radical Trinity. R. Panikkar's Re-Vision of Advaita and the Trinity", *Crossing the Borders. Essays in Honour of Francis X. D'Sa.* R. Rocha and A. Amaladas, eds., (Chennai: Satya Nilayam Publications, 2001), 179-92.

This "Advaitic Trinitarianism" is only a pointer to, or to be viewed in the backdrop of, the "Radical Trinity" – the universal trinitarian structure of reality, which, Panikkar believes to be an emerging religious consciousness of our times. What is more significant, however, is his extension of the Trinitarian understanding of God to the *entire reality.* The Trinity then is not merely a privilege of the Godhead or to do only with the life of God, but it has a lot to do with the very character of the entire reality.

Every reality that we encounter, therefore, is trinitarian, or to use Panikkar's neologism: "cosmotheandric" – cosmic, divine and human. Just to state this trinitarian or cosmotheandric vision very simply:

> There is no matter without spirit and no spirit without matter, no world without Man, no God without the universe, etc. God, Man and World are three artificially substantivized forms of the three primordial adjectives which describe Reality. (Panikkar 1978, 206)

This means that reality is cosmotheandric: cosmic, divine and human at the same time.[5] These three dimensions of reality are the only three aspects of anything that is real. Distinctions could be and should be made between them, but no radical separation. We may say that there is a kind of dynamism of the three toward the one without ceasing to be different. This insight is also reflected in one of Panikkar's inimitable statements:

> I "left" [Europe] as a Christian, I "found" myself a Hindu and I "return" a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian. (Panikkar 1978, 2)

The fallowing mentions are just to indicate very quickly some implications of this Trinitarian vision of reality for religions and religious dialogue.

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[5] For a clear exposition of this insight, see R. Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience. Emerging Religious Consciousness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993). For an elaborate study of this intuition, see Anthony Savari Raj, *A New Hermeneutic of Reality. Raimon Panikkar's Cosmotheandric Vision* (Berne, Berlin, Frankfurt, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang AG, 1998).

1. Panikkar's vision seems to echo the *perichoresis* – an insight of the Greek theologians of the early centuries, which stands for a mutual indwelling of the trinity. The immediate implication here for religions is: *Each religion is only a dimension of the other.* No religion can live in splendid isolation.
2. The religious traditions of the world can dance in dialogue with each other and so grow in both difference and togetherness. *Harmony is not in spite of differences, but because of differences.*
3. Religions are invited and expected to perform the festivity of incompleteness by the dynamics of universalization and also overcome their blind spots in mutual criticism and dialogue. (A dip in a cosmotheandric solution might help a religious tradition develop its own picture of reality, which needs to be completed by the neighbor. After all, it's only in *receiving*, that *conceiving* will take place).
4. Religions cannot focus any longer only on the element of God or Divine. If they do so, it becomes a one-sided endeavor. The authentic religious task would include the integration of all dimensions of reality – the cosmic, divine and human, including the reconnecting of the spirit to the body.[6] In this regard, rather than restricting spirituality or mysticism to the realm of the spirit, otherworldly or the rare, it would link it to the experience of life which each of us enjoys – "a free and spontaneous attitude welling up from the person's fullness."[7] Panikkar's insight of *sacred secularity* and cosmotheandric spirituality may be helpfully recalled here. In this regard, the commonality of problems can offer a good starting point for religions to rally together.

The Role of Cosmic Confidence

For Panikkar, it is not only *necessary* that the religious traditions exist and interrelate to one another, but it is really *possible* so. We may

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[6] Cf. Raimon Panikkar, *Religion and Religions*, Opera Omnia, Vol. II (Orbis Books, 2015).

[7] Cf. Raimon Panikkar and Milena Carara Pavan, *Mysticism and Spirituality*, Opera Omnia, Vol.1 Part 1 (Orbis Books, 2014).

ask, in this connection, how does Panikkar know and assume this *possibility* of dialogue? There is where Panikkar's "cosmic confidence" inserts itself as an answer.

Panikkar really does not know how religions could be radically different and diverse in their perspectives and orientations, and, at the same time, feel the need and have the ability to be connected to one another. Yet, he only *trusts* that his is so (Knitter 1996, 181). We find ourselves trusting that despite or because of our differences, we can and we must talk to, and learn from, and be changed by each other.

It is a trust that conversations between traditions are possible despite utter differences and that if we strive together in mutual trust, there is really a possibility of a mutual construction. In a word, it is a trust in the togetherness of reality and in our common endeavor in ever shaping it.

II. Cosmic Confidence or Preferential Option?

I now submit Panikkar's cosmic confidence to a critique. As I have already mentioned, this critique comes from persons like Paul Knitter who prioritizes preferential option for the poor and oppressed, over cosmic confidence, thus indeed calling for "globally responsible, soteriocentric correlated dialogue of religions."[8]

II.1. The Need for a Critical Stand

Knitter surely acknowledges the validity of Panikkar's warning and proposal that our conversation is possible only when there is a shared "cosmic trust" in the value of differences and the prospects of learning from and cooperating with each other.

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[8] Paul Knitter, *One Earth and Many Religions. Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995), 81.

Yet he offers a critique that, by itself, Panikkar's image of cosmic trust is still too general or too mystical and that "Panikkar is either encouraging or permitting a bourgeois mystical understanding of religious pluralism and dialogue" (Knitter 1996, 183). Therefore, he believes that Panikkar's views tend to be only harmonizing and does not provide space for suffering and ruptures in human life – at least obviously. In other words, Panikkar is criticized for not taking seriously the power relations and their correct use within each religious tradition as between them.[9]

For Knitter – unless in our interreligious conversations we are able to confront and pass judgement on intolerable realities such as starvation, oppression of some human beings by others, torture, and economic injustice and wars that destroy both human and planetary life - the dialogue itself would become immoral.

Panikkar is therefore criticized as not to have sufficiently laid out the criteria – or the procedure – by which we can confront and oppose what seem to be the intolerables (Knitter 1996, 186).

To be sure, Panikkar, according to Knitter, does recognize the need for critical stances, but "he does not elaborate on how such stances are to be found", or what are the "positive and concrete reasons" for determining "evil" or "intolerable" (185). In other words, a hermeneutic of confidence is not enough, what is needed is a hermeneutic of suspicion.

In a word, For Knitter, cosmic confidence, by itself, is insufficient in assisting one to enter in the difficult task of not only understanding but also of confronting and opposing each other.

II.2. The Kairos Confronting All Religions

Knitter further believes that the kairos confronting all religions is the necessity and opportunity to meet the priorities and needs of the poor of the world through dialogue and conversation. Such a preferential option

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[9] Also see Rudolf von Sinner, "Ecumenical Hermeneutics for a Plural Christianity: Reflections on Contextuality and Catholicity," at http://religion-online.org/, visited on 28 April 2005.

to respond to the human and ecological suffering that crisscrosses our cultures and religions would form the starting point, the basis, the heuristic for interreligious cooperation and conversation (186-8).

Hence he calls for a "soteriocentric" approach to dialogue and global responsibility, centering on the human and ecological suffering that confronts all of us. It is for this reason, that he suggests that Panikkar's vision is grounded and inspired by a shared preferential option for the victims of this world. And he believes that this option for the suffering human of the suffering earth would give greater content and practicality to Panikkar's vision, besides receiving a ground and a direction that would integrate its mystical content with concrete prophetic concern.

III. A Panikkarian Response: from Option to Attitude

I shall now discern a Panikkarian response to Paul Knitter's critique.

III.1. Knitter's Critique

In fact, there seems to be no contradiction between the preferential option as suggested by Knitter and Panikkar's proposal of cosmic confidence. Indeed Panikkar's insight of *sacred secularity* which evokes the togetherness of heaven and earth, temporality and eternity, would really offer an authentic base and inspiration to all our liberative commitments and programmes.

Panikkar's vision would only include the Divine plus the cosmic in the "human" welfare, and would encourage an element of joy in all our enterprise. This critique may also indicate how Panikkar goes beyond Knitter in his enterprise and orientation.

III.2. Beyond Knitter

As I have already mentioned, Panikkar goes with Knitter as far as to recognize the intimate link between pluralism and justice and to

direct all our energies in the direction of socio-economic and political justice. But he is tempted to reinforce Knitter's position of a preferential option for the oppressed by stressing "cosmic confidence" as the basis.

> The concern for the poor presupposes precisely a cosmic confidence. In fact, why do we get so indignant at injustice, premature deaths, and sufferings if not because we assume a cosmic confidence in reality, in which somehow we trust and believe that life cannot be so senseless, unjust and cruel as to justify such manmade oppressions? It is that cosmic confidence which triggers the healthy decision of the "option." It is the awareness of injustice, which leads to the "option." It is the awareness of injustice which leads to the "option." But this injustice is only detected because of our presupposition that there is a *comic order* which the injustice has precisely violated. (186-8)

To be sure, cosmic confidence and option for the poor do not belong to the same universe of discourse. It looks therefore, both Panikkar and Knitter share the same *pathos*, the former is an ultimate attitude, the latter a moral option – though both required; only their *logos* seems to be somewhat different (282). Panikkar shows the direction of Knitter's *logos* through some critiques. I just indicate two: one anthropological, the other cross-cultural.

III.2.A. The Anthropological Comment

Through this comment Panikkar tries to show how attitude is deeper than option. Authentic actions spontaneously flow from a deeper attitude than a conscious option made in favour of the needy.

> I wonder if Christ made an option to die on the Cross, if Francis of Assisi made an option to embrace poverty, if Luther made an option ("Here I stand and I can't do otherwise!"), or even if a loving mother makes an option to kiss her child or to spend a sleepless night beside her ailing baby, or an artist paints a canvas, an author writes a poem or a composer creates music out of clear options of love, service, beauty or whatever. It is something stronger than options, more powerful than decisions. (282-3)

He states further:

> I feel I have no option but to strive for justice. I have no option but to stand at the side of the oppressed. We have no option but to speak the truth. I have no alternative other than to set my life at stake for the sake of peace. My conscience has no other option. (283)

III.2.B. The Cross-Cultural Comment

Panikkar's second comment, cross-cultural in nature, exposes the mono-cultural context and nature of the "option for the poor" and also relativizes the role of will. It reminds us that other cultures often do not start from those premises.
In his words:

> Within the framework of dialectical materialism the so-called conscientization leads to despair. With merely historical conscientization the oppressed become conscious that for many of them there will be no liberation at all. In spite of all our most strenuous efforts to opt for the liberation of the oppressed, thousands of children are going to starve *today*, and millions of refugees and victims of wars are not going to be liberated in their lifetime. We may console *ourselves* with the view of a brighter future, but what is our answer for those people? Either there is a transhistorical reality (now or later) or there is no hope for them. (283)

We may wonder, in this context, what is the meaning of life for that immense majority – the aboriginals, the slaves, the outcastes, the starving, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, the women – who have not "made" it? Even in the hardest times and in face of greatest struggles, people could face life with joy and dignity precisely because they have been sustained by some kind of hope. This hope, however, is not merely of the future, but hope in the invisible dimension of life and reality.[10]

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[10] While acknowledging greatly its positive and vital contribution, it is important to discern how, in our contemporary cross-cultural human situation, the *cosmic confidence* (with its characteristic *hope in the invisible*) has to meet, in mutual criticism and dialogue, the *human confidence* (with its characteristic *hope of the future*), in the backdrop of a *rhythmic confidence*, ie., a *hope in the rhythm of reality*. Cf. Anthony Savari Raj, "The 'Hope' of Traditions for Human Future," paper presented at the International Conference on *Asian Values and Human Future*, from 7-9 July 2015, organized by Don Bosco University Guwahati (Assam), in

> Here is where traditional cultures speaking of heaven, *karma*, nirvana, God and brahman have something essential to contribute. To realize that our life has a meaning (sense) which is *life,* even if we have been invited to the banquet of Life just for a few moments, is the only saving hope for many and another exemplification of what I mean by cosmic confidence.[11]

Conclusion

The response of Panikkar to Knitter, as presented above, indeed signals the role played by cosmic confidence in interreligious spirituality. It even makes us radically rethink our conception of the Divine. The needed confidence is not on the Divine as the ground, but the Divine who is perhaps the sky on which no religion can ever claim to set foot. This indeed evokes a sense of contingency and helplessness which is stronger and more fruitful for collaboration and joint action for human-cosmic welfare than certitude on the Divine as the ground. It is perhaps this move and trust in vertical transcendence that provides a link for the amicable horizontal crossings between peoples and religions and to go ahead in life with a sense of hope – hope, not merely of the future, but in the invisible.

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THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF BUDDHIST FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

S.J. NOEL SHETH[1]

Abstract

In this article, I intend to bring out the distinctive features of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation, springing from the specific spirituality and the underlying worldview of living Buddhism in India and Asia. While there are similarities in forgiveness and reconciliation between Christianity and Buddhism, there are many distinctions arising from the divergent world-views not only of Christianity but also of Theravada and Mahayana. These differences are found not only with regard to the presuppositions, but also in reference to the motivation as well as the expression of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Keywords: Buddhism, Christianity, reconciliation, forgiveness.

Introduction

One could speak of reconciliation with a Supreme Being, with oneself, with other human beings and with nature. In this article we are mainly concerned with forgiveness and reconciliation on the horizontal plane, and not with reconciliation on the vertical level, in relationship to a Supreme Being. Although forgiveness and reconciliation are related, they are distinct from each other, specifically in reference to other human beings. Forgiveness involves the giving up of resentment, anger and hatred. It paves the way for reconciliation. In forgiveness the victims unconditionally hold out the olive branch to the offenders;

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reconciliation takes place when the perpetrators admit their offence and respond by extending the hand of friendship. Forgiveness may be localized in one person or group, *i.e.*, it may be one-sided, but reconciliation involves mutuality, the restoration of harmony and trust between both parties: this is the case in relation to other human beings, and not necessarily with regard to the Supreme Being or nature.

In this article, I intend to bring out the distinctive features of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation, springing from the specific spirituality and the underlying worldview of living Buddhism in India and Asia.

There are two forms of Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana. In Hinayana only one school is living, viz., Theravada, whose original texts are in the Pali language.[2] In Mahayana there are many schools existing, and their original texts in India were in Sanskrit.[3] We shall first present the Buddhist understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation, particularly in reference to other human beings, but also with regard to nature and, in passing, also in connection with oneself. This will be further elucidated through concrete examples in relation to other humans. Then we shall point out how meditation, specifically on "Loving Kindness", helps cultivate an attitude of universal forgiveness and reconciliation. After this, we will endeavour to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation, chiefly through comparison with Christian forgiveness and reconciliation.

Before I proceed with forgiveness of, and reconciliation with other human beings, I would like to briefly mention the following: Since in Theravada there is no Supreme Being, there is no question of asking forgiveness from, and getting reconciled with the Supreme Being. However, Mahayana accepts a Supreme Being; in fact, it is the only existing Reality. This Reality manifests itself in the form of unreal

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[2] Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Buddhist Pali texts are from the Nalanda edition, published by the Government of Bihar. However, references to the *Dhammapada-atthakatha* and the *Jataka-atthakatha* are from the Dhammagiri edition published by the Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, Maharashtra.

[3] Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Buddhist Sanskrit texts are from the Darbhanga edition, published by the Mithila Institute, Bihar.

supernatural beings, which help ordinary beings to attain salvation. Now, for instance, in the popularly titled *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, in Chapter 7, which is entitled "Natural Liberation through Acts of Confession",[4] we have a whole series of confessions,[5] asking forgiveness from various divinities of the Mahayana tradition. Thus, here we have an example of reconciliation with the Supreme Being through being reconciled with the manifestations of this Supreme Being, with whom of course the penitent, who is repentant and resolved not to commit the faults again, is actually identical,[6] since there is only One Reality in Mahayana. After this brief remark about reconciliation with the Supreme Being, let me proceed to my main topic.

I. Forgiveness of and Reconciliation with Other Human Beings

In Buddhism, forgiveness forms part of the Buddhist virtue of forbearance (Pali *khanti*; Sanskrit *ksanti*). Forbearance consists mainly in absence of anger, hate and malice, and the forgiving (*marsana*) of offences by others (*parapakara*). All this is included in what is normally called forgiveness. But, secondarily, forbearance also includes the patient endurance of adversity, hardship, pain and suffering, etc. (Dayal 1932, 209)

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4 *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, tr. by Gyurme Dorje, ed. by Graham Coleman with Thupten Jinpa, with an Introductory Commentary by the Dalai Lama (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006), ch. 7, pp. 113-150. The original Tibetan title of the book is *Bar-do Thos-grol Chen-mo*, which in English is translated as *The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States*. Tibetan tradition holds that the author is Padmasambhava who came to Tibet from India; the present text is an abbreviated version of a longer text buried in the ground by Padmasambhava for the benefit of future generations, and later discovered and revealed by Terton Karma Lingpa.

5 These confessions are open to monastics as well as laypeople, and should be distinguished from the twice a month Rite of Confession, which is meant for monks and nuns.

6 However, the individual realizes this, not just notionally, but really, only when the individual attains salvation or liberation.

Ideally, forgiveness is absolute, complete and universal. One must forgive all types of offences (injury, insult, abuse, criticism), everywhere (in private and in public), at all times (past, present and future), in all circumstances (in sickness or health), in thought (not entertaining angry thoughts), word (not speaking harshly) and deed (not harming physically), without any exception (whether friend, enemy or indifferent person), and however wicked the offending person or however terrible the injury may be (Dayal 1932, 209-10) Even if people criticize the Buddha or his Religion (*dhamma*) or the Order (*sangha*), one should not be angry or bear ill will towards them, but merely point out what is wrong.[7] Whoever bears enmity even to thieves who sever one's limbs, one by one, with a saw, does not carry out the teaching of the Buddha. Even in such a circumstance, one should not be harsh to the thieves or hate them, but rather one should be kind and compassionate and cultivate friendliness or loving kindness (*metta*) towards them as well as towards the whole world.[8]

To achieve this high ideal is no easy task, but the Bodhisattvas,[9] in particular, strive to reach this cherished goal, trying all the time not to bear malice or ill will towards anyone even when their life is in grave danger. If, on the other hand, they fail to reach this lofty goal, the Bodhisattvas can repent and confess their fault and reflect how they fall short of the ideal and resolve not to engage in acrimonious disputes, not to reply harshly, not to harbour malice or bear ill will, and so on and so forth.[10]

In the Buddhist texts, one finds many reasons to motivate oneself to avoid resentment towards those who have offended oneself. Buddhaghosa, a Theravada Buddhist, includes the following reasons in his *Visuddhimagga*: remembering the scriptural passages that exhort one to practise forbearance and avoid hatred, reflecting on the harmful effects of anger on oneself, developing compassion for one's enemies

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7 *Brahmajala-sutta*, in *Digha-nikaya*, pt I, 1.1.5, p. 5.

8 *Kakacupama-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikaya*, pt I, 21.5.20, pp. 172-73.

9 In Mahayana Bodhisattvas are special beings who delay their salvation for the sake of helping others, take on the sufferings of others, transfer their merits to them and give them grace.

10 *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*, 24, pp. 208-209.

who will suffer in purgatories due to their succumbing to anger, recalling to mind the many examples of the Buddha, who in previous lives as a human adult or child and even as an animal did not entertain the slightest hatred towards his tormentors, reflecting that one's enemy may have been one's loving parents or brothers or sisters or sons or daughters in previous lives, realizing that the one with whom one is angry is not a substantial soul, but merely a series of momentary aggregates of various elements, and therefore one cannot make that person the target of one's anger.[11]

Similarly, Mahayana texts too try to motivate one to practise forgiveness. Firstly, one should follow the teaching and example of the Buddhas in forgiveness. The Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others who offend them. Secondly, in reference to the person to be forgiven one may reflect in this manner: the present enemy may have been one's friend or relative or teacher in a former birth. Since Buddhism does not believe in a finite soul, strictly speaking there is no perpetrator of injuries and insults, nor is any one injured or insulted.[12] All beings are evanescent and subject to pain and suffering, and so one should rather lighten their burden than be angry and unforgiving. The adversaries are conditioned by the results of their deeds (*karman*) in past lives, and are therefore not acting freely. Thirdly, one may also think with regard to oneself in the following vein: One is suffering insult and injury as a consequence of one's own evil deeds in previous existences. One's enemies are actually one's friends and beneficiaries for they preserve one from such worldly goods as wealth and fame, and give one the golden opportunity to practise forbearance, which leads to salvation. Fourthly, one should ponder over the ill effects of an angry and unforgiving attitude: it results in terrible punishments in various

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[11] *Visuddhimagga*, 9.15-38; see Nyanamoli, *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*), 2nd ed. (Colombo: A. Semage, 1964), pp. 324-332.

[12] It is interesting to note that a similar reason, but with a different presupposition, is given in order to fight against one's enemies, in the Hindu *Bhagavad-gita* (2.19), where Krishna urges Arjuna to fight against the Kauravas since the soul – which constitutes the essence of a person – and, in some Hindu traditions, is inactive, and is therefore neither a slayer nor is slain.

purgatories, and wipes out the merit one has gained through several lives. Hence it is better to bear up with the comparatively negligible sufferings inflicted on one in this life than face the terrible tortures in the future. Revenge always brings evil consequences on oneself. Being at peace with others results in great happiness to oneself. Often one is unforgiving because of pride, which needs to be replaced by the spirit of humble service. Finally, mercy and love urge us to forgive others (Dayal 1932, 210-12).

It is noteworthy that many of these reasons are mentioned also by modern writers on forgiveness and reconciliation. They speak of shifting the focus of attention from oneself to the aggressor: instead of asking "Why me?" one asks "Why them?" In doing so, one realizes that the enemy too is driven by fear and other conditioning factors. This enables the victim to feel compassion for the offender (Botcharova 2002, 299-300). This compassion is not sympathy, but rather empathy for the aggressor's humanity (Shriver 1997, 8). They have also pointed out that examples of extraordinary people who practised forgiveness in extremely difficult situations and even sacrificed their lives for the cause of reconciliation can inspire victims to find the courage to forgive (Worthington 2002, 186-87) It is also helpful to realize that we too have our faults for which we deserve punishment, and yet are often not penalized for them (Dawson 2002, 247-48). The spirit of humility is important in the process of reconciliation (Ledarch 2002, 198-99).

On the other hand, we can easily see that some of the reasons spring from the specifically Buddhist world-view. For example, strictly speaking, no one offends nor is any one offended for there are no finite souls or substantial agents: every finite being is a series of momentary aggregates. In Theravada the aggregates are real, but they exist only for a moment, so who is offending whom? The aggregates of the succeeding moment are different from those of the previous moment. One cannot therefore hold the aggregates of the succeeding moment responsible for what was perpetrated by those of the previous moment.[13] In Mahayana

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[13] Of course, by the same logic, there is no forgiver either and there is no reason to forgive, for the aggregates that were offended and hurt are different from the

the aggregates do not even exist; in fact, nothing exists except the one Supreme Reality, the Adi (First) Buddha. It is interesting to note that the law of *karman* is invoked not so much to condemn the offender, but to understand the aggressor's predicament. Theravada does not accept a God, so there is no question of recourse to the Christian idea that God forgives us and therefore we too should forgive others, or that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others. But Mahayana does propose a similar motive. The Buddhas, who are manifestations of the supreme Adi Buddha, will not forgive those who do not extend forgiveness to others.[14]

The Buddhist texts usually speak of forgiveness, rather than reconciliation. The latter, however, is particularly found in the Confessions made by the monks and nuns. On new moon and full moon days, the monks and nuns assemble together for their fortnightly meetings, called *Uposatha* [Sanskrit *Upavastha*], at which they recite the monastic code, called *Patimokkha* [Sanskrit *Pratimoksa*], which contains the rules and regulations of monastic life. After each rule is recited, there is a pause so that any monk or nun who has broken that rule may confess it and accept the prescribed penalty. The rules for the monks and nuns are not all the same (Dutt 1941, 305-12). A few transgressions are so serious that the sanction is expulsion from the Order. In the case of some infractions, after imposing a temporary expulsion, the Order reassembles to consider readmitting the transgressor. In this way, the one who has violated those rules is reconciled with the members of the monastic community. In some infringements one just expresses regret, e.g., for having struck another monk. In some other cases, the offenders must give up what they had wrongly appropriated, e.g., gold or silver or what was meant for the community, **and must also express regret for having done so. Here we see that restitution is involved in addition to** contrition. There are also practical rules for the settling of disputes about the observance of the rules. For instance, one way is that the disagreeing

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aggregates of the succeeding moment. Buddhists, however, chose the other alternative rather than this one.

[14] Note, however, that in Mahayana all this is only on the practical level for, from the point of view of the absolute truth, everything is illusory, except the one Reality, the Adi Buddha.

persons talk to each other and settle their differences, and thus become reconciled to one another.

Many modern writers on reconciliation emphasize the need for justice too and deprecate cheap forgiveness. However, in this context, it is important to stress on restorative justice, rather than on retributive justice. In restorative justice the aim is to restore harmony by healing the victim and rehabilitating the aggressor through a punishment that is not vengeful but reformative (Schriver 2002, 156-57). It is an interesting remark that in the Buddhist Rite of Confession, the justice is restorative, not retributive. Most of the prescribed punishments are meant to reform the one who has breached the rule and bring about reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator.

There is a well-known Buddhist saying:

> Never does hatred cease by hatred, but hatred ceases by love. This is the eternal law (dhamma).[15]

Anger and hatred are great obstacles to forgiveness and reconciliation. Buddhism emphatically points out that wrath and animosity affect the unforgiving enraged or hostile persons more than the ones on whom they vent their spleen. The one who is full of rancour experiences mental agony and anguish, while the one who bears no resentment does not feel such pain and grief.[16] Anger may or may not make the other person suffer, but it definitely makes oneself suffer. Moreover, in accordance with the law of *kamma* [Sanskrit *karman*] it will not lead to liberation but to damnation in purgatories. An infuriated person is like one who wants to hit another with a burning ember or faeces in one's hand, but actually ends up being the one to suffer burns or to stink.[17] In a programme entitled "Eye for an Eye" and telecast on 16th and 17th May 1999, CNN revealed that rage and retaliation not only deprive one of peace of mind but also harm the body. Laboratory experiments confirmed that in unforgiving conditions one's blood

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[15] *Dhammapada*, v. 5, in *Khuddaka-nikaya*, pt I, p. 17.

[16] *Anguttara-nikaya*, 5.18.4, pt II, p. 451.

[17] *Visuddhimagga*, 9.22-23; see Nyanamoli, *Path of Purification*, pp. 326-327.

pressure, heart rate and sweat rate soared. Indeed, "revenge is not sweet, but bitter, while forgiveness and reconciliation take the hurt away" (Sheth 2001, 76).

II. Some Buddhist Examples of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Concrete examples not only spell out and explain a little more the Buddhist understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation, but also complement the theory to some extent. They also illustrate the ideal as well as other levels of forgiveness and reconciliation. We shall mention a few instances from the texts, from history and from the contemporary world.

1. Examples from the Texts

The most famous example is that of Khantivadi. In one of his previous lives, the Buddha was born as Kundalakumara, who was later known as Khantivadi [Sanskrit Ksantivadin], i.e., "One who preached the doctrine of forbearance". Angry with Khantivadi, King Kalabu tested his forbearance by inflicting one agonizing torture after another: he first had him scourged all over his body, then had his hands and feet chopped off, and then his nose and ears cut off. Even though he was taunted by the king after every torment, Khantivadi never got angry, declaring himself to be a preacher and practitioner of forbearance. Finally, the king kicked him on his chest near the heart and walked off in a huff. The commander-in-chief requested Khantivadi to vent his wrath only on the king, but to spare the others and the kingdom. However, instead of taking revenge, Khantivadi uttered a blessing, "Long live the king!"[18]

Dharmavivardhana, better known as Kunala, was the virtuous son of King Asoka. His stepmother Tisyaraksita declared her burning love

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[18] *Khantivadi-jataka-vannana*, in *Jataka-atthakatha*, 4.2.3, No. 313, vol. 72, pp. 34-37. A Sanskrit version is found in the *Ksanti-jataka* in the *Jataka-mala*, 28, pp. 189ff.

for him because of his beautiful eyes. On being rejected by him, she ordered his eyes to be pulled out. But accepting this as the fruit of his own past deeds (*karman*), he did not bear any malice towards her. He then went about with his wife begging on the streets, and making his living by singing and playing the *vina* (a musical instrument). Later when Asoka heard of the stepmother's dastardly deed, he wanted to put her to death by pulling out her eyes, cutting off her tongue, poisoning her etc. But Kunala asked the king to spare her life, declaring that he harboured no anger towards her. Kunala then miraculously regained his eyes. Nevertheless, the king had Tisyaraksita burnt alive in a lac house (*jatugrha*).[19]

We notice in such instances that the ideal is not even to feel anger or hatred even in the most trying circumstances. The ideal is to practise forbearance, to put up with the trials and sufferings inflicted by others and not bear any grudge or malice toward the opponents. If one does not succeed in this stoic ideal, and experiences hurt and resentment, one must try and bring oneself to forgive the perpetrator. Although desired, reconciliation is not so actively sought for. If the aggressor is moved to repentance and becomes reconciled, it's well and good, but it is not the deliberate goal of every act of forbearance and forgiveness. Justice and reparation too are not insisted upon in every instance.[20]

The ordinary person of course cannot reach such heights of equanimity. Occasionally, the Buddhist texts do give more down-to-earth examples of people who get annoyed with one another but eventually do get reconciled. Two monks residing in Kosambi quarrelled with each other. Then this enmity between the two spread not only to their monastic disciples but also to their friends and others, who thus took sides with one or the other monk. In spite of many efforts made by the Buddha to reconcile them, they refused to do so. It was only when they felt the pinch of being deprived of food offerings from the lay folk that they came to their senses and decided to forgive each

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[19] *Kunalavadana*, in *Divyavadana*, 27, pp. 261-270.

[20] However, in the case of the Buddhist Rite of Confession, both reconciliation and justice are integral parts of it, but Ritual Confession is reserved only for monks and nuns.

other and be reunited. Finally, the two factions also begged the Buddha's forgiveness.[21]

On occasion the Buddha himself brings about reconciliation. In the "Introduction" to the *Kunala Jataka*, it is reported that when the Koliya and Sakyan tribes were about to engage in a bloody battle over the right to the waters of the river Rohini, the Buddha persuaded them to desist from fighting by making them realize that there was no point in killing warriors of priceless value for the sake of some water that had comparatively little worth.[22] Not all however paid heed to the Buddha's mediations. He was unable to persuade the stubborn monk Tissa to ask forgiveness for not welcoming some visiting monks with respect and hospitality. Tissa was unforgiving because he was angry with those monks for having abused him for this fault of omission. In fact, in a previous life too he was not willing to ask pardon.[23]

2. Examples from Buddhist History

Let us now leave the traditional texts and cite a couple of illustrations from Buddhist history. In the 13th Rock Edict, the Emperor Asoka publicly expresses his remorse and confesses how the carnage at Kalinga caused him great anguish. He also declares that he pardons, as far as it is possible, all those who have wronged him. He makes peace with the people living in the forests. He wishes all beings to be free from injury and to enjoy gentleness or joyousness.[24] He even took care to omit the 13th Edict from the texts carved on the rocks in Kalinga, lest even his words of repentance would serve as a spark to re-ignite adverse

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[21] *Kosambaka-vatthu*, in *Dhammapada-atthakatha*, 1.5, pt. I, vol.50, pp. 34-40; see Eugene Watson Burlingame, tr., *Buddhist Legends*, 3 parts, Harvard Oriental Series vols. 28-30 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), pt I, pp. 176-183.

[22] *Kunala-jataka-vannana*, in *Jataka-atthakatha*, 5.21.4, No. 536, vol. 74, pp. 408-410.

[23] *Tissathera-vatthu*, in *Dhammapada-atthakatha*, 1.3, pt I, vol.50, pp. 25-29; see Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, pt I, pp. 166-170.

[24] Radhagovinda Basak, ed., *Asokan Inscriptions* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1959), pp. 71-72.

emotions in the Kalingas by reviving the memory of his fateful attack on their country.[25]

The father of Honen, the leader of the Japanese Jodo-shu school, was fatally wounded by a gang of robbers who attacked their home. On his deathbed, his father exhorted his son never to take revenge but rather to pray for the salvation of his father as well as of the attackers (Anesaki 1963, 171-72).

3. Examples from Modern Times

We now turn to some examples in the contemporary world. The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, has always embraced the policy of peaceful resistance to the Chinese, who invaded Tibet in 1950. He refers to the Chinese as his brothers and sisters and is motivated by tolerance, compassion and love. While wanting autonomy, he admits the fact that Tibet would continue to be linked with China (Gandhi 1999, 400). In his Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, in speaking of the atrocities committed by the Chinese against Tibetans, and their country and culture, he said that he did not speak with a heart filled with hatred or anger against the Chinese for, he added, they too were human beings striving for happiness and were entitled to compassion. Elsewhere he also points out that enemies are valuable because they help us to advance in spiritual qualities such as forbearance and mental fortitude. He admits that had he stayed in Lhasa he might have been isolated and conservative. So he is indebted to the Chinese since his exile helped broaden his perspectives. He felt very sad that Tibetans were infuriated against the Chinese and took part in burning Chinese vehicles.[26] His purpose in narrating the trials and tribulations of the Tibetan people was not out of vindictiveness or hostility towards the Chinese, but in order to

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[25] Romila Thapar, cited by Rajmohan Gandhi, *Revenge and Reconciliation: Understanding South Asian History* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 52.

[26] See Dalai Lama, *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness: An Anthology of Writings by and about the Dalai Lama*, comp. and ed. by Sidney Piburn, with a Foreword by Claiborne Pell, Ithaca (NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1990), pp. 16, 105-106, 133.

inform the public. He also felt that many well-meaning Chinese were simply not aware of what was going on in Tibet.[27] He admits, however, that when people exploit the sincerity of a person, it may be necessary to retort. Although on the surface level an apt reaction is resorted to, there should be an underlying spirit of forbearance, compassion and tolerance, without bearing any ill-feelings.[28] Our real enemies are not outside us but inside us, e.g., arrogance, wrath and envy, and we have to wage a war against these internal foes.[29] World peace cannot be achieved without realizing that we are all sisters and brothers, without cultivating kindness and compassion. But this is not possible without inner transformation.[30]

One of the principles of Mahayana is that there is only One Reality. Realizing the oneness of humanity is one of the ways that facilitates forgiveness or at least reduces unforgiveness (Worthington 2002, 181). It should be noted, however, that this oneness in Mahayana is radical and metaphysical, and not just a sort of psychological unity or a common humanity shared with one another for, according to Mahayana, there is only one Reality, and everything else is illusion; everything is identical with that one Reality.

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh did not bear any hatred towards the Catholic Diem regime that persecuted him, nor to the Viet Cong or the U.S. soldiers who attacked Vietnam. He could find excuses for the atrocities perpetrated by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam, attributing these to their hard life in the swamps and jungles infested by mosquitoes and other insects, and to their being in constant danger of death. Although initially angry, he did not blame a sea-pirate who had raped a twelve-year old girl, thinking that if he had had the same historical, economic and educational background as that pirate he would probably have behaved in the same way. This attitude of Thich Nhat Hanh is based on the Buddhist doctrine of Dependent or

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[27] Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990; New Delhi: Rupa Paperback, 1991; 12th impression, 1994), p. 261.

[28] Dalai Lama, *H. H. the Dalai Lama: The Bodhgaya Interviews*, ed. by José Ignacio Cabezón (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1988), p. 32.

[29] Dalai Lama, *A Policy of Kindness*, p. 95.

[30] Dalai Lama, *Bodhgaya Interviews*, p. 47.

Conditioned Co-production (*pratitya-samutpada*; Pali *patticca-saumuppada*), according to which no being or event arises without a conditioning factor: this (resulting) being or event is because that (preceding) being or event is; this (resulting) being or event is not because that (preceding) being or event is not (Nichols 1985, 2-3). It thus helps the Buddhist to pay attention to attenuating circumstances, and hence be more understanding and forgiving.

In war-torn Cambodia Maha Ghosananda, five-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, led nine *Dhammayietras* [Khmer or Cambodian for the Sanskrit *Dharmayatras*] or Pilgrimages of Truth to promote peace between rival Cambodian groups. Often opponents met and walked together in the spirit of reconciliation. In his first *Dhammayietra*, he preached repeatedly, "The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes Great Compassion. Great Compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world".[31] When, returning from his monastery in Thailand, he paid his first visit to the Sakeo Cambodian refugee camp, he distributed copies of the *Metta-sutta*, a Buddhist Theravada scriptural text on loving kindness or friendship, and exhorted the refugees to forgive their persecutors.[32] A leader of the Khmer Rouge[33] requested Maha Ghosananda to visit Thailand and build a Buddhist temple on the border of Cambodia, and the latter readily agreed. Many were scandalized that he was helping an "enemy". But he pointed out that love did not discriminate between good or bad; in fact, it was those who were deviants who needed loving kindness all the more because often enough virtue vanished from them because they did not experience the

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[31] "Letter from Cambodia" [a newsletter], March 2002, p. 1.

[32] "Editors' Introduction", in Maha Ghosananda, *Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion*, ed. by Jane Sharada Mahoney and Philip Edmonds, with a Foreword by Dith Pran and a Preface by Jack Kornfield (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1992), pp. 17-18.

[33] The name of the communist group in Cambodia that carried out a massive genocide under the leadership of Pol Pot.

warmth of empathy from others. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, he said that reconciliation consisted in destroying enmity, not enemies; loving kindness removed ignorance from adversaries as well as from us: we all needed to be freed (Ghosananda 1992, 62; 68-69)

The Sri Lankan monk H. Uttarananda, who was a member of the now defunct Humanist Bhikkhus'[34]Association (*Manava-hitavadi Bhikkhu Sangamaya*), proposed a Buddhist-Humanist view of the national ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. Following the typical Buddhist "middle path", he wanted to avoid the two extremes of a Sinhala Buddhist State and a free Eelam State. He acknowledged the inhuman atrocities perpetrated on Tamils in 1983 and thereafter by racist fanatics and governments, and was able to sympathetically understand the exasperated violent reactions of Tamils whose pent up rage boiled over due to the prolonged racist attitudes of successive governments. He called for reconciliation and strengthening of racial unity and peace.[35] Apologies, whether private or public, do help in the process of reconciliation (Schriver 2002, 163).

In a Press Conference in Tokyo on 3rd June 2002, the four Mahanayakes or "Patriarchs" of the Theravada Buddhist Order of Sri Lanka, publicly released a Press Statement, which declared that the Order was for peace and development in Sri Lanka and solicited the support of the Japanese people in the peace process and in confidence-building measures which would benefit all three communities affected by the war, viz., the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims.[36] The Sri Lankan newspaper *The Island* reported that the Mahanayake of Asgiriya conferred his blessings on both the UNP Government of Ranil Wickremansinghe as well as the LTTE in their efforts to restore peace through peace talks held in Thailand.[37]

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[34] *Bhikkhu* literally means a mendicant and refers to a Buddhist monk: the initial practice of begging for food is now generally defunct, except in a couple of countries like Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia.

[35] H. Uttarananda, "Sihala Buddhist Monks and the Rights of the Tamils", *Dialogue* n.s. 18:1-3 (January-December 1991): 6-9, 12-13.

[36] From the text of the Press Release, sent to me by the Japanese Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

[37] *The Island*, 5th November 2002, p. 1.

So far I have given examples of Buddhist men. I wish I had more time and resource material at hand to outline a modern Buddhist woman's spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. I am referring to Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar or Burma. Still, something is better than nothing, so here are a couple of stray references that I could glean by quickly skimming through some pages in a book I could lay my hands on. In 1998, at a public rally at the Shwedagon Pagoda, she appealed to the people to let bygones be bygones, to manifest their innate ability to forgive, not to abandon their traditional love for the armed forces and to resort to peaceful means of walking hand in hand with the authorities to build a united Burma (Kyi 1995, 195-96). When she was freed in 1995, after six years of house arrest by the military, and that, too, in spite of a landslide victory of her party, she expressed appreciation for the conciliatory tenor of the announcement of release by her captors, and highlighted the need for dialogue rather than confrontation for the restoration of peace. She declared that she did not harbour any bitterness against anyone for the treatment she received during those six long years (Kyi 1995, 360-61).

III. Reconciliation with Nature

Although the conscious effort to reach out to vegetative and animal life is primarily to avoid unnecessary violence even to plant life and to develop sensitivity to the whole of nature, the natural result of such behaviour is reconciliation with nature. Nevertheless, we do have explicit references to a conscious reconciliation with nature.

1. Reconciliation with Vegetative Life

A monk should abstain from destroying the growth of seeds and vegetables.[38] The destruction of plant-life by monks is a *pacittiya*

[38] *Culahatthipadopama-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikaya*, pt I, 27.2.8, p. 230.

("expiation")[39] type of offence which requires Confession.[40] So those who have committed such an offence towards plants are becoming reconciled to them by confessing their fault.[41] In fact, it is a *pacittiya* fault even to dig the earth or cause it to be dug:[42] this is in order to avoid doing violence to the living organisms and seeds in the earth. Monks were of course permitted to eat vegetables, to use twigs to brush their teeth or to use herbal medicines[43].

2. Reconciliation with Animals

The Buddha died of blood dysentery after eating a dish called in Pali *sukara-maddava* (soft pork).[44] Scholars have different opinions as to whether this *sukara-maddava* was pork or a vegetarian dish made from such items as a sprout or a mushroom, etc. However, the earliest Pali commentaries identify it as pork (Thomas 1927, 149, n3). In the *Amagandha-sutta* it is pointed out that destruction of life, cutting, binding, injustice, harshness, anger, envy, slander, injury, cruelty, disrespect, greed, hostility etc. have the foul odour of rotting meat, but not so the eating of meat.[45] When Buddhist monks went on their begging rounds, they were expected to accept whatever was put into their begging bowls. Early Buddhists were therefore not strict vegetarians.[46] Nevertheless, in time Theravadins became increasingly vegetarian. A monk had to avoid eating animals which were seen or heard by him, or suspected to have been deliberately killed for him.[47] Theravada

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[39] Really speaking, there is no expiation required, but only Confession: see I. B. Horner, trans. *The Book of the Discipline*, vol. 2, Sacred Books of the Buddhists vol. 20 (London: Pali Text Society, 1957), p. 3, n. 4.

[40] *Pacittiya*, no.11, pp. 54-56.

[41] See Horner, tr., *The Book of the Discipline*, p. 229, n. 4.

[42] *Pacittiya*, no. 10, pp. 52-54.

[43] See Horner, tr., *The Book of the Discipline*, p. 229, n. 4.

[44] *Mahaparinibbana-sutta*, in *Digha-nikaya* pt II, 3.19.62, p. 98.

[45] *Amagandha-sutta*, in *Sutta-nipata*, 2.2.22-28, pp. 305-306.

[46] This does not mean that they were not sensitive to animal life.

[47] *Jivaka-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikaya*, pt II, 5.1.2, p. 39.

Buddhists should not be butchers, hunters and fisher folk, and should avoid any job that entails cruelty such as being an executioner or jailer. If they take up such occupations, they are tormentors of others.[48] Buddhism also reacted against the sacrificial killing of animals.[49] In his 5th Pillar Edict King Asoka exempted several animals from slaughter, e.g., parrots, geese, swans, bats, boneless fish, etc., and certain animals when they were pregnant. He also prohibited the killing of fish and certain animals on particular auspicious days.[50] In his 1st Rock Edict he forbade the sacrifice of all animals in his palace. Formerly very many living beings were killed daily for his table; but he decreed that only three would be slain: two peacocks and one deer, and the latter would not be killed invariably. In fact, he said, even these would not be slaughtered in the future.[51]

In Theravada there developed the practice of setting up sanctuaries for birds and animals as well as tanks for fish, where they could move about freely without being hunted or caught. This was called *abhaya-dana* (the gift of fearlessness).[52]

Similar to the case of Theravada, the custom, and even ceremony, of freeing living creatures arose in Mahayana too. It consisted in purchasing birds, animals and fish that had been captured and setting them free in their own habitats. In China and Japan, too, different kings prohibited the eating of meat and advocated non-violence towards animals, birds and fish.[53] It should be noted, however, that some Mahayana schools are non-vegetarian, while Theravada is vegetarian.

It is noteworthy that, in such acts of reaching out to plant, bird, fish and animal life, quite often the person doing so is actually making up for the lack of solidarity with nature by others. Hence the reconciliation

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48 *Kandaraka-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikaya*, pt II. 1.4.8, p. 8.

49 *Brahmanadhammika-sutta*, in *Sutta-nipata*, 2.7.88-93, pp. 313-314.

50 Basak, *Asokan Inscriptions*, p. 103.

51 Basak, *Asokan Inscriptions*, p. 4.

52 *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, s.v. "*Abhaya-dana*," by Shuyu Kanaoka, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

53 *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Malalasekera, s.v. "*Ahimsa*," by Akira Hirakawa, vol. 1, pp. 291-292.

with nature is frequently a sort of collective or corporate reconciliation, and not so much an individual, reconciliation with nature.

IV. The Role of Friendliness or Loving Kindness in Reconciliation

Forgiveness and reconciliation are related to the group of four Buddhist virtues called *Brahma-viharas* (Sublime Abidings or States), viz., *metta* [Sanskrit *maitri*] (friendliness)[54], *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy) and *upekkha* [Sanskrit *upeksa*] (equanimity). All these four Sublime Abidings or States are to be cultivated or developed through meditation. Progress in these qualities helps one to be more forgiving and reconciliatory. In fact, to develop a forgiving and reconciling disposition, it is not enough to just make a good resolution to do so. It is meditation that brings about the necessary transformation. Of these, *metta* has the closest link with our theme, so I focus on it.

Metta essentially consists in the wish that all beings may be happy. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate unlimited love towards all beings.[55] The cultivation of *metta* is the best way to prevent anger from arising and to remove anger in case it has arisen.[56] The mind of one who has acquired perfection in *metta* cannot be affected even by the most hostile person, just as the earth cannot be destroyed, space cannot be painted on, and the river Ganga cannot be burned.[57]

Before embarking on the development of *metta*, one must engage in preliminary reflections on the dangers of hate and the advantages of forbearance (*khanti*). Then one proceeds through meditation to cultivate *metta* in order to protect the mind from the dangers of anger and lead it into the benefits of forbearance. One begins by practising *metta* towards oneself, wishing welfare and happiness to oneself. Notice that this

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[54] *Metta* or *maitri* literally means friendship or friendliness, but is often translated as loving kindness.

[55] *Metta-sutta*, in *Sutta-nipata*, 1.8, in *Khuddaka-nikaya*, pt I, pp. 290-291.

[56] *Aunguttara-nikaya*, 1.2.7, pt I, p. 5.

[57] *Kakacupama-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikaya*, pt I, 21.4.16-18, pp. 170-171.

involves reconciliation with oneself. In Buddhism, only after this, does one proceed to reconciliation with others.

Next one concentrates on engendering *metta* towards one's teacher, then towards a dear friend, subsequently towards a neutral person, and finally towards a hostile person. It should be remarked that this procedure is eminently psychological: if one starts with first focussing on an opponent, one is not likely to be moved to forgiveness and reconciliation. Several reflections are suggested to enable one to overcome resentment towards one's adversary. This *metta* is to be perfected in such a way that eventually one makes no distinction between oneself, the dear person, the neutral person and the enemy. *Metta* reaches its climax when more and more beings are included in the range of one's *metta*, until it extends to all beings, human, animal or plant, and is radiated in all the directions of the universe.[58] Thus forgiveness and reconciliation, in the Buddhist perspective, are all inclusive, encompassing not only all human beings, but also the whole of nature.

V. The Unique Traits of Buddhist Forgiveness and Reconciliation

While dealing with Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation we have already highlighted a number of unique features. It will be helpful now to make a brief comparison between Buddhist and Christian forgiveness and reconciliation. This will serve to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist reconciliation and, by implication, further elucidate the nature of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation.

Buddhist and Christian forgiveness do resemble each other, *e.g.*, both are opposed to malice and both go to the extent of loving one's enemy. But there are many important differences, springing from their different world-views. Christians forgive others because otherwise God will not forgive them.[59] But Theravada Buddhism does not admit any Supreme Being, hence the motivation is not the same. In Theravada,

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[58] *Visuddhimagga*, 9.1-76; see Nyanamoli, *Path of Purification*, pp. 321-340.

[59] See the Gospel according to Matthew, 6.12; 18.21-35.

charity begins at home: one loves or practises friendliness first towards oneself; only then can one extend friendliness towards others. Hence, we must first be reconciled with ourselves. In Christianity the person forgiven has intrinsic worth: the person is a child of God and has an immortal soul. In Theravada, on the other hand, the one who is forgiven is neither created by a God nor has a soul: each individual is just a series of momentary aggregates, subject to the law of *kamma* [Sanskrit *karman*] (results of past deeds), and therefore does not have intrinsic worth, but should still be forgiven. In Mahayana the human being has even less worth, for the individual does not even exist; only the Adi (First) Buddha, one of the technical terms for the Supreme Being, exists. And yet, paradoxically, the ideal is to unilaterally forgive others who do not really exist even for a moment, except on the level of ignorance and from the practical point of view. In a sense, according to the doctrine of dependent co-production, dependence exists – which, in modern times, is further interpreted even as interdependence or a sort of interrelatedness – but individuals do not exist. Moreover, the interrelatedness in the Mahayana world-view is on the ontological level; ultimately there is absolute identity. As a result, while in Christianity one concentrates on overcoming differences between alienated people, in Mahayana one transcends these differences. Hence in Mahayana one can more easily identify oneself even with the oppressor.

While the cultivation and expression of Christian forgiveness is, in some measure, spontaneous, personal, and generally emotional, Theravada love and forgiveness, even if it comes naturally in the case of those who have attained perfection in it, is developed through a systematic, calculated method and expressed in a more impersonal, detached and emotionally more sedate manner.

Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is something active, it brings about a change, a healing, a restoration because it is based on the inter-personal, communitarian world-view. In Theravada on the other hand, one can only do good or harm to oneself, for each one is reaping the fruits of one's own past deeds (*kamma* or *karman*). One can help another only indirectly by one's example, by trying not to provoke resentment and anger in others and by the tranquil, detached vibrations of *metta* sent out in different directions. Disagreeing with an acrobat, his

apprentice pointed out that they would perform their act successfully not by watching out for each other but by each one watching out for himself.[60]

In Christianity it is often said that God will not forgive us unless we forgive others. In Mahayana, too, the Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others. However, it should be noted that even here there are differences. For example, it is not the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are the highest, but it is the Adi Buddha that is the Supreme Being. The dealings of the Mahayana Buddhists, however, are with the former.

The Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation motivates one to forgive and be reconciled, but Christianity does not believe in rebirth. On the other hand, for Christianity the person has intrinsic worth, but this is not the case with Buddhism. Hence the motivation for practising forgiveness and reconciliation is also different in the two traditions.

Unlike Christian reconciliation, Buddhist reconciliation is more universal, since it is extended also to nature and not just to human beings. However, possibly due to influence from Buddhism and other Eastern religions, and with a growing awareness of the environment in the West, modern Christianity is moving in the direction of getting reconciled with nature too and even making restitution by efforts to heal the earth and by recognizing the rights of animals and plants.

One of the practical differences between Christianity and Buddhism is that Buddhism prescribes meditational techniques to help one develop a forgiving and reconciliatory disposition: merely making a good resolution is not enough. Christianity, on the other hand, only exhorts people to forgive and be reconciled, but there are no methods or techniques that enable people to become more forgiving and reconciled. Similarly, too, in the Buddhist confessional practice, the sanctions are meant to reform those who have breached the rules and bring about reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator. By contrast, in Catholic Confession or, in current terminology, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, often enough the penance is just to say the prayer, "Our Father" or "Hail Mary": this does not prove to be an antidote to the

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[60] *Sedaka-sutta*, in *Samyutta-nikaya*, 47.19, pt 5, pp. 144-145.

wrong habit and thus is not psychologically conducive to bringing about restoration and reconciliation.

In the context of the views of many Western writers on forgiveness and reconciliation, it should be pointed out that the emphasis in Buddhism is in the first place on not even feeling hurt or on remaining unperturbed by even the most cruel and vehement aggressor. In this sense, strictly speaking, there is no need of forgiveness for no offence has been taken!

Buddhists have always maintained that anger and hatred harm the perpetrator more than the victim. A deeper realization of this has dawned on the consciousness of the modern world only in recent years. Although desired, reconciliation is not so actively sought for. If the aggressor is moved to repentance and becomes reconciled, it's well and good, but it is not the deliberate goal of every act of forbearance and forgiveness. Justice and reparation too are not insisted upon in every instance. However, we have seen that, in the case of the Buddhist Rite of Confession, which is meant only for monks and nuns, reconciliation and justice are essential parts of it. It should be clarified that what is not always insisted upon is justice in the near future; eventual justice will of course surely take place, for it is based on the law of *karman*. Both forgiveness and reconciliation, in Buddhism, are practised more on the plane of individuals than on the level of groups.

Conclusion

Thus we see that, while there are similarities in forgiveness and reconciliation between Christianity and Buddhism, there are many distinctions arising from the divergent world-views not only of Christianity but also of Theravada and Mahayana. These differences are found not only with regard to the presuppositions, but also in reference to the motivation as well as the expression of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The historian Toynbee has written: "The three Judaic religions[61] have a record of intolerance, hatred, malice, uncharitableness, and persecution that is black by comparison with Buddhism's record." (Toynbee 1966, 167) However, Buddhism too, like Christianity and many another religion, has had its share of hatred, violence and unforgiveness, in the past as well as the present. Be that as it may, while granting that divergent world-views result in differences with regard to the nature, motivation and expression of forgiveness and reconciliation, Buddhists, Christians and others need to hearken to the call of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation, to heal a broken world and build bridges of friendship and harmony, for without forgiveness and reconciliation there is no hope for the future (Tutu 1999).

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IDENTITY, SPIRITUALITY AND DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF AN AXIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Identity in our multicultural world is one of the major problems of contemporary man. There are not cultures totally isolated from the others. Social groups and individuals are directly (through contacts with others) and indirectly (through the media, market products, ideologies and law systems) confronted with many problems. And the modern global society needs more than ever to take adequate decisions on different problems (ecology, inequality, terrorism). The concept of value is the central category of philosophical axiology. Is the general course of civilizational changes able to influence the axiological systems of autonomous cultures, involving them in the process of an inevitable inner change and to testify, in this manner, to its own cultural but not transcendental nature? This is one of the main questions of the present research. My article also will stress why is significant the role of philosophers in the dialogue dedicated to the contemporary role of values within our society. The philosopher's role, besides all is to analyze a future and criticize worldview systems in order to achieve a future value synthesis.

Keywords: identity, culture, spirituality, dialogue, axiological discourse.

The concept of value is the central category of philosophical axiology. Both for believers and theologians, the religious and corresponding theological values do not represent the features of culture, but they are objectively present and defined by the features of being, or at least this is the interpretation of Christianity.

One of the reasons for the increase of religiosity in the modern world is the need for stable conceptual beliefs and opinions, in which

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science can participate, at the best case, only indirectly. Unlike it, religion with its tradition is oriented to conceptually important questions and has the power of an authority and a historical being. The world of the Christian culture assimilated in itself the metaphysical, ethical, artistic and socio-economic thought and masks pure religious perspectives. The main problem here might be expressed as it fallows: is the general course of civilizational changes able to influence the axiological systems of autonomous cultures, involving them in the process of an inevitable inner change and to testify, in this manner, to its own cultural but not transcendental nature?

While the positive answer in relation to a cultural system as science is generally acknowledged, the things differ in relation to religion. The existence of the Christian myth in itself is categorically withdrawn from the power resource of the time and culture. It is not acknowledged as the exclusive fruit of the activity of the human beings and human creativity. The truth can be dependent on the time and culture, of these who believe, but not against its own existence and dogmas. This difference is not deprived of questionability and even so it has to be taken into account. When the European integration is at issue, one has not to forget that any nation has different features proceeding from its national character, history and culture. The modern global society needs more than ever to take adequate decisions on problems such as ecology, demography and terrorism. Two scenarios can be developed regarding the needed decisions. The first relies on the dominating values or priorities of modernity: a technological progress at the expense of ecology, a scientific rationality versus the tradition, the maximization of production and consumption at the expense of resources, a formal legality in relation to the person; the scenario that will lead to the aggravation of the crisis and later to cataclysm. The second scenario reckons on the radical change in axiological priorities. This requires the necessity of the analysis of the two types of an axiological discourse, in science, on the one hand, and also in theology, on the other. The 'logic' in the development of culture has to be also taken into account. Models for the development of knowledge that are borrowed from philosophy are established as its objective regularities – *accumulation, proliferation* and *the change of a paradigm*.

The *cumulative principle* of replenishment proceeds from the past (an abstract philosophical norm, in which the accent is put on identity and the leading role of a dialogue). In the same way as the accumulated theoretical generalizations and facts in science, this model of a cultural development itself is the collection of advances based on the abstract philosophical norms of excellence. Being considered in this manner, culture keeps a human identity but alienates the person from the other persons in the cultural dialogue. This form of a cultural choice is determined by the rational logic supposing the regularities, which are characteristic of social sciences.

The model of *the change of a paradigm* is the revolutionary phenomenology that proceeds from the present (the accent here is put on the change of identity and the change of the positions in a dialogue). It focuses on the concrete sociological norm of human behavior that supposes both the partial and complete replacement. That is to say that the culture is viewed as a field for a free choice where any norm is completely incommensurable with the other. The same applies also to a human identity and a cultural dialogue. According to this model, the history of culture is the complex of various cultural types which are not liable to a mutual comparison but the choice between them is controlled emotionally and not logically.

The third type – *proliferation* – is based on the principle of the relative democracy that relies on the future (the accent here is the loss of identity and the arbitrary positions in a dialogue). The formulated purpose is practically inaccessible and often does not have in common with real human behaviors.[2] For this reason, the future is unpredictable but simultaneously only it allows a choice between different cultural systems to be made. According to this model, there is no sense in speaking about a definite identity and the self-sufficient position in a dialogue. The motto in this model is: "a purpose is nothing, movement is anything"[3]

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[2] Ксавин И.Т. *Ценности новой цивилизации: основания поиска и их критическая оценка*, В: Ценностный дискурс в науках и теологии, М., 2009, с. 11.

[3] Lao-Tzu, Tao-te-ching (The way), ISBN-13: 978-0023207006.

All the three cultural scenarios can be traced in history and the logic of a culture at a large degree is a projecting intentional strategy for the invasion in cultural creation and its theoretical understanding.

Rationality as the Regulative Value of Culture

Our attitude to the culture as a comprehended reality presupposes rationality as a cultural value. The main problem is to combine our values with the values of the other. Are the different cultures incompatible in general? To what extent is possible a cultural synthesis by means of rational ways?

Jurgen Habermas speaks about such project – the project for a communicative rationality, in which the people participating in social discussions are engaged (Habermas 1981). His project assumes that people accept the rules of a rational discourse, which contradicts to the current situation of the radicalization of controversies.

The opposition between the Western Christian or the so-called rational culture and the Eastern Islamic or traditional culture is strongly expressed. The majority of people, independently of their cultural affiliation, suffer at the time of an economic crisis, a war or terroristic outrages but no one can preliminary set the rational solution of such situations until now. The solutions are measured as rational post factum and they are taken by the victor. In fact, a cultural sense plays an important, real role only in two areas: in our own cultural area and in that belonging to another, which differs from ours. We exist in the former but the latter is only an emotional and conceptual construction for us. The culture, to which we belong, makes our knowledge culturally determined. According to Schutz, we can examine objectively and scientifically only a foreign culture (Schutz 1962-66). If we aim to a rational and conscious effort searching a cultural synthesis, we have to leave the limits of local cultures and act neutrally regarding standards, values and ideals. This is absolutely impossible due to the adherence to the ideal of a scientific objectiveness, which is adopted by the paradigm of a classical science. We are all foreigners today and we live anywhere due to global communications. Trying to understand various cultural

determinants creating conditions for the rational discourse of the culture, we can distinguish three levels:

- the level of direct life impressions – examining the native language, long-term relations in family, relatives, school, birth-place. At this level, we have the practical, unconscious emotional acquisition of a culture.
- the level of the acquisition of knowledge – an experience, namely a contact with a foreign culture (travels, learning foreign languages, a communication with foreigners). This level problematizes common sense and gives the possibility of increasing the sphere of a cultural knowledge; the individual can form his own picture of a foreign culture, a total misunderstanding or fear. Due to the separation from an indirect cultural basis, the cognition appears right at this level.
- the level of the philosophical and scientific research of the culture. Here, various cultures are examined as the equal parts of the third world, in the spirit of Popper.[4] This sphere of an objective knowledge demonstrates the pluralism of cultural universals. Right here is the place of the rational dialogue of cultures.

The Main Dilemma: *Anthropologism* vs. *Ecologism*

A dialogue does not occur in an intercultural space but within the frameworks of a definite culture, based on the resources, which are characteristic to the corresponding culture. One of the modern myths that proceeds from sociobiology, along with the common disappointment of West intellectuals and the boom of East religious schools, is the global environmentalism – a good example of how new cultural universals emerge. The Anglo-American sociologist of science, Fuller, calls it a 'karmic Darwinism' (Fuller 2002) Its consequences are as follows: the elimination of a subject and the refusal of the anthropomorphic bases of

[4] Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge. An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

culture; the refusal of science and technological progress; the refusal of rationality as the foundation of knowledge, communication and social regulation. Fuller suggests that in the 21st century the Western science will ally itself with the Biblical religions which will lead to an 'anthropic perspective' as opposed to the karmic determinism. The anthropic perspective is associated with Christianity, Judaism and Islam and is secularized from positivism in the 19th century, identifying social sciences as humanistic religions. The second combines Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism, to which is acceded also the West Epicureanism. The neo-Darwinist synthesis in the 20th century becomes its secular variant establishing as a normative framework for the world. In their works, Dawkins, Wilson and Singer defend the idea for the refusal of normative privileges for man using naturalistic arguments. This idea received the enviable support of post-modernism. Fuller proposes that monotheists should combine themselves with positivists to rehabilitate the collective humanistic project. The understanding of the participation in science as a civil obligation or even in the sense of Boyle, Newton and Comte as a religious service has a decisive significance for this project. According to Fuller, the 21th century will become a witness of the collision between the anthropic and karmic perspectives, and the main questions that will be asked are similar to the fallowing one: Is Man the image and likeness of God and does he has the right of the privileged position in Nature because of this? The monotheistic religions from West come to an agreement on this point while the pantheistic and polytheistic religions of the East did not. In metaphysical concepts, this sounds like the opposition between *universum* (the unity of hierarchies and regularities) and *polyuniversum* (the chaotic interaction of powers and substances).

The key concepts of the karmic ideology are the fallowing: the equality of humans and animals, a moral-political and religious tolerance, the predominance of the elemental forces of social development, the negation of categories such as 'progress' and 'decay', the priority of a natural (biological or cosmological) determinant over the cultural determinant, holism instead of individualism. Yet in the distant past (1960), similar ideas for a karmic ideology were criticized. Jorge Luis Borges and Roland Barthes with their theses on the "death of the

author" are the first, afterward their thesis is realized in the thesis of the "death of the subject", in which is introduced the known statement of Nietzsche for the "death of God".[5] Any minimization of the role of Man in the Nature at the background of modern global cataclysms would be fatal. However, one thing that is positive in the idea of Fuller is the term "anthropia". In its essence, it is a new type of humanism. Ginsburg develops the idea for a secular humanism as the alternative to religion.[6] This new humanism combines in itself the values of religion and philosophy. It is destined to define the new position of Man in the rational world. The old classicism is closely related to anthropocentrism, culture-centrism (the central place of the culture in relation to economics and politics), interdisciplinarity (involvement with science as the source of a critical philosophical reflection). A dialogue between the science and the Christian theology is possible as there is a place in it also for modernization. From a theological point of view, Man is similar to God and this places him on superior positions and above all. The aspiration for an interdisciplinary synthesis is strongly expressed in the modern 'natural theology'. Religion as a cultural form separated from policy and economics turns to the development of a person in its axiological dimensions. The religion has to be the ally of the science but not vice-versa. Hence the place of a philosopher in the dialogue for values is significant.

The Philosopher – A Centrist or a Marginal?

The critical position of the humanist is at the crossroads of cultures. The position of the philosopher is at the intersecting point of cultural epochs. The discussed anthropic perspective is a reference to the epoch of Renaissance when Man is given the status of a hero. The person is in a competition with God, creates societies and cultures, dominates technologically the Nature and shows the abilities of demiurge. If we

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[5] *Ницше Ф* Так говорил Заратустра// Ницше Ф. Соч.:В.2, т. Т2, М, 1990, с. 64.

[6] *Гинзбург, В.Л.* Об атеизме, религии и светском гуманизме, М., 2008.

look closer at the current political and religious extremism and fanaticism, we will recognize new trends toward heroism.

These are the new political leaders, anti-globalists, terroristic leaders who consider themselves new 'crusaders' struggling against the world evil. This heroism is a bad advisor regarding the dialogue for values, a compromise and synthesis as the goals of a rational discussion are strange to it. Such heroism cannot be the form of an axiological discourse. Only a philosophical analysis is able to show the false nature of an axiological polarization. If we return to the delineated three levels of cultural dynamics, we see that the opposition between the karmic and anthropic principles is possible only at the first two levels. Their limitation and syncretism can be seen at the third level of cultural dynamics, where the point is to put at stake a rational perspective. Therefore, the mass conscience constructs social values without being interested in their critical analysis. The ideological strategy is to justify your own values and to criticize the values of the other. Only the philosopher is able to exit from the frameworks of any axiological system trying to preserve political and axiological neutrality.

Certainly, being at the first and second levels of cultural dynamics, representing an empirical subject, the philosopher can prefer and form a definite axiological significance, using the cumulative method and the method of a paradigmatic jump. However, according to his underlying essence, after Wittgenstein, action but not just knowledge is important for him as he knows that he does not know anything. The only position that he can take directly in a dialogue is one to create the ways of achieving the dialogue which can lead to consensus. His neutrality is a guarantee of a distance. The philosopher is able to build critical analytic values in the broader context of an intellectual culture. This distance allows him to see a horizon and to act in compliance with the principle of complementarity. Aligning the anthropic project with a philosophical discourse suggests a diversion from scientific to theological positions and vice versa as an effort to reach common axiological foundations.

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MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON FAITH: ABRAHAM'S CASE IN KANT AND KIERKEGAARD. RECONSTRUCTIONS AND CRITICAL REMARKS

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Abstract

In this paper, I will compare Kant's and Kierkegaard's reflections on faith as they are articulated in the particular analyses of Abraham's sacrifice. Kant's prosecution of Abraham, which commences from the idea of "natural religion", rests on two interrelated lines of attack, an epistemological one and ethical one, which deem Abraham's action to be morally reprehensible. For Kant, the primacy of the practical reason leaves no special room for divine duties that are not ethical at the same time. On the other hand, Kierkegaard's defence of the sacrifice is orbiting around the possibility of a teleological suspension of the ethical. If such a suspension is possible, then faith is a paradox according to which the single individual is higher than the universal. As such, an absolute duty to god is possible, but such a duty is not rationally justifiable or publicly communicable. My paper ends with to some considerations about the protestant inheritance of both, Kant and Kierkegaard.

Keywords: natural religion, moral duties, divine commands, teleological suspension of the ethical, faith as paradox, absolute relation to the absolute, leap of faith.

The story of Abraham's ordeal is the story of unlimited faith. According to Genesis 22, one day, God calls Abraham and commands him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac, on the mount Moriah. Abraham consents and prepares for the sacrifice without disclosing his intentions to anyone. After a three-day journey, which the Bible does not record, the patriarch arrives at the sacrifice spot. After Isaac is bound to the

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altar, the angel of God stops Abraham just as he raises the knife to perform the sacrifice, telling the patriarch "now I know you fear God". Abraham then sees a ram coming out from the nearby bushes, and sacrifices the ram instead.

Abraham's ordeal is the paradigmatic narrative of faith in each of the three monotheistic religions. Across time, it has become a cultural commonplace that prompted numerous analyses and references. In this paper, I will examine two contrasting modern philosophical accounts of Abraham's story, the Kantian one, and the Kierkegaardian one. The former is developed by the German philosopher in some reflections from *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and from *The Conflict of the faculties*, while Kierkegaard's analyses is developed in *Fear and Trembling*, throughout the entire work, but especially in the first two sections. In what follows, I will use mainly these three resources, among others texts and commentaries, to investigate a few aspects of the relation between faith and reason in modern philosophy.

The background for the Kant's analysis of Abraham's case is his account of "natural religion". In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant claims that "religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands" (6:154). What Kant wishes to argue is that the ethical conduct and the religious behaviour are overlapping. Believing in dogmas, attending divine rituals, and being part of a religious community are good only insofar as they lead to the development of a "good will". In the absence of a sound moral conscience, all the religious manifestations are mere superstitions and "counterfeit service of God" (6:171). For the German philosopher, the proper task of religion is to instil the sense of ethical duty and to actively engage in the moral development of human beings. The end of religious behaviour lies outside religion itself, resting in the realm of the ethical. For Kant, God (as the rest of the Ideas of pure reason) is rather a heuristic fiction than an ontological necessity. The use of religious narrative is regulative, not constitutive. Therefore, the purpose of religious concepts is to elevate a rational imperfect being to the highest point of moral excellence. This is how religion (as the spiritual connection of natural and supernatural) becomes "natural religion". For Kant, natural religion is a "pure practical concept of reason" which mixes a rational ethics with the concept of God (6:157). It is clear that the

Kantian notion of divine existence is neither an evidence of the heart, nor a proof of the mind, but an idea that derives from the existence of the moral law. More exactly, the necessity of the Idea of God is explained by people's hope that their moral improvement is eventually rewarded.

> Reason says that whoever does, in a disposition of true devotion to duty, as much as lies within his power to satisfy his obligation can legitimately hope that what lies outside his power will be supplemented by the supreme wisdom *in some way or another*. (6:171)

The individual has no epistemic power to access the nature of God or engage with God's intentions, because of the inherent limits of human understanding. Once again, the concept of God cannot have a constitutive use. Human beings could only presume that it is possible for God to exist and give them assistance to overcome their moral flaws:

> A human being's moral improvement is likewise a practical affair incumbent upon him, and heavenly influences may indeed always cooperate in this improvement, or be deemed necessary to explain its possibility. Yet he has no understanding of himself in the matter: neither how to distinguish with certainty such influences from the natural ones, nor how to bring them and so, as it were, heaven itself down to himself. And, since he knows not what to do with them, […] he conducts himself as if every change of heart and all improvement depended solely on the application of his own workmanship. (6:88)

For Kant, the fundamental role faith plays in the human life is the consolation of the principled man in a promiscuous world. If conscience alone cannot chase away the uneasiness of the persons who see how bad people thrive and good people suffer, than it should be God the one that comfort them in their struggle of approaching the moral ideal. For Kant, the belief in Jesus Christ is important not in virtue of the miracle of Resurrection. It is rather that Jesus can be regarded as a suggestive illustration of the "good will"; he is the incarnation of the moral law rather the incarnation of God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. The terms in which Kant discusses about Christ are suggestive: "it is our universal human duty to elevate ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection" (6:61) and to imitate Jesus' human behaviour. Kant does not intend here to refute the divinity of Jesus, and neither does he

reject the possibility of miracles. He is rather refraining to give them any credit in either moral thinking or moral progress:

> Reason does not contest the possibility or actuality of the objects of these ideas; it just cannot incorporate them into its maxims of thought and action. (6:52)

The Kantian analysis of miracles is essential for our account, because the trigger of Abraham's case is the miracle of God speaking directly with the patriarch. For Kant, the concept of natural religion entails that what is not rationally apprehensible is ultimately expendable:

> If moral religion (to be cast not in dogmas and observances but in the heart's disposition to observe all human duties as divine commands) must be established, eventually all the miracles which history connects with its inception must themselves render faith in miracles in general dispensable (6:84).

Kant is not necessarily an enemy of the popular belief in miracles, but he renders them as useless or, as in Abraham's case, as dangerous. We could sum up the Kantian "theory" of miracles as a three-step argument. First of all, even if miracles really exist, they are superfluous to moral progress. For Kant, moral duty is a universal and necessary demand of reason, not an outcome of unreasonable belief. Secondly, since we do not have any complete test of discerning "theistic" or real miracles from false wonders, then we should be cautious about unexplainable events. Thirdly, if a so-called miraculous event pushes me to act contrary to my duties, than it is clearly not a real miracle. It was not God, the one who produced the miracle, because God wishes only the moral good[2].

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[2] Maybe, it is worth noticing here that, if Kant were to answer the famous Euthyphro's dilemma: "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?" (*Euthyphro* 10a), he would definitely opt for the first answer. God "loves" the moral law because it is good in itself, which means that it stands above any possible will or power. Such an answer contradicts fragrantly "the divine command theory", for which the virtues and the laws are good only insofar as they are willed by God.

One can easily notice that Kant's prosecution of Abraham rests on two interrelated grounds: one is epistemological, the other is ethical. From the epistemological point of view, the call of Abraham is an uncertain event, because an imperfect rational being does not have the capacity to discern a divine manifestation from a demonic one or from mere delusion. The problem of "historical faith" – as Kant labels the ecclesiastical faith in opposition to "rational faith" (6:103) – is that it prescribes arbitrary, statutory laws that are not under the tutelage of reason (6:104). As such, Kant stresses out that, in every historical faith, there is always a risk to naively misinterpret a phenomenal event, which should be better analyzed by historical scholars and scholars of reason: "That God has ever manifested this [...] is a matter of historical documentation and never apodictically certain" (6:187). In *The Conflict of Faculties* (115), Kant expresses the same scepticism towards Abraham's lack of epistemic diligence even more bitterly:

> For if God should really speak to man, man could still never *know* that it was God speaking. It is quite impossible for man to apprehend the infinite by the senses, distinguish it from sensible beings, and *recognize* it as such.

The second line of attack against Abraham is the ethical one. On this ground, Kant asserts that, since God wishes the moral good, it is contradictory to say that God demands an immoral action, like killing an innocent person. As I said earlier, the two grounds are connected to one another. However, the ethical objection could stand on its own. In the first line of attack, there is no sufficient reason for denying a miracle on epistemic grounds, because miracles are a matter of faith. We could say nothing more than the miracle of God speaking to man is uncertain. In the second line of attack, there is a necessary and sufficient reason for being sceptical. Even if miracles exist and one is entitled to believe in them, one has no reason to think that a morally perfect being could order an immoral action. The action is immoral, because it fails two Kantian tests, namely *the formula of the universal law*[3] and *the formula of*

[3] "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (G 4: 421).

humanity[4]. Killing an innocent person is, firstly, a maxim that cannot be universalized, and, secondly, it means to treat the humanity of a person only as a means, and not as an end in itself.

So, when Kant contemplates the same problem as Kierkegaard – could or could not the real God could ask a person to sacrifice his innocent son – he claims that such a request could not be of divine origin, because it violates all rational accounts of human morality:

> For, as regards the theistic miracles, reason can at least have a negative criterion at its disposal, namely, if something is represented as commanded by God in a direct manifestation of him yet is directly in conflict with morality, it cannot be a divine miracle despite every appearance of being one (*e.g.* if a father were ordered to kill his son who, so far as he knows, is totally innocent). (6:87)

The concept of a theistic miracle is allowed by Kant only insofar as reason provides a negative rule, which invalidates any alleged divine miracle that could be deleterious: the so-called miracle could not have come from God if the situation it makes possible is clearly violating the moral law (as it happened, when Abraham believed that God was telling him to sacrifice his innocent son). Although human thinking, finite as it is, does not have definitive certainties about the divine origin of certain events, the agent knows at least that God is good. Consequently, the necessary condition to regard an event as a divine one is the consistence with moral order, which God fully embraces. However, this is not a sufficient condition, because evil often comes under an appealing form, which can distract the human being from his moral path. An apparently good event is not necessarily of divine origin.

However, what Kant failed to take into consideration here is that, just as "the evil spirit often disguises himself as an angel of light" (6:87), so true evil can, as well, trick people into judging something as bad when it is actually good. Only if Abraham's case is interpreted with this possibility in mind (*i.e.*, the possibility that God might choose to use apparent evil to teach a person a good lesson) can it be preserved as a

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[4] "So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means" (G 4: 429).

useful guideline for moral or spiritual growth and authentic spiritual transformation. And the fact is that all three monotheistic traditions have taken Abraham's story along these lines. The hasty way, in which Kant abandoned the potential conformity of the Abraham story to his own theory of rational religion, only confirms one of his chief claims: reason becomes paralyzed whenever it attempts to identify a miracle of any kind (6:86). Given divine omnipotence, it is reasonable to believe that God would certainly be able "to conceal good behind apparent evil just as easily as a demon could pass evil off as good" (Palmquist 2016, 241).

To summarize, Kant tests the plausibility of a "theistic miracle" by a quasi-limited principle of falsification: if the alleged miracle contradicts a moral rule, then it is not of divine origin. In Abraham's story, the seemingly divine demand violates an injunction of practical reason. Therefore, one should entrust his behaviour to the moral conscience, which undoubtedly forbids killing[5]. Taken together the two lines of attack compose a single argument, which could be summarized in the following way:

1. Human understanding is not equipped to say if an apparently divine event is really of divine origin.
2. But practical reason is equipped to say if a certain maxim is in accordance with the moral law.
3. It is not certain that it was God's voice, but killing Isaac is certainly an immoral act.
4. Therefore, Abraham should have listened to the voice of his conscience and not the alleged divine utterance.

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[5] But in some cases man can be sure that the voice he hears is *not* God's; for if the voice commands him to do something contrary to the moral law, then no matter how majestic the apparition may be, and no matter how it may seem to surpass the whole of nature, he must consider it an illusion. We can use, as an example, the myth of the sacrifice that Abraham was going to make by butchering and burning his only son at God's command (the poor child, without knowing it, even brought the wood for the fire). Abraham should have replied to this supposedly divine voice; "That I ought not to kill my good son is quite certain. But that you, this apparition, are God – of that I am not certain, and never can be, not even if this voice rings down to me from (visible) heaven"(*Conflict* 115).

Kant's conclusion is unambiguously on the side of human autonomy. As he stated earlier, when analyzing the putative authority of a sacred text, "[...] if it contains statements that contradict practical reason, it *must* be interpreted in the interests of practical reason" (*Conflict* 65). Kant's idea is that even if Abraham was sure that it was God's voice commending him to sacrifice his son, he would still have to obey his moral conscience. For Kant, the primacy of the practical reason leaves no particular room for divine duties, which are not – at the same time – ethically valid. The religious has to be morally justified, while the ethical is its own justification.

In Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, the ethical is also its own justification (FT 54). However, the main question of Johannes de Silentio, Kierkegaard's pseudonym, is whether one could legitimately speak of a "teleological suspension of the ethical". The answer which Johannes eventually gives is positive. Given this, we would be inclined to say that the main interlocutor of Kierkegaard is Kant. But, in fact, the real target is Hegel, who stands as his main intellectual adversary not only in *Fear and Trembling*, but in most of his philosophical battles.

To understand this conflict, it is worth having a very short look at Hegel's account of ethics and language. For him, there is an important distinction between *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*: the first designates the individual morality, while the second designates the ethical life of a community. Authentic moral principles are to be necessarily found in *Sittlichkeit*, and only by accident in *Moralität*, because the former presuppose the reflected aspects of shared values, in opposition to the subjective nature of an individual inner will, which characterize the latter. The former is necessarily rational, while the second is rational only insofar as it subordinates itself to *Sittlichkeit*. The kind of rationality which Hegel praises is different from the Kantian one. For Kant, to be rational is to acknowledge and comply with a law that is good by itself (not in virtue of its historical content or consequences). The *formula of the universal law* looks like a logical or a mathematical test, and not a social one. This is why Hegel accused Kant of "formalism", a charge by which he claims that Kant's Categorical Imperative is too empty and abstract to determine actual duties. For Hegel, the autonomous reflection of an agent is a matter of individual decision, which pertains rather to

Moralität than *Sittlichkeit*. Thus, the content of our duties must be specified by concrete relationships to other individuals in a community, and by the historical development of institutions and customs. The ethical as *Sittlichkeit* is universal in the sense that it contains the shared rules, institutions and customs of a particular society. From this point of view, the solitary appliance of the Categorical Imperative or the private relation of Abraham with God is not universal. But, for Hegel, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son is rationally repulsive on an additional ground. Not only that sacrificing your son is socially unacceptable, but the fact that Abraham cannot express a justification for his action is irrational (for lacking a public determination). For Hegel, language represents public sphere that involves sharable notions, judgments and concepts. As in Wittgenstein's case, one hundred years later, there is no such thing as a private language. Abraham's abandonment to a purely personal relation with God cannot be put into words; therefore it is only subjective idiosyncrasy. I will later return to this issue.

On these grounds, it is clear that Hegel should condemn Abraham as an irrational immoralist. Instead, Hegel is praising Abraham as the "father of faith". This is where Kierkegaard comes into play, and criticise Hegel for inconsistency. If Abraham is wrong, then Hegel should have protested "loudly and clearly against Abraham's enjoying honour and glory as a father of faith when he ought to be sent back to a lower court and shown up as a murderer" (FT 84). Either Abraham is a criminal and not the Father of Faith, or Hegel is wrong and, consequently, the singular individual could engage in an absolute relation to the absolute. But if the second horn of the dilemma is true, then the religious cannot be reduced to the ethical, be it a matter of universalizability or social acceptability. This is the fundamental claim of Kierkegaard, who stands in fragrant opposition to both Kant and Hegel.

Before proceeding to our investigation, we can easily notice that the ethical and the religious do not find themselves in contradiction. In the majority of cases, God's commends and moral injunctions are overlapping. Lying, stealing, killing or breaking a promise is, at the same time, a sin and an immoral action. There is no structural opposition between the two realms. Nonetheless, for Kierkegaard the ethical and the religious are distinct in (at least) four relevant aspects.

1) The ethical is the universal; on the other hand, faith represents a paradox[6] according to which the single individual as particular is higher than the universal (FT 54). 2) The ethical designates what is rationally intelligible; on the other hand, faith cannot be intellectually mediated because it entails an irreducible paradox (FT 56). 3) The ethical understanding perceives human duties as divine commands, and – comprising the sacred duties as moral duties – leaves no room for any direct or special duty to God; on the other hand, faith takes into account a special kind of obligations, which are absolute, thus transforming moral duties into relative duties (FT 68-69, 81). 4) The ethical is the realm of what is publicly communicable; on the other hand, faith is an unexplainable experience even when it appears to be expressed in language (FT 82, 112-19).

Let us have a look on how these four tensions unfold through the first two *Problemata* from *Fear and Trembling*. Kierkegaard's objective in *Problema I* is to show how, in Christianity, the single individual rises above the universal. In a Kantian manner, Kierkegaard states that the ethical is the universal as it applies to each and every individual, at each and every moment in time (FT 54). It operates impersonally, and the individual's task is to sacrifice his idiosyncratic individuality in order to be part of the universal. Nonetheless – and this is the specifically Protestant mark of Kierkegaard account – the individual is intimately connected with God through faith. And since God is the Absolute, which stands above the universal, so is the individual too, when he links to the absolute, rises above the universal. The inversion between the individual and the universal represents the paradoxical structure of faith:

> Faith is precisely the paradox that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, is justified before it, not as inferior to it but superior – yet in such a way, please note, that it is the single individual who, after being subordinate as the single individual to the universal, now by means of the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual is superior,

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[6] According to C. Stephan Evans, the "paradox" for Kierkegaard is not a logical contradiction. Kierkegaard's concept of paradox rather entails that "the opposition between faith and reason is not a necessary and intrinsic opposition but a tension rooted in the prideful pretensions of reason to autonomy and completeness" (Evans 2006, 226).

> that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. This position cannot be mediated, for all mediation takes place only by virtue of the universal; it is and remains for all eternity a paradox, impervious to thought. And yet faith is this paradox... (FT 56)

So the paradox of Abraham's faith is that, in virtue of his personal relation to the absolute, he transcends the impersonal demands of the ethical. The personal overcomes the impersonal. Could it be possible that, for Kierkegaard, what is personal is always superior to what is impersonal? The answer is no. For example, a remarkable individual – much like Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov, who conscientiously decides to take another person's life – is not at all superior to an ordinary person who is acting morally in an automatic and unreflective manner. On the contrary, his (wrong) personal choice makes him even guiltier than the ordinary and unreflectively decent person.

It is worth to mention that what specifically makes Abraham great is not the personal choice to transgress the moral order, but the personal choice to make the leap of faith, and to abandon himself to God. From the ethical point of view, Abraham's right conduct involves, on one hand, the fatherly love for his son and, on the other, the universal interdiction of killing an innocent. Anything that might stray Abraham from the right conduct must be regarded as a temptation. (If, for instance, another man would offer Abraham a great sum of money to take Isaac's life, such a bargain had to be interpreted as an outrageous temptation). This is intuitive for every reasonable person. What is not at all intuitive is that, in Kierkegaard's analysis of Abraham's story, the moral injunctions have to be interpreted as a temptation. If the absolute demands a seemingly immoral action, then the temptation is the ethical itself.

At first appearance, one could say that every moral dilemma entails an ethical temptation. If I have to lie in order to save a human life, then the moral commandment to tell the truth becomes an ethical temptation. I am tempted to say the truth, but given the consequences of my sincerity, I decide to tell a noble lie. But such a conflict is resolved within the same ethical realm. The moral duty to tell the truth is overridden by the moral duty to save a human life. The temptation is part of the ethical just like the right solution is part of the ethical. In

Abraham's case, however, it is not *a part of* the ethical that entice Abraham, but the ethical *altogether*. The main point of Kierkegaard is that the true solution of the conflict should be sought outside the ethical. To this effect, Johannes compares Abraham with what he calls "the tragic hero":

> The difference between the tragic hero and Abraham is very obvious. The tragic hero is still within the ethical. He allows an expression of the ethical to have its *telos* in a higher expression of the ethical; he scales down the ethical relation between father and son or daughter and father to a feeling that has its dialectic in its relation to the idea of moral conduct. Here there can be no teleological suspension of the ethical itself. (FT 59)

To portray the tragic hero, Johannes gives three examples of fathers who, only apparently, made the same gesture as Abraham: Agamemnon who sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to win the Trojan War, Jephthah who brought his daughter to sacrifice, because he made a "promise that decided the fate of the nation", and Brutus who executed his sons for plotting against the state. In each of the three cases, the choice was tragic, because it was made in favour of an allegedly higher ethical duty. Abraham's situation is radically different:

> By his act he transgressed the ethical altogether and had a higher *telos* outside it, in relation to which he suspended it.... It is not to save a nation, not to uphold the idea of a state that Abraham does it; it is not to appease the angry gods.... Therefore, while the tragic hero is great because of his moral virtue, Abraham is great because of a purely personal virtue. (FT 59)

It is not important for our account if those three sacrifices could really be justified from a Utilitarian or a Kantian point of view. What counts is that, in each case, one could find an ethical justification, no matter how objectionable it may be. The three fathers who painfully sacrificed their children made choices that are intelligible for everyone and conjure empathy for their dramatic character. Every tragic hero is inevitably caught in an ethical conundrum that requires a solution. The answer, which the hero gives, is an ethical response in the sense that it may not be universally justifiable, but certainly is universally understandable. At the opposite, Abraham's case is not of ethical nature,

and furthermore his solution is neither rigorously justifiable, nor publicly understandable. His response is essentially a non-ethical one. God approaches Abraham directly to demand a visibly immoral behaviour. Whereas the tragic hero balances two ethical options, Abraham balances the ethical option and the religious one.[7] He opts for the latter, thus giving Kierkegaard the possibility to speak of a "teleological suspension of the ethical". This means that the ethical, understood as the universal, could be not annihilated, but suspended for a higher *telos*. But Abraham's decision brings forth the problem of a special and absolute obligation: the duty to God.

The question about an absolute duty to God is further discussed by Kierkegaard in *Problema II*. At the beginning of this section, Johannes defines once again the ethical as the universal, but in contrast to the beginning of the former section, he also defines it as the divine. From such a standpoint, every duty is ultimately a duty to God. So far, it appears that one could understand Kierkegaard's perspective as a version of Divine command theory: an action is morally good only insofar as God commends it. On this basis, the ethical and the religious are overlapping. However, such an interpretation would contradict Kierkegaard's view:

> Thus it is proper to say that every duty is essentially duty to God, but if no more can be said than this, then it is also said that I have actually no duty to God. The duty becomes duty by being traced back to God, but in the duty itself I do not

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[7] The tragic hero assures himself that the ethical obligation is totally present in him by transforming it into a wish. Agamemnon, for example, can say: To me the proof that I am not violating my fatherly duty is that my duty is my one and only wish. Consequently we have wish and duty face to face with each other. Happy is the life in which they coincide, in which my wish is my duty and the reverse, and for most men the task in life is simply to adhere to their duty and to transform it by their enthusiasm into their wish. The tragic hero gives up his wish in order to fulfil this duty. For the knight of faith, wish and duty are also identical, but he is required to give up both. If he wants to relinquish by giving up his wish, he finds no rest, for it is indeed his duty. If he wants to adhere to his duty and to this wish, he does not become the knight of faith, for the absolute duty specifically demanded that he should give it up. The tragic hero found a higher expression of duty but not an absolute duty (FT 78n).

> enter into relation to God. For example, it is a duty to love one's neighbour. It is a duty by its being traced back to God, but in the duty I do not enter into relation to God, but to the neighbour I love. If in this connection I then say that it is my duty to love God, I am actually pronouncing only a tautology, inasmuch as "God" in a totally abstract sense is here understood as the divine – that is, the universal, that is, duty.... God comes to be an impotent thought. (FT 68)

One of the logical consequences of interpreting Kierkegaard's view as a version of Divine command theory would be to state that Abraham's relation with the universal is mediated by God. All moral duties are divine duties. But, as in above quote, this leaves no room for an absolute duty to God. Additionally, such an interpretation would contradict Kierkegaard's claim from *Problema I*, which ended with a positive answer to the question of a possible suspension of the ethical. If obeying God is equivalent to being moral, then there is no possibility for the individual to be higher than the universal.

Under such circumstances, Kierkegaard's account of the ethical must be interpreted as being an essentially different stage than the religious, which superpose only incidentally with the ethical. Morality is not necessarily created by God; it is rather the outcome of the historical development of human conscience, much like in the Hegelian account of *Sittlichkeit*. It is an entirely human task to develop the most adequate ethical instruments for history's continuing challenges. Moral values and norms are the creation of mankind, and they generally apply to all persons. Nevertheless, the true believer must always be ready to welcome God and obey his demands, even when those are in a visible contradiction to human morality. In such a case, the "ethical is reduced to the relative" (FT 70), and the individual finds himself in an unmediated relation to the absolute. However, this is almost an unbearable situation, because a decision like Abraham's cannot be rationally defended or even expressed. His connection to the absolute is private and unmediated.

But, given Kierkegaard's own framework, is it really possible to have a pure, unmediated relation, as Johannes passionately claims? In Hegel's philosophy, for instance, a non-mediated relationship is impossible. For him, the very opposition between mediation and immediacy requires

mediation to the extent that nothing is unequivocally mediated or unmediated (Lippit 2003, 95). According to Inwood's interpretation,

> Hegel's arguments are often obscured by the different levels of mediation and immediacy that come into play: e.g. absolute, wholly unmediated, immediacy (which never occurs), relatively bare immediacy, and mediated immediacy. (Inwood 1992, 110)

It is not my intention to enter in all these details, but only to show that, for Hegel, there are "greater and lesser degrees of mediation", and not a purely unmediated relation. For example, Hegel thinks that one's perception of his own existence is relatively unmediated, while the believer's knowledge of God is relatively mediated. The mediation occurs through the Bible, the Holly Tradition, the clergy, the rituals, and ultimately through the incarnation of Christ, which is the mediation *par excellence*. In Abraham's case, there is obviously no Bible, no Holly Tradition, and no incarnation, so Kierkegaard would seem entitled to claim there is no mediation. But how does a wholly unmediated relation look like? The first answer that comes in one's mind is that entering a purely non-mediated relation is engaging with a pure abstract entity, an empty form that could not have such a strong hold on the individual. Such an entity would have no history and no previous manifestation. But this is not the case for Abraham, who perceives God as the Creator of the world, as the sender of the great flood, or as the one who made possible the miraculous birth of Isaac. From this point of view, Abraham's relation is already mediated by a tradition and by his past encounters with God. In this respect, Johannes de Silentio seems to be wrong in attributing to Abraham a pure non-mediated access to the Absolute. However, for Kierkegaard this is not the central point of his argument. My claim is that Kierkegaard is not interested so much in rigorously assessing the unmediated character of the relation, but rather to show that such mediation is so weak that it does not count as rational mediation.

With this, I come again to the non-public character of God's connection to the Absolute. Even if Abraham's relation with God is mediated by a tradition and his former encounters with Him, this is not a reason to say that his behaviour is rational. In Hegel's philosophy

mediation is by definition rational. For Kant, universality as the mediation between the agent and the moral law is also rational[8]. But in Kierkegaard's philosophy the mediation does not seem to be rational. How could a perfect being that created the universe, a just being that punished the sinners, and a loving being that send Isaac as a miraculous gift, demand such an absurd behaviour from Abraham? In this respect, Kant seems to be fair rejecting a voice that demands such unreasonable actions. How could one explain such a horrific conduct? Kierkegaard's solution is precisely that true faith is publicly incommunicable or unexplainable. There is no justification from the ethical point of view that could endorse sacrificing an innocent being. To speak or to justify oneself is to engage more or less with the universal, which is a matter of public concern. What is unspeakable and unjustifiable is a matter of absolute privacy. So when Johannes is claiming the unmediated character of Abraham's relation to God, he is rather pointing to the absolutely private character of the relation than to the absolute lack of determinations.

The private character of the individual's relationship with God is not at all Kierkegaard's personal invention. The privatization of faith is one of Luther's cardinal ideas that marked protestant theology and Western culture. In Lutheran theology, unlike Catholic or Eastern Orthodox theology, the individual's relationship with God does not have to be intermediated by the Church or by the Holly Tradition. To give only one example, one of the fundamental principles of the Bible study is "Scriptura Scripturae interpres" ("Scripture is the interpreter of Scripture"), which dismisses the authority of the clergy or of the Holly Fathers in interpreting the Bible. This principle endows the believer with the responsibility and authority to interpret the Scripture all by himself. As such, the relationship with the Holly Book, as the relationship with God is private and unmediated. If we add to this the primacy of the inwardness (as opposed to the Catholic emphasize of public conduct), another Lutheran idea, than we may easily notice how Kierkegaard's ideas were shaped by the Protestant milieu. But the same Protestant

[8] There are important differences between Kant's use of the word "rational", and Hegel's use of the same word. Some of them I have mentioned earlier here. Others do not make the object of my paper.

environment shaped Kant's ideas as well. The priority of intention over consequences is the secularized version of the Lutheran priority of faith over good deeds. The Kantian notion of autonomy may be seen as the philosophical version of the exegetical principle, which dismissed other exegetical authorities than the believer himself. As such, it is interesting to see that the same religious empowerment of the individual gave birth to opposite philosophical perspectives on faith, such as Kant's and Kierkegaard's. But the development of such a topic deserves a standalone work, in which the above implications could be examined in detailed.

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IDENTITY DISCOURSE IN POSTMODERN EASTERN ORTHODOXY

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Abstract

This text will comment on some of the important aspects of the connection between Eastern Orthodoxy and contemporary civilization, the historical development of which has been designated as post-modernity. Being neither modern, nor postmodern, nor anti-modern (because these predicates are not relevant to it), Orthodoxy has to answer the question as to whether globalization is analogous to the "cosmic liturgy" sought by the Christian religion as a whole, or to the contrary, is moving away from it. The other basic problem of Orthodoxy – especially in what were formerly designated as East European societies – is that it should be identified with nationality. To be Orthodox often means to be a Bulgarian, a Serb, a Russian, a Romanian, etc. Ethnic affiliation and Orthodox affiliation are often interchangeable. Thus, the nationalization of Orthodoxy is becoming a major problem that the Church must resolve.

Keywords: orthodoxy, post-modernity, globalization, ethno-phyletism.

Introduction

Already in the early 1950s, the eminent Orthodox theologian Georgiy Florovsky wrote:

> It is quite customary in our times, and hence quite modern, to say that we are now living in a 'post-Christian world' (although, what could be the true meaning of this pretentious phrase?), a world that, consciously or unconsciously, is moving away, separating from Christianity. Not only are we at a crossroads, at which the true road seems uncertain, but many of us ask themselves whether any safe road exists at all, any

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> possibility to continue forward. Is our civilization not in a tunnel without exit, from which there is no getting out except at the cost of an explosion? (Florovsky 2006, 14)

Thus, we already have a long-standing tradition of scholarly discussions on the post-Christian situation; this text will deal with some of them. We will comment on some of the important aspects of the connection between Eastern Orthodoxy and contemporary civilization, the historical development of which has been designated as post-modernity.

II. The Topical Importance of Orthodoxy

This issue is related to the essential nature of Orthodoxy, its adaptability throughout history, and specifically under contemporary conditions. Orthodoxy does not accommodate itself to the current moment and thus follow history; it could not have carried out an "aggiornamento" like the Catholic Church. This is very precisely expressed by the Russian writer and philosopher Tatyana Goricheva:

> ...in Orthodoxy, there is no dialectics, no evolution. In Orthodoxy, we cannot talk about 'renewal' of the Church, as in the West. In every second of time, the Church is both eternal and new. (Goricheva 1996, 70)

Orthodoxy does not strive to be well liked in order to survive under the conditions of modernist secularization and postmodern religious syncretism; it is not inclined to compromise with "the spirit of the times". In view of this striving to stand at a distance from historical developments, it would not be appropriate to qualify Orthodoxy under any historical form. Viewed as *authentic* Christianity, Orthodoxy can be neither modern, nor postmodern, nor anti-modern: these predicates are not relevant to it. We know that Christianity is *in* the world but not *of* the world. Living *in* the world, prevalent in Western Christianity, is overshadowed for Orthodoxy by a moment that comes from beyond, from eternity. Hence, definitions related to historical ages are not applicable to Orthodoxy. Regarding the challenges of the day, it gives all its responses from the side of eternity. As the Bulgarian author Pavel Pavlov points out,

> In a certain sense, on the one hand, the Church should not defend or deny either premodernity, or modernity, or postmodernity, simply because it cannot identify itself with any of these phenomena. On the other hand, the Church's vocation is to coexist with, to change, and to give life to, all the manifestations and achievements of the human community in the world in all times and ages. (Pavlov 2005, 90)

I will cite an opinion of the well-known Serbian Orthodox theologian Radovan Bigovic that clearly defines the specificity of the historical path of Orthodoxy:

> But it must be had in mind that it is mainly for historical reasons that Orthodoxy does not organically participate in the phenomenon called modernity. It has not tasted of the Renaissance, of the Reformation or the Counter-reformation, of the religious wars and the Enlightenment, of the French Revolution and the industrial revolution, of the triumph of the individual, of human rights and the religiously neutral nation-state. That which modernity recognizes as its basic interest seems to have remained outside Orthodoxy, which has consequently become suspicious of Modernity. This fact certainly helps understand the difficulties Orthodoxy has with communication in the contemporary (post)modern world. (Bigovic 2013, 214)

This type of explanations, usually given by Orthodox thinkers, provide ground for associating Orthodoxy with characteristics like static, frozen, petrified, etc. The difficulty of refuting these reproaches lies in the fact that Orthodoxy must at all times maintain a balance between the two essential principles of the Christian (and more discernibly the Orthodox) Church: it is in the world but not of the world. As John Meyendorff has pointed out with precision,

> The Orthodox Church must define itself concurrently both as Tradition, fidelity to the past, and as an adequate response to the present. (Meyendorff 1991, 17)

Every activity in the world must be penetrated by the eternal evangelical spirit so that neither the eternal nor the temporal may get the upper hand. In the former case, it would mean escaping from the world, in the latter, sinking into the world; both are dangerous temptations for Christianity. It is known that, historically, the former was more characteristic of the East, and the latter, of the West.

In seeking to achieve the difficult balance between the eternal and the topical, between a life true to the doctrine and a life responsive to the

realities of the day, some Orthodox thinkers turn to the interpretation of the holy texts from an existential perspective. This is characteristic, for instance, of the eminent Orthodox theologian and philosopher, the Metropolitan of Pergamum John Zizioulas, who believes that

> The Power of Orthodoxy is not related to the possession of worldly power. It lies in its Tradition, dogmatic and liturgical. But this power will be real only if the interpretation of the Church's Tradition really corresponds to the existential issues of man. It is no longer sufficient simply to preserve the Tradition. Our forefathers did this well. But we cannot make an exotic religion of Orthodoxy, as many Western Christians perceive it to be. We must interpret it in the light of the basic existential problems – of today and of tomorrow. (Zizioulas 2002)

As an heir to a rich doctrinal tradition, Orthodoxy's primary task is to preserve this tradition intact. As Zizioulas points out, this does not mean it must be preserved like some archeological relic. To the contrary, in order for the dogmas to "live", they must be interpreted in an existential light. This is also the most effective way to prevent the transformation of Orthodoxy into an ideology, a risk that is one of the serious challenges presently facing it. The eminent contemporary philosopher and theologian Christos Yannaras points out that Orthodoxy "never responds to man's metaphysical searches with theory, ideology, or moral recipes. Its essence consisted in a concrete realization of *ties of communion* (as well as public ties) in a *sobornost community* that transforms man's *way* of existence: it frees existence from the needs of mortal nature and turns it into the freedom of a *relation-tie*" (Yannaras 2002, 178).

However, there are significant elements of accord between Orthodoxy and postmodern spirituality; one such important element is the attitude to the Other and Otherness. The emphasis on this problem is one of the specificities of postmodern spirituality, and it accords with the basic Christian attitude – especially, and foremost, that of Orthodoxy. For instance, in the context of religious syncretism – of the search for a "new spirituality" – Christos Yannaras points out Orthodoxy's attitude to the Other and Otherness as an advantage it has over Western Christianity (see Yannaras 2002). Aristotle Papanikolaou also points out the "closeness between postmodern though and the contemporary Orthodox theological understanding of difference,

otherness, uniqueness, relationality, and desire" (Papanikolaou 2010, 74). Particularly interesting in this respect is the recent study by the Bulgarian theologian Svilen Tutekov, "The Search for *the Other*: A Theological Answer to the Postmodern Challenge" (See Tutekov 2010).

III. Orthodoxy and Globalization

> For the first time, Orthodoxy – although still the Church of the minority, torn by multiple internal confusions, anxieties, claims and divisions, that are a result of its two-thousand-year long Odyssey through history – finds itself in the 'global village', where different nations, in different ways, move towards the way of life that has started to be dominant on the planet. This is liberal, democratic, capitalist, modern (and post-Christian) pluralism. (Hopko 2003, 9)

These words by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, a priest of the American Orthodox Church, are part of Orthodoxy's reflections on globalization and its consequences.

The globalization process characterizing postmodernity is a challenge to Christianity as a whole. Orthodox thinkers in particular have to answer the question as to whether globalization is analogous to the "cosmic liturgy" sought by Orthodoxy, or to the contrary, is moving away from it. They must assess what the correlation is between the global quality of the world and the universal quality of Orthodoxy. They must affirm the consciousness of the Church's sobornost as being the adequate Orthodox response to globalization.

In his special study on the situation of Orthodoxy in a globalizing world, Anastasios Yannoulatos, archbishop of Tirana and of all Albania, writes,

> Globalization is an unfolding process today, and there seems to be no force capable of stopping it. This process opens great possibilities and unexpected perspectives for the human race. But along with this, it provokes a chain of repercussions and shifts. Despite this, without regard to its positive or negative effects, globalization goes on undisturbed by the cries and appeals that can be heard outside the financial world. (…) The global perspective is the blood of Orthodoxy, blood that is constantly purified in the Eucharist through the blood of Christ, the Redeemer of the world. Instead of globalization that transforms the nations and people into a faceless homogenous mass convenient for the economic interests of an anonymous oligarchy, the Orthodox religious experience and

> vision offer communion of love, a society of love, and they appeal to people to work with all efforts in this direction. (Yannoulatos 2005, 189-90)

The mission of Orthodox thinkers today is to compare sobornost, as an ideal of Christian coexistence, with the intense processes of globalization, and to distinguish the similarities and essential differences between the two.

An important aspect of globalization – aside from its possible interpretation as a secular version of sobornost – is to maintain the optimal ratio between global and local. As John Zizioulas points out, the problem in the globalizing world is how the Church may preserve its identity while not withdrawing from the world:

> Globalization will be the most important problem in the coming century. How to reconcile the 'one' with the 'many'? What must be done so that universal unity might not be achieved at the expense of local diversity? (Zizioulas 2002)

The concern of Orthodox thinkers for preserving the autonomy of individual national cultures is similar to that of scholars from different fields of the humanities who are occupied with the mechanisms for upholding the specificity of separate national cultures that are being engulfed by the emerging planetary civilization.

Another aspect of the polarity between global and local is the need to clarify the role of Orthodoxy as a motor for the formation of a *general European* spiritual identity. Multiple aspects are intertwined in this issue, including – not least – philosophical-historical and geo-political views. Radovan Bigovic assesses that the inert attitude by which the West considers the Orthodox world (and its geographical location) is gradually being modified through the creation of a united Europe.

> Today, the Orthodox Church exists in a new, radically new, world. The so-called 'Orthodox' kingdoms and states have disappeared. Until recently, 'Orthodox world' designated the Balkans and Eastern Europe. For most people in the West, this world does not belong to Europe but to the Orient. It is equated with 'despotism', 'obscurantism', 'conservatism', 'tyranny', and 'backwardness'… (Bigovic 2013, 91)

Now, there is a radically new, growing interest of *Europeans* in the Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition, the multiplication of "Orthodox

parishes established by West Europeans, Orthodox monasteries, publications of texts by the Fathers of the Church, the universal Christian use of Orthodox ikons" (Yannaras 2002, 16), as well as "the impressive revival of the Orthodox monastic tradition" (Zizioulas 2002). If the observations of these outstanding Orthodox thinkers are correct, if we are indeed witnessing a certain bloom of Orthodox religiosity (along with the flourishing of all sorts of other beliefs), then Damaskinos Papandreou, Metropolitan of Switzerland and Exarch of Europe, was right when he said the following at the beginning of his lecture in the Aula of Sofia University in 1999:

> The Orthodox Church is, as generally acknowledged, an important factor in the formation of the spiritual identity of European civilization. (Papandreou 2000, 17)

Orthodoxy will no longer be synonymous with "obscurantism" and "backwardness", and Europe will be a natural place of dwelling for it.

IV. Orthodoxy and Nationalism

If the basic challenge facing Western Christianity is that it might sink into the secular world and make impermissible compromises with that world in striving to "accommodate" itself to it, tolerating individualism, liberalism etc., the basic problem of Orthodoxy – especially in what were formerly designated as East European societies – is that it should be confused with, identified with, nationality. To be Orthodox often means to be a Bulgarian, Serb, Russian, Rumanian, etc. Ethnic affiliation and Orthodox affiliation are often interchangeable. John Zizioulas writes,

> Nationalism and ethno-phyletism have penetrated the Church – especially among us Orthodox Christians. The idea of autocephaly has turned into autocephalism, that is, into the use of the Church for the service of state or national interests. The situation of the Orthodox diaspora in the 20th century is a direct, outright violation of the principles of Orthodox ecclesiology. Without any doubt, such a situation cannot satisfy us, although regrettably, it is 'blessed' at the most official level. (Zizioulas 2002)

Orthodoxy is universal in its conception, as is Christianity in general. It is not anti-national, but while respecting and upholding national differences

as something valuable, it rises above them. This would prevent its being transformed into ethno-phyletism, as has happened in many societies in the range of Orthodox Churches. In this connection, Radovan Bigovic points out:

> By nature, the Orthodox Church is neither national, nor un-national, nor even above-national. It has always been supra-national. But historical events in the Balkans have led to a distortion engendering theo-national ideologies which in some places have turned into state ideologies. This leads to self-enclosure of the local Churches. But today, almost everywhere, the conviction is growing in the Churches that there should be a break away from all elements of religious nationalism.[2]

Thus, the nationalization of Orthodoxy is becoming a major problem that the Church must resolve. The radicalization of nationalism – its growing into chauvinism – often happens, among other factors, due to the feeling that Orthodox identity is particularly important for *national* identity. Strong nationalist moods and attitudes are also present among the clergy of certain Churches: particularly characteristic cases are Serbia, Greece, Russia, and also Bulgaria, where the equating of Orthodoxy with national identity has strong historical roots:

> ...the pathos of the Bulgarian Church has forever assumed the brand of the National-Revival outlook, and has never risen (or rather humbled itself) to the deep spiritual aspects of events. In perceiving Orthodoxy entirely in the categories of traditional national values, the political elite that carried out and realized its aspiration for an independent Church has remained blind to the Church's spiritual content, has turned its back to it, neglected it as something of secondary importance compared with the patriotic ideal. (...) The Bulgarian politician (and the average Bulgarian clergyman, regrettably) never saw Orthodoxy as a value in itself, or the Church as a pillar and support of the Truth – that same Universal Truth from which the religious genius of the Russian or the Greek draws its strength and character. (Sivov 1997, 4)

In seeking to overcome ethno-phyletism, Orthodox thinkers emphasize the initial mission of Christianity/Orthodoxy *in the world*, which is to save and unite people, not to disunite and separate them according to ethnicity/nationality:

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[2] See http://www.pravoslavie.bg/Интервю/Отец-проф.-Радован-Бигович:-Трябва-да-скъсаме-с-религиозния-национализъм

> The Church does not exist only as a cultural decoration of a person's life, although it does shape culture. The Church exists in order to guide people and nations to the eschatological kingdom of God, to create a particular attitude towards the world, other people, and God. This could be expressed by means of different kinds of cultures (pluralism) but not by means of various civilizational-spiritual models. In this sense, the goal of unity is a common ethos, not a common culture; cultures may be different (contrary to 'national' Balkan Churches, where there is spiritual unity only of one language, one culture, one nation). (Pavlov 2006)

V. Conclusion

In responding to the outlined challenges of the new contemporary situation, Orthodoxy upholds its identity in a world marked, on the one hand, by freely competing religions or non-religiousness (a diversity that replaced the once obligatory atheism in East European countries), and on the other hand, by a tense opposition between centrifugal and centripetal trends – globalism and ethno-phyletism. It does so in order to maintain its new/old identity under the new civilizational conditions, and in order to be, as Radovan Bigovic has phrased it,

> not only 'Eastern'; today Orthodoxy is universal both in its nature and content, and in geographical terms. That is why it must suppress its tribal mentality, imposed during the centuries of bondage, and build a sobor-like, all-encompassing, universal human mind, care, feeling, and love. All this is in history, or, if you prefer, in post-history and postmodernity. (Bigovic 2002, 8)

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GEORGIA'S PHILOSOPHICAL LANDSCAPE – SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This article discusses the main trends of Georgian philosophy: its basic principles and perspectives, the importance of the Western, especially the European cultural heritage, and the Georgian contribution to the history of ideas in a global perspective. Metaphysical questions of cognition, truth, identity, virtue and value, wisdom and power, as well as issues of ethical, social, political and aesthetic values, phenomenological, philosophical-theological and linguistic research are central to Georgian philosophy and exemplify its continuing relevance vis-à-vis the Western tradition in its broadest sense. Although philosophical ideas in Georgia rarely matured into a well-balanced, self-sufficient system, one may distinguish as original conceptions some ideas of *Christian Neo-Platonism* and *Aletheological Realism*.

Keywords: Georgian philosophy, European standard of philosophizing, Christian Neo-Platonism and Aletheological Realism, phenomenological-existential research, linguistic turn, philosophical-theological studies.

I. Anthim the Iberian and Name-Symbols in Georgia. *In Lieu* of an Introduction

One of the central figures of Romanian and Georgian cultures, "a great person of the epoch of [the] Enlightenment and a great humanist"[3]

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[3] This issue is recently precisely analyzed by a group of Georgian philosophers, in Zakariadze, A. Brachuli, I. and others (2016). *Anthim Iverianul and European Enlightenment*. Tbilisi: "Dobera" Press (in Georgian).

is Saint Anthim the Iberian, (1660-1716). Since 1699, his books that were printed in Bucharest's printing house, are signed as Anthim Iverianul. Following his ecclesiastical name, *Anthim*, he placed the name of his home country, Iveria. In effect, he used a name-symbol. It is necessary to define this symbol more precisely.

The academic world knows Georgia from two names that designate its region: Colchis and Iberia/Iveria. Colchis was the utmost stronghold in the Eastern ancient world. A well-known ancient Greek story tells us about the expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis.[4] The Southern boundary of the ancient world, the forerunner of contemporary Europe[5] was in Colchis, which was running along much of the river Phasis (now Rioni). Colchis was the country of king Aeetes and his daughter, Medea, who later on married the Greek hero Jason. "Colchis" is a name of pagan Georgia.[6] According to the information provided by Herodotus, the boundary between Asia and Europe was believed to be the Colchian river Phasis (IV; 45). The mythical characters associated with Colchis, personify these links. According to some sources, Aeetes came to Colchis from Ephira, a historical part of Greece;

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[4] To be consulted the following works: Janet Ruth Bacon, *The Voyage of the Argonauts* (London: Methuen, 1925); Elizabeth J. W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles: the Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); David Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity: A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia, 550 BC-AD 562* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Rismag Gordeziani, *The World of Greek Mythology* (Argonauts: Tbilisi, "Logos" 1999), 109-123.

[5] An interesting debate on this problem can be seen in a monograph: T. Pipia N. Dundua, *Georgia and the Rest of World-making of Europe and Historical Forms of European Integration* (Tbilisi: TSU Publishing Press, 2009).

[6] Greek sources from Homer to the authors of Byzantine period identify Georgia with Colchis. See in detail in Akaki Urushadze, *Ancient Colchis in the story of Argonauts* (Tbilisi: "Ganatleba" Publishing Press 1964); "The Argonautica" by Apollonius of Rhodes is one of the oldest Greek sources where we can find the name "Colchis ". Apollonius of Rhodes describes an ancient kingdom and region on the coast of the Black Sea, populated by Colchians, an early Georgian/ Kartvelian tribes; he also noted Colchis capital Kutaisi, king Aeetes and princess Medea. See in Apollonius of Rhodes, "The Argonautica". Translated and commented into Georgian by Akaki Urushadze (Tbilisi: Ganatleba Publishing Press, 1972), 247-49 (in Georgian).

one of his sisters, Pasiphaë, is the wife of the legendary king of Crete, Minos, although his other sister, sorceress Circe, migrated to Italy and became the eponymous mother of a number of Italian tribes. Medea first went to Hellas, and afterwards returned together with her son, Medos, which likewise reflects the ties (Gordeziani 2010-2011, 252).

In 327 CE, Christianity was announced as an official state religion in Iveria. During late antiquity, Iveria was the name of the Eastern kingdom of Georgia.[7] The first Christian communities,[8] which were founded, according to tradition, by the apostle Andrew and Simon the Zealot/Cananaeus, took up residence in Georgia. The first Christian King Mirian the III[rd] of Iberia replanted a Byzantine way of thinking about the Christian state into his country[9] and was opposed to Persia, etc. and the Georgian Church entered under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox World Patriarchy. The terms "Georgia" and "Iveria" coexisted until the nineteenth century in various sources and documents. With Mirian's decision to accept Christianity as the state religion of his country, pagan Georgia-Colchis symbolically ceased to exist; even in historical sources we cannot find the term "Colchis" ever longer; from now on, Colchis, the so-called "The Old Israel", becomes "The New Israel" – "Holy Iveria"[10] a stronghold of ancient and Byzantine civilizations, of the European-Christian world in the East.

The short description offered here presents a summary of the symbolical content of the term "Iverianul" as it was shaped and

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[7] For clarifying this statement see: Tyannius Rufinus, "References of Byzantine writers about Georgia" in GEORGICA. Vol. I. Texts with Georgian translation and comments are done by A. Gamkrelidze, and S. Kaukchishvili, (Tbilisi: "Mecniereba" Publishing Press, 1961). Rufinus said that "at that time Iberian tribes (*iberorum gens*) which lived on Ponto's side adopted God's commandments, laws and belief in eternal life."

[8] Tamar Adamir, *The Apostles Andrew's and Matthias' Activities in Georgia* (according to Georgian, Greek and Latin sources) in Magazine "Religion" Issue 3:2013, 12-20 (in Georgian).

[9] Nodar Lomouri, *Relations between Georgia and Byzantine Empire*. Part I (fourth-ninth centuries) (Tbilisi: TSU Publishing Press, 2011), 85-90.

[10] This term can be found in Georgian hagiographical literature; see *e.g.* the tenth century authors: Giorgi Merchule, and Ioane-Zosime. They called Iveria –"Holy", because it "has given birth to Saints."

manifested itself in the formation process of Anthim's identity from his childhood on (Zakariadze & others 2016, 14-56). Those who conduct research into Anthim's cannot fix exact dates of young Anthim's capture in Georgia, when he was being sold, as a slave, on Constantinople's slave bazaar, was meeting with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos Notara and was liberated and by sent by him as a monk in Jerusalem, where he worked as an oikonomos of the Church of Savior. What we know on the basis of historical documents, is the date of his arrival in Wallachia: the year – 1689. An official note declared that in that year he became an archpriest of a monastery in Wallachia.[11]

When he began his activities in Romania, he also came to see this country as a stronghold of Europe, as a part of the Christian *Universe* in the Balkans, as a country that was proud of its Romanian roots (Eliade 2014, 62-63).

Christianity was a product of ancient civilizations. One of these civilizations was the Greek one, which, to a noticeably large extent, was characterized by its concern for and commitment to philosophy. Christianity contributed to renewing and reshaping this civilization, moving it forward towards a new level of spirituality and morality. The harmonious unity of faith and knowledge, Jerusalem and Athens, might be regarded as the ideal of the world. Two strongholds of this unity are Georgia in the East and Romania in the Balkans. St. Anthim's name, Iverianul, expresses this conceptual position.

The example of Anthim Iverianul, a man of thinking and writing, who was committed to his country of origins, serves well as a characterization of the essence and tendencies of learning and the investigation of philosophical thought in Georgia.

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[11] For further reading one may recommend the following books: Emile Picot, *Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthim ed'Ivir, metropolitaine de Valachie*, in *Nouveaux Melanges Orientaux* (Paris, 1986) 513-560; Constantin Noica, *Modelul cultural European* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 1983); Gabriel Ştrempel, "Un cronograf ilustrat atribuit mitropolitului Antim Ivireanul", în *Romanoslavica*, anul XIII, 1966, 309-353; Gabriel Ştrempel, *Antim Ivireanul* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1997); Mihail Stanciu, "Consideratii despre originea Sfantului Antim Ivireanul", *Ortodoxia,* 2012/Issue *3;* Mihail Stanciu, "Descoperiri recente referitoare la venirea Sfantului Antim Ivireanul in Tarile Romanesti", *Ortodoxia*, 2014/Issue 1.

II. The Quest for a "European Standard" in Philosophy and Debates about the Character and Identity of the "Georgian Philosophical School"

The idea of the existence of a "Georgian Philosophical School" emerged in the middle of the 20th century and right away became a subject for debate. In the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, "philosophy" is referred to as "Hellenic wisdom." Heidegger thought that philosophy is the "Greek order of thinking", the renewal of which occurred in more modern-day Europe, namely in classical German Idealism. In the nineteenth century, philosophy once more experienced a period of modernization. This process continued through the establishment of a number of well-known philosophical schools in the course of the twentieth century.

As for Georgia, we could argue, on the basis of ancient sources[12], a philosophical school at the Black Sea existed in Colchis in the 4th century CE. This was the so-called Phasisi Academy, a philosophical school that had a wide reach, with participants coming from very distant parts of the Hellenic world. This information may support the idea that "Georgian philosophy" has a history of at least sixteen hundred years. The Phasisi Academy may have been a Greek school founded in the Greek colony, Colchis.

When we speak about "Georgian philosophy", we think of the movements and articulations of philosophical thought in the form of cultural and linguistic expressions in Georgian. We cannot understand the Georgian philosophical expression as being a mere spectator of the European main center, as being the one keeping to "European standards." Instead, it appears as an independent player, a figure on a chess desk of the world of philosophy.

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[12] See, *e.g.* that *a letter of Libanius* (314-393) tells us that "near the river Phasis, where there Argonauts came to Colchis, is the perfect school of rhetoric and also the "school of Muses". References of Byzantine writers about Georgia can be consulted in *GEORGICA*. Vol. I. Texts with Georgian translation and comments are done by Alexandre Gamkrelidze and Simon Kaukchishvili (Tbilisi: Ganatleba Publishing Press, 1961) 59-68.

According to this criterion, it is believed that Georgian had twice the opportunity to become a player in the game of world philosophy. For the first time, the opportunity arose at the beginning of 12th century, when the Georgian philosopher Joane Petrizi, upon the invitation of the Byzantines, arrived in Georgia, to deliver lectures at the Gelati Academy.[13] Here he developed an original version of Christian Neo-Platonism. His conception was a reasoned response to the challenges of that epoch. For the second time, at the beginning of the 20th century, while still being a doctoral student of the University of Heidelberg, the philosopher Shalva Nutsubidze established an original line of philosophical thinking which came to be called *Aletheological Realism* (Begiashvili 1980, 219-220).

III. Christian Neo-Platonism and Aletheological Realism

Ancient philosophy continued its existence in the deepest layers of Byzantine theology. Joane Petrizi is recognized for building up a Georgian conceptual system which would be equal to the Greek philosophical terminology, translated into Georgian, so to say. He developed the basic philosophical concepts of *Logos, cosmos, noema, nous, psyche, anima, ethos, theos, Aletheia, dianoia, gnosis,* etc., in Georgian. Joane Petrizi translated Proclus Diadochus, "The Elements of Theology", supplying it with comments. These comments articulate an original conception of philosophy.[14]

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[13] The Galati Academy was founded in a medieval monastic complex in the West Georgian region in the 12th century. Historically, Galati was one of the main cultural and intellectual centers in Georgia. The Academy employed some of the most celebrated Georgian scientists, theologians and philosophers, many of whom had previously been active at various Orthodox monasteries abroad. Among the scientists, scholars were also celebrated. Due to the extensive work carried out by the Galati Academy, people of the time called it "a new Hellas" and "a second Athos".

[14] For further reading one may consult Lela Alexidze, *Ioane Petritsi und die antike Philosophie* (Tbilisi: TSU Publishing Press, 2008); see also L. Alexidze & L. Bergemann, *Ioane Petrizi. Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica des Proklos* (Amsterdam, 2009);

During Petrizi's time, comments were the most wide-spread genre of philosophizing (Joane Petrizi 1937, 9-165). Petrizi's version of Neo-Platonism deeply influenced Georgian culture. A vivid example of this influence is Shota Rustaveli's philosophical poem "The knight in the Panther's Skin," a masterpiece created during the early Renaissance period (Nutsubidze Sh. v. VII: 19, 85).

In 1918 upon the initiative of Shalva Nutsubidze, the first philosophical society named after Petrizi, the "Joane Petrizi Philosophical Society," was founded in Tbilisi. The aim of the society was to restore a philosophical tradition that had been lost during the preceding centuries. During Petrizi's period, the language of philosophy was Greek; with the beginning of the 20thcentury, German philosophy took the leading position in the world. Neo-Kantian philosophical schools became predominant. In Europe, phenomenology and existentialism took their first steps. At that time, a new system of articulating Georgian philosophical concepts, which would address topics that also were relevant in the wider realm of philosophy and could be equivalent to German philosophical concepts, such as *Geist*, *Sein*, *Dasein*, *Sosein*, *Werden*, *Wesen*, *Ursprung*, and others, was needed.

Shalva Nutsubidze began to work in this direction. In his monographs that were printed in Berlin and Leipzig, "*Truth and the Structure of Cognition*" (Nuzubidze, 1926) and "*Philosophy and Wisdom*" (Nutsubidze, 1931), Nutsubidze worked out the main principles of aletheology. Its author called the original philosophical conception *Aletheological Realism*. Aletheology was situated somewhere midway between philosophy and what might be called wisdom. Nutsubidze distinguished between "the truth for me" (*episteme*), "my truth" (*doxa*) and "the truth in itself"; this last one is an ontological reality. Truth,

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B. Gigineishvili & L. Grüner, *The Platonic Theology of Ioane Petritsi* (Gorgias Press, 2007); Levan Gigineishvili, *The harmonization of Neo-Platonism and Christianity in the Gelati monastic school, Annual of Medieval Studies at the Central European University for 1994-1995* (Budapest: Annual of Medieval Studies at the Central European University for 1994-1996, 124-139); Tengiz Iremadze, *Joane Petrizi.* Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2006, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/joane-petrizi/ edited in 2011).

according to Nutsubidze, is not a state of empirical reality – but the Aletheological one. Truth is not an attribute of thought; it is not a fixing of correspondence between knowledge and thing, but a state of reality as "the truth in itself". Scientific knowledge is the correspondence between "the truth in itself" as a reality and "the truth for me". Thus Nutsubidze argues that "the truth in itself" as a system of interrelation of reality became a system for me, i.e. "the truth for me."

"Truth by itself" has three levels: "being" (*Sein*), "being-thus" (*So-Sein*) and "more-than-being" (*Mehralssein).* This last level is a sphere of non-relation. It is pre-logical and it is present in each creature. Nutsubidze insisted that such a higher being also does exist in itself and it is present within each empirical entity[15] "Aletheological reduction" is more than a form of logical conclusion. Aletheological reduction leads us beyond the sphere of "relation" and content (*Inhaltlichkeit*) in "pre-logical" terms. In this it reveals its peculiarity and difference from the "eidetic reduction" of Husserl.

In discussing Georgian Neo-Platonism and the poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin," Nutsubidze founded the comprehensive conception of "Oriental Renaissance". He presented his original theory in several studies: "Rustaveli and the Oriental Renaissance" (1947) and two volumes of his "History of Georgian Philosophy" (1956-58). Similar studies introduced Nutsubidze to the fifth-century mystical author known as Dionysius the Areopagite. Nutsubidze argued that this name was a pseudonym of Peter the Iberian.

Shalva Nutsubidze's heritage is still alive. Generations of Georgian philosophers have been brought up on his works and ideas. His works on aletheology and on matters pertinent to questions of the Renaissance are an active element in philosophical debates in Georgia and abroad.[16]

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[15] See in Tengiz Iremadze, *Der Aletheologische Realismus. Shalva Nutzubidze und seine neuen Denkansatre* (Tbilisi: Nekeri Publishing House, 2008) and in Basil Lourie, "Possible Areopagitic Roots of Nutsubidze's Philosophical Inspiration. Introduction", in "Philosophical-Theological Review", Issue 3, 56-61 (Tbilisi: TSU Publishing House, 2013).

[16] Two volumes of researche have recently been dedicated to the theme: *Philosophical Theological Review*, Issue #3/ 2013 at TSU, and *Georgian Christian Thought and Its Cultural Context*: *Memorial Volume for the 125th Anniversary of Shalva Nutsubidze (1888-1969*). eds. Tamar Nutsubidze, Cornelia B. Horn, and Basil Lourie (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity; Brill, 2014).

IV. Nietzsche in Georgia

At the beginning of the 20th century, professional philosophical activity could be re- established in Georgia. The country had come back to the European cultural fold. It gained independence and was able to found the first Georgian university. In order to understand this development, it is necessary to analyze the spiritual situation at the time. Many of the leading thinkers in Europe and in Georgia considered Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche as their Master. Up to now, Nietzsche still remains a source of inspiration for Georgian philosophers.

The history of the interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy in Georgia began in 1900 and continues up to today[17]. Scientists even discuss the periodization of a "Georgian Nietzscheology" (Elizbarashvili 2005, 7-12). Indeed, it is possible to identify several periods, as it follows.

The first period, from 1900 to 1930, may be referred to as a romantic stage. Nietzsche was conceived of as a prophet of free thinking. He was seen as the one who liberated mankind from the fallacy of rationalism. Grigol Robakidze's (1880-1962) aesthetical-mythological visions were full of such ideas. Robakidze's thought stood within the Georgian-German linguistic continuum. He immigrated to Germany and there issued his Nietzsche-styled mystical novels in German. Robakidze joined the principles of a philosophy of life with the Georgian Mythos and ancient Eastern Mysteries. Konstantin Gamsakhurdia's novel, "The Smile of Dionysus", reproduced Nietzsche's Dionysian aestheticism. Several published studies (such as those published by Sergi Danelia and Konstantin Kapaneli) have argued that Nietzsche was connected with Vaja-Pshavela's epic poetry and thus with the aesthetic character of the Georgian spirit.

During the second period, from 1930 to 1950 of, the Soviet ideological cliché was dominant: Nietzsche was seen as the ideologist of Fascism. From the Academy, the issue was shifted to the realm of political agitation and propaganda.

The third period, from 1960 to 1990, is characterized by the attempt to rehabilitate Nietzsche. We can find certain positive moments, that

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[17] See Tengiz Iremadze (ed.), *Nietzsche in Georgia* (Tbilisi: Nekeri Publishing House, 2007) (in Georgian).

were emphasized in this process. Nietzsche was brought closer to Kierkegaard. Nietzsche was discussed as an ally in the struggle against scientism and technicism. The philosophers, Tamaz Buachidze and Zurab Kakabadze, that considered this problem relevant for their studies, saw Nietzsche in that light. In the late '80s, Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche was dominant. Nietzsche was seen as a thinker who noted challenges and dangers of the 19th and the 20th century.

The fourth period, from 1990 until nowadays, is marked by the distance that the philosophical writings took from Heidegger's heroic[18] hermeneutics. It was replaced with more precise scientific approach (Tengiz Iremadze, Avtandil Popiashvili) that applied Nietzsche's thought in searching for new ways in the areas of ontology and metaphysics[19], reinforcing his philosophy through postmodern paradigms.[20] In recent years, Nietzsche's philosophy is discussed under the influence of French post-structuralism. Scholars are also interested in how Nietzsche was presented by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard (Elizbarashvili 2005, 146-167).

V. Phenomenological-Existential Investigations

In Georgia, phenomenological studies were founded during the 1920s, directly by Edmund Husserl's Georgian disciples and students, mainly by those who participated in Husserl's, Nicolai Hartman's, and Martin Heidegger's classes in Germany. In one of his letters dated to 1926, the Georgian philosopher Kote Bakradze described his visit to the Husserls and how Mrs. Husserl, quite picturesquely, explained the essence of phenomenology: "Wesenschau" she said, "is a method of opening a new horizon. What my husband observes is like a view which

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[18] Term belongs to John D. Caputo; see his monograph John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[19] For further one may turn to Valerian Ramishvili, *Fate and Destiny (Metaphysics of Time)* (Tbilisi: Meridian Publishing Press, 2006) (in Georgian).

[20] In this context see Irakli Brachuli, *World outlook of Superman (Energetic paradigms of Hermeneutics)* (Tbilisi: Ganatleba Publishing Press, 1996) (in Georgian).

is seen from one of the tops of the Caucasian ridge. You, his disciples, will observe another horizon from other peaks" (Bakradze 2014, 95-96).

For a long time, phenomenology has been a subject of thorough investigation in the Georgian school of philosophy. The works of several Georgian philosophers, including Kote Bakradze, Angia Bochorishvili, Zurab Kakabadze, Guram Tevzadze, Merab Mamardashvili, and Givi Margvelashvili, are devoted to this area of study. This tradition continues today. One of the contemporary researchers, for instance, notes in his monograph that his objective is "to review phenomenological studies in contemporary Georgian philosophy," in particular, "the problems of Hartmann's epistemology and existential ontology" (Dolidze 2013, 13-14). Kote Bakradze noted that it is very difficult to reproduce Husserl's system, given that each one of Husserl's works is an independent meditation, which opens a new horizon. The founder of phenomenology himself changed his point of observation in each one of his works. In his "Logical Investigations," Husserl argued that logic is independent from psychology. Its subject is ideal. Phenomenological or eidetic reduction, unlike logical reduction, is a reflection towards cognition. Phenomenology is the description and reflection of "Eidoses". Bakradze saw it as a weakness of phenomenology that it could not coordinate transcendental subjectivity with the apriori of idealism (Bakradze 1970, 359-456). Angia Bochorishvili was one of the prominent Georgian phenomenologists. His holistic research is dedicated to the importance of Husserl's method for psychology, anthropology, aesthetics, and epistemology (Bochorishvili 1959, 7-24). His goal was to develop Max Sheller's anthropology. For that purpose he tried to fill Scheler's personalism with Dimitri Uznadze's theory of set.[21] Jean Piaget called this theory "the Uznadze's effect". Bochorishvili agrees with Sheller's idea that *Persona* is neither a thing, nor a function or a structure. Person is "the readiness for an act," a set, which is neither subjective, nor objective. It is the premise for pure relevance (Bochorishvili 1979, 59-78).

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[21] For further one may turn to Dimitri Uznadze, "The Psychology of Set" (a monograph) (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1966).

Zurab Kakabadze belongs to the new generation of Georgian phenomenologists. Immediately after releasing of his monograph about Husserl, published in Georgian and Russian, he has become a "Soviet classic" for those who know Russian. The book was dedicated to the author's teacher Kote Bakradze, as in the case of Heidegger, who dedicated his *Sein und Zeit* to his tutor, Husserl (Kakabadze 2002, 10-11).

Zurab Kakabadze focuses on phenomenology as a way out of the "crisis of the European sciences". He asks whether Husserl's conception can play the role of "a new milestone" in the history of mankind. For him, Husserl was right when he noted that the essentialism of traditional idealism could not be an "indicator" of existence. The intentional life of my consciousness and the phenomenological reflection of the *self*-analysis of one's *Lebenswelt* lead to the "self-manifestation of this world. Due to this insight, which is based on self-analysis and the opening of the "inter-subjective" (Kakabadze 2002, 107) as a "constituting factor" of the world's existence, this work belongs fundamentally to the ontological method. By accepting the intentional life of my consciousness, the meaning-producing, freely self-determining action as a primary basis of the existence of the world, phenomenology accepts existence into being. Husserl hoped that the "crisis of life" can be overcome by the infinite horizon of actual experiences.

Zurab Kakabadze considered that Husserl could not get rid of the tradition of rationalism, that he could not finish the search for a specification of the "life of consciousness". Former disciples of Husserl criticized him for his insufficient radicalism. This applies, in particular, to Heidegger. Kakabadze argued that Husserl could not find any other way except consciousness. Finally, the *telos*- a constituting factor for Husserl is consciousness.

Givi Margvelashvili, a Georgian philosopher and novelist, while dealing with the problems of existential ontology, could not do without consideration of phenomenological philosophy. According to Margvelashvili, apart from the methodological resemblance, there is a deep conceptual similarity between the works of Heidegger and Husserl (Margvelashvili 1998, 121-145).

Givi Margvelashvili is a bilingual (German-Georgian) writer and philosopher. He was born in a family of emigrants in Berlin. From 1946

till 1992 he lived in Tbilisi. For almost 30 years now, however, he chose Berlin as a place for living. His original conception is called "the theory of onto-textuality". Here Margvelashvili explained the implicit foundation of Heidegger's study. The author brought to the discussion the difference between existential time and story time. He argued that the study of the temporality of speech and language describes only story time. Existential time, on the other hand, is unreachable (Margvelashvili 1976, 102-137). Margvelashvili tries to discuss this unreachable stratum on the basis of a reflection on his artistic activity (novels, plays). He writes about "onto-textual ties" between poetry and philosophy (Margvelashvili 1992, 221-224).

Another contemporary thinker, whose work reveals the phenomenological roots of aesthetic thinking, was the famous Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili (1930-1990). Mamardashvili was able to change the "German orientation" of Georgian philosophy to some extent. He embarked upon a French "style of thinking", which was characterized by "artifacts of Georgian culture"[22]. In the course of the lectures, entitled "Cartesian Meditations," which he delivered at Lomonosov Moscow State University in 1981 (Mamardashvili 1993), Mamardashvili made an attempt to restore a course of lectures under the same title Husserl had used when delivering his lecture at the Sorbonne.[23] The starting point of thinking is Descartes' *evidentialism*, a radical self-reflection on a stream of experience and inner creativity of the internal life of consciousness that constitute the essence of thinking. That is expressed by the word "life". In his study "Psychological Topology of the Path", Mamardashvili examines how the life of thought takes place in the text. For this purpose he discusses Marcel Proust's novel *The Remembrance of Things Past*. It turned out to be an aesthetic experiment using the phenomenological way of thinking in literature.

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[22] In this context for further reading are recommended: Merab Mamardashvili, *Cartesian Meditations* (Moscow: Progress Publishing House, 1993 I ed., 2001 II ed.). (in Russian); Merab Mamardashvili, *Psychological Topology of Path* (*Lectures on Proust*) (St. *Petersburg*: Publishing House of Humanitarian Institute, 1997).

[23] This course of lectures was secretly typed by his students at the auditorium and the first edition consists of the notes taken at those very lectures.

The past is an unreachable phenomenon; we have to refer to the present state of mind, which acquires the meaning of the past. Through reflection, the restoration of things past, primal intentions have a methodical meaning; it turns out to be an explication of the history of mankind. Husserl examined phenomenology in this perspective. Mamardashvili observes a certain methodological analogy between Descartes, Husserl, and Proust here. Yet Nietzsche also spoke about the methodological restoration of authentic intentions.

According to Mamardashvili, thinking is ecstatic: it is re-birthed in an alien, hidden home country and return to the self. This is the common moment that unites Descartes, Husserl, and Mamardashvili's "Cartesian Meditations". This kind of meditations is particularly needed in the chaotic conditions of the present world; under conditions of systematic order, there is less of a need for them.

VI. An Echo of the Linguistic Turn

During the 1950s, a discussion of the matters pertinent to logic became the main trend of Soviet philosophizing. This was the case, in particular with regard to interrelations between formal logic and dialectical logic. The focus of the discussion was on a dispute between two Georgian philosophers: Kote Bakradze and Savle Tsereteli, both of whom were authors of major works in logic (Bakradze 1995 and Tsereteli 1971).

The author of a first manual in logics was Solomon Dodashvili. He issued his book in 1827. This original text of a young Georgian philosopher served as the only manual in the Russian Empire for many years. On the one hand, Savle Tsereteli argued that formal logic is a moment of dialectical logic. He created his theory on the basis of Hegel's conception. On the other hand, Kote Bakradze did not agree that formal logic is a lower, more elementary science; rather, he argued that dialectical logic is a higher stage, because it can get integral forms of existence. Whereas dialectics is a specific method of knowledge, logic can only be formal. As he defended the traditions of Aristotelian logic, Tsereteli tried to develop the dialectical logic of Hegel.

Influenced by logical positivism, from the '60s on, the process of separating logic from philosophy has gained strength and popularity in Georgian philosophy. A new generation of Georgian philosophers tried to "clean" logic from metaphysical and speculative elements and move closer to mathematics.

From the '90s motives of non-classical logic and linguistic philosophy paved the way. There were Georgian translations and studies of the works by of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Popper, and Gottlob Frege, John Dewey and Charles S. Pierce etc. with regard to language and culture; on William James's pragmatism and on the semantic theories of Ernst Cassirer and Susan Langer[24]. Debates were reopened between classical and non-classical logic. Classical logic entered a phase of pluralism. Some asserted the point of view that, with regard to logical systems, existing systems do not exclude each other but are complimentary to one another.[25]

With regard to articulating points of orientation on the thought of the late Wittgenstein, one notes that the analytical theory of linguistic acts and the growing interest towards semiotics is an echo of the linguistic turn in Georgia[26]. Wittgenstein's theory of "Linguistic games" opens a wide pathway for both: for returning logic back to philosophy and for other branches of philosophy. The phenomenon of game has a unique feature: by using different rules, one can build multiple different games from one and the same material. Thus the existence of the human being can be looked at as an infinite game of his/her possibilities.

The "Emergence" of Anglo-American philosophy in Georgia is another important phenomenon[27]. During the 20th century, Georgian philosophers

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[24] For further readings one may consult A. Zakariadze, *Specificity of Art Symbol* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 2007) (in Georgian).

[25] These considerations show up in the volume: *Aspects of Necessity: Apriority, Identity, Contradiction* (Tbilisi: Iliauni Press, 2009) 19-25, 40-51, 89-96.

[26] Much of interest is printed in a newly issued volume dedicated to the memory of the philosopher Mamuka Bichashvili, *Language, Culture, and Philosophy* (Tbilisi: Meridian Publishing Press) (in Georgian).

[27] Studies in this direction have been undertaken by M. Bichashvili, K. Katsitadze, A. Zakariadze, see *e.g.* A. Zakariadze, *Surveys of American Philosophy* (Tbilisi: Meridian Publishing Press, 2008).

looked down upon empiricism, positivism, and pragmatism. These branches of philosophy were not considered to be true philosophy. Only the European/Continental philosophy was acknowledged as being a part of the "local classics". In the mind some people, for example, the English language was not sufficiently suited for articulating philosophy. The new orientation, however, provides an opportunity to find a new approach to the analysis of such an important phenomenon as religious language[28] or the language of science, the language of art, political language, and other discourse practices.

VII. Philosophical-Theological Studies

In Europe, as well as in Georgia, philosophy in the 20th century was marked by a main epistemological problem. The censorship of Marxist ideology suspended the development of philosophical thought in Georgia. The leading philosophers had to move to the sphere of the history of philosophy. From the '70s on, the accent shifted to the sphere of philosophical anthropology. The spheres of religion and ethics remained in a vacuum throughout. The communist censorship forbade any spreading of literature on these themes. There also was a thorough lack of theological education.

Now, during a time that is marked by being in a so-called "post-secular" condition, one part of Georgia's intellectuals is addicted to Heidegger's "heroic hermeneutics", while another part adheres to the deconstructivist type of nihilism. The first decade of the 21st century is marked by philosophical-theological studies, that is, with investigations that aim to fill the vacuum. Together with the active cooperation of Romanian theologians, a Minor Program in Theology has been prepared at TSU, a scientific research center for philosophy and theology that is named after Anthim Iverianul. Also, TSU has established a scientific magazine, called the "Philosophical-Theological Reviewer." Nutsubidze's

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[28] N. Dura, A. Zakariadze, I. Brachuli, *Philosophy of Religion* (Tbilisi: TSU Publishing Press, 2015) (in Georgian).

rich heritage, his ontology, and his paraconsistent epistemology can play the role of being a bridge between theology and philosophy, as his aletheological realism is inspired by both Areopagitica and Petrizi's theory (Lourie 2013, 56-58; Koplatadze 2013, 61-71). Yet, also his studies in the ancient and medieval history of philosophical-theological ideas, the theology of politics, and his research on different issues of moral philosophy and applied ethics from theological perspectives, etc., will also support the development of the philosophical-theological studies in Georgia.

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SPIRITUAL PRACTICES
AS A PATH TO MEDIATE AND RECONCILE

DAN CHIȚOIU[1]

Abstract

The *spiritual experience* is, somehow, closer to what is proper to the contemporary *scientific experiment*: both are ways of *tryout*. A follower of such path needs to meet the requirements comparable with those of scientific experiment (in spirituality we can name it "experience"): rules and criteria of verification. Yet the result of this spiritual quest is on another level, because it grants access to a reality beyond our common-sense perception. To express the contents of this experience is extremely difficult, and the normal usage of words is inadequate. And, with any generation in history, expressing the specificity of this experience becomes always a question of novelty. This is due to a different cultural and social background, of a different "field of experience". I consider that nowadays we can better understand the rigor of a spiritual path as well as its concreteness (new scientific researches prove it), tracking the significance of spiritual practice for a more complex understanding of reality. But at the same time, new spiritual experiences, made in the actual contexts, can offer new solutions and new answers to the contemporary social and cultural challenges. Spirituality, understood as a practice following a particular religious tradition and aiming personal and community's betterment, has the ability to provide empathy for the other, because somebody having a spiritual practice can recognize a similar need of any other human. "To reconcile" can have many meanings, from reconciling individuals to reconciling neighborhoods, communities, entire countries, to which the reconciliation with self gathers (since we often have contradictory elements in our formal instruction or in our thinking).

Keywords: spirituality, globalized culture, mediation, reconciliation.

1. Globalized Culture and Need of Spirituality

Nowadays the outset of the so-called globalized culture becomes gradually expressed and sustained by the new ways of communication.

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Yet, this new evolution brings not just positive effects, but also critical ones, as the pressure felt by traditional cultures. This, because globalization implies the standardization of the ways of communicating. We have to question what are the consequences on human experience at the anthropological level, if today we encounter significant changes in the way we experience ourselves, the other and the world. There are enough reasons for the answer to be yes, for sure.

A recent phenomenon that can be discovered especially on social media, is the increasing occurrence of messages or conversations on spiritual/religious topics. This should be connected with the need of identity felt by today's younger generation, a need related with the development of a personal experience connected with something more than everyday life. Yet, the reference to spirituality is made following a subjective need, so there is a little interest to understand what is the real specificity of spiritual tradition and practice, there are just used some affirmations fitting with this personal quest. I relate this need of assuming personal experiences which exceed the usual with the quest for radical and authentic novelty, for attaining something really different and personal. For sure, nowadays this kind of quest is different in shape and content from those made, before because of the impact of recent science and new technologies. But there is also a kind of danger. If we agree that the quest for spiritual path is more present today compared with what happened before, and this pursuit is different compared with the past, the practice of it may not lead to the desired goal due to lack of any criteria or landmarks (as any spiritual/religious tradition offers).

This is confirmed by the today's unclear meanings of spirituality: the use of term now becomes rather vague and, on the other hand, the spiritual practices are so diverse that it is improper to use the term in every case. That's because today this term is more and more used for designating practices not related with traditional religions. Among the young generation there is an explicit tendency for searching a spiritual path that does not track any religious practice, it is a quest for a private spiritual activity that does not follow the rules and the requirements of traditional religious practices. This tendency is more or less worldwide present. But this spiritual quest is often risky because of inadequate means and inadequate goals. It is hazardous because it can affect not

only the reasoning, but also the health of the practitioner. To give a support for this last statement I propose, in what follows, a discussion on the role of *tradition* when speaking about *spiritual practices*. Tradition can be seen as a description of human capabilities and possibilities in conducting spiritual experiences: a horizon of possibilities and limitations. But the limitations where understood as a way to channeling experiences, to empower the human capacities in attaining spiritual goals and to prevent failure or harm. So, this implies verifiability (guidance) and precision requirements (prescriptions aiming mind and body). It is indeed very interesting to clarify how these requirements were set in different cultural areas. So, it is useful to clarify the influence of a certain cultural horizon in shaping of a particular spiritual practice and vice versa.

II. The Foundations of Eastern-Christian Tradition: Ways and Guides of Spiritual Practice

A very good example in supporting the statements I made is the fundamental intention which dominated the Eastern-Christian Tradition: apart from the systematic inventory of the affirmations made on different articles of faith, it was the way in which the practical experience of following a Gospel commandment was guided, as *someone's* concrete experience. The way through which what we call *Tradition* has crystallized was the accumulation of the testimonies about this practical experience. For our cultural exigencies, this type of accumulation does not mean more than the filing of a subjective and random case which could represent at the most a prime matter for further processing that could offer a coherent and systematic picture of this Tradition. This is precisely the thing we must avoid in order to reach the true spirit of this inheritance. It is necessary to accept the fact that not only our cultural model is not the supreme and ideal form of rationality, but also that in the European culture we must admit the existence of at least another major cultural paradigm which established a particular kind of connexion amongst the human capacities of experience and understanding. Privileging a certain description of reason and the affirmation that the reason is the human capacity by excellence have decided the cultural evolutions of the

modernity, but this radical emphasizing ultimately generated the crisis which crosses today cultural model.

Characteristic for the Eastern Christian spirituality is the notion of *betterment*, understood as a process of enhancing human's humanity. This progress, or *betterment,* as it is termed, can be described as attaining of somebody's 'measure'. So, somebody's identity is not a fixed configuration of psychological characteristics, but a kind of virtual tendency that can be more or less actualized. Yet this road to somebody's betterment requires guidance, and this guidance is an act that cannot be done by following a manual, a book, because of the concreteness and non-repeatability of personal mode of existence. The Byzantines used the ancient Greek word *mystagogía* for this guidance, intending by this naming to indicate that there is rather an initiation than a teaching, than something related to the classical *paideía*. I consider this formative dimension as the missing aspect of today education. We need today a formative strategy that should compensate just the building of practical or theoretical abilities, this compensation being the *initiation process* as a personal guidance dedicated to concrete and unique persons. This mystagogical approach can be described as the discovery of what is non-repeatable, of what is not to be find in any categorical description. On that way, the human potential can be unleashed, a potential that is either never or insufficiently activated by the current educational strategy. Such formative ideal stands under what is called *spiritual humanism*[2], a form of humanism that must compensate and correct the problematical features of the Early Modernity`s secular humanism, that one that hypostasized mathematical reason as privileged human capacity.

III. Spiritual Guidance and Role of Philosophy

The reaching of ultimate experience cannot be result of any type of formal instruction but of a different guidance, which could be called

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[2] As it is described, for example, by Tu Weiming in *Humanity and Self-Cultivation. Essays in Confucian Thought* (Cheng&Tsui: Boston, 1998).

'practical spiritual guidance': an exclusively face to face relationship, yet which did not equate to the passing on of information or techniques, because for the first time the absolute and radical uniqueness of personal experience was acknowledged. Of particular significance was the understanding of the human being from this novel perspective. Gregory of Nyssa and Basil the Great faced the task of describing an existential situation which could not be confined to the classical Greek philosophy of understanding nature (*ousía*). Freedom, in the proper sense, involves the possibility to overcome predetermined frameworks. The postulation of man's personal dimension (*hypóstasis*) marked an essential leap compared to the philosophical understanding of man up to that point. The pinnacle of the Greek meditation on man's existential situation was Tragedy, which described the individual's forever unsuccessful attempt to evade the fate that ruled his life (Zizioulas 1996, 33). Tragedy was the limit that Greek meditation could attain in reflecting on the man's effort to suspend his conditionings, because there were no arguments in favor of man's capacity to genuinely alter the course of his existence. Christian doctrine did not merely assume the fact that man is able to make decisions freely and to realize his decisions, it also emphasized the possibility that man can radically change his way of living, his own existential condition, to be in other words an *open* existence. Of course, such a statement involves paradox, being very difficult to make reliable statements about human. The paradox required the use of a different type of language, *åpóphatic*, based mainly on negation and suspension in order to escape the trap of describing what cannot be positively stated in any way. Consequently, the only way to express the personal mode of existence is to exceed conceptual language (which frames the object of its description in definitions and details), and to adopt a new acceptation of terms use, which allude to an apophatic reality rather than categorizing it in some way. The word is given the role of *pointer*, signaling a reality that eludes conceptual frameworks and even simple description.

The understanding of a fundamental difference between God and World was full of consequences for the way in which the possibility of knowledge was conceived. In the Greek horizon before Christianity it was stated that the possibility of knowing the truth was offered by the co-naturalness of the human mind with God, because the world is not

from an ontic perspective different from God, but it is an emanation of Him. But the Christian doctrine brings the conscience of an unsurpassed abyss between the created mind and uncreated God and therefore it is impossible for the mind to find out on its own about God. For this reason, it was necessary to reconsider the acceptance of philosophy as a truth searching exercise. To philosophize could not any longer mean a rational effort to grasp the mysteries of reality. Yet this didn't mean a rejection of the value of classic philosophic exercise, as made by Plato or Aristotle. But to this way of searching it was granted a preparatory role, a very important one, in the economy of searching the ultimate purpose of the philosophical exercise (Runciman 1970, 85). It was called *exōterikos*; however, this does not describe an inferior level, but it pointed out that this is the maximum possible that the human effort could reach in knowledge; it is what we call the knowledge from the *outside*. This 'outside' means the lack of something which can offer true and complete knowledge, 'being outside' the relation what could deliver the truth. For the entire cultural history of the Christian East, practicing this outside philosophy was considered to forming the mind possibilities' to discern, because any higher spiritual experience[3] has many dangers, as the risk of falling in the imaginary of the mind as long as the rational capacities are not completely formed. It has been considered that the instruction in the classic Greek philosophical texts could accomplish this formative task. But for this spiritual horizon the Truth is not *something* any longer but *Someone*. So, reaching the truth takes the form of a personal relation with the Truth as Someone, as a Person. In this understanding we can no longer talk about an objective knowledge of the truth, so the much-used later difference of modernity between objective and subjective becomes useless[4].

But there is also an inner philosophy, *the inner one*, *esōterikos* (Cavarnos 1968, 15). This philosophy does not follow the rigor of the Greek classic rationality: its particularity is given by what is

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[3] Which today we call *mystical*, but it did not had this name since it had the signification of an experience through which anyone could search the true path to Christ.

[4] M. Costa de Beauregard, Dumitru Stăniloae, *Mica Dogmatică vorbită* (*The Little Spoken Dogmatic*) (Sibiu: Deisis, 1995), 86.

characteristic to each person in his/her is opening to communion with Logos, with God. This is the reason why, in its intimacy, this part of philosophy is situated higher than the speech, it names the depth of the personal relation between the Creator and the creature, a relation always unique and non-repeatable. Nevertheless, reason is not absent from this experience, but takes superior forms which cannot be simply placed in a discursive expression. But this is also the place where the paradox of this expression lays, an experience which does not go around reason but it cannot be put into words either. This is the most practical dimension of philosophy, one that involves the entire being, all the human capacities and has as consequence a change of man in his depth which received the name *metánoia* in the Patristic texts. It means a change of mind but not as in a modification of its function, a decrease or alteration of its rational capacities, but an opening of it to the understanding of what is above the creation, it is a *participation* to the uncreated. The consequences of this experience are much ampler, they imply the whole human being even the body. There are also changes in the references to the world, in the way we interact with, so that we could talk about a *real* influence of man upon the world through his inner changes and not through the external direct actions or things. From this point of view, what becomes more important is the achieving of this *metánoia* rather than the outer interaction with the objectivity of this world. So, as it was understood in the Christian East, the inner philosophy is close, if not identical, to the aims of spiritual practice, even if the ways of preparation, of training can be more or less different: it is not requisite for the spiritual practice to have a previous training in formal philosophy, yet such kind of preparation is very effective in directing your inner experience.

IV. Community and Communion: Hierarchy as a Way to Human Betterment

Philosophy had an important and effective impact in setting the cultural and social life in Byzantium, and as well as much in fine-tuning of relationship between State and Church – at least by providing two central paradigms: the distinction between inner and outer wisdom and

the hierarchal understanding of reality. The distinction between an *outer* level and an *inner* level in philosophizing, in the way of making culture or instruction, offered a model in establishing the links and the dynamic dialectic between the secular power and the religious one. Describing the World as a hierarchical chain of levels in transmitting and participating to the Good also offered a vital model for setting the resorts of secular administration, and at the same time conferring it a symbolic and spiritual role, not just a pragmatic one. Every aspect of the Byzantine life was sow as linked in a subtle but real and effective hierarchical participative chain, connecting everything and everybody in a continuous act of spiritualization. So, there was not a firm distinction between earthly and heavenly, because the Heaven came on Earth for to make the Earth Heavenly.

The hierarchy theme, within the Eastern-Christian background, was understood it as a way to *perfect oneself through participation* (Pseudo-Dionysius 1987, 67). The superior-inferior diagram is not appropriated to this description: no matter on what level you are, adopting and participating to a hierarchy could lead you to perfection. The ones who find themselves on superior levels of the hierarchy, have to proper *mediate* the transmission of *good*. No matter the level a person is on, if the hierarchy he adopted is one that transmits the *good*, he will maximal fulfil his potentiality, he could reach *perfection*. This display of the senses of a hierarchy is based on a fundamental supposition of the Byzantine spirituality: the existence of man as a person, which means absolute identity, uniqueness, and non-repeatability. The hierarchy is understood as an existential dynamic which includes in a chain the movement of the persons towards their perfection as good people. At least this was the ideal that animated the organization of the Byzantine social structures, and of course the historic reality reflected more or less its completion.

The essential idea is that no one could directly unite with God and therefore mediation is needed. Secularly speaking, mediation is equally necessary, because for the Byzantine the social good means nothing but the possibility to participate to transcendence through the best way possible. The levels of the administrative hierarchy are especially the degrees of participation on Good and at the same time they are manifestations of it towards the ones who find themselves on an inferior

level. But the difference between levels is not one among something better and something inferior, but it is actually o different capacity of participation. In this way, the hierarchy is not voluntary established, but it is dictated precisely by the possibility and the measure in which a person could receive the Truth and at the same time could communicate it to others.

The type of justice developed by the Byzantine society can be described as *iconic justice*, and has as its central element the *hierarchical responsibility*. It is a different way of understanding and doing justice, a rather existential and dynamic one, something connected with the Byzantine acceptation of Tradition. As I mentioned before, apart from the systematic inventory of different social or religious practices, this way of preserving tradition is the sum of the practical experiences in following a prescription (social or religious), is about concrete experiences of people, communities and generations. Based on this use of tradition, the responsibility was developed as having a double, even triple meaning. You have to be responsible not only for that one under you on the hierarchical scale, but also for the ones situated above you and also you have a responsibility for whole cosmos as a part of it. That's why in this understanding, the proper description of reality is that of a Chain of Beings, not of a Chain of Being (a very widespread philosophical interpretation about the order of reality), to more accurate, of a *Chain of Persons*. This late formulation is the most proper one since even the Ultimate Reality (God) is described in the Byzantine Tradition as being Personal. The ideal of every man and woman was *betterment*, a continuous process of self-perfection through hierarchical responsibility. Justice is, in this case, a result of the common assuming of hierarchical responsibility. This understanding of doing justice worked as a presupposition also in the Post-Byzantine societies in the Eastern Christianity, even if sometimes was unapparent.

V. Conclusion

Responsibility, as described by the Eastern-Christian social paradigm, plays a key role in the process of mediation among people belonging to

a certain community or society. But as well, this crucial aspect in setting of the Byzantine social mind, and more or less active in the late Eastern-European societies, can offer as much as a valid solution to the question regarding the strategies in mediation and reconciliations between communities and nations in today's globalized world, when so often your neighbors are people coming from a distant culture and religion. Yet, the responsibility of this description gains its foundation in the quest for betterment as continuous self-perfection, something to be gain by spiritual practice. So, it can be argued that a spiritual practice, no matters from what religious or cultural area it comes, can offer the ground for mediation and reconciliation among people and communities.

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PROCESS PHILOSOPHY IN THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL TRADITION

VESSELIN PETROV[1]

Abstract

The subject of the present exposition is namely the discussion of the question when and how process philosophy has entered into the European cultural tradition. We could approach this question in two ways: the philosophical and the historical perspective. We shall focus of our attention on both perspectives, which concern the return of process philosophy in Europe after its original moulding as a contemporary philosophical trend by Whitehead and his immediate followers. If we trace and systematize chronologically the acts of influence of Whitehead's works on eminent scientists and philosophers in Europe, we can provisionally outline three stages. The paper evaluates the manner in which process philosophy became so attractive for the European philosophical thought. At the present time we can definitely conclude that it is confirmed the existence of "a school" of representatives of process philosophy in Europe.

Keywords: European cultural tradition, European philosophical thought, process philosophy, Whitehead.

Process philosophy is a possible answer to the questions concerning the opposites of being against becoming and constancy against change which have been central for the metaphysics since the time of Ancient Greece. The present exposition will not have the task to explain the essence of process philosophy, nor will it discuss the variety of answers about it. As it is well known, contemporary process philosophy has as its founder or spiritual father Alfred North Whitehead, with his

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philosophical works of the first half of the 20th century. Through a combination of circumstances, it has taken place in the USA after working at Harvard University. That is why it is usually accepted that contemporary process philosophy has originated and developed first as a trend in the American philosophy before Whitehead and his immediate pupils and followers. In the course of years, the interest in process philosophy went far beyond the boundaries of the American continent as a result of the originality of the approach, of its significance for the development of contemporary philosophy in general and of the actuality of problems to which this approach is directed even outside of the sphere of philosophy. Nowadays it is an affirmed trend in the philosophical and, *in extenso*, in the humanitarian thought in America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

The subject of the present exposition is namely the discussion of the question when and how process philosophy has entered into the European cultural tradition. We could approach to this question in two ways. If it is considered in philosophical and historical perspective, it is clear that the roots of process philosophy are European because a number of its predecessors in the history of philosophy as Heraclitus, Leibniz, Hegel etc. are Europeans, and also concretely because of the fact that the views of Whitehead himself has been moulded in the Great Britain in purely European cultural environment.[2] In that sense we can say that process philosophy has never left the European continent. We shall not focus our attention on this aspect of the question.

The other aspect of the question – concerns, so to speak, the second return of process philosophy in Europe after its original moulding as a contemporary philosophical trend by Whitehead and his immediate followers. The fact of the great development of process philosophy in Europe is recently noted by many researchers (Lucas 1989, 6) and cannot be questioned.

I would like to begin the exposition with a story which has taken place more than 50 years ago. In 1956, several years after the World War II:

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[2] As George Lucas, Jr. points out, Whitehead is "representing in fact a unique and functional blend of some of the main currents of English and American" tradition (Lucas 1989, 148).

> Prof. John Smith of Yale University in USA has come in Europe and decided to pay a visit to the venerable Martin Heidegger. Their conversation lasted for three hours, during which time Heidegger expressed his passionate interest in turning toward a new, post-Hegelian pursuit of a philosophy of nature. Smith responded that in America A. N. Whitehead had already spawned such a movement. Heidegger was most pleasantly surprised and interested, and expressed a desire to read some of Whitehead's philosophy. It was, in fact, at Heidegger's request that the tremendous project of translating Process and Reality was begun at Suhrkamp Verlag (Frankfurt). (Veken 1990, 240-47)

As a matter of fact, the translations lasted longer and Heidegger died before the end of the work. But nevertheless it was carried to the end and the German translation has appeared in 1979 (Whitehead 1979). Many other examples could also express the interest of eminent European philosophers and thinkers to the philosophy of Whitehead. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin had read Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* during an exploration in the Gobi desert and he had vowed to study in greater detail the ideas of Whitehead. Merleau-Ponty, toward the end of his life, read a French translation of *The Function of Reason* and declared Whitehead to be one of the most original and creative philosophers he had ever read (Veken 1990).

If we trace out and systematize chronologically the acts of influence of Whitehead's works on eminent scientists and philosophers in Europe, we can provisionally outline three stages. In the first one we are speaking of an early influence of Whitehead during his lifetime on thinkers as Bergson (1859-1941), the chemist and philosopher of science Emile Meyerson (1859-1933), the philosopher and mathematician Louis Couturat (1868-1914), the historian and philosopher Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943), the philosophers Charlie Dunbar Broad (1887-1971), Philippe Devaux (1902-1979) and Enzo Paci (1911-1976) etc. (Weber 2004, 45).

The second stage includes the next generation of European thinkers that had been influenced by Whiteheadian philosophy. Of course, the borderline between the first and the second stages is only conventional. We should point out here the philosophers Dorothy Emmett (1904-2000) and Wolfe Mays (1912-2005), the scientist Ilya Prigogine (1917-2003), the philosophers Jules Vuillemin (1920-2001), Jean Ladriere

(1921-), Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), Volfhart Pannenberg (1928-), Reiner Wiehl (1929-), Jan Van Der Veken (1932-) and many others (Weber 2004, 45).

The third stage can be dated conventionally as beginning from the first half of the 1970-ties, when translations of Whitehead's works began to appear into German, French and Dutch. For example, the first translation into Dutch appeared in 1974. During that time the interest in process philosophy in Belgium increased. The students there began to study process philosophy and several doctoral dissertations had been defended in this area. One problem then was still finding enough materials and documents in Europe, devoted to process philosophy which were necessary for an effective investigation. The investigator up to there had to travel to the USA, where the Center for Process Thought already existed at Claremont. So, it was decided to establish such a center in Europe. In 1978, during the visit of one of the most eminent representatives of process thought, Charles Hartshorne, in Leuven (Belgium), the Louvain Center for Process Thought was created. Soon after that, on the basis of this Center, the European Society for Process Thought was created. The task of the Center is to reunite scholars from Europe with interest in process thought, to invite specialists in that field from all over the world for seminars, discussions and research work. One focus of the investigations in this Center is the correspondence of process philosophy to the state of affairs in the contemporary European philosophical stage.

We should also mention that the European Society for Process Thought already began to publish *European Studies in Process Thought*, whose first volume appeared in 2003, followed by two further issues that are currently in the press. This series is intended as a continuation of the world-famous journal *Process Studies*, published in the USA. Quite recently, in October 2005 a "Whitehead Metaphysical Society" was created in Poland by a group of Polish philosophers interested in process philosophy. This society plans to organize conferences yearly and already it began to publish its own journal *Studia Whiteheadiana*. Analogous societies exist in other European countries, for example in France, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

The same process is in its course also in Central and Eastern Europe. Whiteheadian society was created in Hungary and it has realized the

Hungarian translation of Whitehead's book *Process and Reality*. Next it was Bulgaria, where a Bulgarian center for process studies was established and soon it became a collective member of the European society for process thought. In 2016 Bulgaria organized one of the European Summer schools in process thought. Efforts to establish Whiteheadian society were made also in Romania in the last few years.

International conferences devoted to specific problems of process philosophy, considered in European perspective, have begun to be organized in Europe during the third stage of the influence of Whiteheadian thought on European philosophy. The first conference has taken place in Leuven in 1978 and next conferences have been organized in Bonn (1981), Bad Homburg (1983) and Switzerland (1987). These events have been followed by the conferences "Whitehead and the Rythms of Education" in Lille (France) in 1994, and "The Future of Process Thought in Europe" in Kortrijk (Belgium) in 1997; "The Interplay between Science, Philosophy and Religion: the European Heritage" in Leuven (1998) and "The Philosophical Significance of Whitehead's Concept of Creativity" in 1999. We should also observe that there are International Whitehead Conferences, held every two years. The last two were organized in China in 2002 and in Korea in 2004, but during the 2006 year there were the 6th International Whitehead Conference again in Europe, in Salzburg University in Austria from 3-6 July. The discussions have gone parallel in more than 40 sections on philosophy, religion, and science and humanities. Next few conferences were in Asia, but in 2013 there was an International Whitehead conference in a European country – in Poland. These facts speak about the great importance which process philosophy had in Europe.

After this short review of facts and events which are evidences for the firm settlement of contemporary process philosophy in the European cultural space, it is relevant evaluate the manner in which process philosophy became so attractive for the European philosophical thought. In answer to the last question, it should be pointed out the theoretical dialog between the Whiteheadians and non-Whiteheadians in the area of philosophy, as well as fruitfulness of process philosophy for other fields of knowledge. It is not an accidental fact that outstanding scientists as Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers have been attracted by

the approach of process philosophy. David Bohm should be added to this number of scientists. Process approach is fruitful not only for physics, but also for biology, for the contemporary ecological and related ethical problems, and for medicine.[3]

Process philosophy is attractive not only for the philosophy of science. It offers a definite approach also to the philosophy of culture, philosophy of economics and philosophy of the political theory. Here we should mention the classical works of Whitehead as *Adventures of Ideas* and *Modes of Thoughts*, as well as publications of contemporary processualists (Cobb 2002). Process philosophy also gives support to intercultural dialogue. Its non-substantial approach is particularly attractive to Buddhists, claiming to be ancient predecessors of process philosophy. Such problems are frequent themes of the regular East-West conferences. This subject-matter is particularly interesting for the humanitarians from Europe. Last but not least, process approach is related to the great challenges of our time, such as our attitude toward nature, the problems of different nations among the world, different aspects concerning the justice, and so on.[4] It is clear that this approach does not offer decisions at key for any of these problems, but it frames a conceptuality which is probably most suitable for their solving. One of the dangers for the contemporary world consists in efforts to solve the problems in isolation. In this respect, the process approach is most adequate with its stress on the interconnectedness of the things in the world (including problems of the day).

As to the philosophy in proper sense, contemporary process philosophy is a constructive way of thought, opposing to the deconstructive trend both in Europe (in the face of Derrida, etc.) and in USA (in the face of Rorty etc.). The philosophy of the second half of the 20th century became influenced by their debates about constructive postmodernism, one of the fathers of which is Whitehead (Griffin 1993). Independently of their conventional recognition as constructive

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[3] See the papers of the volume edited by Griffin (Griffin 1988).

[4] Very indicative in this respect is the paper signed by John Cobb, Jr. from January 2006 dedicated to the current threats of USA to Iran for an air attack because of its nuclear programme.

postmodernists, the representatives of process philosophy successfully tried to restore the trust amongst philosophers to the possibility on principle for a new type of metaphysics, and with their activity in this respect they earn sympathy both on the other side of ocean and in Europe. This is valid not only for Whitehead and his immediate pupils, but also for the present day followers of process philosophy. On the other hand, the attractiveness of process philosophy to the European philosophers is also due to the fact that Whiteheadian philosophy can claim a number of important anticipations of problems, which have been laid down and developed subsequently in the works of such eminent philosophers as Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Richard Rorty, Saul Kripke, John Searle, Hilary Putnam, John Perry and others.[5]

Generalizing the considered reasons for the interest in process philosophy in Europe, we should outline, to use the words of George Lucas, Jr., that "students of the Western philosophical tradition can perceive a recent, intelligible, and highly plausible attempt to forge a unified and coherent perspective on the problems and concerns that they themselves (and the contemporary culture in which they participate) share and seek to understand" (Lucas 1989, 11).

We can definitely say that at present time there already exists an affirmed school of representatives of process philosophy in Europe. There is a great amount of publications concerning the European process philosophers in different areas of process philosophy, many of them quite notorious.[6] They have already initiated many discussions in that direction. As an example, we can point out to the fact that when the American philosopher Nicholas Rescher created his own version of process philosophy, expressed in a series of his books[7], it was organized immediately a discussion published as a large book on different themes and versions of process philosophy, following the initiative mainly of

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5 This aspect of Whiteheadian philosophy is considered in detail by George Lucas, Jr. in chapter 8 of his book (Lucas 1989, 129-49).

6 Some of them are: Veken 1999a; Veken 1999b; Jonas 2001; Poli 2001; Decock 2002; Debrock 2003; Seibt 1990; Seibt 2004a; Seibt 2004b; Riffert, Weber 2003; Dietz 2006 and many others.

7 See Rescher 1996; Rescher 2000a; Rescher 2000b; Rescher 2001.

European process philosophers (Weber 2004) who work in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Italy and other European countries.

In conclusion, I would like to remember the observation of George Lucas, Jr. that parallel with the process of increasing the interest in Europe in process philosophy, there is also a process of "continentalisation" of the philosophical (including process) thought in America, through useful comparisons with the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and even with Hegel, Schelling and other European thinkers from the past (Lucas 1989, 203). It is clear that these are processes connected with the increasing of mutual influence of the different cultural (including philosophical) traditions in contemporary world. We can rightly expect that this mutual influence of the different cultural traditions will give creative stimuli for new authentic philosophical investigations.

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DARWIN'S ANT PROBLEM. GROUP SELECTION IN THE *ORIGIN OF SPECIES*[1]

MIHAIL-VALENTIN CERNEA[2]

Abstract

This paper explores two philosophical issues related to Darwin's treatment of the sterile castes of insects in the *Origin of Species*. The first aim is to review the scholarly articles on the subjects of Darwin's acceptance or rejection of natural selection acting at levels above that of the individuals. The second aim is to see whether Darwin's position on group selection informs in any way contemporary debates on group selection and multilevel selection. The paper arrives at the conclusion that, there is significant evidence in the *Origin* that Darwin did see natural selection acting at the level of the *community*, but it is hard to say anything more than evolutionary biology is compatible with multilevel selection if we take this point into account. Many present-day individualistic and pluralistic accounts of natural selection that seek legitimacy from Darwin's views on the subject open up to charges of anachronism.

Keywords: Darwin, *Origin of Species*, group selection, multilevel selection.

Introduction

It is the first half of the 19th century and you are a promising young scientist trying to understand the mind-numbing diversity of life on planet Earth. You travel the world and document the behavior and morphology of various species and subspecies, you engage in selective breeding, you seek the help of other biologists, and slowly, but surely it

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dawns on you that there may be a simpler, more elegant, and plausible way of explaining how it came to be that life on Earth has taken so many forms than any other account available in your age. Some of your predecessors have already been proposing controversial notions regarding the transmutation of species, but you think that you have found plenty of evidence to show that species do evolve over time. Unlike your contemporaries, this happens mainly due to a mechanism you call "natural selection" – given the limited resources of our planet, there is a struggle for existence in which the individual organisms adapted to the surrounding environment survive, and reproduce, while only oblivion awaits for those unfit. Thus, over many generations, the offspring of those surviving individuals inherit their parents' phenotypical traits, this way producing massive change in the species' fundamental characteristics.

Now, as you have probably guessed, your name is Charles Darwin and you have some big hurdles ahead of you. However powerful your theory of evolution through natural selection might be, the religious and scientific establishments of your time will not easily accept your ideas. This new theory of yours will worry those who see life as having divine origins, because your mechanism of natural selection seems to need no God, while your fellow scientists will have good reasons to doubt your conclusions, given that you have yet to explain what exactly "heredity" means, and that there is no way to devise experiments that span generations and thousands of years to confirm your work. And on top of all that, you struggle with a quite serious ant problem.

This paper concerns Darwin's "ant problem." In the *Origin of species*, Darwin seems to apply the mechanism of natural selection only to individuals. Specifically, it is the individual organism which is involved in the "struggle for existence," not groups of individuals or species themselves. In the end, it seems that the lone organism is the one that fights for sustenance and produces offspring, thus the subject of natural selection. The development of species or intraspecific varieties can mostly be reduced to happenings in the world of individuals. The phenotypical traits which arise from the aforementioned struggle are meant to maximize individual fitness and differential reproduction.

Unfortunately, the natural world always provides counterexamples to whatever theories we may conceive about it. The "ant problem" I keep referring to is, in simple words, that there are individuals belonging to the species of social insects which develop traits that do minimize their own fitness and reproduction potential (worker ants and bees do not have offspring), while maximizing that of the group. As we are about to see, this was a big obstacle in Darwin's argument for the existence of natural selection, and it is also a problem that has plagued evolutionary biology to the present day in the form of the contemporary debate around the concept of "multilevel selection." That is, the idea that not only the individuals are "naturally selected," but also groups of individuals, populations, and maybe even species themselves. While group selections was vigorously denied by most evolutionary biologists in the last 50 years, Elliot Sober, E.O. Wilson and D.S. Wilson revitalized this notion in the form of the multi-level theory of natural selection (abbreviated MLS since). The issue remains contentious, though, and it is interesting to see that the controversy around group selection and MLS has spawned another scholarly discussion around Darwin's own positions on the issue. Since the 1980s, there has been considerable disagreement whether the founder of evolutionary biology was a strict organismal selectionist, or he also accepted some kind of supraorganismal natural selection.

In the following pages I will explore this debate, and tentatively argue that some of the questions that we want Darwin to answer about group selection may have serious anachronistical flaws which preclude his simple classification as an individualist or a pluralist regarding natural selection. The article is structured as follows: (i) in the next section I will begin by giving a short summary of the contemporary debate around MLS, and the surprisingly large role Darwin still plays in it, (ii) the third section will focus on the scholarly debate on whether Darwin is actually a group selectionist or not, with a critical summary of the most important contributions to this discussion, (iii) the fourth section will be concerned with Darwin's own words on the subject, and the way one might rightly interpret them, and (iv) in the last section I will offer some concluding remarks, and present a possible objection

regarding the anachronistic application of some contemporary terms and concepts to Darwin's writings.

I. A (Very) Short History of Group Selection

What has been called since the 1980s "the group selection controversy" (Wilson 1980) was not actually much of a controversy until British naturalist Wynne-Edwards published a fully realized account of group selection in his book *Animal Dispersion in relation to Social Behavior* (Wynne-Edwards, 1962). Darwin's issues with this notion notwithstanding, as I shall explore them in detail during this paper – the idea that natural selection operates at levels above that of the individual organism – was widely accepted by many of Darwin's contemporary fellow evolutionists, and was entertained by some of the great figures of the Modern Synthesis era. Only after Wynne-Edwards' account was demolished both by biologists and philosophers of biology alike (Williams 1966, Maynard Smith 1972), it became a contentious issue that has spawned countless papers and debates.

As far as I am concerned, the central questions that shape this discussion are: (i) what is the unit of natural selection?, and (ii) what are the levels of the biological organisation on which natural selection operates? If one opposes group selection, she will reply (i) by saying something like "the individual is the basic unit of natural selection", and (ii) something like "natural selection operates exclusively at the level of the individual organism." On the other hand, a modern group selection supporter's answer to the first question is that natural selection has multiple units, even if what the accepted units are may vary (it could be individuals and groups of individuals, or something even more inclusive, like genes, cells, individual organisms, and populations). To the second question, the answer will be that natural selection operates on multiple levels in the natural world.

The need for a version of natural selection that includes "between-groups" competition (Okasha 2006, 15) is generated by a requirement for evolutionary biology to explain certain phenotypical traits which preclude reproduction for certain species of social insects, as I have

noted above, but, maybe more importantly, altruistic behaviour in social animals. One striking example is the evolutionary biologists' ambition to explain the evolution of human morality. This is not a new objective for biology, as, ever since Darwin's seminal follow-up to the *Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, it has been clear that altruism is an issue for a biological theory which predicates the diversity of life on the "selfish" needs of the individual to survive and bring offspring into the world.

Even though I will focus mainly on the *Origin* in this paper, as I find it important to see if group selection is embedded by default in the abstract structure of natural selection and not just an ad-hoc development meant to explain away some pesky and unruly phenomena, it is relevant to note this quote from *The Descent of Man*: "a tribe including many members who (…) were always ready to give aid to each other and sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection." (Darwin 1871, 166) As we can see, Darwin calls "natural selection" a competion between groups of humans in which the individuals sacrifice their own fitness for that of the group, and win together. This trend of thought continued in evolutionary biology when it was finally unified with Mendelian genetics at the beginning of the 20th Century. Dobzhansky, to give just one example, emphasized that the physiology of populations is quite different from that of individuals, that they function under separate sets of evolutionary rules and, strikingly, considered the physiology of populations not accounted for in satisfactory manner by developments in the theory of evolution of his time (Dobzhansky 1937, 120).

Scientific works, like those quoted above, which came about in the first half of the century, inspired Wynne-Edwards to provide an exhaustive look into group selection. Paradoxically, his ideas were strongly rejected by his fellow contemporaries, and group selection was discarded for a long time by the biological scientific community. The two most important figures of this repudiation were George Williams and John Maynard Smith (Williams 1966, Maynard Smith 1972). I will not go into the fine details here, as it is not in the scope of the article, but "they argued that group selection is biologically unlikely." (Okasha 2001, 27) The reasons for this unlikelihood are many. As groups have longer lifespans than individuals, it seems highly implausible that group

selection has the far-reaching phenotypical and behavioural effects that Wynne-Edwards and others ascribed to it. It is more likely that the rise and fall of various groups of individual organisms is driven by natural selection operating at the organismal level. As such, any development that could be explained by group selection is either reducible, or only a by-product of individual selection, and nothing more. Moreover, group selection is not actually needed, as one can invoke theories like kin selection, compatible with strict individual selection (Hamilton 1963). Altruistic behaviour is explained away as just an individual's propensity to maximize its reproductive success, in this version the concept of fitness being inclusive of closely related kin. Mathematical models used in evolutionary biology seem to undercut group selection as well because they validate group selection in such a narrow range of situations that render it statistically insignificant.

The reports of group selection's death had been greatly exaggerated. The debate was revitalized in the 1980s and 1990s largely due to the contributions of Davis Sloan Wilson, Elliot Sober, and Edward Osborne Wilson. They actually extended the scope of group selection, naming the theory they proposed the "multi-level theory of natural selection." The basic idea of MLS is that natural selection operates on most levels of the natural world, whether it is the gene, the cell, the organism or the population. Species selection is still a very controversial notion. The resurgence of group selection in its multilevel variety is still coldly received by the scientific community despite some of the reasons invoked by Sober, Wilson, and the other supporters of MLS.

What does Darwin's 150 years old work has to do with a contemporary debate in the evolutionary biology that involves tools and conceptual structures that have been introduced in recent years? To quote Elliot Sober, "Darwin casts a long shadow, and many evolutionists have sought shelter in his penumbra." (Sober 2011, 50) I do not believe that Sober means anything contentious with such statements. The idea, to my understanding, is not that contemporary biologists hide their own scientific prejudices behind Darwin's original formulation of natural selection. The simple point is that the *Origin of Species* set the agenda of research to this day, and this is not a failure of biology, but rather a feature of science as it generally functions.

Philip Kitcher explained that progress in science is a multidimensional notion that may or may not involve all of the aspects of a type of scientific practice (language, fundamental questions to be answered, explanatory patterns, standard examplars of data and experimentation, exemplars of scientific reasoning). (Kitcher 1993) In this view, we should imagine progress in a scientific discipline like a chart of a successful commercial entity: some months are less profitable than others, but the general direction of the graph is upward. In the same way, with some scientist's work, the progress he/ she brings to the discipline may involve language and explanatory schemata, while she may do worse in the experimental department. It is then someone else's job to bring forth better experiments, even if this might restrict the range of questions answered by that domain.

Turning back to the issue at hand, Kitcher argues that the main contribution to biology that Darwin brought to the table is related to the explanatory patterns formulated in the *Origin*, and to the questions they are meant to answer. In short, Darwin asks, schematically, why all or most of the members of species S (or population P) have the trait T. The answer, in the majority of cases, involves showing how T helped members of previous generations of S/P to survive and reproduce, compared with other contemporaneous variants of S/P having variants of T. Given that T is heritable, and that organisms with T have higher rates of reproductive success than all other variations, given enough time all members of S/P will have T (Kitcher 1993, 28). The task that was ascribed to the following generations of researchers was to fill in Darwin's blank spots. This is what we probably mean when we say that Darwin was the "founder" of evolutionary biology. "In the history of Darwinism," Kitcher notes

> those patterns have been extended, revised, and refined. As we trace the way in which this has been done, we see how an abstract and schematic picture of how the phenomena of nature are ordered is successively filled in, how the basic structure of Darwin's explanations in the Origin is preserved and extended as the questions about which he confessed his ignorance are answered. (Kitcher 1993, 50)

Because the philosophy of science has offered many conceptions on the advancement of science, I only ask the reader to entertain

Kitcher's views on the subject, as they offer us a conceptual apparatus that is useful in clarifying one of the two main issues this paper tries to deal with: why Darwin plays such a fundamental role in contemporary debates in biology and the philosophy of biology. In Kitcher's terms, if Darwin's original explanatory patterns are incompatible with group selection or its MLS version, then the objections of Williams and Maynard Smith have stronger grounding than ever before. Therefore, group selection will seem to be outside the scientific practice set out by Darwin in the *Origin*. On the other hand, if Darwin accepted, even with difficulty, that natural selection works at supraorganismal levels, then it will be difficult to trace and justify the narrow individualist notion, popular these days.

One could worry, though, that this approach might not consider the way the explanatory patterns have been "revised and refined" over the years. This is the second main issue that I intend to explore in this article. While the Darwinian basic structure may have been preserved, the introduction of modern genetics, axiomatization, mathematical models, and other such techniques to evolutionary biology might make asking the question whether Darwin was a group selectionist, at best, irrelevant to the current debate or, at worst, wholly anachronistic, as I shall argue at the end of this article. While evolutionary biology has not suffered the same paradigmatic changes that physics has, it may just be that the central problem of this paper is analogous to wondering what Newton would have thought of the space-time continuum.

II. What We Think about Darwin's Thought

In the following section I will offer a brief review of the literature written on Darwin and group selection since the 1980s. I believe it is better to begin with a conceptual cartography of the aforementioned debate rather than with Darwin's writings (which will be taken into account in section IV). This is mainly because I have found that the relevant passages from the *Origin* serve the purposes of this paper better as a litmus test for the views that I will present in the subsequent pages. As we shall see in these subsequent pages, there has been considerable

disagreement in contemporary scholarly articles about this historical issue, with both sides arguing that the other is misrepresenting Darwin's original writings. I shall speculate upon the reasons for this controversy toward the end of this paper, but first let us see what the main positions are. It may already be obvious that there are authors who believe that Darwin was, or at least tried really hard, to be a strict individualist regarding natural selection, while some more recent discussion cast a pluralist light on his work, arguing that Darwin accepted group selection without restraints, at least in the case of social insects and the emergence of human morality.

III. Darwin the Individualist

Even though the debate on Darwin's answer to the problem of the units of natural selection begins in the 1980s, as I have stated above, it is fair to say that, even before, there were authors praising Darwin for maintaining a strict composure regarding the application of natural selection to higher levels than individual organisms (Ghiselin 1974, 17).

However, most recent historical studies on this debate have picked Michael Ruse's *Charles Darwin and Group Selection* as its starting point (Ruse 1980). Ruse writes this article in a time when the group selection controversy was seeing a resurgence, and observes that

> both the sociobiologists and their critics resort to the familiar tactic of trying to legitimize the present by reference to the past – one finds protagonists on both sides claiming that they alone stand in the true evolutionary tradition – there is therefore some interest in seeing whether the debate around the levels of selection stretches back to the first announcement of the theory of evolution through natural selection, and where precisely the theory's chief formulator, Charles Darwin, stood on the matter. (Ruse 1980, 616-617)

One passing observation one could make, as I have stated above, is that there may be more important theoretical reasons for this historical investigation than simple scientific legitimacy.

Ruse is quick to note that Darwin is clearly focusing on natural selection acting at individual levels. Whether it is between organisms

from different species or conspecifics, the founder of evolutionary biology sees the struggle for existence as an individualist contest. Moreover, Ruse argues that sexual selection, as it is presented in the *Origin*, shows Darwin's commitment to this issue, mainly because it underlines the selective pressures that force even members of the same group to compete with one another for resources, and for reproductive success.

With respect to the ant problem, Ruse seems to hint that Darwin had in mind a mechanism closer to kin selection rather than group selection. The fact that social insects have castes of sterile workers is not entirely detrimental to the sterile members themselves, and that only enhances the fitness of their fertile relatives. To quote Ruse,

> the sterility occurs because it is of value to all the related members of the nest, and also Darwin thought in part because, when one has two sterile castes, without sterility one would have interbreeding and less-effective hybrid forms. (Ruse 1980, 619)

Here, Ruse effectively argues that Darwin thought that sterile castes actually improve their own fitness by being sterile, and it is not a phenomenon that should be attributed to some early formulation of group selection. Furthermore, Ruse states unequivocally that reading *group selection* in those passages from the *Origin* where Darwin talks about group selection may be exposed to a charge of anachronism, as we may see through our contemporary eyes, "something more subtle than is really there." (Ruse 1980, 619) It is not entirely clear to me what the less subtle theoretical construction used by Darwin is in Ruse's view. A primitive notion of group selection is not unavailable to Darwin in his time, and biologists like Wallace clearly support the idea that natural selection also operates on groups of individuals.

Ruse seems to accept that Darwin may have given an explanation akin to group selection regarding the evolution of human morality and altruistic behaviour, but he was entirely unconvinced about it, and also tried to give an individualist explanation for this phenomenon. I will not go into details here, but the basic idea stems from the evolution of the human being's capacity for reasoning. The more we understood about ourselves and the world, the more we developed a predictive outlook on

social relations that may have told us that altruistic behaviour would be responded in kind by our kin. Thus, morality evolved through an individual level mechanism. Despite the fact that tribes which foster "good" behaviour have higher chances to come out victorious in the struggle with more egotistical tribes, the reason why morality came about is still to be found at the level of the individual organism and its fitness traits.

This is, evidently, not the only interpretation that deems Darwin a strict individual level selectionist. Jean Gayon argues that Darwin denied group selection in almost every way possible. Even the often quoted passages where Darwin mentions "the good of the species" is, in Gayon's view, not a good reason to ascribe anything like group selection to his ideas (Gayon 2009). Everything that may be good for a species will be arrived at through the good of the individual. Helena Cronin also contests those Darwinians who do not abide by the individualist line set out by their venerable forefathers (Cronin 1991, 280-295).

A more interesting case, in my view, is Stephen Jay Gould, who agrees with the aforementioned authors, but recognized that Darwin "agonized over levels of selection." (Gould 2002, 50) The story Gould tells has Charles Darwin choosing an organismal account for natural selection for theoretical reasons, as it laid the foundation for his gradualist view of evolution. Therefore, Darwin was being "brave" and "single-minded" about the exclusivity of the organismic level and, in Gould's view, this is the "radical and distinctive feature of his theory." (Gould 2002, 17) Even when an individualist view seemed to be incoherent with evolutionary trends, Darwin tried to solve the ant problem and other issues without resorting to group selection. Gould believes that Darwin was not wholly satisfied with this situation, even though many of his contemporaries, Wallace included, accepted various versions of supraorganismal natural selection, even taking into account species selection.

To conclude, we have two ways in which we can cast an individualistic net over Darwin's writings. We can either say that Darwin was fully committed to the organismal level, and that reading group selection is rather an anachronistic interpretation, as Ruse seems to maintain, or say that the question about levels of selection was very important for

Darwin and, despite his obvious preference for organismal selection, and given the status of the tools and theories available to biologists in his time, it was hard for him to establish apodictically that natural selection operates only on individuals, like Gould seems to believe. On the other side of the debate, though, there are authors who read the *Origin* and its further Darwinian developments rather differently.

IV. Darwin the Pluralist

One of the most interesting features of this debate around Darwin's supposed account of the levels of selection is the way in which authors from different sides of the more general controversy regarding group selection and MLS read the same passages from the *Origin* and Darwin's other works on the issue in a wholly different way.

I will begin this brief history of Darwin the supraorganismal selectionist with Mark Borrello's account from the first chapter of his book from 2010 about the contentious history of group selection, mainly because it is a direct critique of Ruse's arguments (Borrello 2010). In this work, Borrello tries to shed some new light on the development of evolutionary biology through the sinuous trajectory that group selection has seen in the history of the science. Obviously, he begins with Darwin.

Manifestly against Ruse, but also against other authors mentioned in the previous subsection, he states that "in both the *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* Darwin explicitly allows natural selection to act at levels above the individual." (Borrello 2010, 6) Moreover, Ruse is mistaken in invoking kin selection when talking about neuter castes because, as Borrello argues, the development of kin selection as a part of evolutionary biology is actually made possible with the inclusion of modern genetics, which were not at Darwin's disposal in the middle of the 19th century. Even if reproductive success was part of Darwin's notion of fitness, he had no way to quantify degrees of relatedness. The only move available to him was accepting higher order natural selection in the purpose of explaining the existence and development of sterile castes of insects. It is more appropiate for Darwin, in this view, to say that social instincts are selected at a supraorganismal level rather than

inherited from individual to individual. This is all part of a more general point Borrello makes: without a clear and specific account of heredity, Darwin can only expand the scope of natural selection to deal not solely with neuter castes of insects, but also with other self-destructive adaptations like the bee's sting, the Portuguese man-of-war, the coral polyp, or other similar issues. Even though he does not specifically state it, Borrello seems to imply that it is anchronistic to say Darwin had in mind kin selection when explaining these phenomena if we take into account the scientific resources available in his time, and the competing theories. Social insects are also a problem for Lamarckian views, not just Darwinian ones. As we have seen in the previous subsection, Ruse also dishes out the same charge of anachronism for those sociobiologists that claim legitimacy from Darwin, though Borrello provides, in my view, a better account of what is exactly anachronistic about considering Darwin a strict individualist.

Mark Borrello is neither the first, nor the last historian and philosopher of science that tried to highlight the error of citing Darwin as an authority regarding the failure of group selection. Ever since Robert Richard's famous *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Richard 1987), where he argued that groups of social insects actually undergo natural selection in the *Origin*, there has been a spate of articles and books that mean to cast doubt on the assurances given by Ruse et all.

For the remainder of this subsection I will focus on Gordon Chancellor's recent remarkably extensive and exhaustive account of this issue, *Levels of selection in Darwin's Origin of Species* (Chancellor 2015). In this paper, he argues that Charles Darwin was fully committed to supraorganismal selection. The way Chancellor proceeds to analyze Darwin's work is by reconstructing the levels of biological organization hinted by Darwin in the *Origin*, and by underlining the passages that suggest natural selection acting at those levels. Chancellor agrees with Gould's observation that, regarding macro evolutionary issues (divergence, for instance), Darwin was unable to bring about a complete reduction to the individual level, but, unlike Gould, he maintains that the whole discussion of divergence and even the diagrams one can examine in the *Origin* make sense only if we understand Darwin as a

"multilevel selectionist." (Chancellor 2015, 10) The main difference between Chancellor and other scholars from this side of the debate is that Chancellor does not limit ascribing only group selection to Darwin. In his own words, it is clear "that Darwin also had a clear understanding of selection at the variety and species levels." (Chancellor 2015, 25) While it is absolutely true that Darwin sees populations evolving because of natural selection acting mostly at the level of the individual organism, at least in this reconstruction there are serious hints that he may have given natural selection a much larger power than it is usually understood. Contra Sober, for instance, when discussing the possibility for species selection, Chancellor argues that there is ample evidence for thinking that Darwin explicitly allows species selection, given phrases like "service/disservice to the species," "advantage to the species," "good/welfare of the species." If there is such a thing as differential reproduction between species, one might argue that species do undergo natural selection.

As a relevant side note, Elliott Sober, one of most famous proponents of the multilevel theory of natural selection, does not argue in favor of Darwin being a group selectionist, even if he does recognize that Darwin's own writings sometimes seem to lead us in that direction. Still, as far as Sober knows, "Darwin never invoked the good of the species in his discussion of natural selection." (Sober 2011, 57) I find this detail about Sober's view on Darwin interesting, as it shows that we cannot simply assume that the disagreement Ruse et all and Borrello et all can be traced to their standing in the group selection controversy. More likely, the difficulty stems from the Darwinian text itself and the wholly unprecedented argument that he put forth. One may be able to open a new scientific chapter, but chances are that she will not be able to fully articulate it on her own.

Before I try to fashion myself a hopefully original space in this debate, it is necessary to take a serious look at what Darwin actually wrote on this subject.

V. Darwin's Own Words[3]

In this following section, I will try to present my own take on Darwin's ant problem, by selecting and quoting the relevant passages from the *Origin*. Regarding the levels of selection, as they are named by Darwin, I have followed Richards and Chancellor, with one exception.

1. Darwin's "Levels" of Selection

When talking about "levels of selection" in the context of the founding of evolutionary biology we must be very careful as not to commit anachronistic fallacies, and give a contemporary meaning to a scientific ontological space which belongs to a different age. That is, I do not wish to maintain that it would be impossible for us to reconstruct the argument of the forefathers of evolution, but that it is very difficult not to charge them with more sophistication than it was possible during their time. Entertaining a Kuhnian framework for one moment, we are now at the establishment of a new paradigm for biology, one that was not articulated back then as it is now.

This worry notwithstanding, it is plausible to think that Darwin had in mind different levels of biological organisation. The terms he used are (in order of complexity): (i) "individual" – used, evidently, to designate the individual organism; (ii) "community" – what we would call today a group, but, like other authors, it would be remiss of me to use "group" instead of "community", given the heavy load the term carries in contemporary evolutionary theory. Darwin also uses names like "swarm," "family," or "caste" instead of "community," and it is important to note that "community" is never used to name a population involving multiple species living in the same ecological space in his work; (iii) "variety" – here is where one can notice how subtly articulated modern biological ontology has become. Varieties were what

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[3] For the Darwin quotes I shall examine I have used the online Variorum edition so as to confront all of the *Origin of Species* editions Darwin ever published.

we name "subspecies" in the present day, even though Darwin also used this term to refer to race and to incipient species as well; (iv) "species" – one of longest standing debates in philosophy of biology is, of course, the one involving what is the correct understanding of species we should have. For the purposes of this paper, however, it is safe to assume that Darwin had in mind a concept of species that required reproductive isolation; (v) "groups of species" – for lack of a better word, Chancellor chooses to use "clade." As I want to avoid any possibility of a modern misconstrual of Darwin, I will resort to the rather vaguer, but age-appropriate "groups of species."

In the subsequent subsections, I will examine each level listed above to see whether there is a strong case for thinking that natural selection is operating. Where relevant, I will quote Darwin *in extenso*.

2. "Individual" Selection

On this level, there is no controversy, and I do not have any reason to start one. There can be no question that Darwin emphasizes organismal natural selection in the *Origin*, and that, for him, this is the main driving force for evolution. The ant problem and the other ones connected I have underlined in this paper describe only certain limits for the explanations based on individual selection.

3. "Community" Selection

As stated above, I will avoid using the term "group." I will just ask whether there is enough evidence in the *Origin* to justify thinking that Darwin's original version of natural selection operates at the "community" level. At this point, it is crucial to clarify exactly why I believe present-day notions of group selection are incompatible with the scientific tools and theories available to Darwin and his contemporaries. One simple reason is that, at the time of Wynne-Edwards' proposal of group selection, evolutionary biology was synthesized with Mendelian genetics, thus genetic behaviour and disposition is essential in defining

exactly what group is. Moving forward, today's multi-level natural selection is further complicated by a subtle ambiguity that has only been seriously discussed relatively recently (Damuth and Heisler 1988). In the first sense, called multilevel selection 1 (MLS1), a particular collective of conspecifics plays the role of an environmental factor that affects the fitness of those individuals. In the second sense, named multilevel selection 2 (MLS2), the different collectives of conspecifics and their "offspring-collectives" become the focus of the study (Okasha 2005, 1017). Usually, treatments of "group selection" can be understood as treatments of MLS1, while macroevolutionary discussions emphasize MLS2 (Okasha 2005, 1018). I mention this ambiguity nestled in MLS to show that using contemporary terms in treatments of Darwin's arguments is at best risky and inaccurate and, in practice, confusing.

As we have seen in the previous section, advocates of Darwin as an individual selectionist usually find a way to collapse community selection into individual selection. The simplest strategy is to state that whatever trait or behaviour seems to be selected at the community level was in reality a product of workings going on at the individual level. The problem is that the authors in this tradition of thought usually try to use contemporary concepts to achieve this reduction – front and center, there is "kin selection." Along with some of the scholars on the opposite side, I do not agree that this was possible in 1859. If Darwin was actually reducing kin to individuals, given his propensity for precision, evidence gathering, and careful argument construction, it is more plausible he would have equipped the *Origin* with a more thought-out theoretical scheme to do this move. Also, he would have clearly stated this goal. But there is nothing in the *Origin* that proves such an idea was in Darwin's mind.

On the other hand, saying that there actually is something akin to community selection needs better support than just saying that he had no other way around individual-level fitness decreasing traits that are being selected. Fortunately, for this approach we can find some strong evidence in the *Origin*. I believe that it unequivocally proves that Darwin took supraorganismal selection into account, however grudgingly. In all six editions of the *Origin* published until 1872 we can see how Darwin specifically deals with his ant "difficulty:" "This difficulty, though appearing insuperable, is lessened, or, as I believe,

disappears, when it is remembered that selection may be applied to the family, as well as to the individual, and may thus gain the desired end." (Darwin 1859, 237) I will shortly quote two other passages that support the idea underlined above. Before that I want to emphasize that the aforementioned quote is not modified throughout the history of the publication of the *Origin*. I cannot figure any other way to interpret "selection may be applied to the family" other than Darwin accepting higher order natural selection. One might be tempted to believe that here the appearance of the term "family" may indicate an early version of kin selection, but I do not think it is the case. On the same page, right after this sentence, Darwin talks, in clear terms, about sacrificing the individual for the good of its family, giving the example of cattle-breeders who slaughter individuals to see whether the stock of cattle is of any value. If its meat is of good quality, the survival of its stock has been ensured. So, there is no fitness gain for this individual in this particular case, but for the community of which he is a part. Even if the individuals are closely related, that which is selected is a grouping, not an individual.

Furthermore, while discussing the curious phenotypical differences between the workers castes in ant colonies and their gradual formation, Darwin writes that

> (…) a graduated series having been first formed, as in the case of the driver ant, and then the extreme forms, **from being the most useful to the community** (note: this formulation disappears from the 1866 edition onwards), having been produced in greater and greater numbers through the natural selection of the parents which generated them; until none with an intermediate structure were produced." (Darwin 1859, 241) And he continues, "We can see how useful their production may have been to a social community of ants, on the same principle that the division of labour is useful for civilized man. (…) I must confess, that, with all my faith in natural selection, I should never have anticipated that **this principle could have been efficient in so high a degree**, had not the case of these neuter insects led me to this conclusion. (Darwin 1859, 241-242)

We can clearly see from these two quotes that Darwin himself was surprised by how efficient the principle of natural selection was that it even affected communities, and not only individuals. It may be hard to argue that Darwin would have accepted contemporary versions of

group selection, but there is no doubt that he accepted "community" selection. And he did not actually "agonize" about it.

4. "Variety" Selection

Chancellor is adamant to maintain that Darwin was also a believer in natural selection working at the variety level. I am inclined to disagree because Darwin is rather more ambiguous than in the case of community selection. The most important quote on the subject goes to say that

> more individuals are born than can possibly survive. A grain in the balance may determine which individuals shall live and which shall die — which variety or species shall increase in number, and which shall decrease, or finally become extinct. (Darwin 1859, 467)

This passage is present in all six editions, but it begs the question whether this is actually a case of natural selection, or something else, namely sorting, *i.e.* "differential birth and death among varying organism within a population" (Vrba and Gould 1986, 217). If it's a case of sorting rather than selection, than there can be many causes for it other than natural selection, for instance genetic drift. As Vrba and Gould maintain, it is easy for classical Darwinian to conflate sorting and selection when the individual organism is the target of selection, but higher levels of biological organization necessitate a clear distinction between the two notions (Vrba and Gouled 1986, 218).

So, is an increase or a decrease in numbers enough to say that here we deal with natural selection between varieties? Modern formulations of natural selection, like the one Lewontin provides (Lewontin 1970) may accommodate such views, but it is precipitous to ascribe this to Darwin. We can, however, see that there is a certain kind of autonomy between individuals and varieties, as an individual cannot by itself increase in number. This does not automatically imply natural selection and, if one can show it does, then she needs to use MLS 2 to do that, something that, as I have emphasized before, is unavailable conceptually to Darwin.

5. "Species" Selection

Can species undergo natural selection? A large majority of contemporary biologists and philosophers of biology would balk at even hearing this question. But would Darwin? As many authors noted, Darwin uses formulae like "the good of the species" throughout the *Origin*. But that alone does not justify saying that there is species selection in Darwin's work. We need a stronger theoretical case. What would it take to say species undergo natural selection in the original Darwinian sense? One possible outline for an answer can be constructed if we take Gould's version of Darwin's original formulation. For species to be subjects of natural selection they would need competition, variation, and heritability (Gould 2002). Darwin does admit that there is a struggle for existence between species (Darwin 1859, 76) at various points which I would tentatively construe as competition. The principle of divergence, at least in Darwin's words, seem to implicate variations for species if we are to consider "variations" as the groups' organisms which may define the basic trait of that species. Lastly, heritability is insured through the chain of individuals. Of the many possible objections to this line of thought, I will mention only one: to undergo natural selection in Darwinian terms, a species needs to enjoy differential reproductive success (that is, it needs to generate other offspring-species). If anything, it is the varieties that seem to enjoy differential reproductive success. This may be the reason why Darwin hesitates to ever write about "species selection."

The preceding train of thought is more of a mental experiment. On the whole, I am very skeptical that we can call Darwin a species selectionist. There is no fragment in the *Origin* to indicate this clearly. And, as an aside, if Darwin was so surprised to say that the principle of natural selection works at the community level, one cannot easily conclude that he had in mind the natural selection of species.

VI. Conclusions. Toward a Better Understanding

There were two main issues that this paper was concerned with: the first, whether there is evidence that Darwin accepted something akin

to "group selection" in the *Origin*; the second, if Darwin did actually theorize natural selection at the hierarchical level of the group, how it affects the contemporary debate around group selection and MLS.

Regarding the first problem, there can be no doubt that the primary level of selection for Darwin is the individual organism. There is a strong reason to believe that such a thing as community selection is accepted in the *Origin*, and, given certain ambiguities and theoretical traits of natural selection it its original formulation, we can seriously doubt he felt the same about variety and species selection. This being said, to state that Darwin envisioned community selection is not to say that he would have agreed with contemporary versions of group selection, or that this is a good reason to believe the MLS fits into evolutionary biology. It simply shows that if we take Darwin out of the contemporary controversy, there is good reason to assume that his type of explanation would be coherent supraorganismal selection, however limited in scope it may be.

Regarding the second problem, one of the fascinating traits of the scholarly discussion around what I have jokingly called "Darwin's ant problem" is the way each side accuses one another of anachronistically applying contemporary terms, concepts, and theories to less articulated version of evolutionary biology that Darwin founded. Whether it is about group selection, kin selection, or multilevel selection, one can find this charge leveled against the opposing side in one text or the other. While it is wholly possible that Darwin's original work may be reconstructed in modern ways, staying true to the source, I worry that we may not find the answer or even the legitimacy we are searching for in making him either a group selectionist, or an individual selectionist. As I have proved in the preceeding pages, we can, at most, surmise that natural selection, as it is presented in the *Origin of Species*, operates on the community level. This fact taken together with the Kitcherian understanding of Darwin's relevance in the group selection controversy may only show that there is nothing in the mission laid out by Darwin to the following generations of biologists incompatible with supraorganismal selection. It does not show, however, that MLS, or any other variant of supraorganismal selection, should be accepted or not by the scientific

community. Thus, seeking legitimacy in this respect from Darwin might just be a futile endeavor.[4]

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[4] I wonder whether we can understand more about Darwin's application of this principle to higher orders of the biological world if we put his views in the cultural context from which they originate. I do not mean to diminish the originality or brilliance of Darwin's enormous contribution to the life sciences, but there have been attempts to show there may be a connection between the way Darwin tries to explain the diversity of life and the emergence of various phenotypical traits and behaviours and the way Scottish Enlightenment philosophers and economists tried to explain the way a social order may arise from the free, unguided interactions of individuals, and then how this social order goes on to regulate their lives. It would be interesting to see if the power of the principle of natural selection may have similar intellectual and conceptual origins to Adam Smith's invisible hand and whether shedding light on this possible connection will teach us more about the levels on which Darwin's main driving force for evolution might function.

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TOWARDS A THEATRE OF THE HEART

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Abstract

In this article I have written about a set of experiences with theatre productions over the last few years that have appealed strongly, in different ways, to the heart. To contextualise the phenomenon, I have coined the phrase *theatre of the heart*, and have provided an analysis of its manifestations with reference to non-linear theatre, atmosphere, love, and wisdom and age. I have provided examples for each of those contexts from recent theatre practice. In sharing this experience and my interpretation of it, I hope to enable other spectators to make sense of experiences they have encountered but may not be able to place, or to open them up to such experience in the first instance. My considerations may also support theatre artists to be courageous and develop the theatre of the heart further.

Keywords: theatre of the heart, chakra, regulation of emotions, aesthetic experience.

Introduction: The Heart

The conventional paradigm of science, with its predominantly positivist and materialistic contexts, seeks to exclude the subjective by definition. As a result, the methods and concepts of science have been unable to capture the subjective, and have therefore ruled it out in favor of objectivity. Nonetheless, in recent years, science has begun to incorporate subjectivity in the form of first person approaches, especially in the context of consciousness studies (Varela and Shear 1999). A number of new research methods have evolved to emphasize

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the value of alternative, participatory modes of knowing, *e.g.*, Intuitive Inquiry, Organic Research, and Heuristic Inquiry (Anderson 1998, Clements 2004, Moustakas 1990). Tart advocated the development of *state-specific* sciences, suggesting that non-ordinary states of consciousness are likely to yield new insights not accessible by conventional methods (1972). This development owes much to the emphasis on subjectivity in non-Western traditions, and on the basis of research into that dimension, the recognition that subjectivity has existed in the Western context as well, making the alleged and assumed West/non-West binary opposite obsolete.

In my book *Observing Theatre: Spirituality and Subjectivity in the Performing Arts* 2013b), I introduced the philosophy of German geo-biologist Hans Binder as the basis for discussions of aspects of theatre as varied as *nostalgia* in theatre, intuitive collaboration, praise of acting in theatre criticism, practice as research, digital performance, theatre and philosophy, the canon, applied theatre and aspects of acting including helping actors cope with stage fright. In this article I want to continue this discussion with some thoughts on the nature of the heart in the context of theatre practice.

The relatively recent cognitive turn in theatre and performance studies (McConachie and Hart 2006) highlights an existing emphasis on ratio, on reason, on the biochemical and electro-physiological processes in the brain of theatre and performance makers and their audiences. Emotions, hitherto the major domain of the theatre, have been subsumed under the cognitive regime, and, in line with the materialistic paradigm characteristic of the scientific approach of cognitive science, have been reduced to brain activities.

Apparently in contrast to this emphasis on the brain is the endeavour to foreground the heart as much more than merely an organic pump, and to understand it in terms of the seat of the soul, and a core centre for human spiritual contexts (where spirituality is understood as relating to human nature in both religious and non-religious terms). In this article I want to explore the heart in relation to spirituality in general terms, and then consider the relevance of the insights of that exploration for theatre and performance practice. The purpose of this consideration is to re-assess the nature of the experiences of creating theatre and of

watching a performance in a way that does not seek to reduce it to brain activities, but allows a wider perspective that in turn can be shown not to rule out the dimension of brain activity as mutually exclusive. For the science-minded, the argument I present in this article can be operationalised, and turned into a set of hypotheses, which can be tested empirically.

The Heart Chakra

In the context of knowledge from a range of knowledge traditions, subtle energy is circulating in and around our physical body. Chinese medicine is aware of these energies in terms of the meridians of acupuncture, while in Indian philosophy there are the concepts of *prana* and of the *chakras* – centres in the body that serve as hubs for subtle energies flowing in up and down the spine. The heart serves as one such *chakra*. In Sanskrit it is called *anahata chakra*, its colours are green, pink and gold, it is associated with the element of air, and with the sense of touch. It is also referred to as twelve-leaved lotus. It is further associated with the heart, the upper back with ribcage and chest cavity, the lower area of the lungs, blood and blood circulation, and the skin. The associated gland is the thymus, which regulates growth and the lymphatic system, and stimulates and strengthens the immune system. In terms of astrology, the heart chakra is associated with leo/the sun, for warmth of feelings, geniality and generosity, with libra/venus for contact, love and striving for harmony, and with Saturn relating to overcoming the individual ego as the basis for making selfless love possible in the first place.

As the fourth of seven chakras, the heart chakra forms the centre of the chakra system, connecting the lower three emotional-physical chakras (root, sacral, solar plexus) with the higher, mental-spiritual chakras (throat, forehead, crown). The symbol of the heart-chakra, the hexagon, demonstrates vividly how the energies of the three lower and upper chakras intertwine in the heart chakra. The heart chakra's relation to the element of air is what gives the heart flexibility. The heart is what gives us the ability to empathise and be attuned to one another, to resonate with each other, and to experience beauty of nature, in the

harmony of music, in the performing arts and in poetry. In the heart chakra, images, words and sounds are transformed into feelings. The main task of the heart chakra in human life is unification through love. Any yearning for unity, harmony and love is expressed through the heart chakra. In its purified and fully opened form, the heart chakra is the centre of pure, unconditional love, which exists only for its own sake and which you cannot own or loose. The path of the heart leads from the loving and understanding "yes" to ourselves as the condition to the "yes" to the other and to life. This kind of "yes" creates a vibration that does not allow negative feelings to take hold – they dissolve. Loving ourselves, in the sense of lovingly accepting our very essence from the depths of our hearts can thus fundamentally transform and heal us – thus creating the basis for a fulfilling love for others, for compassion, understanding and deep enjoyment of life.

When the heart chakra is developed and open, people will radiate natural warmth, geniality and cheerfulness, which opens the hearts of those they interact with, creates trust and gives joy. Compassion and readiness to help others are, of course, matters. The feelings of such people are free from inner tumults and conflicts, of doubt and insecurity. They love for the sake of love, from the joy they feel when they give, without expecting anything in return. They feel secure and at home in all of creation. They do not know fear, and engage in all they do with their whole hearts.

People whose heart chakras do not function in harmony might want to be there for others and want to give, but without being in tune with the source of love, they still, even unconsciously, expect to receive something in return (recognition or appreciation) and find themselves disappointed if those do not come. Sub-function of the heart chakra renders people easily vulnerable and dependent on the love and affection of others. If such a person is being rejected, they feel deeply hurt, especially if such rejection comes after they had had the courage, for once, to open up. This then leads to sadness and fear of further hurt. If the heart chakra is closed completely, people will come across as cold, unresponsive and heartless. Opening the heart does not mean to approach everyone carelessly with open arms and to hug everyone – it means employing the tools of intuition and wisdom to separate the wheat from the chaff.

The Heart and Non-Linear Theatre

According to St. Germain, one of the Ascended Masters in theosophy and other esoteric traditions, the balance of feminine and masculine values is the purpose of spiritual development across a long sequence of a living being's incarnations. Beings, whose masculine side is over-developed, are incarnated as humans on earth, since earth is considered, in this context, as an essentially feminine planet. Thus the purpose for souls to be incarnated as humans on the planet earth is for them to be able to develop the feminine side of their nature, irrespective of whether they are born as man or woman (2004). For this development, the heart has a crucial role, as does a proper balance between heart and mind. The heart works through love, and vice versa. In the course of human development, the feminine, the heart and love will become more and more evident and foregrounded in all areas of life, including the arts and theatre. This means that art and theatre will deal more and more with these subjects and the contents will become more and more genuine (as opposed to the superficial nature of many romantic films, for example). New forms of expression of theatre will come into existence. The nature of theatre of the heart, for example, will be non-linear and multi-dimensional in presentation and reception.

Precursors

According to the psychology of the senses, although we may develop an ability to process sensory impressions as if they were simultaneous, and develop, therefore, considerable skills of multi-tasking, in fact our sensory perception is ultimately linear, we can process only one input at a time. "Multi-tasking" is therefore a misnomer. The theatre has sought to develop modes of perception that allow true multi-dimensionality. Peter Brook's rehearsal exercise, which he demonstrated at a National Theatre platform performance (5 November 1993), is an example. From the stage, he asked the 1200 members of the seated audience in the semi-circular auditorium of the Olivier theatre to stand up. After a lot of shuffling, when everybody had stood up, Brook instructed the audience to sit down. Then he alerted them to the need to be prepared for standing up,

for this activity to become more efficient and faster. The next time around he asked the audience to get up, speed and efficiency indeed improved. Then he alerted the audience that they had in fact at least 180-degree vision, and instructed them not to look only at him at the centre of the stage, but to become aware of the full range of vision, of the other spectators. With that visual awareness, the impulse for getting up, and subsequently sitting down again, was to come from among the audience, not from him. This worked, a little hesitantly at first, and more and more in synchrony as Brook repeated the exercise four or five times. He concluded this part of the Platform session with the information that he did this exercise with his performers at his Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris for 45 minutes to an hour at the start of each rehearsal, so as to create synchronicity among the performers.

Different modes of perception were also central to the work of David Freeman with Opera Factory Zurich, where he staged a production of Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* in such a way that in addition to the main (and usually only) focus on stage, on the singers currently singing, the audience could also see other characters going about their business: for example, while Susanna and Figaro measure their new bedroom, Basilio is composing, the maids are baking bread, Marcellina has a cold and is helped by Bartolo by administering a hot foot bath, Antonio is tending to his garden, the Countess is having her breakfast, the Count is chasing after the maids, as is Cherubino. Freeman's London two-part production of *Morte d'Artur* started off in the Lyric Hammersmith theatre. During the interval of the first part, the audience walked across to the church in Hammersmith, where the first part ended and the second part started. For the second half of the second part, the audience returned to the theatre. In the church, the pews had been removed, and the action of the play continued simultaneously on at least five pageant wagons arranged across the space of the church. I have discussed this in more depth elsewhere (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2006a).

Aurelia Baumgartner's *Catch Me if You Can: Euridice 2012 Reloaded*

This kind of experimental performance can, I would like to suggest, trigger an experience that is different from that of conventional sensory

experience. The implication is that it might in fact be the experience of genuine simultaneity that these performances enable, which should yield different results in psycho-physiological terms. In the remainder of this section, I discuss two more recent examples of such performance, which achieve a similar impact in quite different ways. The first is dancer/philosopher Aurelia Baumgartner's performance of *Catch me if you can: Euridice 2012 Reloaded*, presented on 11 June 2015 at the 6th International Conference on Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts at St Francis College, Brooklyn Heights, New York, and developed into a performance installation for the 2015 annual conference of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA). The second is the four-part production of the *Iliad*, by Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes, presented at the Ffwrnes Theatre, Llanelli, Wales, from 21 September to 3 October 2015.

At the beginning of Baumgartner's *Catch me if you can: Euridice 2012 Reloaded*, the auditorium lights go off, there is darkness. A projection on to the large screen at the back of the stage shows buildings behind trees, accompanied by a sound reminds me of cicadas, but may also be high-pitched radio or electrical interference – it lacks the pulse of the cicadas' voices. The camera short shifts from the row of houses to a large building, with trees in front, with the camera driving past, hand-held, a little shaky. The camera shifts to capture different city images, including car traffic, less trees. A female voice-over on the video, speaking in English with a German accent, speaks individual words or phrases – fragments which may or may not relate to the images. The word "predestination" appears on the screen, top right, while the scene captured by the camera shifts to interiors, with words "café", "Kasse Kaufkarten / ticket office" providing some orientation. The soundscape reflects the noise of many people speaking at the same time. The female voice-over meshes with recording referencing train announcements over a tannoy at a railway station. Meaningless sequences of small and capital letters now fill the screen, their ordered appearance from top to bottom jarring with the impossibility of making sense of the letters in terms of words. This description covers only about a minute of the 69-minute performance. The first human appears on stage after around four minutes – Flamenco Puro dancer Jairo Amaya appears in silhouette in a

round beam behind a screen, launching into a flamenco number – the rest of the screen remains in darkness, the screen is dark as well, no more projections for the moment.

Aurelia Baumgartner's father was a highly respected professor of philosophy in Germany, and Baumgartner is a philosopher. Her work is philosophy, both what she has to say and what she does in her practice. In what she has to say, she has referenced the philosophers that she thinks about, thinks in terms of, and that have guided her thoughts. All that thinking is interwoven with her practice. For her, practice is thinking, and takes the shape of her performances. It is philosophy in practice, just as much as it is possible to understand the history of philosophy as practice – as the writings about personal experience. Philosophers encountered their own revelatory experiences, and wrote about those experiences to make sense of them for themselves, and to share them with others to enable others to make sense of their respective experiences, and to enable others to have the same, or a similar, experience. For many, the first encounter with such experiences was new, unexpected and life-changing. Sadly, this experiential aspect of philosophy was marginalised in the writing of the history of philosophy, leaving philosophy to be considered speculation (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2013b, 125-9).

Baumgartner's performances seek to bring philosophy back to the realm of experience, reclaiming it from the context of mere speculation. Perhaps she has found the key in performance that fine artists and musicians appear, or claim, to have found in their understanding of Practice as Research, which has left the restrictions of verbal language behind.

The components of *Eurydice* interweave and interact, mediated from prepared audio and video material, and immediate components, unmediated through the live body on stage, and the arrangement of the live space. Module art adds to this diversity, which, despite, or, actually, because of the disparate nature of its components, coalesces into a whole that constitutes a new dimension. The performance moulds this new dimension and explores its facets, nuances and external textures. The formation of this new dimension is given to the recipient's experience – I am using this term because the term "spectator" is restricted to the visual, and the term "audience" to the auditory senses. These terms do

not do justice to the more comprehensive experience aimed at, enabled and taught by *Eurydice*.

Either gradually, or in a sudden phase transition, the new dimension opens up to experience. While we know the sudden transition from the sudden shift that allows us, with Rubin's vase, for example, to see either a vase or two faces in profile, but never both at the same time, in *Eurydice*, in the new dimension we are able to experience all aspects simultaneously.

We can think and talk about this experience, as I and you are doing now, in academic terms, but that is not the same as the experience itself that we try to capture in this way. The performance has become embodied thinking, body-thinking, which is a more holistic way of experiencing the world – a performative idea of utopia. If only we could encounter the real world, whatever that is, in such a way. In that sense the performance, which we cannot grasp fully through words, has a didactic nature because, the performance is not limited to the verbal "dimension".

The *Iliad* by Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes

Iliad was the third production for National Theatre Wales by Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes, following on from their 2010 production of *The Persians* by Aeschylus in xx, and their 2012 production of *Coriolanus* by Shakespeare, in xx. For *Iliad*, Pearson and Brookes used the poem *War Music* by Christopher Logue (1926-2011). Inspired by Homer's *Iliad*, Logue's poem at the centre of the Peason/Brookes *Iliad* begins at the moment when Achilles refuses to continue fighting, until the point when he does resume. The production was presented in four parts, each lasting between 90 to 120 minutes. The four parts were presented on consecutive nights, and over two marathon performances of all four parts across 12 hours, one daytime (10.30am to 9.30pm) on 26 September, and one night-time (6pm to 6am) on 3 October.

The main hall in the arts centre in Llanelli was stripped of seating, the floor covered in beige-coloured tiles of flooring, not carpet, but softer, and hence more comfortable to the feel than laminate. There were stacks of plastic garden chairs, which spectators were invited to use and

place wherever they chose if they wanted to sit. Many used car tyres were located in different areas of the space, and what appeared to be stage hands, but turned out to be fully trained actors, shifted those tyres, piled them up and placed large plywood sheets on to them, thus creating make-shift performance platforms. Sometimes, spectators were instructed to move away from certain areas, which were then used for and by the actors. Sometimes, the plastic chairs were used as part of the performance, to shape the space, to represent a mountain range, or to allow for the cast to express emotions such as anger by throwing the chairs, on one occasion throwing chair after chair, what must have hundreds of them, high into one corner of the venue, to reach almost to the ceiling. Microphones hung down on their cables from the ceiling, and the actors used them to recite their lines. Monitors around three sides of the space projected the text in autocue format. At other times, the characters of the Greek gods appeared on the monitors – they were pre-recorded, played by adolescents from the area. The gods, this dramaturgical device suggested, were teenagers, with all the stereotypical assumptions about adolescent emotional inconsistencies and vulnerability – leading to arbitrary support or punishment of the humans at their mercy.

I am still impressed by the clarity of the vocal presentation by the actors, the decision to have trained actors as the "stage hands", who in the end did so much more than just shift people, tyres, chairs and so on, to contribute to the overall atmosphere of the production. The multi-layered nature of the event, with actors, stage hands, the auto-cue monitors, the gods on monitors, the landscape film in the background with its very slowly shifting image, the audience on the move, the text in itself, the rendering of the text by the actors, the Welsh accent, and the layer of distance between the audience and the performers despite relative physical proximity – too many layers to even try to make sense of them intellectually, and always approximating, and sometimes gaining, the nature of new dimensions of experience. All of this suffused with, permeated, informed, carried and sustained by something as yet not really theorised, but more and more frequently the essence of great theatre: a very deep quality of the heart, an unconditional love for the art and its expression in the performance space, which includes the audience.

The Heart and Atmosphere in the Theatre

In the introduction to her 2012 anthology on *atmospheres*, editor Christiane Heibach points out that atmospheres are omnipresent, and their existence can, therefore, not be doubted. Nevertheless, they evade analytic, scientific consideration predominantly because of their diffuse nature and because they resist categorisation. Etymologically, Heibach explains, the word originates from Greek *atmós*, steam, mist, and *sphairos*, globe, and this situates the word within the discipline of physics. This kind of atmosphere is central to climate research. The enveloping, invisible and nevertheless perceptible nature of atmosphere as subject of physics is then transferred to human life, where it is currently not measurable (Heibach 2012, 9). Heibach differentiates first-, second- and third-order atmospheres. First order atmospheres are occurring naturally, they are those described by physics. Second-order atmospheres are anthropocentric: atmospheres that come into being in and through interaction of people with other people, and with spaces, things, and environments. Third-order atmospheres are intended atmospheres as parts of societal and cultural reality: planning of buildings and cities, environments of consumption and wellness, mono- or multi-medial forms of art, and theatre and performance (Heibach 2012, 11-12). Totalitarian regimes are cut off to the outside and manipulate people internally in their spaces of living and thinking to create toxic atmospheres (Sloterdijk 2004, 189).

I propose to understand atmosphere as the result, and experience of, interactions of subtle energy. I have explained what I mean by subtle energy as follows.

The entire universe, according to Binder, can be understood as an energy field that integrates smaller units also as energy fields and interacts with the parent field, and other fields, since they are in turn connected to each other. Each planet has therefore its own energy field and is connected via the "unified field of natural law" again with the great whole. On Earth, there are then earth energy fields at each level of manifestation, for all plants and each plant, and for all animals and for each animal, and for all people and every individual. The deepest and most important energy field of each person is that of their very own life

plan. "Since this plan of life for every human being is different and individual, according to their own primordial tasks of learning and *karma* from previous incarnations, each individual has the opportunity to change the past by living in the present and by addressing the tasks resulting from her life plan in daily life. (…) Everything that people have ever created and create, have manufactured and manufacture, in what form and with what material whatsoever, and what people have ever thought and think at this very moment, also represents energy fields within the unified field of natural law, brought into being by the respective activities of manufacturing, creating and thinking. All levels of complex energy fields now interact with each other and react to each other, in the sense that like attracts like in turn." (2013b, 105-6)

I have also proposed that physics has developed a model allowing to explain and understand these subtle energy interactions (2006b). These subtle energies come together in the experience of atmosphere. For example, if people are happy, they build up energy fields of happiness which resonate with all existing happiness in the universe, tapping into that universal field of happiness energy, and receiving nourishment from that universal field, as well as in turn further nourishing that universal field of happiness with the energy of their own happiness. This energy field is first and foremost experienced, and then describable and communicable, as atmosphere. This is why "atmosphere" can relate to the experience of one person, or more people who are together. If a person's heart is well developed, he/she will have an organic, natural atmosphere of that quality, and that quality, that atmosphere, will also characterise his/her work, whatever it may be. The principle of resonance is important in this context. I described it, from Binder's perspective, as follows:

Our emotionally substantiated and stored beliefs generate a tremendous resonance field and everything that oscillates within this resonance field is taken up by this resonance field and cannot help but resonate, just as all the strings on a guitar resonate when a string is plucked. The law of resonance teaches us how everything in the universe communicates with one another via resonance. All things and beings in the universe have a natural oscillation and communicate with each other, as well as all the cells and organs of our body and of matter vibrate with each

other, usually in different frequencies. Other people, beings, things or events cannot escape the resonance field that we generate, when they resonate with our generated frequency, for like always attracts like. (2013b, 110)

Based on this principle of resonance, a person whose heart is open will attract other people who have similarly open hearts, or are ready, in their spiritual development, for impulses that allow their hearts to grow.

Peter Brook's Theatre

I propose considering Peter Brook's theatre, his productions and the Théâtre des Buffes du Nord, the actual theatre space that was his from 1974 to 2010, and which remains the venue that continues in his spirit and where he still presents his productions, as representative of the theatre of the heart. The heart is certainly at the centre of Brook's most recent production, *Battlefield*, which is a 70 minute "continuation" of his 1985 epic 9-hour *Mahabharata*. The programme for the performances at the Young Vic in London provides a poignant quote from the play: Yudishtira, who becomes King after the end of the war that is central to the *Mahabharata*, is shown in conversation with Krishna, the god:

Krishna	*You won't have a choice between peace and war.*
Yudishtira	*What will be my choice?*
Krishna	*Between a war and another war.*
Yudishtira	*The other war, where will it take place?*
	In the battlefield or in my heart?
Krishna	*I don't see a difference*

(Brook and Estienne 2015)

The theatre space that has been Brook's for nearly four decades carries his atmosphere, which is characterised by a deep, heartfelt love, awe towards, and veneration, reverence and respect for the art (form) of the theatre. This atmosphere originates from Brook's work and permeates, saturates, and pervades it. In a more neutral performance space that has not developed this particularly unique atmosphere, Brook's productions lose some of their impact. In such venues, they

have to create the atmosphere of the theatre of the heart afresh with each performance, which takes more effort, and the intensity of the atmosphere will be less. In comparison, performances at the Théâtre des Buffes du Nord, in which the atmosphere of the theatre of the heart has been established very strongly over the years, the performances are carried by that atmosphere and increase it further. Atmosphere transforms a mere, and neutral, space, into a place that is characterised by its atmosphere.

The Heart and Love

According to Binder, there are three levels of love, related to the heart and the heart chakra: interpersonal love, partnership love and universal love of the heart. Ultimately, Binder argues, the first two categories of love have not much to do with universal love – they are predominantly bonds that serve specific purposes, such as an increase of economic/financial and social security, to live one's ego, to get mutual recognition, and not to have to live alone. On that basis it is possible to consider interpersonal and partnership love as "needy love", which is based on a deficit, and can lead to people manipulating each other for their own gain. Two people in a "needy love" relationship can easily, when the needs are not met as expected, ruin each other's freedom and respect, leading to hatred and jealousy.

Universal love of the heart, on the other hand, never tries to change the other in line with our expectations, accepting him or her as he or she is. It is self-sufficient, and allows those who live universal love of the heart to be able to forgive. Universal love of the heart structures an aura, a complete energy field, for each person that can radiate inside or outside, as needed depending on the situation we are in.

Under the Covers and *Blueprint* by Zoo Indigo

Zoo Indigo was founded in 2002 and is based in Nottingham. The company describes itself as an "Anglo-German contemporary performance company". Its founding members are Rosie Garton and Ildiko Rippel.

Garton is a lecturer in drama and performance arts at De Montfort University, and in creative writing at the University of Nottingham. Rippel, originally from Germany, is senior lecturer in drama and performance at the University of Worcester. Thus, both combine their performance practice with careers as academics. In 2008/9 they premiered *Under the Covers*, in which they had a live skype link to infra-red cameras in their homes filming their infants in their cots. That footage was shown live during the entire duration of the performance. The framing device was for Garton and Rippel to tell the audience that as young mothers they had failed to find babysitters for the night, but not to worry, as the audience was now taking on the collective role of the babysitter – the audience would now have to watch the children on screen while at the same time also watching Garton and Rippel perform, and would have to become active when they noticed the children waking up, or crying, by singing a lullaby to them, or embarking on any other activity suitable to calm the child/children in question. I would like to argue that the performance of *Under the Covers* represents theatre of the heart in so far as the material comes immediately and without mediation from the heart – the performers both open up and frame what comes out (pure love of the mother for the child) in the artistic context of the performance. There is utter fullness there, and the performers as mothers can give as much of that as they like without feeling any depletion. The fullness comes from their shared love for their children: as the video clip of excerpts demonstrates. In *Zoo Indigo's* 2012 *Blueprint*, the mother-child relationship is expanded: Garton and Rippel, and, in one version of the production two other performers on stage, are linked by skype with their respective mothers, with whom they playfully interact. The performers introduce their mothers, ask them to show us their environments at their homes, ask questions about their mothers and about themselves as children, and they play themselves as children, and they play biographical monologues as their mothers about the mothers and their own younger selves.

The Heart and Age / Wisdom in the Theatre

In current Western society, in general (with some minor regional differences), the norm is defined by people aged 25 to 45, give or take a

few years. Any person below that age or above it runs the risk of being considered, by those that define the norm, as not within the norm. Anyone who does not fit within the norm is not fully understood and therefore considered at best with surprise or suspicion. The position outside the norm, which those below 25 or over 45 have not chosen for themselves, makes them vulnerable. Society has realised this to the extent that it provides funding for, or at least tolerates the existence, on the basis of charitable donations, of organisations that protect the young and the old from the norm (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, NSPCC, and Age Concern in the UK). The young are considered predominantly in terms of what they need to do to achieve well when they have reached the norm, without much attention to their here and now during those years. The old are considered predominantly in terms of what they have, or could have achieved while they were the norm. Hope, the frequent attitude towards the young, is replaced by sadness that not much may have been achieved, or sadness that in comparison with all that has been achieved, the status quo of the aged person assumed to be so much less than that achievement. From the perspective of the norm, youth is considered in terms of growth towards a goal, while older age is considered in terms of deterioration. Goal and deterioration are not within the grasp of those defined by it. The here-and-now of the young and the old does not count on its own terms, as the terms of comparison and judgment are that of the norm, and youth and age both deviate from the norm.

There are some alternative approaches to youth, for example that developed by Maria Montessori, and while there are many laudable attempts to bring such innovative approaches to bear on public opinion, they have not become mainstream in the sense that they determine policy that schools have to follow. There is some recognition that an increasingly ageing population will bring challenges with it, buzzwords have been created and are circulating, and research funding bodies have latched on to this development and have made funds available for research to study well-being and dignified ageing, for example.

In attempts at shifting perceptions about ageing and the aged, frequently the idea is referenced that old people are wise and younger people should acknowledge and respect that wisdom. The concept of

wisdom goes back to Greek times in the Western context, and to comparably early times in other cultures. With this strong history of wisdom in our lives and culture, we all seem to know the word, and have an idea of what it means. However, writing in 1997, leading wisdom researcher Monika Ardelt pointed out that wisdom research has been a relatively recent addition to sociology and psychology, and that after well over a decade of research, there is no uniform definition. The range of wisdom definitions reaches from wisdom as "an expert knowledge system (expertise)" (Baltes & Smith 1990, 87) and "a form of advanced cognitive functioning" (Dittmann-Kohli & Baltes 1990, 54) over wisdom as the art of questioning (Arlin 1990) and the awareness of ignorance (Meacham 1990) to an elaborate description of wisdom as a two dimensional model with intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal aspects on one dimension and the domains of personality, cognition, and conation on the other (Orwoll & Achenbaum 1993, 1997, 15). Ardelt emphasises that wisdom is not merely a different form of descriptive knowledge or the accumulation of facts: "Wise people do not necessarily know more facts than other individuals, but they comprehend the deeper meaning of the generally known facts for themselves and others" (1997, P16).

More recently, Ardelt defined wisdom as "as an integration of cognitive, reflective, and compassionate personality characteristics" (Kallio 2015, 34). The *cognitive* wisdom dimension relates to the search for the true and deep meaning of phenomena and events. To do this, wise persons are able *to look at events from a multitude of perspectives*; they are not merely stuck on their subjective preferences, and they are able to ponder the questions deeply (the *reflective* dimension of wisdom). Finally, deeper understanding and less self-centeredness are supposed to lead to compassion for others (the *compassionate* wisdom dimension) (Ardelt *et al.* 2013). Lee et al. address the debated issue of whether wisdom is a universal or culturally-specific construct, by comparing USA and Korea (2015).

Conventionally, growth of wisdom is associated with increase of age – the older the person, the more wisdom they have gained and exhibit. Psychological research sometimes confirms this, sometimes not. A 2013 study by Thomas and Kunzmann, for example, "suggests that any phase of life offers opportunities for the attainment of wisdom-related

strengths as long as an individual is willing and able to actively engage in life's ongoing challenges" (2013). Other studies suggest that middle-age correlates more highly with wisdom than young and older age (Webster, Westerhof and Bohlmeijer 2012). Studies of wisdom also consider aspects of gender. Ardelt found that women "tended to score higher on the affective dimension of wisdom than men. By contrast, men tended to outperform women on the cognitive wisdom dimension only among the older cohort" (2009, 9). Vladimir Soloviev used to equate holy wisdom with beauty and the principle of feminine divinity (McCannon 2004, 458).

In this construction, it is the woman who – as if pregnant – bears wisdom and nurtures it. It is left to man to make wisdom manifest and active. This effectively parallels not just Jung's pairing of *anima* and *animus*, but any of the female/male dualities whose unions are considered to reflect cosmic revitalization and spiritual perfection. Sophia and Logos. Shakti and Shiva. The Church with Christ as her bridegroom[2] (McCannon 2004, 475-6)

The aim of development is integration of masculine and feminine, which is then the peak of wisdom. In line with this, Ardelt concludes that the "results might reflect gender-specific socialization practices and changes in those practices for the younger cohort. As predicted, no significant differences between men and women were found in the three dimensions of wisdom among the top 25% of wisdom scorers, suggesting that relatively wise persons have integrated the cognitive and affective dimensions of wisdom" (2009, 9).

Zacher, McKenna and Rooney found that "the effects of composite wisdom on life satisfaction and positive affect were fully explained by composite emotional intelligence" (2013, 1711). Zacher *et al.* describe several dimensions of emotional intelligence.

The first emotional intelligence dimension is appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself (*self-emotions appraisal*), that is, "an individual's ability to understand his or her deep emotions and to be able to express emotions naturally" (Law *et al.* 2004, 484). The second dimension is appraisal and recognition of emotion in others (*others-emotions*

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[2] For more on Soloviev and the female divinity, see Galtsin 2015.

appraisal), defined as "an individual's ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around them" (Law *et al.* 2004, 484). The third dimension is use of emotion to facilitate performance (*use of emotion*), defined as "the ability of a person to make use of his or her emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance" (Law *et al.* 2004, 484). Finally, the fourth dimension is regulation of emotion in oneself (*regulation of emotion*), that is, "the ability of a person to regulate his or her emotions, enabling a more rapid recovery from psychological distress"[3] (Law *et al.* 2004, 484).

If we understand these dimensions as dimensions of the heart, we can argue the link between wisdom, the feminine, and the heart.

Public opinion lags far behind, however, and is still dominated by the norm in terms of growth and deterioration, associated with, ultimately, hope regarding the assumed potential of the norm, and fear of the decline associated with age. Drama and theatre, in this context, most certainly have held the mirror up to nature. Do they recognise, acknowledge and take seriously their potential of bringing real change in the minds of the spectators? The 2013 production of *Much Ado About Nothing* directed by Mark Rylance, put that question to the test in a major way by casting Vanessa Redgrave (b. 1937) as Beatrice and James Earl Jones (b. 1931) as Benedick. The production ran from 6 September to 30 November 2013 at the Old Vic theatre in London. The majority of critics panned the production, in some cases in worryingly ageist terms.

David Benedict considers the casting choice an "interesting notion that collapses in execution", qualifying that this is "the least of the show's problems". He does come back to the age of the two leading actors later in the review, however, arguing that "casting actors this old renders numerous lines and situations preposterous". He provides as an example the impression that "Redgrave's Beatrice is old enough to be Hero's grandmother. Why do they share a bed?" Benedict is even more dismissive of Jones, referring to his "rambling, shambling Benedick", who "looks wholly detached from all his scenes, using his bassoon-like voice more as narrator of his thoughts than as a man engaging with

[3] See also Law et al. 2013, 1698-9.

those around him" (2013). Brown (*London Theatre Guide*, 2013), Coveney (*The Stage*, 2013), Norrington (London Evening Standard, 2013), Billington (*The Guardian*, 2013), Spencer (*The Telegraph*, 2013), Hemming (*Financial Times*, 2013), and Letts (*Daily Mail*, 2013) have similar concerns in relation to the ages of the lead actors. To expect, as those comments seem to imply, for Redgrave and Jones to appear on stage as they would have at, say, the ages of thirty-eight or forty-one respectively, is strange. They were not trying to play a younger age, or to hide their age, but they both performed in full awareness of their capacities. It is those capacities that reviewers should have focused on, rather than resorting to irrelevant belittling and insults. It may have been the very subtlety of their acting that was beyond the critics' vocabulary to describe, assess, or perhaps even to perceive in the first place.

Redgrave's and Jones's tremendous achievements as actors across a long and distinguished career are not in doubt, and critics of *Much Ado* acknowledge their appreciation of those actors' work elsewhere and up to now. To do justice to the critics, some of them have some words of praise to say about Redgrave and Jones in this production as well. Coveney finds that Redgrave: "delights sporadically". She is "buoyant and that familiar, penetrating voice casts its spell" (Norrington). She has "odd moments of unpredictable magic" (Billington) and a "still-potent charisma" (Coghlan). She is "great on her character's fierce independence and eccentricity (…) and can be poignant" (Hemming). She "carries great dignity on stage. Her voice is these days almost Shirley Williams" (Letts). She is the "expected reliable class act, energetic and sprightly" (Lee Tomlinson). "Jones brings twinkly charm and a lovely tenderness to Benedick" (Norrington). He is good "when he puts on a silly voice or gurns" (*Express*), and brings "tender warmth to the part" (Hemming). Only Sadler in the Huffington Post has only praise: "The playfulness and mischief they bring adds so much to the comedy in the production. And both of them have such wonderful tones to their voices as well as acting talent that you really could just listen to both of them spouting Shakespeare all day" (2013).

Conclusion

In this article I have written about a set of experiences with theatre productions over the last few years that have appealed strongly, in different ways, to my heart. To contextualise the phenomenon, I have coined the phrase *theatre of the heart*, and have provided an analysis of its manifestations with reference to non-linear theatre, atmosphere, love, and wisdom and age. I have provided examples for each of those contexts from recent theatre practice. I sharing this experience and my interpretation of it, I hope to enable other spectators to make sense of experiences they have encountered but may not be able to place, or to open them up to such experience in the first instance. My considerations may also support theatre artists to be courageous and develop the theatre of the heart further.

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TWO PARADIGMS OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The present article deals with a comparative analysis between two paradigms advanced by the contemporary philosophy of education – one represented by the version of John Dewey's and the other one inspired by work of the prominent Georgian philosopher and psychologist Dimitri Uznadze, based on a so called "set development" theory. The article discusses the reasons why an innovative idea, declared by Dewey, that school must provide equal opportunities to every student, projected and suggested by his followers, has not overstepped boundaries of traditional paradigm of education. On the other hand, Uznadze's version, suggesting a new epistemological paradigm of education, seems closer to solving the problem of reconstruction of traditional philosophy of education. Nevertheless, the problem is again still relevant and needs to be developed in future.

Keywords: pragmatism, experience, set development, philosophy of education.

I. Introduction

A new epistemological paradigm of education was born within the circle of American pragmatism. Research of educational philosophy in modern scientific circles is very actual and essential. The aim of the presented article is to consider the discourse of epistemological theory of education and by comparative to prove its structural resemblance with another educational – psychological experimental doctrine. It is worthwhile to pursue John Dewey's and psychologist Dimitri Uznadze's conceptual importance of

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fundamental problems of education and pedagogical sciences. The latter is the author of an original theory called the "Theory of Set", among which his main working-hypothesis evolve in a great similarity with Dewey's educational theory. The experimental "Theory of Set" has given us its own way for solving the basic challenges. This experimental theory opened a new path in analyzing the challenges that occur in the process of democratizing the system and the practices of education nowadays.

II. Dewey's Vision of Plato's Educational Theory

As it is already known, John Dewey separates three models of education. First of all he makes the analysis of Plato's model. He argues:

> The first one to be considered is that of Plato. No one could better express than he did the fact, that society is stable organized when each individual is doing that for which he has aptitude by nature is such a way as to be useful to others (or to contribute to the whole to which he belongs); and that it is the business of education to discover these aptitudes and progressively to train them for social use. Much which has been said so far is borrowed from what Plato first consciously taught the world. But conditions which he couldn't intellectually control led him to restrict these ideas in their application. (Dewey 1916, 88)

Indeed, for Dewey, the organization of society was entirely based on the knowledge of the final aim. As a consequence, without knowing the end of a goal taken by an individual we would not know how to build up a perfect organization. There would not be relevant conceptions on how to restrain, or how to rightly and correctly distribute different activities. But how can we obtain any knowledge about the final, definitive and eternal kindness or goodness? Dewey offers an answer for this concern as it follows:

> In dealing this question we come upon the seemingly insuperable obstacle that such knowledge is not possible save in a just and harmonious social order. Everywhere else the mind is distracted and misled by false valuations and false perspectives. Disorganized and factional society sets up a number of different models and standards. Under such conditions it is impossible for the individual to attain consistency of mind only a complete whole is fully self-consistent. (Dewey 1916, 89)

An alternative argument is provided by Dewey in *Democracy and Education*, criticizing Plato's perspectives on the same matter. As Plato suggested, only a small number of individuals, as chosen ones, and only through their love for wisdom, are able to perceive right forms of true being. Dewey considers:

> While he affirmed with the emphasis that the place of the individual in the society shouldn't be determined by birth or wealth or any conventional status, but by his own nature as discovered in the process of education, he had to know perception of the uniqueness of individuals. (Dewey 1916, 90)

Indeed Plato's educational philosophy was under the influence of static ideas of traditional antic vision; he could not approve innovative changes because he thought the changes and alteration could bring new deep complexities.

III. The Philosophy of Education During the Enlightenment

The 18th century's philosophical framework gives us rather different ideas on model of education. This modern period conserves its affinities for Plato's educational theory, but it is absolutely clear that the new perspectives on the idea of freedom and the autonomy of the individuals' discourses appear in a different formula. In fact, it is the period when antisocial philosophy was ostentatiously directed towards the free society, enforcing – cosmopolitism. Its humanism rose as a positive idea. This doctrine of absolute disenthrall is an idea that depicts the improvement of human. John Dewey argues:

> It was plainly seen that economic and political limitations were ultimately dependent upon imitations of thought and feeling. The first step in freeing man from external chains was to emancipate them from internal chains of false beliefs and ideals. Social institutions were too false and corrupt to be trusted with this work. (92)

Dewey honors Jean-Jacques Rousseau for arguments on prioritizing the voice of nature, which lies at the core of a new diversity of individual talents, rising personality. As Rousseau argues:

> From the first moment of life, men ought to begin learning to deserve to live; and, as at the instant of birth we partake of the rights of citizenship, that instant ought to be the beginning of the exercise of our duty. If there are laws for the age of maturity, there ought to be laws for infancy, teaching obedience to others: and as the reason of each man is not left to be the sole arbiter of his duties, government ought the less indiscriminately to abandon to the intelligence and prejudices of fathers the education of their children, as that education is of still greater importance to the State than to the fathers: for, according to the course of nature, the death of the father often deprives him of the final fruits of education; but his country sooner or later perceives its effects. Families dissolve but the State remains.[2]

As we see the empirical doctrine of philosophy was innovative in theory of knowledge and this kind of education was doubtless progressive and relevant for developing educational skills.

IV. Dewey's Theory of Education Based on Experience

For many years, the pragmatic outlook was not recognized as an independent, original view within philosophy. European thinkers perceived just it as a continuation, or a renewal of traditional empiricism, as the heritage left by the thinking of the British philosophers: David Hume and John Lock. It was in the middle of the 20th century when it became recognized as an independent philosophical vision. But prominent American philosophers such as: John Dewey, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and Josiah Royce as well provided a quite new philosophical discourse on experience, freedom, education democracy and understanding of "self". As an example, Dewey demanded the reconstruction in philosophy:

> It has been stated that philosophy grows out of, and in intention is connected with, human affairs. There is implicit in this view the further view that, while acknowledgment of this fact is a precondition of the reconstruction now required, yet it means more than that philosophy ought in the future to be connected with the crises and tensions in the conduct of human affairs. (Dewey 1948, 11)

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[2] See Rousseau 1755, 148-9, available at: http://infed.org/mobi/jean-jacques-rousseau-on-nature-wholeness-and-education/ Accessed at 30 November 2016.

As John Smith argues, an "inferential stretch" is found in experience. The importance of the theme of experience in European academic society has been acknowledged by the prominent German thinker Edmund Husserl, whose phenomenological method is so akin to new understanding of experience by pragmatism. An alternative name for the intentional method of the Husserlian philosophy is that of "philosophy of experience". "Back to things", "back to the real occasions of life" – that is what the method of the phenomenological system recommends, for perceiving the human being. This opinion is very relative to the pragmatic outlook, arguing that abstract, formal skills are not relevant and useful in real occasions of life.

American transcendentalism does not recognize any sort of values, it disconsiders their significance and application. John Dewey emphasizes the several types of experience. For example: direct and indirect experiences. Both of them are very important instruments for observation in perceiving for self-identification and acknowledge inner world, as well.

The first and most important institution of community, which is not being trivial for Dewey, is the school. School is a place, where a child has the chance to find his one "self". All his direct or indirect experiences must be observed and taken to the point. Each pupil must feel, that he or she is irreplaceable, being one "self", an individual person. Every past experience prepares the space for a new one. This approach is relevant in opening new epistemological paradigm of education. All sources of formal skills must be mobilized around the student, as a pupil and the teacher, or the tutor, organizing or influencing the free development each of them.

All individual talents and opportunities must be developed and fostered, as individual and unique. Only a free and a successful person can create a real democratic society, since it is the only kind of person that might be able, due to his or her education, to develop real democratic values.

The development of reflective thinking is the most important aim of education as Dewey argues. The role played by this setup is essential in the creative process of a free society from its very beginning. Dewey explains:

> The problem of securing diffused and seminal intelligence can be solved only in the degree in which local communal life becomes a reality. (Dewey 1927, 217-18)

Dewey thought that school was one of the few remaining institutions, which could provide children with a richer sense of dialogue, interaction, integration and community. Even church has endured the deep impact of industrial specialization and urbanization, and therefore school as a community became more important than it has ever been before.

Time and again, Dewey argued, that "the roots of vital democracy are found in just those "face to face" associations which the complexity and impersonality of modern technological society, that makes it increasingly difficult to sustain. The school, he believed, showed at the outset of life be a living example of the sort of community that an ideal democracy would be." (Smith 1992, 141)

V. The "Theory of Set" in Psychology

In this section I will analyze the "Theory of Set". The author of this conception, as we stated above, is a prominent Georgian philosopher and psychologist Dimitri Uznadze. In 1905 he left Georgia and entered Leipzig University becoming the student of Wilhelm Wundt. He devoted his study to philosophy and metaphysics. After a successful graduation, in 1910, he received his PhD degree at the University of Wittenberg (Halle, Germany) for his work "Vladimer Soloviov: Epistemology and Metaphysics". Soon, he entered Kharkov University and graduated it in 1913. Returning home he taught history at Kutaisi Georgian Gymnasium until 1917 and gathered a wide experience teaching at school, being the headmaster of a specialized school for girls "Sinatle".

> People see deliverance in education and they pounce on it, but the deliverance is steel invisible. And our society thinks: our schools absolutely do not pay attention to living conditions, they aren't able to bring up people who are ready for living and it's no wonder that turnaround from stagnation is steel impossible. (Uznadze 1915, 151)

A "set" according to Uznadze, is a fundamental structure of a person. The set is a pre-readiness for behavior. As it is grown up before

the behavior. Each behavior must be recognized as part of the realization of this set. The evolution of the set is determined by the meeting of necessity and situation. According to Uznadze, the human activity consists of three components: situation – set – behavior. After the actualization of a behavior the set never disappears. It is remarked by continuity and through experience is becomes shaped as a new set, fulfilled by a new experience. This doctrine became very important for the philosophy of education, reorganizing the educational system and the pedagogical sciences. However, Uznadze made up his "set" as a system belonging to a psychological theory.

Afterwards, he began a widely experimental research on the origins and regulations of the "Theory of Set". Uznadze discovered that the set is a middle structure between environment and behavior. He coined the perceptive process that Piaget recognized as "Uznadze's Effect". It is based on the unconscious psychological condition, on one hand similar to the Freudian "Unconscious Mind", but on the other hand correspondent to the theory of unconsciousness. Uznadze criticized the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of personality, his understanding of the unconscious, but he recognized the undoubting success of the therapeutic psychoanalysis. Uznadze argued that the neurosis is the result of unrealized sets and not unrealized aspirations. The "Theory of Set" is the part of experimental psychology and also the way of development. It is an explaining idea of one person's development: human speeches, memories, thinking and etc. According to this theory, the practice of education and upbringing must be based on set. After returning from Germany as we already mentioned he had teaching practice and he published scientific works in education and pedagogy ("*Introduction in Experimental Pedagogics"*). In this work, he mentions that teachers and students are motivated by social sets. These demands are not correspondent to the teacher's sets. It is "a tragic moment" in the pedagogical practice. So it is unavoidable to make curriculum and the whole teaching program come in harmony both with the teacher's objective demands and the student's estimations as well. The teacher must know and acknowledge each student's original and individual specifics and must turn the child's sets to more emphatic emotions. In the theory of Uznadze the pupil's activities and the

relationships between them are emphasized and brought in dialogue. Consequently, this method categorically refuses to give marks at the level of elementary school.

VI. The Upbringing of Will

Uznadze considers will as a sort of activity that lays on the roots of the psychological creativity as a creative stream. He considers the psychology of will as the analysis of the psycho-intellectual consequences of a person. Each person's will and the activities derived from it establish in a creative way of life.

> Real point of life, its matrix is shown in a cultural creativity, and the main principle of creativity is will, so preparing student for life lays in the development of his/her will. To grow up will mean to make changes in empirical reality, that means to do something yourself, make any kind of business. (Uznadze 1915, 153)

The homework assignment, a problem which students gets to work out at home, has to be composed by segments, that show the idea of wholeness and aims, this approach clearly shows the reconstructive vision of new educational discourse, demands and challenges. This formula stands near to Kurt Lewin's "*Aufforderungscharakter*" (demand characteristics), Nicolas Achlin's "Theory of Knowledge", as the *Gestalt psychology*'s "ending rule" and Dimitri Uznadze's "Theory of Set", which also appears from equivalence of external and internal synthesis.

VII. Discipline and Self-Government

According to Uznadze, school must be competent in upbringing any kind of behavior.

> So discipline could have maximum of upbringing, when pupils/students are considering themselves about their conduct. And consequently build up their own rules of ethics by making their cognitive decisions turn into their everyday life (154).

Nowadays discipline is most problematic point of education and learning. Each teacher who has any kind of experience in teaching is aware of this problem. Uznadze's approach is too idealistic to be realized. In any case, the educational system and teaching requires certain rules.

School is a small society, which leads hard common rules of life and as usually, the members of this society do not take part in regulation and settlement of real life. Students do not have opportunities to realize their new-found feelings, emotions and moral principles and put them in experience-empirical life occasions.

VIII. Upbringing of Feeling and Transforming Ideas into Power

The act of feeling is an irreplaceable companion of every human conduct. It has almighty influence on the human's will; it can even change willpower and bring it under the social aims. It is the act of feeling that can build up new moral fundaments, without the moral power of the will; upbringing, a person, loses the importance of the social meaning.

School that fights for transforming idea into the power must be inevitable of the highest level. Only rhetoric, studying and reading books is not enough to make up moral ideals. What is learned and read must be reached not only brains of the students, but their hearts and souls and this is reachable by training. This is the way to create moral ideals and make them powerful. Knowledge is the power which leads the process of world's transformation.

IX. Conclusions

Works and ideas of John Dewey and Dimitri Uznadze in philosophy and psychology of education are strictly focused on the democratization and individualization, of solving problems of incomplete system of education. Their rich theoretical and practical experiences still need future elaboration and treatment, as contemporary sets forth new challenges, new dilemmas and innovations. The pragmatic view of philosophy

collaborates with all kinds of cognitive theories. All ideas are relevant and near the truth, if they are useful for progress. Despite the fact that the "Theory of Set" advanced by Dimitri Uznadze and the paradigm of philosophy of education conceived by John Dewey are relevant and up to date, they still need subsequent researches and development.

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INTERVIEW

(POST)MODERN AESTHETICS ON TRIAL: REVISITING A CENTURY OF AVANT-GARDES

ALEŠ ERJAVEC[1], OANA ȘERBAN[2]

This interview is inspired the most important working-hypothesis presented in the volume *Aesthetic Revolutions and the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Movements*, edited by Aleš Erjavec, that questions the legitimacy of the distinction between aesthetic and artistic avant-gardes, supported by the relationship of each concept with the modern revolutionary politics. The relevance of this contrast for determining modernity both in its ideological shape and its continuity, in the terms of postmodernity will be criticized in our discussion with professor Erjavec, reflecting on the manner in which the artistic communities representative for Surrealism, Russian constructivism, Situationist International, Dadaism, Italian Futurism, 1960s American Art, as well as for Slovenian, Mexican or Romanian artistic movements of the 20th century opened the path for different democratic or totalitarian political attitudes, practices and ambitions.

Oana Șerban: Professor Erjavec, your study, "Avant-Gardes, Revolutions, and Aesthetics" which sums up the important working-hypothesis advanced by the authors of each chapter of your mosr recent edited volume, *Aesthetic Revolutions and the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Movements*, confronts us with an unconventional and radical new perspective on the

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revolutionary patterns of modern and contemporary art. On the one hand, you do distinguish revolutionary art from avant-gardes. On the other hand, you consider that the socially critical art – what avant-gardes mostly privileged and emphasized – is partially performed by individuals, contaminated with different political commitments and beliefs, rather than movements. Even though your argument, inspired by Courbet's artworks, supports, in this theoretical apparatus, the main distinction between the revolutionary artistic canons of the nineteenth century from those belonging to the twentieth, such an argument might be nowadays successfully applied in understanding the politicization of art, under the following question: are the artistic revolutions the consequence, or at least, the cultural subsequent expression, of the political revolutions?

Aleš Erjavec: With your question you raise some key issues shared by avant-garde art on the one hand, and revolutionary art, and politicized art, on the other. The more social antagonisms are present, the more revolutionary and politicized are the dominant art forms and the less this role today is left to the avant-gardes. Allow me to take as an illustration not New York or Paris but the Philippines: on the one hand you find there protest and revolutionary art (promoted by art critic Alice G. Guillermo), on the other you have postcolonial theory applied to the local art (past and present) championed by art critic and historian Patrick Flores. A similar torsion is to be found in South Africa, in Taiwan, and even the Balkans. In all these places exists a tension caused by torsion of these different kinds of art. The Philippino art is thus almost socialist realist, for this is the way in which local artists express themselves within the global contemporary.

In some other instances these three kinds of art have cut in three different directions across the broad surface that we call art. On European continent revolutionary and politicized art was claimed alternatively to be modernist, to be non-modernist and sometimes to be anti-modernist. In all three instances this was art that did not fit the simple and linear schema of "things" – making it an illegitimate artistic entity within art *tout court*. As we know the matter becomes complicated further by the uncertainties generated by different meanings of "modernism" in different countries and epochs. It was only with the advent of postmodernism

that modernism achieved some semblance of uniformity, although such perception turned out to be short-lived. Recently I edited with Tyrus Miller an issue of *Filozofski vestnik*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (2014) that we publish in Ljubljana, titled "Modernism Revisited." Articles presented there offered a totally new image of modernism – of Aborigine art seen as a part of modernism, for example.

The view taken by some Eastern European authors (such as Boris Groys), as well as by some Western ones (Benjamin Buchloh or Hal Foster for example) differs from the usual perspective of two modernisms (that include the three kinds of art mentioned above).

The two most radical avant-garde movements in the avant-garde framework were Italian futurism and Russian constructivism. Here I would wish to stress that for me "the most radical" does not automatically signify "the most artistic" or "the most aesthetic." Although "the most radical" may signify "the most provocative," "the most daring," the most innovative," and "the most contemporary," such qualifications carry import only within specific constellations, i. e. the heavily politicized ones. Politicization means not only what Aristotle and Rancière understood by politics but also the process, the path of politics – very much in dependence to the notion of democracy. Let me take as an example the activity of the Slovenian music group Laibach for example, that in 1980 called itself by the German name for Ljubljana, thereby recalling that it was during World War Two that Ljubljana was called by the German name for the last time. Although similar avant-garde gestures were already made by Johann Hartfelde (John Heartfield), the impact of this gesture by Laibach was still strong enough to make the Ljubljana city council prohibit the group to perform in Ljubljana under the German name. What happened? – Laibach continued to perform but under a different name, and at the same time proclaimed itself a victim of the totalitarian city council. This was both a case of politicization and – with delay – of politics. It also shows what it can mean to be avant-garde.

The autonomy/heteronomy divide was established and retained both in traditional and in avant-garde art. The heteronomous avant-garde art ended up in the politically wrong part of the art archive, although outside such an archive it strolled freely, slowly directing its

steps towards autonomy. It is such archive – kept and supported by the grand institutions such as the Louvre and the British Museum, as well as school curricula, histories of art and occasional plain re-awakenings of past art – that retains the edifice called art in its place and keeps it as an important part of culture and of various communities.

It was a great contribution of Jacques Rancière to have drawn our attention to the fact that the dividing line between the mentioned tandem as well as the political and the non-political is flexible and temporary.

As to the issue of artistic avant-gardes being a consequence of political revolutions: There exists a moment (a "knot") in the history of most (if not all) authentic political movements in which different paths cross and open up and in which the political and the artistic (the "poetic") are fused and interchangeable. This happened also in our two countries – Romania and Slovenia in 1991 – namely, the fusion of a political and an artistic agenda. The Kantian "enthusiasm" that such a "moment" generated, often lasted only a short while, but still sufficiently long to allow a new sensibility and an epochal change in our consciousness to appear. This, then, is but a moment, as Marjorie Perloff has called it (after Giovanni Lista), the "futurist moment" – in which the path to the future is opened as an event. So far this event didn't turn into a linear historical reality. What happened instead, were once more expectations of "exorbitant and misleading promises of an aesthetic revolution which endeavored to transform art's form into the forms of new life." (J. Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 14).

Oana Șerban: Is there any distinction between aesthetic and artistic revolutions? As it appears, the manner in which the ideologies support the former is responsible for taking this distinction for granted. Nevertheless, when you expose what I would call "the revolutionary rationality" of the Italian futurism and the post-1917 Russian avant-gardes, you refer to them as "exemplary cases of aesthetic avant-gardes", which perform a symptomatic need for complementing their artistic revolution by a political one. In fact, I am more interested in how do you conceptually distinguish artistic revolutions from aesthetic revolutions, and in how do you identify and argue the interdependencies, not only chronologically, but also methodologically, between artistic, aesthetic and political revolutions,

on the other hand. This very specific assumption on the historical order of an artistic revolution, followed by a political one, shows up your dedicated concern on the difficult, and yet challenging common concepts, involved by each of these "paradigm shifts", if applying Kuhn's definition on scientific and cultural revolutions, *in extenso*, is worthy in this context. I refer to specific concepts, such as the *necessity* of a revolution, its *predictability* and its *structure*. How should we consider them as components of aesthetic, artistic and political revolutions?

Aleš Erjavec: In my view an artistic revolution encompasses the "artistic" revolution in a traditional sense of the meaning of "art," while the "aesthetic" involves – simplifying matters somewhat – the "artistic" fused with the "political." To give an example: Italian futurism was an aesthetic avant-garde movement and it engendered an aesthetic revolution – demonstrating and showing the hitherto hidden or unnoticed facets of sensible reality. Let me add something very important: revolutions – aesthetic, artistic, political – are always compounds and mixtures of all three kinds of revolution.

The artistic, the political, and the aesthetic revolutions are concerned with different although interrelated aspects or segments of art and life. What each of them accomplishes is to extend and/or to change the realm of the lived world and reality, to transform our *Lebenswelt*. Today we are used to stumble upon art behind every street corner, and are therefore not so sensitive to it, its nature, and the transformations it (may) cause in our lives and in everyday experiences. In my view art carries much import in our life – not in all life and not in everybody's, it is true – but still in a sufficient number of lives and in essential ways. Art matters – although sometimes it matters in forms that exceed (or circumvent) what we consider to be art and consider to form a part of everyday life. It is true though, that the legacy of the Frankfurt School weighs heavily upon us and often prevents us to see art instead of an infinite mass of mass culture.

Oana Șerban: Why should Dada be excluded from the field of those artistic revolutions that created aesthetic revolutions? Just because it proved to be the partisan of "apolitical anarchism"?

Aleš Erjavec: Aaah, Dada. I have to admit of being insufficiently clear, for you are the second person who has criticized my position as regards Dada in the Duke book. In his review of the *Aesthetic Revolutions* book Curtis L. Carter has in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Vol. 74, No. 3 (Summer 2016), pp. 314-316) voiced a criticism similar to yours. My response to both criticisms is that while I stand by my judgment I should have made my argument more explicit. Let me explain my position now and let me do this by quoting Thierry de Duve who in this respect holds views very much similar to mine. Thierry writes: "Dada not only had no programme, it was against all programmes (…). Dada was 'the absolute whatever' (...). Dada never consisted of group marching in step to the same ideology." (Quoted in *Aesthetic Revolutions*, p. 261.) Dadaism was an anarchic negation of the future. In brief, "Dadaism lacked the 'positive' designation characteristic of Italian futurism, constructivism, surrealism and the later avant-garde movements." In my opinion any avant-garde requires what in 1845 G.D. Laverdant has phrased in the following way: "So that in order to know whether art fulfills with dignity its role as initiator, whether the artist is actually of the avant-garde, one must know where Humanity is going and what the destiny of our species is." (Quoted in *Aesthetic Revolutions*, p. 263.) To summarize: the reason for my exclusion of Dada was that it lacked even vestiges of a positive program – something that all aesthetic avant-gardes possessed.

Oana Șerban: You dedicated many pages to Raciere's considerations on the so-called unitary program of "aesthetic revolution", distinguished by three regimes of aesthetic representation. The references, in this context, to Kant's "aesthetic revolution" – as we see, a paradigm shift of the metaphysical discourse, in the name of rationality, following the scientific model of the Copernican revolution, to Schillers's perspectives on the aesthetic education of the modern individual or to Foucault's meditations on the role of representation as an ultimate form, given to the rivalry between the visible and the invisible, complete your focused analysis of what might be understood as a two main historical and, let's say, theoretical paradigms of interpreting nowadays the aesthetic revolutions: a German and a French one. Meanwhile, you associate other

European geographical and cultural areas, such as Italy and Russia to the most important artistic movements, politically committed. However, one of the greatest outcomes of the efforts that made this collective volume possible is represented by the attempt of examining, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the manner in which the philosophical discourse, in its modern and postmodern configurations, faced almost a century of artistic movements and aesthetic revolutions. As a matter of fact, I would invite you to go back to one of the most important paragraphs of your study, which places the Marxist thought in the proximity of Ranciere's talks on aesthetic revolutions, in order to explain it: "An aesthetic revolution may lead also to the human revolution as envisaged in the 1840s by Karl Marx: « The coming Revolution will be at once the consummation of and abolition of philosophy; no longer merely 'formal' and 'political,' it will be a 'human' revolution. » The human revolution is an offspring of the aesthetic paradigm."

Aleš Erjavec: As noted, in the book that we are discussing, much attention was directed at the two most radical early avant-gardes, namely Italian futurism and Russian constructivism. Here I would like to reiterate that I do not consider these two movements to be, by being radical, necessarily artistically outstanding. No, they were of interest to me because they represent borderline cases of art – somewhat like conceptual art that analytic philosophers have continuously dissected.

As concerns Marx and the "human" revolution the situation may be less clear than it appears. We are back at the 11th thesis on Feuerbach: how does the passage from representation to transformation occur? The theoretical value of Marx's own interpretation has often been questioned and with good reason. Recently some have argued that the manifesto supported by Searle's theory of the construction of social reality could be interpreted as an exemplary form of "transformation," while yet others have additionally researched the actual meaning of "life" within the constructivist setting. (Tatlin: "A brotherhood of artists and architects will be born and will create not only temples and monuments to human ideals but also complete artistic towns. To link art with life – this is the task of the new art." (October, 1918)

Of course, this issue brings us to Leibniz, Kant's *Ding an Sich*, and, finally, to the *Aesthetic Politics* (F.R. Ankersmit). There are unexpected but interesting theoretic links that are as of now still almost untouched.

Oana Șerban: You know that Lipovetsky, for example, adds to modernity and postmodernity a new cultural-historical dimension: hypermodenity. To what extent are these distinctions important for the main talk about the contrasts between aesthetic and artistic revolutions? Could they affect, until a certain point, our wide understanding on what you recognize as different "generations of avant-gardes"?

Aleš Erjavec: I am somewhat wary about the incessant stream of new terms. It seems that especially French authors are prone to invent new terminology, with Rancière also being one among these. One could here mention Régis Debray, Nicolas Bourriaud, and, earlier, Jean Baudrillard. Achille Bonito Oliva's "trans-avant-garde" made to me more sense and was more needed than some of the mentioned conceptual inventions.

Terry Smith was correct in claiming that in recent past postmodernism has lost much of its conceptual value and has been swallowed up by the notion of modernism on the one hand and by that of contemporary art on the other. Postmodernism promised a lot but then failed and did not acquire long-lasting import. If we are to repeat with Hal Foster: "Whatever happened to postmodernism?" "For me" – wrote Foster in 1993 – "as for many others, postmodernism signaled a need to break with the exhausted modernism, the dominant model of which focused on the formal values of art to the neglect not only of its historical determinations but also of its transformative possibilities."[3] Unfortunately, it turned out, postmodernism wasn't ready to serve as a new theoretical concept.

Oana Șerban: Nowadays, many art consumers are quite reticent to contemporary art, in the sense of the fine arts manifestations. As a

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[3] Hal Foster, "Postmodernism in Parallax," *October* 63 (Winter 1993, 3).

paradox, even though people are seduced by the 4D techniques that the postmodern cinema embraced, in a spectacle of multilayered and narrative reality, fewer people manifest their affinity for contemporary art, blaming it for not providing a specific meaning, for being too generous in its character of *opera aperta*, for involving the authors' skills, but not an incontestable artistic talent, for being very easy to be done. If Robert Morris isolated the artistic quality of a work of art from its aesthetic contents, through his notorious *Declaration of Aesthetic Withdrawal*, today, people lost their confidence both in the aesthetic and in the artistic qualities of a pretended artistic object. What is the relevance, in this context, of any research on aesthetic revolutions?

Aleš Erjavec: You raise the question of the indifference of general public towards contemporary art. In response I would point out that the contemporary situation in art is but a continuation of that which finds its roots in the 19th century and then in the 20th with its hermetic art and its Adornian elitism. In Adorno's time (and when confronted with the culture industry) such a position may have been necessary, but this changed later on. In other words, elitist modernist exclusivism may at that time have been useful, but only for a few decades. In 1960s a survey was made in France in which people were asked which art they considered to be "of their own time." It turned out that they considered Picasso from 1910s to be a example of such art, while in the 19th century the public recognized art made in its own time as art of their contemporaneity. In other words, since the end of the 19th century art has continuously lagged behind its own time, so to say (or, rather, the public has). This signifies that art has taken its own path, one that is separate from developments in other realms of human existence.

It is mostly in its existential role that I see the pervasive contemporary function of art. For that of course (and as Arthur Danto has observed already in 1964) to understand what contemporary art is about, one has to be familiar with a lot of philosophical literature. To some extent such an observation applies also to Robert Morris and conceptual art.

Oana Șerban: My last question goes to you, as a specific editor of this volume. If you were to take this project from the beginning, would you change the selected topics and approaches? And, taking into account that this interview is a direct dialogue with all your readers, either as amateurs or as scholars belonging to this specific domain of aesthetics, would you confess us what do you suppose being the greatest outcome of your volume and its main insufficiency or, let's put it otherwise, disadvantage?

Aleš Erjavec: The avant-gardes remain a void: although they have been around for more than a century, they still remain opaque and only superficially grasped by theory—even when simple empirical fact are at issue. For example, only now the special role played in the development of Russian avant-garde by anarchism is coming to light.

Now to come to your questions:

(1) Would I change the selected topics and approaches in the Duke book? No, definitely not. Earlier such an edited volume was the book *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art Under Late Socialism* (Berkeley 2003, Taipei 2008). This was a volume that discussed art in Russia, China, Eastern Europe, and Cuba. I The California and the Duke books were conceived not as simple collections of articles but as if each of the books was written by a single author. In such a way I was able to cover the chosen topic as a global issue, i.e. I was able to take into consideration all the illustrative and relevant cases. In the case of *Aesthetic Revolutions* the situation was to some extent similar although less demanding. I did not want to include only the traditional western cases, which is why I have brought in Latin America and once again the NSK movement. I should also note that the Duke book should be read as a sequel to the California book.

(2) What would be the main insufficiency of the 2015 book? – The book was intended to make other researchers of the avant-garde to consider the issue of the representation/transformation of historical reality by a specific type of avant-garde action.

(3) In the two mentioned books I have introduced or expanded three notions: "aesthetic revolutions," "aesthetic avant-garde movements" and the "third generation avant-gardes." This last issue is very dear to me for with it I have pin-pointed down a specific type of avant-garde, i.e. one that emerged with the demise of Soviet-type socialism and then mostly vanished with the advent of parliamentary democracy.
(4) An insufficiency (a deficiency?) of the 2015 Duke book is that one of the central issues of the book, namely the passage from "interpretation" to "transformation" has so far not been sufficiently analyzed and has been demoted to the immediate future. In fact, my next book (in Slovenian) will be to some extent devoted precisely to this issue.

I shall consider the book to be a failure if in ten-year's time no one will be familiar with the terms "third generation avant-gardes" and the "postmodern avant-gardes." Expecting "aesthetic revolutions" to become a household word would be expecting too much – although one never knows "where Humanity is going."

Thank you for your questions.

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publications: *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art Under Late Socialism* (ed.), (Berkeley 2003, Taipei 2008); *Aesthetics and/as Globalization* (ed.), (Ljubljana-Beijing 2004, Beijing 2010); *Postmodernism, Postsocialism, and Beyond* (Newcastle 2008); *Estetika in politika modernizma /Aesthetics and Politics of Modernism/* (Ljubljana 2009, Beijing – forthcoming); *Aesthetic Revolutions and Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Movements* (ed.), (Durham, 2015, Belgrade 2016, Shanghai – forthcoming), *Critical Aesthetics* (Shanghai, Vienna – forthcoming).

REVIEW

The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World, edited by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, Routledge: London and New York, 2016, xiv + 266 p.

THE LIVES OF OBJECTS IN THE EARLY MODERN GLOBALIZATION

VIOREL VIZUREANU[1]

It cannot be expected that the approach considered by this volume, lapidary positioned from the outset by the editors "at the intersection between global history and material culture" (p. xi), does not entail the involvement of all related disciplines, thus forming what might be called a kind of "hermeneutic ball", at least not precisely in these times of disciplinary interconnection, reflecting what might be conventionally accepted as *the internal globalization of knowledge*. This perspective engages the consideration of knowledge as a "globe", an inextricable network of cognitive disciplinary gradients, expressing themselves as differences rather than identities in the strong sense. Consequently, given the presence of an ideological content in any action or critical inquiry, in this framework, we could talk, even in great extent, nowadays, about *the self-globalization of knowledge*, a globalization that

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knowledge itself – naturally, through individuals and concrete policies – imposes as its determinative value.

One will "naturally" find here – *naturally* for the contemporary investigations of this type – aspects that mark the opening of history towards art, science, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, musicology, literary studies etc. It is important understand, however, that these aspects are not simply related to what might be understood as consecrated sub-branches of such domains: history of art, history of science etc. By themselves they are mutually connected, diluted, intersected, resulting thus hybrid approaches, even "fluid", without a strict/classical framing not even in a narrower sense of the division of scientific labor.

Before proceeding to the critical analysis of the main arguments and thesis of this book, I will briefly provide some explanations on the theoretical framework that guides my exposure. If we are to conduct our inquiry using secondary sources of the current literature, then global history will show up as a peculiar type of history, one that starts directly from a reality simultaneously *globalized*, *which globalizes* (by involving concrete mechanisms, processes etc. through which the world becomes unitary, condensed, interconnected etc.; among them we can briefly mention the role accomplished by telecommunications and transports in this matter), and that is *globalizing* (being highly supported by speeches that draw – centripetally, I would argue – all the phenomena, processes and identities etc. in the explanatory sphere of globalization); in short, nothing can be addressed, understood or criticized nowadays, positively or negatively, outside this perspective. Relying on Diego Olstein's argument, global history acts as an approach which "adopts the interconnected world created by the process of globalization as its larger unit of analysis, providing the ultimate context for the analysis of any historical entity, phenomenon, or process."[2]

The collective research concentrated in this volume is claimed both from theoretical sources, mainly positioned in the last two decades of

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[2] Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 24.

the past century – such as the innovative contribution made by the volume edited by Arjun Appadurai in 1986 (*The Social Life of Things*) or by the volume of author signed by Daniel Miller in 1987 (*Material Man and Mass Consumption*) – and from the attempt of reconfiguring this interpretative tendency after a decade, through what the editors call "the global turn", pointing to the manner in which globalization inherently affects the discourse of social sciences and humanities. The things, therefore, as they are thought now, "are not just things with social lives, but with global trajectories" (p. 3). In other words, the social character "added" to the things is diversified through multiple spatial and temporal ramifications that despite the fact that they do not engage the spatio-temporal compression, easily identifiable nowadays and specific to our society, genuinely express a necessity of historical approaches dealing even with the beginnings of modernity.

However, these global trajectories can be explicit (as it is the case of the still life of the XVIIth century, painted by Antonio de Pereda, put forward by the editors among their specific examples that also include objects of very different geographical origins) or less visible, in which case the researcher himself is meant to carry a complex and clarifying hermeneutic effort in this sense. Nevertheless, we should add the fact that from this perspective, things do not only represent objects that are simply moved from one side of the globe to another, in accordance with certain elements, somewhat static, of "departure" and "arrival". In a particular manner, the editors announce that "we are not only interested in trajectories that span time zones and geographical variations, but we are concerned to explore the transformative impact of these trajectories on the goods themselves" (pp. 13-14).

The linear representation of the commerce of things, reminded here, is at least problematic, if not misleading, as far as it ignores or disregards a multitude of processes that give a complex and fluid identity to all these apparently rigid routes. Consequently, their perishable destinies are forgotten, as it happens also with the involvement of the human and concrete subjectivities (with their passions and needs, partially induced by our society), the alterations of sense – rather substantial – suffered by objects among these routes, or

the changes suffered by the different cultures themselves that intersect with or contribute to the respective destinies.

What is at stake, therefore, is an "internal" route, more complicated, in which a certain thing accumulates different senses along the way – "meaning is created in layers" (p. 18), as the editors mention in their introductory study. Implicitly, this means that "to see the objects as things with global lives, we need a repertoire of disciplinary, methodological and conceptual tools, so as to drawn on a variety of insights, ranging from art history, archaeology and anthropology to literature and historical studies, especially global history" (p. 8) (However, let us note, once again, on the occasion of this statement, that globalization is not a simple internal category of this new type of discourse, but a producing category, that remodels the discursive structures themselves, hence, a meta-category.)

The research is structured and gathered around three types of objects that engage the presence of globalization in their analysis: "objects of global knowledge", "objects of global connections" and "objects of global consumption", corresponding to the three engines that produced – from this perspective – the globalization, within the framework of the early modernity, configuring what the editors recall as "the first so-called global age" (p. 19): science, trade and consumption.

At the heart of this argument is the observation that certain objects, mainly the luxury ones or those having a cultural / symbolical distinguished value, have largely circulated, being either desired or changed etc. also before this period, at what cautiously might be understood as *a global level*. Nevertheless, the editors Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello point out that "…from the late sixteenth century onwards, then, we not only see the long-distance trade in high-value luxury goods for the elite markets, but ever-growing regular flows of commodities traded in bulk across vast distances" (p. 4) (in a slightly altered form, on p. 6 it is stated that "from the early Sixteenth century onwards, the then, the world of trade began to transform the world of goods")

Although they are aware that extended generalizations on the favorite objects of these global connections cannot be obtained in a few introductory pages, the editors suggest, however, in the introduction, some minimal ideas that guide the reader on the path through this

world that has already begun to be particularly animated in modernity, starting with silver and ceramic items or textiles.

This volume emphasises, undoubtedly, the expression of the overwhelming importance that materiality gained in the contemporary culture. The quotidian society, marked by materiality through its diverse features is – somewhat simplistically expressed – a materialistic society. But it is a materiality of a particular type. In fact, we could say that we live in a time of the necessary mixing in which what is commonly called a spiritual or soul element etc. is necessarily expressed through material elements (objects, environment), and the material is reinterpreted by widening its meaning, assuming the inclusion of the elements belonging to the former. Relative to the last point, in a sense an object is "detached" from its own material support, it is intensively "colored" by all that aspects representing his interactions with the human, from the ideas, needs, practices (both individual and collective), which have led to its appearance, to what constitutes its "life" – the trades, utilities, desires, exposures etc. in which it is caught. A subtle, complex phenomenology emerges here, overcoming the dualism that characterized, for a long time, the European culture.

This aspect is highly observed by one of the authors, Pamela H. Smith, who, starting from the contributions of Raymond Tallis and Tim Ingold, argues that "in the reciprocal process between matter, hand, cognition, and intellect, natural material and the human body mingle. Indeed, tool use and the acquisition of skills can perhaps ultimately be viewed as an evolutionary process of interaction between humans, the human body, and the environment." (p. 31).

This hypothesis is confirmed as long as we consider the many aspects that depict the manner in which the human body is involved in shaping the early modernity: its involvement in processes of manufacturing as a means of verifying certain properties of materials, as a source of certain used substances, as a model for various natural processes found in those used substances, as a repository of knowledge (understood as *habitus*) that is transmitted from one generation to another providing benchmarks for measuring various features of things etc. (p. 33).

Furthermore, additional meanings (and their different mixes thereof) also result from the manner in which objects join one another,

during our experiences. Referring to those *Kunstkammers*, as cabinets of curiosities that preceded the constitution of the modern museums, Gerritsen and Riello highlight that "early modern collections combined natural and man-made products into a single unifying system, raising important questions on the distinction between natural and artefacts things" (p. 10). Here lies the starting point of the approaches that aim to reveal the complexity of motivations that lead to all these considered juxtapositions and gathering of things.

As the editors cautiously mention, in terms of methodology, the readers will not only meet in this volume the approaches that favor studying the social processes and phenomena on longue term, which involve categories of objects, but also what they call a "micro-methodology reminiscent of the 'cultural biography' approach", which is extensively concerned with the "individual experiences" of certain manufactured objects (p. 23).

The contributions grouped in the first part of the volume start from a quite revised understanding of what was commonly appreciated until recently as science. Accordingly, instead of focusing on what the modern science of nature as a theoretical embodiment of an evolutionary process – exclusively European – would be, the authors rather prefer to consider elements depending on the so called *cultures of knowledge*, or particularly, the scientific culture.

Moreover, beyond the role played in shaping the European modern science by the fact that its exponents were caught in a complex, global network of relationships, interactions or exchanges, it will be highlighted in this context "the importance of collecting, understanding and displaying things for scientific development" (p. 14).

The texts signed by Christine Guth and Pippa Lacey explain the *interplay* of local and global on the modern destiny of two materials, the shagreen, respectively, the coral. Both critical inquiries retain the manner (which might easily be defined as dialectic) in which the production of such materials (enshrined in certain geographical areas and thus correspondent to the particular cultures within them) comes into contact, self-transforms and changes, in its turn the presumable knowledge assumed about these or the trade flows. Shortly, as noted by Pamela H. Smith, we are dealing here with "a reciprocal rather than linear process" (p. 31). Here, as well as in the study belonging to the

aforementioned author, "the interconnected nature of knowledge, shaping and shaped by the exchange of commodities and materials over vast distances" (p. 16) is recognized and discussed.

The second part of the volume contains texts that in one way or another contest the linear and simplistic representation of the commerce that I have previously mentioned. The articles focus on the manner in which *featherwork* in South America are marketed, perceived, (re)signified in the European context (Mariana Françoso); the different meanings that we can assign to the inventory (of 1600 pages!) belonging to one of the most impressive collections of objects from the XVIth century, remained after the death of D. Teodosio, Duke of Braganza (Nuno Senos); the objects utilized by the officials of Dutch East India Company in their relationships with the indigenous people, an interaction through which all these cultures mutually remodelled by engaging such objects (Susan Broomhall); the interaction between locals and the influent French minority from the Indian port Pondicherry, reflected by artefacts or objects listed in various historical documents, such as inventories, "ego-documents" etc. (Kévin Le Doudic).

According to the editors, these materials seriously put into question some of the fundamental premises and underlying assumptions of the classical analysis of the commercial exchange of that time: either Europe was seen as the absolute and privileged place of all these commercial networks, an outbreak to which all activities converged, also receiving their main significance, or those questioned exchanges were totally anonymous, as the people involved in them had never come with their own cultural collective heritages or individual particularities.

From this latter perspective it appears that, regardless the considered form of the trade, it "might involve networks of gifting and collecting; purposeful reinterpretations of the meanings associated with specific objects; or even the material re-shaping and transformation of objects through process of customisation, alteration, and re-combination" (p. 19).

Consequently, the articles from the last part of the volume fall under the assumption that guides the scientific debate of many contemporary studies in the field, namely that "the consuming habits of people in different parts of the world were reshaped by artefacts, commodities and technologies from other world areas or continents" (p. 19), particularly

concerned being, in this context, the *raw commodities*, not the *manufactured products*. Authors interrogate the history of the spread of tobacco in Russia (Mat Romaniello), the environmental effects of the implementation of various and large plantations of sugarcane in Central America and the Caribbean Islands (Urmi Engineer), the development of the coffee trade supported by the Hamburg port in the eighteenth century and the manner in which the consumption became focused on a restrained elite of the society (Christine Fertig and Ulrich Pfister).

These examples provided by the authors, both in terms of broad categories of material objects, and the micro-methodology of the individual, also mentioned by the editors of the volume, vary and can only represent the beginning of a more careful perspective on the role of material culture in transforming and shaping mentalities at a global level, highly accelerated with the beginnings of what will later be called modernity (more specifically, *early modernity*). Opening such a hermeneutical path, this book gives us grounds for a research program *sui generis*, for the globalization that (already) characterizes the early modernity expressed through material culture, a program with multiple development opportunities, some of them quite unexpected and unpredictable.

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