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## POESIS OF PEACE : AN INTRODUCTION

“Peace is not merely an absence of war, but a virtue that springs from force of character,”<sup>1</sup> wrote Spinoza in his assessment of different forms of government in *Political Treatise*. If the subjects are prevented from waging war solely by fear, he claims, this could not yet be called peace; the same holds true for circumstances in which they are too lazy (Spinoza literally calls that “inertia”) to do so. Peace, he claims, is always an action, and obediently refraining from war in a civic state must not be enforced or endured, but actively sought for: “for obedience is the constant will to execute what, by the general decree of the commonwealth, ought to be done.”

The issue of peace in the contemporary world brings us closer to Spinoza’s rather sobering insight. As it has all too often been demonstrated in too many different locations around the globe, peace that is enforced or endured has a limited staying power. Neither military nor civil repression can stop the fighting for a prolonged time and such enforced peace that is merely endured by a populace often proves to be no more than a ceasefire that ends when the repression loses its efficacy. The peace that could have a chance to persist needs to be based on active citizen participation, education for peace and many related attempts to put peace – so to say – into practice. Such a particular understanding of peace-making – the practice of peace – brings us to the particular conceptualisation of the process of “making” that the ancient Greek philosophers referred to as *poiesis*. *Poiesis*, “making” is indeed the root for words like “poetry”, “poetics” etc., but the variety of meanings in ancient Greek contexts is much greater and can be applied to any human process of deliberately bringing something into existence. In addition to its application as obtaining either descendants (by procreation) or fame (by bravery), it is only when *poiesis* is joined by virtue that it becomes the highest possible way a person can “make” things, as

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<sup>1</sup> Spinoza, B. (2013), *A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise*, transl. R. H. M. Elwes, Courier Corporation, p. 314.

explained by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* (209). The idea of *poiesis* as a disclosure of Being was further developed by Heidegger; thus also being brought closer to *poesis*, or poetry. The process of establishing peace is intrinsically connected on one hand with the notion of "making", of human action and agency, and on the other with the particular importance of *poiesis*, or more generally put, of the arts. Both *poiesis* and *poesis* are part of the process of peace-making both within a person and in the web of interpersonal relations: society, state and the world at large. The reflections on the processes of the establishment of peace also provided a starting point for the *Poesis of Peace* conference that took place in May 2014 in Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia. Organized by the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska and chaired by prof. Lenart Škof, the conference provided a setting for discussions between more than thirty participants and invited a wide range of interesting presentations and debates on the topic. This volume includes a selection of the papers presented at the conference.

The first paper in the volume, by Janko M. Lozar, sets out to re-think Heidegger's assessment of Nietzsche. The author starts from the notion of restlessness as opposed to peace and provides an interpretation of Zarathustra's "riddle of all riddles", showing not only that the two thinkers are closer than they might seem, but also that Nietzsche's Zarathustra, having articulated the groundless attunements, marks the birthplace of a new measure. The second paper in the volume, Yūjin Itabashi's "No Effort, Just Peace" also approaches the problem of groundlessness, but from the perspective of a philosopher of a very different provenience. He analyses Kitarō Nishida's *An Inquiry into the Good*, exploring Nishida's idea that peace does not – as is usually thought – need a common ground, but can be established by relying instead on the self-creativity of the immediate experience. The following two papers extend the interpretations of the notion of peace into the field of ecology. Tomaž Grušovnik's paper proposes a reconsideration of the expansion of the moral domain to subjects other than humans. It shows that humans are already capable of sensibility to non-human suffering and that this sensibility need not be introduced, but can rather be uncovered by environmental and animal rights' education. In the fourth text in the book, Nadja Furlan introduces an eco-feminist perspecti-

ve in her criticism of theological traditions that reinforce relations of domination and victim-blaming approaches. She advocates instead a reconsideration of the so-called religions of the Goddess and their contemporary revivals. The following three texts then bring us closer to the title of the conference, dealing with the issue of peace in art – in painting and in music. In the fifth paper, Carlo Chiurco explores images of metaphysical peace in Venetian renaissance painting of the early 16th century (Giorgione and the young Titian) and compares them to those of the older Italian Quattrocento. Lev Kreft in the subsequent text brings an analysis of the imagery of peace in art three centuries closer to our time. He chooses an interesting example, Jacques-Louis David's late painting *Mars disarmed by Venus and the three Graces* to discuss David's particular attitude towards European peace in the time of great changes, just a decade after the fall of Napoleon. In the third paper on the notion of peace within different art forms, Maja Bjelica analyses the peace-making potential of the process of "musicking" – engaging in the making of music – and offers an interdisciplinary reconsideration of the relationship between music and peace. The last two texts in the selection relate the notion of peace to self and the connection between the inner and the outer peace. Sebastjan Vörös' text on the autopoiesis of peace is based on the contemporary paradigm shift in cognitive science and explores the possibility of a sustained (auto)poiesis of peace based on the approach to life (mind) as co-determined and thus empathically open towards the other. In the last paper in the book, Alen Širca approaches the topic of peace from a view of Christian mysticism while comparing it to the ideas of Buddhist spirituality, thus coming to the topic hermeneutics of peace and its intrinsic interculturality.

As is evident from the short overview of the papers included in this book, debates on peace can begin from a variety of angles and spread into many different disciplines. It is debatable whether all different approaches on peace actually talk about the same notion. Is inner peace so closely related to social peace as the use of the term suggests? Can Nishida's meditative notion of groundless peace be compared to the commonality induced by the practice of playing music? Is there one peace or can there be many? Spinoza's peace in the above quote was of a political or even social type, but it can still be read as a more general

insight that opens the common ground of debates in this book. Peace might not be *merely* the absence of war, conflict, disturbance or unrest, but it still *is* primarily that, with an important addition – it requires a process – and virtue – to keep achieving it.

*Helena Motoh*

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL  
POIESIS OF ZARATHUSTRA'S  
VISION AND THE RIDDLE:  
BACK INTO THE CIRCLE  
OF TIME TOWARDS THE  
GROUNDLESS

J a n k o M . L o z a r

Restlessness and peace – including peace of mind – seem to have been one of the most emblematic traits of the European cultural-historical drama since the very beginnings. Like the paradigmatic pairs of the Many and the One, or of doxa and episteme, it appears to be intrinsic to almost any philosophical endeavour, be it ancient or postmodern. And, as in every pair, due to our metaphysical faith in the absoluteness of the opposites, the first elements in all three pairs, the Many, doxa and restlessness, have all enjoyed, or suffered from, the reputation of representing the negative aspects of the meaning of life, and of life itself.

Or, at least, so it seems. Why? There is one crucial difference to be read from the phenomenon of restlessness, compared to the Many and doxa, upon which we need to shed light: restlessness, as the first element in the initially mentioned paradigm, in my opinion, remains grossly undervalued, and (thus) remains to be properly and seriously articulated. The issue of restlessness has so far been most ingeniously articulated by one of the most restless spirits of Europe: Friedrich Nietzsche. It may well seem inappropriate to start drawing nearer the negative eidetics of restlessness by referring to Nietzsche. Already a brief mention of his infamous will to power as the principle of restlessness, as constant destructive creative volitional agency, might suffice to warn us against the fruitlessness of such an undertaking.

Still, we have to ask ourselves, what if the most acute criticism of this phenomenality already lies hidden in the thinkers who are believed to be the most prominent and zealous advocates of the very same phenomenon? Could we not perhaps say that Nietzsche was most familiar

with the overpowering restless drive of self-overcoming and therefore also with the negative aspect of this metaphysical unrest? With this, we bring restlessness in an intimate relationship with measurelessness, and the famous ancient sentence of *homo mensura*.

It is well known that Heidegger, in his *European Nihilism*, makes use of the measure of man as one of the crucial criteria for explicating a historical-metaphysical standpoint, talking of Protagoras, Descartes and Nietzsche. And it is also well known that Nietzsche, together with Descartes, is grasped by Heidegger as a metaphysical thinker of subjectivity, which finds its measure solely in its circulating around itself. Thus Descartes' *cogito* as the sole subject in the universe, through representation, progressively expands in its ambition of gaining mastery over the entirety of beings. And Nietzsche's superman is understood as the extreme development of the same modern metaphysical momentum in the sense that everything is at the disposal of the will to power in its eternal circulation around itself as the will to will. In both thinkers, Heidegger, quite rightfully I suppose, detects a tendency to lose the measure through exaggeration and excess. But, as we all know, this is not the case with Protagoras as the author of *anthropos metron*.

Still, we have to ask ourselves whether Heidegger's dismissal is all there is to it. As we already asked, is there something to be found in Nietzsche that manages to evade the all-powerful truth of being understood as the will to power? Is there perhaps something entirely different to be found in Nietzsche's obvious favouring of the measureless truth of the will to power as constant over-powering? In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche swings his philosophical hammer with all his strength:

The ascetic ideal, you have guessed, was never anywhere a school of good taste, still less of good manners, – at best it was a school for hieratic manners, – which means it contains within itself something that is the deadly enemy of all good manners, – lack of measure, opposition to measure is itself a 'non plus ultra'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, F.: *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 108.

The Latin *non plus ultra* aims at the unsurpassable extreme. The fundamental reason for the eventuation, and the growing prevalence of ascetic ideals, according to Nietzsche, is resentment. There are a couple of passages in his *Genealogy*, which, in my opinion, point directly to what is at stake in resentment: fundamental misattunement. Now this would be my own rendering of the German *Grundverstimmung*, since the existing translations use the adjectival phrase “deeply depressed”, corresponding to Nietzsche’s actual use of the adjectival form of *die Gründlich-Verstimmte*. In paragraph 16, Nietzsche speaks of “physiologische Verstimmung”, which is rendered into English as “physiological upset”. In both cases, I believe, the translation underscores the German wording. *Verstimmung* is neither depression (it can be, but depression is only one possible psycho-somatic embodiment of misattunement) nor the state of being upset. Both translations underscore the original; the more suitable as well as more accurate rendering would be misattunement. Why? *Stimmung* as the root word in *Verstimmung* has been, particularly more lately in Heidegger translation, prevalently rendered as attunement, replacing the older version of mood. Needless to say, attunement is more accurate than mood, because it contains the rich allusiveness of the German *Stimmung*. We only need to mention the same meaning of the basic verb form in English and German: to tune a piano or *ein Klavier stimmen*. The one who adjusts musical instruments is called a tuner and *ein Stimmer* respectively, or a tune and *die Stimme* for that matter, where *die Stimme* can also mean the tune of one’s voice.

The fundamental misattunement is, according to Nietzsche, the crucial propellant of ascetic ideals, which are used as a vehicle to do away with the fundamental pain, lethargy or depression – more accurately, misattunement. For Nietzsche, ascetic ideals are, to put it in a nutshell, self-medicine propelled by resentment, and the medicine procured is to alleviate the unbearable pain of the fundamental misattunement.

In Nietzsche’s own words:

*The ascetic ideal utilised to produce excess of feelings: to throw the human soul out of joint, plunging it into terror, frosts, fires and raptures to such an extent that it rids itself of all small and petty forms of lethargy (Germ. Unlust),*

apathy (Germ. *Dumpfheit*) and depression (Germ. *Verstimmung*), as though hit by lightning.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most telling feature of ascetic ideals, as inconspicuous as it may be, in terms of their invisible reverse side, is what Nietzsche calls *mechanical activity*. Again, and in a direction significantly different from that of the excessiveness of the Will to Power, the following passage points in the direction of Nietzsche turning a sceptical eye to an excess of restlessness:

Much more often than such a hypnotic total dampening of sensibility, of susceptibility to pain, which presupposes unusual powers, above all courage, contempt of opinion, ‘intellectual stoicism’, another training is tried to combat the condition of depression, which at all events is easier: mechanical activity. It is beyond doubt that with this, an existence of suffering is alleviated to a not inconsiderable extent: today people call this fact, rather dishonestly, ‘the blessing of work’. The alleviation consists of completely diverting the interest of the sufferer from the pain, – *so that constantly an action and yet another action enters consciousness and consequently little room is left for suffering*: because this chamber of human consciousness is small!<sup>3</sup> [emphasis added]

This passage may come as a surprise to any scholar who favours Heidegger’s critical thrust against Nietzsche’s metaphysical nature of his Will to Power as constant self-overcoming or Nietzsche’s conception of being as constant presence.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, does not Nietzsche in this passage explicate the issue of the *constancy* of action as a *troublesome* and highly improper temporal truth of being? “Constantly an action and yet another action enters consciousness”? Quite tellingly, if Heidegger condemns his Will to Power as what could be rendered in modern, non-philosophical terms as obsessive compulsive behaviour, it rather seems that he fails to grasp his genuine message because Nietzsche considers constant activity to be an inadequate response to the ailments of being, imbued in resentment. And the latter, as the groundless misattunement, propels ascetic ideals – and not only those, as we shall soon realise.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Both authors use the same temporal (problematic) predicate of constancy: Nietzsche speaks of “*beständig ein Thun*”, Heidegger of “*beständige Anwesenheit*”.

With this said, we are at once plunged into the cellar of the magnificent abode of metaphysics; at the very roots of the tree of knowledge, which are in tune with the ancient Greek word *diathesis*, and the modern words *Stimmung* or attunement. Let us just say for the sake of brevity here that the truth of attunements does not belong to onto-ego-theology, since attunement can be neither an entity nor the being of beings; rather, it moves to the evasive and elusive realm of being as being. With attunement, we move from the ground into the groundless.

### Nietzsche and Heidegger

One further issue to be addressed here is the strong similarities between Nietzsche and Heidegger. The reason for this will become clearer later on, when we shall undertake a philosophical reading of Nietzsche's literary pearl vision from his *Zarathustra*. So let us explicate the strong analogies between their manners of thinking, moving from the more obvious to the less conspicuous:

- The first and most obvious one is the issue of nihilism, though the issue was thought and approached differently by each author. Still, as Heidegger readily admits in his *European Nihilism*, it was Nietzsche himself who understood nihilism (ingeniously and correctly) as a historical phenomenon.
- Related to it – and the debt to Nietzsche is already a bit less visible – the understanding of the history of philosophy as a regression from the great beginning in Pre-Socratic philosophy (Heraclitus, Protagoras!), rather than progression. In contrast to Hegel's – or Husserl's for that matter – conception of the history of philosophy, which so adamantly stresses the progression of the spirit from its humble beginnings in ancient Greece towards its final realisation and perfection in the modern idealist abode of absolute subjectivity, Nietzsche thrusts with a diametrically opposite conception, namely in that European culture, philosophy included, is a deteriorating process, starting with the downfall of the tragic culture, having bloomed in the times before the rise of the Socratic and/or Platonic spirit. Compared to this, Heidegger's historical diagnosis bears surprising resemblance to Nietzsche's insights. One need only mention here Heidegger's

stunning analyses of the primordality of Anaximander's, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Protagoras' thinking, and compare it to Nietzsche's praise of Protagoras as the sage who was still in tune with Pre-Socratic wisdom.

- The *polemos* or agonistic character of life. As many an interpretation of Heidegger's has (prevalently critically) shown, Heidegger, particularly in his middle period, has drawn profusely on Nietzsche's polemic and antagonistic understanding of the truth of being. Compare for example his understanding of truth as *aletheia* in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, where he speaks of the need to wring the truth from out of concealment.
- Life justified as an aesthetical phenomenon. The analogy is, or at least should be fairly obvious. The later Heidegger's accent on the priority of poetry as the primordial place of the "truthing of the truth", as the initial comportment of the human being, thus rendering the practical (not to mention the theoretical) comportment of *phronesis* and *techne* secondary, or the derivative forms of the poetic comportment. With this, we are moving fairly close to the need for a philosophical reading of Nietzsche's poetic vision.
- The priority of the event over entities, of being over beings, grammatically understood as the priority of the verb over the noun agent. As patently shown in a passage from his *On Genealogy of Morals*, there is indeed no neutral substratum called the lightning, which decides when or whether to flash or not. As Nietzsche says poignantly, all there is is the flashing. Now if we compare this to Heidegger's notions or phrasings such as the being of beings, the worlding of the world, the timing of time, the nihilation of nothing, the speaking of language, we can, and should, immediately recognise the origin of his language and thinking.
- The core of the will to power as a chorus of affects, each fighting for mastery over others, which renders all conceptions of the will as a monistic unity unconvincing. Now compare this with Heidegger's stress on the primordality of attunement, which enables *Dasein* to relate to something intentionally.
- Marriage of becoming and being: In Heidegger's *Anaximander's Saying* we read the following (2002, 250):

At the summit of the completion of Western philosophy the following words are said: "To stamp becoming with the character of being - that is the highest will to power." Thus wrote Nietzsche in a note entitled "Recapitulation." Going by the character of the handwriting we must locate the note in the year 1885, the time at which, having completed *Zarathustra*, he planned his great work of systematic metaphysics. "Being," as Nietzsche thinks it here, is "the eternal return of the same".

It is the mode of permanence in which the will to power wills itself and secures its own presencing as the being of becoming. This is how the being of beings is expressed in the final stage of the completion of metaphysics.<sup>5</sup>

And if we season this criticism with the "chilli quote" from his *Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (1967, 427): "this is a supremely spiritualised spirit of revenge", Heidegger is here, quite appropriately as it turns out, in starkest possible opposition to Nietzsche.

And yet, again in *Anaximander's Saying*, eight pages later, we read the following:

What, however, has its essential nature in such arrival and departure we would prefer to call the coming and the going rather than the being; for we have, for a long time, been accustomed to opposing becoming and being, as if becoming were nothing, not belonging within being, which has for a long time been understood as mere perdurance. If, however, becoming is, then we must think being in so essential a manner that it embraces becoming not in an emptily conceptual way but rather so that being bears and moulds the essence of becoming (*genesis - phthora*) in an essential way.<sup>6</sup>

If we compare Nietzsche's "to stamp becoming with the character of being" with Heidegger's "being bears and moulds the essence of becoming in an essential way", we cannot but realise how close, how intimately close both ontologies are, despite Heidegger's relentless criticism levelled at Nietzsche. In this sense, his criticism does indeed betray certain insincerity on the side of the thinker of the openness, *i.e.* frankness of being.

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<sup>5</sup> Heidegger, M.: *Off the Beaten Track*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, pp. 250–51. Again, for Nietzsche, permanence as *Beständigkeit* is a temporally troublesome issue belonging to the truth of resentment or the reign of ascetic idealism.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

- And lastly: the criticism of the understanding of time as a circularity of the infinite succession of now points. In the very end of his *Being and Time*, Heidegger severely attacks Hegel's and Aristotle's conception of time as a succession of now points, rendering them vulgar, and advocating instead a more primordial temporality as the overlapping of the three ecstasies of time. Now what about Nietzsche? Does he have anything to say on this issue? Is this perhaps somewhat related to the issue of the prevalence of neutral noun agents over the eventing of the verbalness of sheer being? With this last comparison, we have come closest to the least obvious as well as most intimate relatedness of the two thinkers. It also becomes clearer why we started with Nietzsche and his ingenious insight into the ascetic ideals story of the European spirit, understood as opposition to measure. And this begs us to move forward to the explication of Nietzsche's famous vision as the riddle of all riddles.

### Nietzsche's Riddle of All Riddles

Let us start with the first part of the vision/riddle, or rather with the very first act of the confrontation of Zarathustra with the dwarf as the spirit of gravity:

"Stop, dwarf!" I said. "I – or you! But I am the stronger of us two – you do not know my abysmal thought! That – you could not bear!" – Then something happened that made me lighter, for the dwarf jumped down from my shoulder, the inquisitive one, and he crouched upon a stone there before me. But right there where we stopped was a gateway. "See this gateway, dwarf!" I continued.

"It has two faces. Two paths come together here; no one has yet walked them to the end. This long lane back: it lasts an eternity. And that long lane outward – that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they blatantly offend each other – and here at this gateway is where they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed at the top: 'Moment.'

But whoever were to walk one of them further – and ever further and ever on: do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?" –

"All that is straight lies," murmured the dwarf contemptuously. "All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle."

...

“You spirit of gravity!” I said, angrily. “Do not make it too easy on yourself! Or I shall leave you crouching here where you crouch, lame foot – and I bore you this high!”<sup>7</sup>

The story is, obviously, all about the understanding of time. The main emphasis, in proper accord with the tradition, is placed on the moment (Ger. *Augenblick*, sometimes rendered in English as the moment of vision). And the two lanes stretching outward in two directions are those of the past and the future. Firstly, we should take the overcoat off the riddle by hinting at – or, better, guessing – the true nature of the spirit of gravity, represented by the dwarf. One of the poems to be found in Nietzsche’s *Jovial Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), says:

Der Gründliche

Ein Forscher ich? Oh spart dies Wort! -  
Ich bin nur *schwer* – so manche Pfund!  
Ich falle, falle immerfort  
Und endlich auf den Grund!<sup>8</sup>

The Well-Grounded One

A scholar I? I’ve no such skill! –  
I’m merely *grave* – just heavy set!  
I fall and fall and fall until  
I to the bottom get.

Nietzsche’s original, if we are indeed to get closer to what Nietzsche jocularly hints at here, well merits a slightly different translation:

A scholar I? I’ve no such skill! –  
I’m merely *grave* – many a pound!  
I fall and fall until  
I hit the ground.

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<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche, F.: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 124–25.

<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche, F.: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft. Sämtliche Werke*. KSA 3, dtv/de Gruyter, München/Berlin 1999, p. 363

Obviously, the rendering “ground” for the German word *Grund* is better than “bottom”, because the latter fails to communicate what is fully at stake here. *Grund* and ground are both poetical and philosophical words: both the German and the English word, and Nietzsche must have been well aware of it, also introduce the Latin *ratio* into play: the reason. So the scholar as the grave one – or the spirit of gravity – is the opposite to the spirit of lightness in that in hitting upon the ultimate reason he also hits the ground.

So who then is the dwarf or the spirit of gravity, who, when challenged by the dismal prospect of time stretching back and forward into two eternities, answers through his teeth: “All that is straight lies,” and “all truth is crooked, time itself is a circle”? Zarathustra says that by shooting out this answer the spirit of gravity makes it too easy on itself. We have already intimated that Zarathustra speaks to the scholar, the philosopher. Why would he distance himself from his claim about time as circle? Why indeed would he reproach him for making it too easy on himself?

The story of Zarathustra’s climbing the steep hill with the dwarf, the spirit of heaviness and revenge, mounted on his shoulders, and his decision to confront him, now comes clearly to the fore in all its intuitive thrust and insight. In the last sentence, we have tacitly equated the spirit of heaviness with the spirit of revenge. Is this simply a careless addition? Or is this perhaps the first possible condition of coming to grips with the heaviness of the ultimate ground-seeker?

This, yes this alone is revenge itself: the will’s unwillingness toward time and time’s “it was.” Indeed, a great folly lives in our will; and it became the curse of all humankind that this folly acquired spirit! The spirit of revenge: my friends, that so far has been what mankind contemplates best; and wherever there was suffering, punishment was always supposed to be there as well.

For “punishment” is what revenge calls itself; with a lying word it hypocritically asserts its good conscience. And because in willing itself there is suffering, based on its inability to will backward – thus all willing itself and all living is supposed to be – punishment!

And now cloud upon cloud rolled in over the spirit, until at last madness preached: “Everything passes away, therefore everything deserves to pass away!”

And this itself is justice, this law of time that it must devour its own children” – thus preached madness.

“All things are ordained ethically according to justice and punishment. Alas, where is redemption from the flux of things and from the punishment called existence?” Thus preached madness.<sup>9</sup>

It is my contention that the truth of the eternal recurrence of the same is meant to reveal the truth of the dwarf’s (measureless, restless) misattunement. The eternal recurrence envisaged – and used as a grudge against the spirit of gravity – is the truth of mechanical activity; therefore, it does not belong to Zarathustra, who strives to overcome the spirit of gravity. The constancy of the now point being surpassed by yet another now point, and the circularity of it, is the truth of time/being, which needs to be overcome by another eternity.

Of course, since the dwarf as the spirit of heaviness is Zarathustra’s own most intimate matter (scholar as the spirit of gravity as a question directed to himself), the intuitive hammer thrust at the dwarf is also a thrust at Zarathustra, and at Nietzsche himself. To make the point clearer: the eternal recurrence, addressed initially in the vision, reveals the negative in Zarathustra himself, *and not the positive truth*, as advocated misleadingly by many an interpreter of Nietzsche: as the truth of the groundless misattunement.

The truth of time of the spirit of heaviness is that of the circularity of the incessant succession of now points. The temporal truth of the now, which is constantly running late through the no longer now and running ahead through the not yet now, running late for the proper now, missing it and falling into the no longer now – isn’t this running ahead and running late the very nature of the traditional truth of the now? From Aristotle’s *to nyn* all the way to Hegel’s *das Jetzt*?<sup>10</sup> And thus constantly onwards and backwards, throwing us in the constant running ahead and running late motion (of the concept!); indeed, should we not

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<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche, F. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “On Redemption”, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 111. And just to remind ourselves of the numerous, and more than surprising, analogies between Nietzsche and Heidegger: the last sentence clearly evokes Anaximander’s saying, and Nietzsche patently calls for a non-moral, a “released-from-morality” ontological reading of time, just as Heidegger does in his *Anaximander’s Saying*.

<sup>10</sup> Comp. Heidegger’s compelling critical thrust at Aristotle and Hegel in his *Being and time*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1996, pp. 385–91.

recognise in this the emblematic trait of the “opposition to measure, which is itself a ‘non plus ultra’”?

Opposition to measure is imprinted in the *truth* of time as a concession of now points. And opposition to measure is, according to Nietzsche, resentment as fundamental misattunement. Of course we don't like it and we resent it and hate it that everything we really cherish in life is too soon lost in time and its “it was”. And boy do we resent it; indeed it does appear to be the harshest possible punishment; and never shall we forget it. And furthermore: if this punishment befalls me, is there any reason why anyone should escape it? Why should there be an exception to the punishing (Anaximander's) rule of time? Thus, I resent it universally: and so be it, says the spirit of grave revenge: the universal, objective truth of time is to be the incessant circularity of now-points... In the dwarf's quasi-disinterested objective ascertainment about the truth of time, Zarathustra recognises resentment, inner hate and vengefulness. Otherwise he would not be named the spirit of heaviness as the spirit of revenge.<sup>11</sup>

Now it is time to continue with Zarathustra's vision/riddle:

See this moment!” I continued. “From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane stretches backward: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever can already have passed this way before? Must not whatever can happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before? And if everything has already been here before, what do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been here? And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all things to come? Therefore – itself as well?”

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<sup>11</sup> Comp. Hegel's Hegel, F.: *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury 1991, Part II: “Philosophy of Nature”, §201: “In time, it is said, everything arises and passes away, or rather, there appears precisely the abstraction of arising and falling away. [...] But time itself is this becoming, this existing abstraction, the Chronos who gives birth to everything and destroys his offspring. [...] For time in its concept is, like the concept itself generally, eternal, and therefore also absolute presence.” Quite randomly and with indifference, it seems, Hegel mentions Chronos as the main mythical truth of time. Of course we all know we resent him for his voracious appetite. And so does Hegel for that matter. Because if the solution to the savage, chronic nature of time is “absolute presence”, in its *constant* process of self-negatory self-affirmation, then is it fairly obvious that, according to Nietzsche, Hegel betrays mechanical activity of the concept/spirit/idea as the most proper response possible, and therefore also his ascetic idealism...

Thus I spoke, softer and softer, for I was afraid of my own thought and secret thoughts. Then, suddenly, I heard a dog howl nearby. Had I ever heard a dog howl like this? My thoughts raced back. Yes! When I was a child, in my most distant childhood: – then I heard a dog howl like this. And I saw it too, bristling, its head up, trembling in the stillest midnight when even dogs believe in ghosts: – so that I felt pity. *For the full moon had passed over the house, silent as death, and it had just stopped, a round smolder - stopped on the flat roof just as if on a stranger's property –*

[...]

Where now was the dwarf? And the gateway? And the spider? And all the whispering? Was I dreaming? Was I waking? I stood all of a sudden among wild cliffs, alone, desolate, in the most desolate moonlight.<sup>12</sup> [emphasis added]

First we judge and then we understand, says Nietzsche poignantly. The judgement underlying the understanding of time as the now point (always already no longer now and not yet now), the traditional understanding, present from Aristotle onwards, is, in my opinion, and this is also what I believe to be Nietzsche's claim, moulded in resentment. It is because we resent time in its "it was", its unjust transient character, that we want this punishment to affect everybody, without exception. If this be so for me, then let it be so for everybody, and I also make sure I never forget what I resent: the truth of time is therefore the continuous flux of now points always already pushed aside by the new now. And this is the truth of the spirit of heaviness.

The spirit of heaviness, being thrown into a suffering flux of perturbation, cherishes a dream of being drawn out of the flux by the hand of the almighty, into timeless eternity. Nietzsche confronts the dwarf with the non-possibility of such bailing out. The future is radically closed, especially for the possibility of being saved, rescued. Zarathustra confronts the dwarf with the nothingness of the possibility of the ultimate leap into beyond. "What do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been here? And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all things to come? Therefore – itself as well?"

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<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, F. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 126.

And here comes his first harbinger of a recovery, and rehabilitation of the long lost measure: anxiety. The latter is unbearable for the spirit of heaviness, and he disappears, while Zarathustra finds the courage to linger awhile in the deadliest of nights, with the naked moon.

Why talk of anxiety all of a sudden? “For the full moon had passed over the house, silent as death, and it had just stopped, a round smolder - stopped on the flat roof just as if on a stranger’s property.” Now we have to ask ourselves: what has happened to Zarathustra, who perseveres in the horrifying drawing away of it all into the eternal past? What is it that manages to strip all beings of their meaning, indeed even of their very names? For the moon, as Zarathustra himself says, turns from a full moon into a mere round smolder? According to Heidegger, and obviously also to Nietzsche, it is the unveiling of the attunement of anxiety.

The dwarf disappears because he is not able to face his own truth of resentment over being – over and over again plunged in the all-the-sameness of the same disappointment. *The dwarf as the spirit of heaviness and revenge cannot face, let alone articulate and witness his own **angry judgement on life**, because it is the truth of his own fundamental **misattunement** and particularly because, in digging through the ground of attunements, one is, sooner or later, obliged to run into the groundless, which opens up, which yawns (Gr. chaos) in the groundless attunement of anxiety.*

Let us recall and recuperate: ascetic ideals (to be followed) demand an excess of (or opposition to) measure of any kind, in order to reacquire the lost measure. In other words: in order to be able (as a fundamentally misattuned person) to reacquire the attunement, you are obliged to throw your soul out of joint (through starvation, self-infliction of pain, pouring oil on the fire of bad conscience, exercise in constant work of the concept as self-negativity) not to be in tune with the good measure or golden mean of everyday life. Resist all measure in order to reacquire the good or best possible measure. Fall out of tune in order to regain the best possible attunement with the ultimate good. In other words, the soul, thrown in the groundless misattunement, strives to run ahead of its current state in order not to be running late for or to be behind time for the promised Measure of all Measures. Again and again, isn’t this running ahead and running late the very nature of the tradi-

tional truth of the now? From Aristotle's *to nyn* onwards: it is no more and not yet; and thus constantly, throwing us in the constant running ahead and running late motion. The temporal truth of the now, which is constantly running ahead through the not yet now and running late through the no longer now, is the emblematic trait of the "opposition to measure, which is itself a 'non plus ultra'". Small wonder the dwarf as the spirit of heaviness does not want to see or realise his own truth of always running late and running ahead. And small wonder Kant, Hegel and Husserl all conceive of attunement as the accompanying phenomenality to be crucially unrelated to the rationality of manhood.

What is actually to be gained in thinking towards anxiety in its proto-metaphysical sense? Thought on the level of being as being, the attunement of anxiety, temporally taken, manifests itself as the passing away of time. There is no time as such; no concept of time which manages to set itself free from the chronic time into eternity. There is only the eventing, unbearable as it may be, of the passing away. Now let us consider the advantage that can be surmised from our being overwhelmed by this sheer passing away; moving away, passing away and absencing, as the spatial, temporal and ontological truth of the groundless attunement of anxiety.

Persevering in the truth of time as constant shifting of nows, passing through the door of the moment, letting oneself be *in* the passing away of the now. By not making it too easy for oneself: plunging oneself in the no longer now, as the experience of the oozing away of everything, as sheer lingering in the passing away of time; with the real novelty being the lingering of time in its sheer passing away: through anxiety, one is released from fear as the supreme judge over the truth of time in the ever changing time.

I spoke of running late and running ahead (of time and myself) as the basic traits of groundless misattunement. What could the not-running late and not-running ahead of anxiety mean in this context? Anxiety gives, or better gives back time the time for lingering in the passing away. Anxiety in this sense is the slowing down of time as the eventing of the "no more". It reveals the time lingering in its passing away. The time witnessed in anxiety is no longer the yoke of "no more" and "not yet".

Is it possible to be in the manner of passing away without being in the manner of running ahead, which is always already too late? The anxiety lingers in the absencing, and in the absencing it is me who lingers. This is the crucial point. We should take care not to overlook the slowness of time passing away in anxiety. The following question is crucial: does the disclosure of passing away, going away and absencing allow for – hurrying? For running ahead? Mechanical activity? Can we, lingering in the passing away – be running late at all? Does it allow the running late? What calls for running ahead? Can I hear the meaninglessness of the following phrase: running ahead of passing away? Overtaking the absencing?

The story narrated in Zarathustra's vision and riddle is that of the birth of the measure of man as mortal, as the birthplace of mere lingering. Running ahead and running late could be understood as the basic trait of fear as running away from the groundlessness of sheer lingering in passing away. Thus, the true and most proper name of groundless misattunement could very well be *fear* as lack of measure, opposition to measure.<sup>13</sup>

Anxiety as the slowness of passing away in the farewell from being is the birthplace of non-running late and non-running ahead. How exactly? By lingering in going away towards – the going away. But it obviously takes courage to do it...

From fear to anxiety: from the temporal truth of the now (as constantly no longer now and not yet now, which evokes in man the misattunement of constantly running late and running ahead) to the pri-

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<sup>13</sup> Comp. Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Digireads.com Publishing 2009, p. 49): "THE knowledge, which is at the start or immediately our object, can be nothing else than just that which is immediate knowledge, knowledge of the immediate, of what is. We have, in dealing with it, to proceed, too, in an immediate way, to accept what is given, not altering anything in it as it is presented before us, and keeping mere apprehension (*Auffassen*) free from conceptual comprehension (*Begreifen*)."

The funny part of the solemn beginning of a solemn chapter is that the English rendering of *Auffassen* intimates exactly what is at stake for Nietzsche: namely that the initial "truthing", as sheer apprehension, also implies apprehension as "a feeling of fear that something bad may happen." (Collins-Cobuild, *Lingea Lexicon* 2002). Comp. also Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*: "How now? Is the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps a kind of fear of, and escape from, pessimism?"

mary temporal truth of passing away (without any running late and ahead), evoking the groundless attunement of anxiety.

The emphasis is not on the now as the kairoic moment of transition, as intimated in Löwith and Heidegger<sup>14</sup>, but on the lingering awhile in the self-annihilation of the moment. The constancy of the now point is the truth of time belonging to the spirit of gravity and revenge. With the disappearance of the moment, the dwarf disappears, too.

What remains is the lingering of anxiety. What is the temporal nature of being in anxiety? Could we not rather, or better, say that what remains is the anxiety of lingering?

### The riddle within

Now is it really so that I somehow managed so solve the riddle? Not at all! The riddle simply turned about a bit, and revealed its new enigmatic face, expressed in the following questions: How does the groundless attunement of anxiety transform itself into groundless joviality? How does the lingering of absencing shift and jump up (like the shepherd) to the lingering of presencing? With this question, Zarathustra's riddle shows yet another, and far more riddle-ridden face.

And truly, I saw something the like of which I had never seen before. A young shepherd I saw; writhing, choking, twitching, his face distorted, with a thick black snake hanging from his mouth. Had I ever seen so much nausea and pale dread in one face? Surely he must have fallen asleep? Then the snake crawled into his throat – where it bit down firmly. My hand tore at the snake and tore – in vain! It could not tear the snake from his throat. Then it cried out of me: “Bite down! Bite down!

[...]

Meanwhile the shepherd bit down as my shout advised him; he bit with a good bite! Far away he spat the head of the snake – and he leaped to his feet. – No longer shepherd, no longer human – a transformed, illuminated, laughing being! Never yet on earth had I heard a human being laugh as he laughed!<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Comp. Löwith's *Nietzsches Philosophie des Ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, and Heidegger's *Nietzsche I*.

<sup>15</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. p. 127.

It is a story of not rescuing oneself from the clutches of dirty, rotten, evil time (Chronos as the devourer of his children), but of entering it in a more proper way: *Dasein* is not in time, but is the time in its timing/ecstasies. The message is: don't get rescued from time, but enter it properly, *become* time in its timing, which is groundless in its nature and revealed in the groundless attunements of anxiety and joviality. Here, the possibility of reacquiring the long lost measure, already present in Nietzsche, dawns upon us: dwelling as lingering.

The eternal recurrence, willed by Nietzsche, is not at all the one depicted in the first part of the vision/riddle. Rather, the latter belongs to the spirit of gravity, to the long – perhaps too long – philosophical tradition, starting with Aristotle and culminating in Hegel. What then is the eternity of recurrence, advocated by the spirit of *lightness*? Could we perhaps grab hold of the first hint at this enigmatic conception of time in the following sentence (Nietzsche, 2006, 299): “*Eternal liveliness*, however, is what counts: what do ‘eternal life’, or life at all, matter to us!”<sup>16</sup> And move a step forward with yet another, even more telling passage, taken from his posthumous fragments: “Can't you see how time is nothing but exuberance, and space but joviality (Germ. *Ausgelassenheit*)? And what wantonness of freedom can be more wanton than my rolling wheel of reason and consequence?”<sup>17</sup>

Why is Nietzsche funny and Heidegger isn't? Nietzsche's laughter of *Ausgelassenheit* as opposed to Heidegger's serenity of *Gelassenheit*: this could actually prove one of the most important differences between the two thinkers. And this is where, I guess, the rendering of Nietzsche's *Heiterkeit* as serenity drastically fails to bespeak Nietzsche's primary intimation because it actually misses his point and fits better – unintentionally even – Heidegger. Serenity is fairly far from Nietzsche's joviality

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<sup>16</sup> F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p. 299.

<sup>17</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe. München/Berlin, dtw/de Gruyter, 1988*, vol. X, p. 551.

of *Heiterkeit* and *Ausgelassenheit*, and much closer to Heidegger's release-ment in *Gelassenheit*.

Shouldn't we better bring it to a close? And what better way of doing this than with the help of Nietzsche's double hammer stroke:

And the path to redemption from that owlish earnestness lies only through joviality.<sup>18</sup>

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The Gay Science  
(La Gaya Scienza)

This house is my own and here I dwell,  
I've never aped nothing from no one  
And – laugh at each master, mark me well,  
Who at himself has not poked fun.

Over my front door.<sup>19</sup>

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“NO EFFORT, JUST PEACE” :  
THE GROUND - LESS - NESS  
OF PEACE IN NISHIDA’S  
PHILOSOPHY

Yūjin Itabashi

Inspired by both Western philosophy and East Asian Buddhist thought, Kitarō Nishida 西田幾多郎(1870–1945), arguably Japan’s most famous, significant, and influential modern philosopher, developed his own comprehensive philosophical theory, covering the areas of metaphysics, logic, practical and religious philosophy, philosophy of natural and social science and philosophy of art.

Throughout his works, based on his epistemological thinking on our immediate experience of our lives, Nishida sought the most fundamental, universal standpoint of philosophy, which could embrace and comprehend both Eastern (especially East-Asian) and Western thought.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting that this does not entail an attempt either to ground Western thought on Eastern thought, or vice versa, we can see Nishida’s intention to negate – or eliminate a temptation to find any philosophical basis or ground – in either Western or Eastern philosophical tradition.

Actually, for Nishida, as we will consider later, philosophy can be essentially brought about only through a denial of the will that probes for any generally reliable ground; not only in one’s philosophical thinking, but also in one’s actual life. Such a life that is lived while annihilating any ground is, in his early monumental, and most famous book *An Inquiry into the Good* (*Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究, 1911) and drafts for this book, designated as “peace” with others in this actual world. Peace, as Nishida remarks, does not signify a negative or passive state at all, but only an act of living vividly and actively in the world – even one that is filled with suffering. He calls it “intellectual intuition”<sup>1</sup> or “unitive

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<sup>1</sup> John W. M. Krummel states: “The thinking of Nishida [...] escapes confinement or reduction to the dichotomizing schema of “West vs. East””(Krummel 2012, p. 4).

intuition”<sup>2</sup> as the self-realisation of the immediate experience (this will be discussed later).

Although we can agree with Nishida’s conception of “peace” as an actively lived life, more usually it is thought that it is finding some common purpose – which may be referred to as the basis or ground that brings about a settlement of differences – that can actualise peace among people. Claiming the elimination of any ground in philosophy and life, however, Nishida also considers that a state of peace can be realised without any basis or ground: if we are aiming at some ideal or purpose (even peace itself) that entails some reason, basis, and ground upon which it depends, peace cannot be brought about. This paper will focus on this issue of groundlessness (or nothingness) of peace as vivid life, based on Nishida’s own consideration of the self-creativity of the immediate experience that lacks any ground.

### Self-Creativity of Experience

To begin with, let us examine Nishida’s philosophical standpoint, which consists of an epistemological consideration of the world of immediate experience. In *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida considers that we can neither grasp the nature of matter nor the object in itself in complete isolation from the subject. This also holds true for the object that is the perceiving mind (or subject in-itself), assumed by traditional Western philosophy to exist as a substance independent from, or prior to, the perceived object. Here the point Nishida makes is expressed as an epistemological criticism. One should not consider that the subject (or mind) and the object (or matter) as substances first existed independently from each other, and only later became related; in Nishida’s view, this means that their existence was correlative.

In the manuscripts for his lectures, Nishida says: “Essentially a distinction between the subject and object is never fundamental. [...] Originally there is no distinction between objects and the self, but there

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<sup>2</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 42. While referring to NKZ, all the translations are by the author; for the passages see also Kitarō Nishida, Masao Abe and Christopher Ives trans. *An Inquiry into the Good*, and Keiji Nishitani, Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig trans. *NISHIDA KITARŌ*.

is one field of experience.”<sup>3</sup> No independent substance exists, only one fact, or better one field, in which the subject and object are primarily open to, and exist through, each other. Nothing exists prior to this field, and nothing exists in a hidden background. Nishida rephrases this as the idea that, even by thinking or reflecting, “one is unable to get behind the screen of the direct experience.”<sup>4</sup>

Nishida explains such a field through the following example: “Fascinated with exquisite music, in complete oblivion of myself and things, only one music sounds throughout the universe; in such a moment, true reality presents itself.”<sup>5</sup> When I am listening to music, I actually exist in so far as I am listening to it – not independently of, or separated from, the act of listening. As the fact of “listening to music” cannot be divided into the act of listening and the music being listened to, the whole self is concerned with the act of listening, which is one with the music. In that moment, I do not exist without music. Rather, I exist only *as* listening to music. In the same sense, the only music existing in that moment is that which I am listening to and no other music exists. As such, the music and myself (indeed all the listeners to the music) originally exist only as long as they are mutually involved. As the music is integrated with their co-presence and vice versa, the music and their listening are one and the same activity.

This activity as one field of experience is mirrored in such phrases as “In complete oblivion of myself and things, only one music sounds throughout the universe,”<sup>6</sup> and “Subject and object abolishing each other, in oblivion of self and things, there is the one activity of the universe as sole reality.”<sup>7</sup> This, however, should not be regarded as the abolition of differences. The one and the same activity as a field is *not subject to the language of dualistic subject–object or inner–outer relations*. In short, we may conclude that listeners are listening not independently

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<sup>3</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> NKZ, 15, p. 190. “One field of experience” referred to in the second half of the sentence is written in English by Nishida. See the newest edition of *The Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō* (西田幾多郎全集), 15, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 2006, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> NKZ, 15, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup> NKZ, 1, pp. 59-60.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

but cooperatively and simultaneously. While each listens to and perceives or feels music in his or her own manner and differently from the others, there is no existence of music in itself prior to its being listened to. Thus, each listener is unsubstitutable and indispensable to the music as it sounds. In other words, the sounding of the music takes place only as one field in which they are listening cooperatively – and yet there are differences in the field.

It can be said that when I feel the music, my individual feeling or perception presents and comprehends that of another. Lifting the desk with my friend, my physical interaction with the desk is not that of only some parts thereof, but of the whole desk, of which the friend supports other parts. The fact that I am listening to music generally takes place in the field in which every individual feeling or perception resonates with, and is open to, that of each other.

Nishida's statement, "Just as the objective world can be said to be a reflection of the self, the self is a reflection of the objective world,"<sup>8</sup> indicates the one field of experience where each being represents each other as well as the whole. There is "only one activity," but it contains difference. In the field of experience of one activity, each one's self-cognitive or self-aware act can be realised, for instance, as an act of feeling the music or lifting the desk, which is at one with the act of representing and expressing another, the whole.

For Nishida, this is not a special state, but the fact of our actual daily life as it is, the fact that I am as I am, and being is as it is.<sup>9</sup> The experience as one field, one activity is thus not just the true experience of reality but in fact reality in itself. In short, this is "the only one activity," and there is nothing prior to such a field as activity. Nishida says that "we usually hold that there is some agent [that is some basis or ground] of activity by which activity arises. But in terms of immediate experience [that is pure experience] it is the activity in itself that is reality."<sup>10</sup> One

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Nishida regards a field of experience without a substance in its background as a "conscious phenomenon (*isiki genshō* 意識現象)," which has no consciousness as a substance or substratum behind the "phenomenon." From this point of view, Nishida states, "Conscious phenomenon is sole reality" (*NKZ*, 1, p. 52). For a detailed analysis, see Ueda 2007, pp. 141-150.

field of experience as reality is the only one activity that presents or manifests itself without any substance, that is, any basis or ground prior to this activity.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, such activity maintains a difference between entities, and every entity is directly open to each other, and each of them presents one whole reality. Nishida insists;

“The fundamental form of reality is such that reality is one while it is many, and many while it is one; in the midst of equality it maintains differences, and in the midst of differences it maintains equality. Because these two sides cannot be separated, we can say that reality is the self-development of a single entity.”<sup>11</sup>

Pure experience consists in the one and only self-presenting activity, in which differentiation and unification are one reality viewed from different perspectives, as Nishida writes: “originally, the differentiation (*bunka* 分化) of the reality and its unification (*tōitsu* 統一) are one and cannot be two.”<sup>12</sup>

As such, this claim is advanced not to raise the significance of East Asian thinking or religious experience, but clearly as criticism that questions the assumptions of substances existing independently of any experience.<sup>13</sup> Immediate experience, whether as one field or one self-presenting activity, is simply an experience behind which nothing exists. Nishida calls it “pure experience,” referring to the “radical empiricism” of William James, even though, in a lecture on James, Nishida criticises James as treating “the unifying aspect of experience”<sup>14</sup> – in other words, the oneness or unity in self-development of experience – too lightly. As discussed, immediate experience as one field, or “pure experience” in Nishida’s sense, is true reality as *one self-presenting activity*.<sup>15</sup> Such a remark suggests *self-creativity of one whole field of experience*, in which each being creates itself as well as whole, being immediately resonated

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<sup>11</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> After *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida develops his criticism through a dialogue with the thoughts of Neokantians; H. Cohen, H. Rickert, and E. Lask. See Itabashi 2004.

<sup>15</sup> NKZ, 13, p. 103.

with, and open to each other. Behind this self-creating field, there is no substance or essence, and no creating, unifying function as ground.

Regarding such self-creativity of reality, as he puts it, "by regarding experience as active, I felt I could harmonise my thought with transcendental philosophy after J. G. Fichte,"<sup>16</sup> Nishida expresses his sympathy with German Idealism, rather than James' empiricism. Sharing insight with German Idealism, especially with its critical epistemology and its theory of the self-creative activity, however, Nishida's philosophical standpoint is that reality is the *actual experience itself as one field, one activity without any ground*. He criticises the assumptions of independent substantial existence derived from experience. We thus note that his philosophical standpoint can come into existence through the negation and elimination of the will seeking for a ground in philosophical thinking – and, more to the point, in our actual lives.

### Negation of Will for Ground

For Nishida, we usually view reality according to the dualistic division of self and other, which have substantial independent existence. Here we must distinguish between two types of views. One occurs when we recognise the division independent from the one activity and reflect on the independent existence of the subject and object, self and others. The other, which takes the "true" philosophical standpoint Nishida occupies, occurs when we realise the division of self-other or subject-object entirely within the one activity that is pure experience.

As Nishida states, "division (*bunnretsu* 分裂) or reflection (*hansei* 反省) is not an independent activity [from the sole activity], for it is only the development of the activity of differentiation that constitutes one facet of unification."<sup>17</sup> Originally, in Nishida's view, the fact that I divide and reflect upon entities takes place within the self-creative activity of the one field of experience in which each one is cooperatively open to each other and represents others as well as whole. Reflection from

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<sup>16</sup> As Rolf Elberfeld states, "Die reine Erfahrung ist somit immer die Erfahrung eines *einheitlichen Feldes*, in der sich das Feld selber erfährt" (Elberfeld 1999, p. 87).

<sup>17</sup> *NKZ*, 1, p. 4.

the true philosophical standpoint thus expresses "truth" inasmuch as it participates in this truth; it *becomes* a part in this unitary self-creative, self-presenting (or self-representing) activity. For this reason, we may point out that this sole activity cannot be explained by or grounded on any reflection, thinking or reason.

"It is hardly difficult," as Nishida insists, to prove that "the myriad things in the universe are in fact created teleologically"<sup>18</sup> and that "even supposing that this fact is proven, we can still think of the teleological world as coming into such being even by chance."<sup>19</sup> Nishida thus rejects the view that reality is teleological. Nevertheless, Nishida's notion of the self-presenting and self-creative activity as reality is frequently misinterpreted as teleological. Here Nishida recognises that, although each single thing is subjected to some principles, the whole of reality itself cannot be explained or given any ground or reason by reflection.

In short, a view or a reflection that represents the self-expressive truth through becoming the one self-representing activity can come into being through the elimination of any ground behind reality, the rejection of any reason or ground for reality as such. For Nishida, nevertheless, we see that each individual has a tendency to set up their "subjective self" (*syukan teki jiko* 主觀的自己; subjective ego)<sup>20</sup> as the ground or basis of having their own way in their own life<sup>21</sup>. Here, Nishida considers the activity as attached to the will, which establishes its own ground on its own efforts. On the ground of "subjective self," one recognises the division independent from the one activity, and the independent substance of subject and object, self and other. This dualistic type of division or reflection arises with the appearance of oppositions, contradictions and conflicts between the subject and object, self and others. Then we see human life and the universe as filled with separation and suffering.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> As Bret W. Davis indicates, in Nishida's thinking, we should note the important distinction between ego (*ga* 我) and true self. See Davis 2011, p. 151.

Within such life and universe, as Nishida suggests, “the conversion of self [filled with suffering] and the reformation of life”<sup>22</sup> appears through the complete annihilation of “the belief in one’s own self [as ground]”<sup>23</sup>; this annihilation implies a radical negation of the will probing for a ground. It also brings about the realisation of the sole activity as true reality; Nishida insists that we should regard this conversion and reformation as “finding one’s true self in God (*kami* 神),”<sup>24</sup> or, “just living in God [...] in true religion.”<sup>25</sup>

As Nishida remarks, “We call the foundation of this [sole] infinite activity “God,” [however] God is not something that transcends such reality.”<sup>26</sup> God exists and acts, from Nishida’s viewpoint, *only in a sense*, at the foundation of the sole self-creating activity; however, we should note that, while seeking for God as foundation or ground, one can never realise it. As Nishida puts it: “one sees the true God where even God has been lost.”<sup>27</sup> Insisting that God is at the foundation of the sole self-creative activity implies that God is self-creativity; or, rather, the *self-creating* or *self-opening itself* of the sole self-creative activity, just as with negating any existence transcending the sole activity. God is nothing other than this *self-creating itself* through negating any ground.

The denial of the will for ground, the elimination of the belief in the self as a ground should not lead us to experience a fundamental and ultimate existence or essence other than the sole activity of one field; such existence or essence is never in the back-ground of the sole activity. This denial implies the realisation that there is nothing other than the sole activity, in which differentiation and unification are one reality viewed from different perspectives. Here the claim supporting monism that *is grounded* on the only one substance is not advanced. Negating the will

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<sup>22</sup> See *NKZ*, 1, p. 171.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>26</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96. Not referring to Japanese Shintōism as polytheism, but to Christian philosophy, Nishida calls the foundation of reality God that is one, rather, beyond the distinction between one (singular)–many (plural) or inner (active)–outer (passive). Nishida thus regards that God also can be designated as Buddha, in his phrase: “absolute, infinite Buddha or God” (*NKZ*, 1, p. 199).

for ground thus realises the field of experience in which each one realises and lives the true, incomparable, individual self, who represents the others as well as the whole, while cooperating with others; this claim is not subject to the dualistic distinction between monism and pluralism.

Here one lives its own life uniquely and irreplaceably in the sole self-creating activity of one field of experience; that is "the conversion" of self filled with suffering as "finding one's true self in God," or "just living in God." Actually, that which is not grounded behind experience is God. Stating that "one is unable to get behind the screen of the direct [i.e., immediate] experience,"<sup>28</sup> Nishida makes a note in the margin: "here is where each one is facing God."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Nishida remarks, "because God is thoroughly nothing (*mu* 無), there is no place where God is not, and no place where God does not act."<sup>30</sup> Reflecting upon Nishida's statement that "God is not something that transcends such reality. Just the ground of reality is God,"<sup>31</sup> God is, in this particular sense, ground, but not transcendent of reality; in summary, we shall say that God is *nothing* as ground.

Living "one's true self in God" means that one's own life in the one self-creating activity of one field is comprehended or grounded by God that is *nothing* (*mu* 無) as ground, or is as *nothingness* (*mu* 無) of the ground; in short, by *nothing* (-ness of the ground) other than this activity itself.

### Ground-less Peace within *Being Present Together*

Nishida recognises this realisation of our life in the sole self-creating activity of the one field that is pure experience as "intellectual intuition (*chiteki chokkan* 知的直観)"<sup>32</sup> or "unitive intuition (*tōitsuteki chokkaku* 統一的直覚),"<sup>33</sup> signifying "the unifying act in pure experience itself,

<sup>28</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 192.

<sup>29</sup> NKZ, 15, p. 181.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 100. Here Nishida might take the thoughts of Nicholas Cusanus and Meister Eckhart into consideration. In addition, we can find a simirality concening "nothingness (*Nichts*)" in Schopenhauer and Nishida. See Itabashi 2012.

<sup>32</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

the [profound] prehension of life.”<sup>34</sup> “Unitive intuition” is thus the profound “prehension” of or becoming one’s own individual self, which is “living in God” as nothingness. Then Nishida states: “This sole reality [...] on the one side is infinite opposition and conflict, and on the other is infinite unity [...] we call the foundation of this activity God.”<sup>35</sup> Nishida thus considers that intuition indicates life in the oneness of unity and conflict, or in the unity in the midst of the conflict.

Eliminating the will for ground, as discussed, brings about the sole self-creative activity, in which each self creates itself as well as one whole field of experience, resonating with – and open to – each other. This co-creative oneness, or co-resonant openness, however, should not be regarded as the abolition of conflicts and sufferings. Reflecting upon the nothingness of the ground, there can never exist some common doctrine and ideal, or aim and purpose as a basis, which bring about a settlement of conflicts in the field of experience. Far from that, facing God throughout as the nothingness of the ground – or, in other words, confronting the absence and nothingness of God, which we can all believe in – radically negates our will for ground.

This co-creative and co-resonant oneness in the sole activity should not be included in some ground; for instance, in a teleological order. Annihilating the will for ground leads us to realise that each event is unique and proper in itself and cannot be included in or comprehended by others. It is true that each event has a cause or reason, by which it exists precisely here and now; however, nothing has a cause or reason for its existence as it is; rather, each being exists precisely so together. Thinking the fact that such an event of *being present together* thus has no substance or ground behind it, we should say that such an event as the one field arises by itself, interpreting Nishida’s consideration of the self-creativity of experience.

Here in the midst of the conflict of interests, even not sharing the same ideal or purpose as basis or ground with each other, but just sharing an event of *being present together*, or, *encounter between each other*,

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. Both of “*chokkann* 直観” and “*chokkaku* 直覚” can be translated as “intuition,” although in “*chokkaku*” the immediateness might be more emphasised.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43. Considering “intellectual intuition,” Nishida refers to “Schopenhauer’s will-less pure intuition [*Reines Anschauen*]” (NKZ, 1, p.42). See Itabashi 2014.

without being able to find any ground upon which we depend, each one still remains in co-creative, co-resonant oneness between each other. The denial of the will for ground causes us to recognise this event with a *bottom-less* sorrow for its *ground-less-ness*, and at the same time with a blessing and joy for its coming into being. It is the very experience of the unity within conflict; in Nishida's phrase, "happiness even in the midst of suffering," that indicates "unitive (or intellectual) intuition." Happiness, from Nishida's view, means the realisation of what the true self wills, in other words, that of the self-creating act of true self not included in sufferings, which can exist in the oneness or unity within conflicts.

In his draft for *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida then describes "intellectual intuition (*chiteki chokkaku* 知的直覚) is [...] no effort, but peace [*heiwa* 平和]."<sup>36</sup> "Happiness even in the midst of suffering," as considered, is itself not included in and comprehend by sufferings, and in this sense, we can call this happiness "peace." Realizing this "peace," as Nishida's words quoted above, we do not need any effort; effort is an act that will attain some ideal or purpose by its own, then as far as we exert effort, it signifies that we depend upon our own abilities as basis or ground independent from others. Opposed to that, we need to eliminate any efforts, any will probing for a ground. As Nishida remarks, the realisation of each life in the sole activity of one field, or living in God as nothingness of the ground, is "no effort, just peace." Moreover, such peace actualises not a negative, apathetic life about conflicts and suffering, but a vivid, active life facing them; as Nishida states, "belief in God [that is life in God] is [...] intuition with vital power [of living one's true life],"<sup>37</sup> or, in unitive intuition, "there is stillness [but] within movement (*dō chūni seiari* 動中に静あり)."<sup>38</sup> Unitive intuition, as above, entails that in the midst of conflicts each one realises itself in the co-creative, co-resonant unity through sharing *being present together or encounter between each other without ground* in the field of experience. This intuition must not be the will escaping from conflicts and

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<sup>36</sup> NKZ, 16, p. 323.

<sup>37</sup> NKZ, 1, p. 177.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

sufferings. Negating the will seeking for a ground brings about directly, without any effort, the willingness to embrace conflicts and sufferings, in order not to encourage them to hinder the unity, as *being present together*. Unitive intuition realises itself, not as an act of effort, but just as *being oneself together ground-lessly*, that is the co-creative, co-resonant unity among us in the one field.

### Conclusion

Tracing his thinking, we see Nishida's inquiry into our life, based on his consideration on the self-creativity of the sole activity, the one field of immediate experience. As we considered earlier, our actual experience is that which can arise as one field; it is precisely the only one self-creative activity behind which no substance and ground exist. Then, however, we came to the problem of how to live in the midst of conflicts and sufferings that appear in the sole self-creative activity: then we saw that negation or elimination of the will that probes for a ground brings about the unity of the sole activity of one field within conflicts and sufferings.

Here, nevertheless, might still remain a question as to why such an activity brings conflicts and sufferings; moreover, why does one realise a differentiation independent from unification. Actually, unless we become free from and transcend such questions and answers, we are still willing for a ground. The denial of the activity of willing for a ground means the realisation of the activity that is originally and truly ground-less.

Although referring to the notion of *nothing (-ness)* as God, which is evolved under the strong influence of East Asian traditions, Nishida is nevertheless generally aiming at a negation of the existence of a ground behind and separated from our actual life.<sup>39</sup> Nishida's thinking is based not only on some traditional or philosophical thoughts in the East (and some in the West), but also on his own critical philosophy, which re-

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<sup>39</sup> For a consideration of the development of Nishida's thinking on "nothing (ness)," see Itabashi 2008.

jects any independent existence or essence from our experience without any presupposition.

Regarding our true individual, unique life in the midst of conflicts and sufferings as "happiness" and "peace," Nishida suggests the realisation of being free from conflicts and suffering even in the midst of them, which comes into being through the radical, co-creative, co-resonant unity of *being present together without ground*; there is no will escaping from sufferings but only the act of living and embracing them. In short, it is just the negation of the will for ground that realises this "peace" among us; it implies an act of living vividly and actively with others in the actual world, even one that is filled with conflicts and suffering.

While aiming at some common ideal or purpose as a reason, basis, and ground for the attainment of peace, which brings about a settlement of conflicts between each other, one is actually escaping from the sufferings in order to secure oneself as a firm ground; nevertheless, sufferings are never abolished because one's experience – or one's life itself – cannot be included in some (for instance, teleological) order *grounded on* an ideal or a purpose. It is *ground-less*. This *ground-lessness* or *nothingness* of the ground, however, indicates the uniqueness of each life in the co-creative unity that cannot be grounded on the only one doctrine or principle.

When one finds that an act of negating the will for ground itself should still only be a negative state escaped and isolated from our actual life filled with sufferings, one still probes for some existence or state remaining after negating any ground. There *one finds that one is still attached to the willing for ground behind one's life in order to secure oneself as ground*. Negating any ground throughout is thus immediately equal to – and absolutely at one with – an act of living vividly and creatively, not abolishing the conflicts and sufferings among us, but having them not hinder our vivid life. Here is no separation between the act of negating a ground and the act of creating one's active unique life. *No effort* toward a ground becomes *just peace*, without any gap, any effort or any ground.

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# THE WORLD UNDONE: ENVIRONMENTAL DENIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND ANIMAL RIGHTS EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Tomaz Grušovnik

## Introduction

The majority of ideas in environmental ethics, especially those focusing on much-needed practical changes in human behaviour, represent a well-known strategy of widening the circle of our moral responsibility so as to encompass all living beings and even inanimate natural objects, such as ecosystems. This is precisely what Aldo Leopold had in mind when he advocated the necessity of the idea of the “third step in ethical sequence” in his *A Sand County Almanac*: “The extension of ethics to this third element in human environment is, if I read the evidence correctly, an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity. It is the third step in a sequence”.<sup>2</sup> In more general terms, this strategy is detected as one of two main conclusions concerning environmental ethics in Andrew Light’s and Holmes Rolston III’s introduction to *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*. They describe it as a “central question” in ethics, formulating it thus: “How broadly ‘inclusive’ we ought to be in our circle of moral consideration?” adding that “The history of ethics often appears to be the history of ever-expanding notions of moral respect.”<sup>3</sup>

In line with the overwhelming consensus concerning the business of environmental ethics – unfolding our moral umbrella so as to cover as

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<sup>1</sup> The ideas of the present paper were first presented at the “Poesis of Peace” conference in Gozd Martuljek, Slovenija (May 2014), and later at the “International Days of Frane Petrić” conference of the Croatian Philosophical Society (September 2014) in Cres, Croatia.

<sup>2</sup> A. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> A. Light & Holmes Rolston III, “Introduction: Ethics and Environmental Ethics”, in: A. Light & Holmes Rolston III (eds.): *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*. Blackwell, Oxford 2003, pp. 1–11.

many natural beings and ecosystems as possible – a vast number of educational methods in environmental ethics and sustainable development focus on developing sentiments, or looking for rational reasons on which to base a widened moral obligation, in active moral subjects (i.e. humans) needed for such a “third step”. My own past efforts, presented in my monograph *Odtenki zelene*<sup>4</sup>, took this exact avenue in pursuing an environmental ethical goal, focusing on the Rortian-Humean proposal of the “progress of (moral) sentiments”. In this paper, however, I want to radically alter that perspective, presenting an alternative view on environmental and animal ethics<sup>5</sup>, according to which our affection towards nature and living beings – and even our sense of moral obligation towards them – is not something that has to be brought about in the future (by, for instance, pointing to our similarities with animals, or our enjoyment of the natural world in order to convince us that “they are worth our respect since they are almost like us”) but instead something that has to be reclaimed from our denied present; this affection is thus not something we have to construe from nothing (would that be at all possible?) but is rather something which is “always already there”, something that is repressed in the course of our upbringing, something that each individual (to a greater or lesser degree) learns (perhaps subconsciously) to deny as a member of a society that is based on high consumption of environmental resources.

By pointing out that our affinity towards the natural world is always already present and that our detrimental attitude towards the environment and cruelty towards animals has to deny this primordial moral affection, I do not mean to say, perhaps in a pseudo-Rousseauian fashion, that deep within ourselves we are all environmentalists, and that all what we have to do is to recover our true self, the one that is uncontaminated by subsequent pressure from social institutions. That is, I do not want to hypostatise any “moral substance” in humans that is

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<sup>4</sup> T. Grušovnik, *Odtenki zelene [Shades of Green]*. Annales, Koper 2011.

<sup>5</sup> I'm aware of the troubled relationship between the two; however, for the purposes of present paper they will be more or less coterminous. The reason for this is that both environmental and animal ethics traditionally presuppose an “enlargement” of our moral universe; therefore, the difference between both is here (for brevity's sake) viewed only in terms of *how far* this universe should be stretched.

present in moral subjects *before* they enter our high-consumption society; on the contrary, this environmental moral sentiment as something that is “always already there” has to be understood more in terms of a logical precondition with which one can explain the occurrence of trauma in people exposed to disproportionate violence towards nature and natural beings. To put this in different words: our “primordial moral affection towards the natural world” could well be something that surfaces only *post festum*, only after subjects are introduced into a culture that they view as alienating; something that is coinstantaneous with the degradation of nature and natural beings and not something that exists in any substantial fashion since, or even before, the inception of a moral subject. The main point I want to make here is simply to point out that I do not need to naturalistically hypostatise any moral substance in human subjects in order to pursue the present argumentative strategy.

I hope these remarks will further clarify themselves in the course of the paper. I will try to touch upon them once again explicitly. However, what should be mentioned right at the outset is a certain resemblance of the present strategy to the one I employed in my papers concerning “environmental denial”. There<sup>6</sup> I tried to show how disbelief in scientific data about climate change and human impacts on the natural world is a consequence of our inability to cope with perceived reality: according to the *cognitive dissonance* theory, we have to deny facts in order to preserve our *mode de vie* and our image of ourselves as moral persons. There is, however, an important difference to be noted between both examples of denial: if in the first case the facts (about climate change, or about environmental degradation) are presented to deniers and by virtue of that consciously acknowledged and then denied, in the second example – one dealt with here – this is not the case, for here “facts” (our “spontaneous” affection towards the natural world) are *not present* to subjects and thus remain unobvious (this is precisely why traditional forms of environmental ethics strive to “enlarge” our moral domain); in this sense, the first case of denial could be termed “active” or “con-

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<sup>6</sup> Most accessible: T. Grušovnik, “Environmental Denial: Why We Fail to Change Our Environmentally Damaging Practices”, *Synthesis Philosophica*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2012, pp. 91–106. Accessible online: [http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&cid\\_clanak\\_jezik=139410](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&cid_clanak_jezik=139410)

scious” (in the sense of consciously confronting the facts), whereas the second is much more sublime and “passive”, or “unconscious” (because the “facts” are always already repressed).

The consequences of this latter denial are also much more frustrating and immediate, at least for individual subjects, than the consequences of the first denial, since, if the climate change deniers face only inaction (failure to act according to sustainable development standards) as a consequence of their disbelief, then workers in a slaughterhouse, for instance, face much more immediate and shocking traumas as a consequence of this latter denial, most notably *traumatic stress*, resulting in widespread alcoholism and violence.<sup>7</sup> In the case of environmental degradation, the consequences of denial may not be as intense as in the case of violations of animal integrity and well-being; nonetheless, they are severe: whole communities are exposed to terrible living conditions; in recognition of this, everyone – except for the poorest of the poor – tries to avoid such environments or jobs connected with severe environmental degradation.

In this sense, the most potent argument in favour of the present strategy is a simple fact: since practically every sane person tries to avoid killing or hurting animals and damaging the environment, and since slaughterhouses and areas of industrial pollution are almost without exception hidden from civic eyes, a very strong environmental and animal moral sentiment – or stance<sup>8</sup> – has to be always already present in

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Dillard, “A Slaughterhouse Nightmare: Psychological Harm Suffered by Slaughterhouse Employees and the Possibility of Redress through Legal Reform”, *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy*, 15, no. 2, summer 2008, pp. 391–408.

<sup>8</sup> One could, of course, argue, that this fact is *not enough* to argue for *moral* problematic: since garbage, for instance, is also put away from civic noses and *this* is not a moral, but rather an “*aesthetic*” problem. In other words: slaughterhouses and polluting industrial areas are put away from our sight because they are unpleasant, not because they are *immoral*. But if this were so, how come that slaughterhouse workers nonetheless exhibit symptoms akin to symptoms of those who are exposed to brutal inter-human violence, and how come people observing images of vast environmentally degraded areas have a feeling of there being something *wrong* with that (and not that it is only unpleasant in the sense of a pile of rotting garbage)? If we are to relativise the present problematic in such a fashion, we should, of course, go all the way and also try arguing that Nazi concentration camps were put out of sight only because they were unpleasant (and not because people didn’t want to know what was going on there because that was highly morally disturbing).

human moral subjects.<sup>9</sup> As Larry Carbone, a laboratory research veterinarian, nicely pointed out in his monograph *What Animals Want*: “If voluntary consent were our standard for animal research, the whole business would end – not because we cannot understand what the animals are telling us, but because we can.”<sup>10</sup> The point, then, is that what (in this case animal rights) ethics looks for is already there, the only problem is that we are *taught to repress it*: “... veterinarians in the U.S. before 1989 were simply taught to ignore animal pain”.<sup>11</sup>

### Acknowledging animals and nature

Perhaps the most obvious way to argue for something like a primordial, spontaneous human affinity with the natural world would be to endorse the so-called “biophilia hypothesis”. Coined by Erich Fromm and elaborated by Edward Osborne Wilson, the hypothesis accounts for “the connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life.”<sup>12</sup> The reasoning here would be quite simple: in line with Leopold’s idea that (environmental) ethics is actually a product of evolution and can be seen as a form of “symbiosis”,<sup>13</sup> it is obvious to conclude that human beings must cherish spontaneous feelings of affection towards the natural world. In other words, since as a species we co-evolved with other organisms, it is only natural that we prefer green environments to concrete walls and living animals to robots. Consequently, all that is required for a “third step” is in us already – we just need to return to our deeply ingrained affections in order to overcome the environmental problems and alleviate the animal pain that is inflicted by our industrial food production.

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<sup>9</sup> Next, perhaps equally powerful point in favour of the basic premise of this paper, is the fact that “moral enlargement” would not be possible if there were no “ground”, viz. already existing environmental and animal moral sentiment in humans, on which to build it, as already glossed above.

<sup>10</sup> L. Carbone, *What Animals Want*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004, p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> B. Rollin, *The Unheeded Cry: Animal Consciousness, Animal Pain, and Science*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, pp. xii, 117–118, cited in: L. Carbone, *What Animals Want*, p. 150.

<sup>12</sup> E. O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*. Harvard University Press, Harvard 1992.

<sup>13</sup> A. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 202.

But this line of reasoning begs the question. For if we have been so intimately interconnected with nature from the beginning, why do we then face such enormous environmental problems? How is it possible that we so overwhelmingly act in discordance with the biophilia hypothesis? What is the source of the perceived alienation?

Because of this problem and due to the fact that the biophilia hypothesis seems to demand a certain hypostatization of primordial affection in human moral subjects (which, for ontological reasons, I hope to avoid), I'm choosing a different route in arguing for our denial of an always already present environmental and animal ethical outlook, based on my previous work on Stanley Cavell in connection with environmental debate,<sup>14</sup> focusing around the problematic of the concept of "acknowledgment", the cornerstone of Cavellian philosophy.

In tackling scepticism, Cavell resorts to a painstakingly detailed analysis of primarily Wittgensteinian philosophy and Shakespearean drama in order to derive an idea that scepticism can be – as in the case of *Othello* – something that one "lives" and is thus connected with our quotidian strategies of coping with the world. Drawing from Nietzsche Cavell concludes that in this sense scepticism can be seen as "the attempt to convert the human condition, the condition of humanity, into an intellectual difficulty, a riddle", interpreting "a metaphysical finitude as an intellectual lack."<sup>15</sup> Thus in scepticism regarding "other minds" the existence of others can be – as the title of Cavell's essay on *King Lear* suggests<sup>16</sup> – *avoided*. In this sense, the existence of others (but also the world as such) is not something that one has to *know*; rather, it is something that has to be *acknowledged*, accepted.<sup>17</sup> And – most

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. T. Grušovnik: "Un Poète Maudit: Stanley Cavell and the Environmental Debate", *Conversations: The Journal of Cavellian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 85–100. Accessible online: <https://uottawa.scholarsportal.info/ojs/index.php/conversations/article/view/954>

<sup>15</sup> S. Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1987, p. 138.

<sup>16</sup> "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*", in: S. Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1987, pp. 39–123.

<sup>17</sup> Originally, the argument is bound up with Wittgenstein's philosophy, where scepticism is not wrong but nonsensical because sceptical arguments undermine themselves; Wittgenstein, for instance, shows how making mind states "private" eliminates them from language games entirely (cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell, Oxford, § 293), or how utterances "I am only dreaming, and this is not real" in the "dream argument" similarly

importantly – failure to do so results in doubt (as in Descartes) or in hatred and violence (as in Shakespearean tragic heroes, or in Coleridge’s *The Ancient Mariner*), and this is precisely why Cavell says that “what philosophy knows as doubt, Othello’s violence allegorises (or recognises) as some form of jealousy.”<sup>18</sup>

Of course it is now possible to ask *why* Cavell thinks one would try to *avoid* accepting, or “acknowledging”, the existence of other minds or even the external world. The answer to this question can, in fact, be deduced from what has already been said: because one is incapable of facing the whole truth of “human condition”, its contingency, vulnerability, and uncertainty; because one is dissatisfied with circumstances and relations in this world; and because one strives for something bigger, or greater than what is “humanly possible”.<sup>19</sup> If one wants to escape from the contingency of Wittgensteinian *Lebensformen*, or if one wants to “give up the responsibility of their maintenance”,<sup>20</sup> the “real” existence of the other (be it the world, or the human Other) has to be presented as inaccessible, as beyond our powers of reason.

An analysis of Cartesian treatment of other human beings (“other minds”) then reveals precisely this logic of reinterpretation of an existential problematic into an epistemological one, in which the existence of other “souls” is transposed and understood as a problem of (unattainable) knowledge because of the inability to cope with human separateness.<sup>21</sup> Descartes’ treatment of animals as “brutes, substantially

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undermine themselves by implying that their truth-value is independent from the fact of me perhaps dreaming (in other words: if the statement “I’m only dreaming” is true, then I’m also only dreaming this statement and its meaning, which in turn means, that it cannot be true; for a good presentation of Wittgenstein’s analysis of the dream argument cf. A. Stroll, “Wittgenstein and the Dream Hypothesis”, *Philosophia*, no. 37, 2009, pp. 681–690). Thus if a sceptical position is *per se* incoherent, then its sense must be somewhere else; for Cavell, this sense is to be found in an individual’s reinterpretation of an existential problematic in an epistemological one.

<sup>18</sup> S. Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> In this sense Cavell can be seen as saying something Hegel says in “Introduction” to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in § 74, viz. that what calls itself as fear of error, makes itself known rather as fear of the truth.

<sup>20</sup> S. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1979 p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> Similar to this line of argument one could – like Rachel Jones, explicating Luce Irigaray’s thought on Descartes – say that the process of universal doubt: “is less driven by the quest for certainty than the meditator’s desire to free himself of dependency on anything that originates

different from human beings” reveals, however, a somewhat different but nonetheless analogous logic: it turns out that the present existence of animal souls has to be denied in order to save the possibility of the eternal existence of human souls (animal consciousness, then, has to be denied in the same way that the practical knowledge of human minds was earlier denied). This can be clearly seen from the remarks about animals in *The Passions of the Soul* and *Discourse on Method*, where Descartes points to a complete similarity of animal and human bodies on the one hand, and yet denies an ontological equivalence between humans and animals. In other words, the distinction between animals and humans turns precisely on *nothing*; it is a non-existent difference:

“For although they [animals] lack reason, and perhaps even thought, all the movements of the spirits and of the gland which produce passions in us are nevertheless present in them too, though in them they serve to maintain and strengthen only the movements of the nerves and the muscles which usually accompany the passions and not, as in us, the passions themselves.”<sup>22</sup>

In *Discourse on Method* it becomes clear that this distinction between animals and humans is needed in order to reassure the Cartesian subject that he, in his innermost essence, cannot be affected by death. In other words, the distinction between animals and humans is asserted for the same reason as the distinction between the body and the mind:<sup>23</sup> it’s needed in order to remove humans from nature, and thus rescue them from finitude:

“For after the error of those who deny God, which I believe I have already adequately refuted, there is none that leads weak minds further from the straight path of virtue than that of imagining that the souls of the beasts are of

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outside himself.” R. Jones, Irigaray: *Towards a Sexuate Philosophy*. Polity, Cambridge 2011, p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> R. Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (Part One, § 50), in: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1 (tr. Robert Stoothoff). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 325–404, p. 348.

<sup>23</sup> This is also the reason why the present argumentation of course holds *even if* animals do not in reality have any souls, or consciousness; the point is, on the contrary, that Descartes wants to make a distinction where there is, according to his own reasoning, none. Perhaps it is *precisely because* he ties “passions” – and states of mind in general – so strongly with the body that *then* he needs such an unreal distinction between the two entities in order to argue for immortality.

the same nature as ours, and hence that after this present life we have nothing to fear or to hope for, any more than flies and ants. But when we know how much the beasts differ from us, we understand much better the arguments which prove that our soul is of a nature entirely independent of the body, and consequently that it is not bound to die with it.”<sup>24</sup>

Along similar lines one could argue that in the romantic period “Man” was, again, further alienated from “Nature” as a consequence of a similar motivation: trying to preserve a place for the human subject that would help to raise her/him above natural determinism, contingency, etc. The idea can, as Isaiah Berlin points out, be traced to Kant’s thoughts on the Will freed from nature, and even more specifically to Friedrich Schiller.<sup>25</sup> It is the latter that famously says in his essay *On the Sublime*: “All other objects obey necessity; man is the being who wills.”<sup>26</sup> Romanticism then, even more than during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Enlightenment period, exhibits precisely the paradox I want to draw our attention to: while presumably cherishing nature and, perhaps for the first time in Western history, exposing it as an “Other” (which can be most clearly observed in Caspar David Friedrich’s paintings), it simultaneously represents it as a *different* from humans, and humans as “above” – even “outside” – it. To put it in different words: instead of inaugurating it (which is perhaps commonly thought), Romanticism by and large *eliminates* it from the human sphere and alienates humans from nature almost *completely*.

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<sup>24</sup> R. Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* (Part Five), in: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. 1* (tr. Robert Stoothoff). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1985, pp. 111–151, p. 141. Even Descartes’ contemporaries and close followers were surprised by his treatment of animals, which was unusual for the time. Mandeville, for instance, explicitly scoured Descartes for his views on animals: “When a creature has given such convincing and undeniable Proofs of Terrors upon him, and the Pains and Agonies he feels, is there a Follower of *Descartes* so inur’d to Blood, as not to refute, by his Commiseration, the Philosophy of that vain Reasoner?” (B. Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988, pp. 196–197). For a good overview of philosophical attitudes towards animals in Descartes’ time cf.: P. Harrison, “The Virtues of Animals in Seventeen-Century Thought”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1998, pp. 463–484.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. I. Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*. Princeton University Press, Princeton 2001 (fourth lecture, or chapter, titled “The Restrained Romantics”, where Berlin talks about freed Will).

<sup>26</sup> F. Schiller, “On the Sublime”, in: *Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*. Echo Library, Teddington 2006, pp. 102–111, p. 102.

This gesture would not in itself be problematic were it not a consequence of what has been shown above: of an inability to accept the immersion of humans into nature and thus their susceptibility to death, contingent violence etc.<sup>27</sup> The irony of this denial is, of course, that it does precisely what it should avoid: committing violence towards nature and oneself (as in *The Ancient Mariner*). The only way out of this circle is to *accept* “human finitude”, to *acknowledge* nature. How this should be done is a matter of specific circumstances, of a specific singular act on the part of a specific individual: everyone has to do it for her-/himself (the Mariner did it by accepting ugly and disgusting water-snakes as “O happy living things! No tongue / Their beauty might declare: A spring of love gushes from my heart, / and I bless’d them unaware! /.../ And from my neck so free / The Albatross fell off, and sank / Like lead into the sea”<sup>28</sup>). The other important emphasis of this point is that the denial of nature (i.e. the denial of the feelings and emotions of individual living beings as well as the denial of nature as something humans are immersed in) causes harm to the denier her-/himself, and not solely to nature and natural beings. This, in turn, is the case because something that has been avoided and repressed – namely the always already existing affection towards nature and natural beings – does not simply vanish but remains “there” in a displaced fashion, as a suppressed truth which inevitably resurfaces and revenges itself as a feeling of isolation and despair with which the denier from now on has to live.

One will undoubtedly argue that the picture of the denial(s) presented here is a bit stretched, and that the philosopher, or a poet like Schiller, denies nature in a very different way than, for example, the Mariner

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<sup>27</sup> Schiller's motivation in the above mentioned essay is precisely to protect Romantic subject from violence, and thus save his “dignity”. After uttering the famous sentence, Schiller continues: “It is exactly for this reason that there is nothing more inconsistent with the dignity of man than to suffer violence, for violence effaces him. He who does violence to us disputes nothing less than our humanity; he who submits in a cowardly spirit to the violence abdicates his quality of man... Surrounded by numberless forces, which are all superior to him and hold sway over him, he aspires by his nature not to have to suffer any injury at their hands.

<sup>28</sup> If we were true to the Mariner's story all the way, we should perhaps say that this act of acknowledging has to happen unconsciously: the verse “And I bless'd them unaware” repeats twice in this stanza, and the Mariner attributes his change to the “pity of his saint”. S. T. Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, in: Wordsworth, W., and Coleridge, S. T., *Lyrical Ballads* (Owen, W. J. B., ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford 1985, pp. 7–32 p. 17.

or – to take the most vivid example – a slaughterhouse worker. This, however, would not be a minor objection at all: for, if true – if the philosopher, the poet, the Mariner, and the slaughterhouse worker do not share the same fate – then the argument of this paper is to a significant degree pointless, since its aim is precisely to show how an analogous structure is at work in all these cases. The challenge, then, is to show how both Descartes and the slaughterhouse worker kill animals in roughly the same way. In order to do that, one has to point out that in the latter case, in the case of a butcher, the animal has to be *already dead* if it is to be slaughtered. To put it in other words: the animals in slaughterhouses have to die *twice*, first *as animals*, i.e. *as living beings* (which, in industrial farming, happens even before they are born), and then also physically, *as objects*. The only difference between the philosopher and the butcher is then the physical act of terminating an object.<sup>29</sup> This is, of course, no small difference and the full force of it is felt as different consequences of the denial and their severity. However, what I wanted to stress it is that the first act is needed in order to carry out the second.

The fact that there is, by and large, a certain uneasiness in killing animals for food, and that indeed the animals have first to be killed symbolically before they can be slaughtered, can also be clearly detected in language. To be sure: one never says that the animals killed for food have been “killed”; they are either “butchered” or “slaughtered”. Similarly, meat brought to the table always has to be renamed: one does not feel comfortable eating a “cow”, a “deer”, a “pig” or a “sheep”. We instead prefer to eat “beef”, “venison”, “pork” and “mutton” (needless to say, this difference occurs in practically every language); more generally, we do not eat “flesh”, we consume “meat”. The connection between the object (meat) and the animal (a cow, a deer, etc.) has to be symbolically severed before it is ready for consumption; the physical act of turning

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<sup>29</sup> But even that is questionable, for it is known that Descartes performed vivisections himself, at least from what can be deduced from his vivid examples: “If you slice off the pointed end of the heart in a live dog, and insert a finger into one of the cavities, you will feel unmistakably that every time the heart gets shorter it presses the finger, and every time it gets longer it stops pressing it.” R. Descartes, *Description of the Human Body* (Part Two), in: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. 1* (tr. John Cottingham). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1985, pp. 313–324, p. 317.

an animal into an object has to be hidden from public eyes, so much so that some young people don't even know where the meat comes from. But, as indicated above, the animals for meat production are turned into objects even before they are killed: they aren't simply "animals" as "pets" are, but are "livestock", "cattle" etc. All this points to a hypothesis proposed by Edmund Leach, viz. "we can only arrive at semantically distinct verbal concepts if we repress the boundary percepts that lie between them."<sup>30</sup> In our case the "boundary percept" that is being repressed is nothing other than an animal as a living being, a being that has a life that is similar, at least in certain aspects, to our own.<sup>31</sup> Again it is precisely because there is a need for symbolic distinction that one may presuppose that no distinction was originally felt.

This "originally", however, demands some further reflection, as already indicated in the introduction. By "always already present affection" and "no original distinction", I, as mentioned, do not wish to hypostatise any "organic" or "naturalistic" bond between humans and nature (apart from an obvious fact that we all are material beings with bodies and thus subject to same physical laws). I'm convinced such a strategy would lead to theoretical problems – such a proposition demands empirical evidence which I don't attempt to provide here, since it is questionable what this evidence should look like: how, that is, one could empirically prove something like an "affection" or even "morality"? It is enough, I believe, to point out that the discussed symptoms (from posttraumatic stress to symbolic operations in language) presuppose the denial and the repressed truth, even if this truth is non-existent before the onset of the symptoms. This would mean that the differences introduced between animals, nature and humans formally presuppose contiguity between these concepts; were this not so, then there would

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<sup>30</sup> E. Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse. *New Directions in the Study of Language*, August 15, 1966, pp. 23–63, p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> A roughly analogous symbolic operation occurs when humans are being killed in conflicts: the enemy is often portrayed not as a "fellow human being" but as a "demon" (religious wars) or as an animal, a "pest" (as, for instance, a "Colorado beetle" in the latest Ukraine conflict: cf. "Colours of Conflict", *The Economist*, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Accessible at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/05/guide-ukrainian-and-russian-flags> (retrieved September 4, 2014)).

be no need for imposing the difference on the one hand, and also *no place* where to ground it.<sup>32</sup>

Before turning to the conclusion, let's shed some light on the distinction between denying animals as animals and nature as nature; that is, between repressing our affection towards animals and towards nature, which was here presented as a singular denial of "nature". Even though there seems to be a major qualitative difference between the acts of killing an animal and cutting down a tree – reflected also in different symptoms experienced by the one who commits the deeds – there is nevertheless a commonality to both: in either case the agent has to distance her-/himself from the "object" he/she destroys. And even though there is a huge difference between slaughterhouses and clear-cuttings, or polluted industrial areas, there is a convincing similarity there as well: both have to be hidden before the eyes of the public, and no one feels comfortable looking at them. As already pointed out, those phenomena should not only be viewed aesthetically but predominantly morally: they are hidden (maybe not only, but certainly *also*) because one feels there is something *wrong* with that. In order to exist, they presuppose a distancing of humans from them, portraying humans as *substantially different* from animals (as in Descartes) and above, or even

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<sup>32</sup> Perhaps one could even argue that the "gap" one perceives between oneself and the Other (be it another human being, or an animal, or even an object) is a result of the very existence of "knowledge" and "subject" as such; i.e., that it is formally necessary for a "subject" to think of itself as "alienated" from an "object", since the very structure of "knowledge" is such that it immediately falls apart into a "subject" and an "object". The gap, then, would be formal and as such necessary precondition for every possible "knowledge" and thus also "subject". The "error" – in our case the error of traditional environmental ethics – would then be to hypostatise this formal gap into a supposedly "real gap" that exists between a "moral subject" and "nature" as distinct objects. If this were correct, then the task of environmental ethics – of bridging the gap that it itself poses – would as such be impossible; i.e. it would not be possible to bridge the gap *within* environmental ethics itself. The point here is also this: it does not make sense to speak about either "continuity" or "gap" *before* or *outside* of knowledge (and thus also subject); they are interdependent. One further point: by commenting that the gap is "only formal", one doesn't mean that it isn't *perceived* as real; it is, of course, and necessarily so. However, it is nothing *empirical*, nothing partial (like an object that can be pointed out). It is, instead, an effect of the structure of knowledge as such (and if this structure changes, then the sense of the gap changes as a consequence).

outside our ecosystems (as in Schiller and romantics).<sup>33</sup> This gesture, however, produces a blowback, a shadow of what has been repressed, which carries its own revenge. The only way to avoid this revenge is to acknowledge what has been repressed and denied by simultaneously acknowledging that we, as well as “them”, or “it”, are all a part of this “nature”, marked by contingency, finitude, susceptibility to violence, pain and the cessation of life.

### Conclusion: environmental and animal rights education reconsidered

If what I tried to show above holds true, then much of environmental and animal ethical education may turn out to be misplaced, or even part of a symptom (ethical studies trying to rationally ground our responsibility may be seen as our attempt at escaping our moral obligation, the same way that Descartes’ solipsism was, in Cavell’s analysis, a sign of his unwillingness to accept and acknowledge the existence of other human beings). In formal terms, its goal should then not be seen as an *enlargement* of our moral responsibility; rather, it should be viewed as a deconstruction of our acquired insensitivity and denial, as its *reduction* and *shrinking*. This, however, is not just a formal turn of the problem; it significantly changes the perspective from which to view human insensitivity to nature and animals – and, consequently, how to deal with it.

Firstly, such education must place an emphasis not so much on learning something new but on unlearning something acquired through, perhaps, socialisation (even learning of language). It must focus on something that was repressed and forgotten, and not on something that is yet to be brought about. “Teaching, like analysis”, says Soshana Felman:

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<sup>33</sup> Here perhaps one should also point out that similar feelings of wrong occur when not only the natural areas are devastated but artificial ones as well: as, for instance, the destruction of buildings and whole residential areas in war. The point of this comparison would be the fact that it is not problematic to destroy only “natural” areas or “living things”, but “objects” as such; perhaps this is the reason why humans must think of themselves as “subjects”, i.e. categorically different from “mere objects”. For brevity’s sake I’ll leave these thoughts aside for now, recognising their potential importance and perhaps delineating a future area of my research.

“has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge as with resistance to knowledge ... Ignorance, in other words is nothing other than a desire to ignore: its nature is less cognitive than performative; as in the case of Sophocles' nuanced representation of the ignorance of Oedipus, it is not a simple lack of information but the incapacity-or the refusal-to acknowledge *one's own implication* in the information.”<sup>34</sup>

This “refusal to acknowledge” brings us back, full-circle, to Stanley Cavell and our point of departure. But let us only stress that in trying to overcome our “resistance to knowledge” new, or at least reformed, environmental and animal rights education might first start to look for social and cultural mechanisms, including learning a special body of knowledge and know-how, that teach us to disregard nature and living beings as moral subjects. In short: environmental and animal rights education must focus on how the world was undone since this is the only way to rebuild it.

Secondly, these remarks remind us that environmental and animal rights education as it stands has little chance of succeeding – for whatever it teaches is automatically undone by a different, perhaps more silent “teaching” that is opposed to it and that teaches us precisely how to disregard its main points: animal sensibility and the “intrinsic” worth of nature and ecosystems. We have, as we speak, two different “educations” that are opposed to each other and that mercilessly bite at each other without going back to their common root: it’s doubtful whether reinforcing one will help to eliminate the other; it may, on the contrary, only provoke more hatred and cause even a bigger repression and denial from the other side, as is often the case. Instead of teaching us how to “sympathise with animals” or trying to “walk our feet” with trees (a strategy that is highly problematic for all kinds of reasons), education should focus on social mechanisms that promote and institutionalise our denial. In order to prove this, it is enough to point out that the strategy of “sympathising with animals” has, so far, only made killing lots more of them more “humane” by industrialising meat production and pushing it out of public gaze: “The public animal slaughtering facilities

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<sup>34</sup> S. Felman, “Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable”. *Yale French Studies*, no. 63, 1982, pp. 21–44, p. 30.

constructed outside of city centres in both the US and Western Europe were designed and sited to reduce contemplation and questioning of them by workers and consumers”;<sup>35</sup> this was done *precisely in those countries* that otherwise express great concern for animal well-being, there “where people are physically and psychologically removed from the animals that produce the products they use, yet most somewhat paradoxically enjoy very close relationships with their pet animals.”<sup>36</sup>

A similar paradox can be noted in our current “eco-oriented” societies, in which nature and ecosystems ostensibly started to play an important role in our economic and other considerations. The relevant policies and strategies have, however, come up with many new and subtle methods for controlling and dominating nature rather than with an attitude that is capable of bringing about a reconciliation. New equipment designed to monitor all sorts of “environmental parameters” and qualities can be seen as another biopolitical tool, not necessarily as means of coming to terms with our natural habitat. Indeed, all sorts of eco mobile apps and portable “meters” – while ecological footprint grows form year to year – can be seen as nothing else but a symptom of human desire to bypass and repress our dependency on the environment, even the desire to rise above finitude, contingency and individual mortality.

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<sup>35</sup> A. J. Fitzgerald, “A Social History of the Slaughterhouse: From Inception to Contemporary Implications”, *Research in Human Ecology*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2010, pp. 58–69, p. 60.

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# G O D D E S S   G A I A   A N D A N   E A R T H   H E A L I N G S P I R I T U A L I T Y   O F   P E A C E

N a d j a   F u r l a n   Š t a n t e

She changes everything She touches and everything She touches changes. The world is in Her body. The world is in Her and She is in the world. She surrounds us like the air we breathe. She is as close to us as our own breath. She is energy, movement, life, and change. She is the ground of freedom, creativity, sympathy, understanding, and love. ... She sets before us life and death. We can choose life. Change is. Touch is. Everything we touch can change.<sup>1</sup>

He is an old white man with a long white beard, dressed in blue, white, or lavender robes, sitting on a golden throne in heaven, surrounded by clouds. He created the world out of nothing. He rules it with His laws and could wipe it out at a moment's notice, if He chose.

This description of *She who changes* (originally written by Starhawk and revised by Carol P. Christ) is created in contrast to the picture of God as an old white man with a long white beard, the widespread and well-known western cultural myth or stereotype of the masculine image of God. This Christian God is referred to using such invocations as Lord, King and Father. Each of these images is exclusively masculine. Until recently, the only kind of legitimate public authority most western people could imagine was that of an adult man. Goddess feminism reverses the judgmental dualism that sets the Judeo-Christian tradition against pagan religions according to which the Biblical religions are seen as entirely patriarchal, existing only to affirm male superiority, while paganism is seen as supporting a feminist religion based on ancient matriarchy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. C. Christ, *She who changes*. Palgrave, New York 2003, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> R. Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Bacon Press, Boston 1983, p. 39.

However, in this paper I will not refer to so-called Goddess feminism, or pagan-feminist spirituality or the Wicca movement. I have employed the term Goddess Gaia in the title of this presentation because all the issues that I wish to explore pose questions concerning the relationship between man and woman, human and nature, the living planet, earth, and the concept of God as it has been shaped in the Western religious traditions with the stress on Christianity. Gaia is the word for the Greek Earth Goddess; it is also a term adopted by a group of planetary biologists, such as James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, to refer to their thesis that the entire planet is a living system, behaving as a unified organism.<sup>3</sup> The term Gaia has caught on among those seeking a new ecological spirituality as a religious vision. Gaia is seen as a personified being, an immanent diversity. Some see the Jewish and Christian male monotheistic God as a hostile concept that rationalises alienation from and neglect of the earth. In these terms, Gaia should replace God as the focus for our worship.<sup>4</sup> I agree with much of this critique; nevertheless, I believe, as Rosmary Radford Ruether has put it, that merely replacing a male transcendent deity with an immanent female one is an insufficient answer to the “god-problem”<sup>5</sup>.

This requires a transformation of the mental paradigm and a change in the overall consciousness of the individual and, consequently, the entire collective memory of the Western society. Namely, regarding the issue of God’s image and understanding of the man – nature relation, the collective memory of the past (western man’s collective memory) is characterised by the weight of the discriminatory (man) God model, which rules everything and all human and inhuman beings on Earth – even the Earth itself. And consequently *the human community itself was fissured into controlling subjects and exploited objects*<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See J. Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at the Life on Earth*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1979.

<sup>4</sup> C. Spretnak, *The Politics of Women’s Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement*. Anchor Press, New York 1982, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> R. Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God*. HarperOne, New York 1992, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Radford Ruether, op. cit., 1992, p. 257.

## Masculine God Image: Relations of Domination and Victim-blaming Theologies

Our power of imagining does not in the first place involve abstract ideas but instead tends to incline towards language, imagery, human experience, symbolism and art, and thus simultaneously involve the intellect, will and emotions. Our religious power of imagining should be healed firstly with regard to God.

It is important to be aware that we can only speak about God and God's revelation in human language, which is coloured and limited by the time and culture in which it develops. In a patriarchal culture, in which men are expected to possess the strength, authority and power, God, who is thought to possess all these attributes, can only be a man. Or, in the words of feminist critic Mary Daly: *If God is male, then male is God.*<sup>7</sup> Characteristics traditionally attributed to God, such as strength, wisdom, immutability, dependability, and righteousness are similar to values stereotypically attributed to men, whereas the corollary values applied to humanity, such as weakness, ignorance, vacillation and sinfulness, are stereotypically applied to women. Thus the concept of God as male serves to define men and masculine roles and to reinforce the inferior definition and roles of women.

Consequently, we can realise not only that God the Father is a common name for the divine, but also that the entire web of divine-human relations, inter-human relations and relations between man and nature are understood in a patriarchal context.<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, for instance, in her criticism of the "outmoded language about God", which she defines as "oppressive and religiously idolatrous," develops an approach that establishes tension concerning the secret of God and the promise of human and cosmic liberation:

Only if the full reality of women as well as men enters into the symbolisation of God along with symbols from the natural world, can the idolatrous fixation on one image be broken and the truth of the mystery of God, in

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<sup>7</sup> M. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*. Beacon Press, Boston 1973, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> S. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1982, p. 8.

tandem with the liberation of all human beings and the whole earth, emerge for our time.<sup>9</sup>

Since gods always reflect the styles of behaviour we see as possible, as our range of the possible expands, so must our pantheon. As Noomi R. Goldenberg points it out: “Feminism is pushing us into an age of experimentation with new personifications of authority. We can picture public power held by a woman or group of women, shared by both sexes or rotated between the sexes. These more fluid concepts of hierarchy are certain to affect our view of God.”<sup>10</sup>

Theological tradition has emphasised analogous talk about God and showed that the limitations of human language are recognised. Therefore, to take the image of one sex and exclusively use it and its social features to describe God is an inherently incorrect and unwise act. Consequently, the society in question reflects the mutual interaction between the patriarchal image of God and the display of male power. On the other side, theological tradition has completely underestimated the power of symbolic talk about God. Feminist theologians have, therefore, sought the answer in symbolic language, the power of which was traditionally overlooked.

The question of patriarchal language was radically problematised with the publication of Mary Daly’s book entitled *Beyond God the Father*. In it Daly maintained that God cannot be expressed by a noun and that a verb would be more suitable, since it expresses constant activity.<sup>11</sup> This problem was also tackled by Rosemary Radford Ruether in the fifth chapter of her book *Sexism and God-Talk*,<sup>12</sup> which bears the provocative and challenging title: *Can a Male Saviour Save Women?* In her opinion, patriarchally-tinted theological language represents a kind of sacrilege due to being idolatrously projected into the nature of the deity, who is ascribed male traits. And if God’s attitude towards the world is the same as the attitude of human despots towards their oppressed subjects, such language calls into question the very authority

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<sup>9</sup> E. Johnson, *Ich bin, die ich bin. Wenn Frauen Gott sagen*. Düsseldorf 1994, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> N. Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods*. Beacon Press, Boston 1979, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*. Beacon Press, Boston, pp. 116–134.

of the Biblical revelation. If such language is, in fact, based on symbolism reflecting the victory of man over woman, then the authority of the divine revelation is dangerously poisoned by the ruling male ideology. And if that is so, then even the images of God, creation, salvation and the life to come are marked by the oppression of half of the human race: these images are thus twisted and sacrilegious signs legalising and condoning evil in the name of a deity. If the patriarchal language and the patriarchy legitimating and sacralising this language are really something that bad or even the source of all evil, like some sort of original sin, then the feminists have the right and even the obligation to find a solution and an alternative.

Rosemary Radford Ruether continues the thought as to what needs to be done. She looks for an answer in new sources of religiosity – new in the sense of rediscovering the lost popular religiosity of women. Ruether rejects the androgyny model with which some feminists would like to solve the problem. She prefers to talk about “a process of double conversion.” At the end she writes that humanity can only achieve reconciliation with God if the latter stops being a male God and instead becomes the basis of reciprocity in all creation: God/Goddess. Not only in terminology but also paradigmatically. It is therefore a change in the footprint of consciousness, the consciousness that talks about the female image of God as the Goddess and delivers liberation to all of mankind from the shackles of one-way captivity in the discriminatory practice of Christianity. It makes a change to be able to worship the Christian God as the Goddess and for this not to result in excommunication or accusations of heresy. But if we ask symbolically: What happens when father-gods die for an entire culture?

The death of God the Father would then destroy the alienated images of male selfishness in the sky, which sacralise any domination and servitude in the world. Namely, for the past two millennia God has been described as the concept of the Father surrounded by man's characteristics and culturally conditioned attributes. Is it then even possible to talk about God using female descriptive symbolism, thus defining God

as a *She* and not a *He*, without falling into heresy?<sup>13</sup> Some feminist theologians have demanded the introduction of so-called inclusive language: Our Father and Mother, Jesus Christ and Jesa Christa, God/dess.<sup>14</sup>

As far as the feminist polemics about a suitable theological language are concerned, the research by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who professes the God of the Biblical tradition anew, is of utmost importance. Schüssler is complementing the discoveries made by Phyllis Tribble in connection to the findings about *rahamim*<sup>15</sup>, *the womb of compassion* and God's eros. Schüssler revives the religious image of the past, which in the Biblical heritage of wisdom literature and evangelists used to denote the female image of God as Sophia – or wisdom – and as Jesus' Sophia deity.<sup>16</sup> The renewal of the Sophia tradition has considerably enriched the female *professing* of God, since Sophia-wisdom is transcendent and immanent. According to the wisdom tradition, she was with the Lord before he began to create the earth (Pr 8, 22–30),<sup>17</sup> she was pleased with his world and pleased with its people (Pr 8, 31); she set her tent up among the descendants of Jacob (Sir 24, 8–12) and encouraged them to love justice, to do what is right and to keep the Lord in mind (Wis 1.1). The Biblical tradition regarding Sophia-wisdom to which Schüssler called attention was complemented by numerous women scientists who studied its roots in the early female figures of deity, its appearance in Jewish and Christian and other wisdom traditions, as well as its influence on the lives of women. Sophia language and imagery

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<sup>13</sup> This reminds me of an interesting joke on this topic told by missionaries in Zambia: two priests talk and ponder about what the face of God looks like. They promise each other that the one who first passes to the other side will return to tell the other what God looks like. When the first dies, he comes back and tells the other, bewildered: "He is a She and She is black!"

<sup>14</sup> A. M. Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology*. Orbis Books, New York 2001, p. 93.

<sup>15</sup> The Slovenian philosopher Lenart Škof also calls attention to the meaning of *rahamim*: "The Hebrew language knows for God's compassion the root 'rhm,' which in the singular (*raham*, *reham*) carries the meaning of (female) womb, while in the plural, as *rahamim*, it conveys the meaning of motherly sentiment, compassion. This means that a mother's body was originally understood as the seat of compassionate feelings." (See L. Škof, *Sočutje med religijo in filozofijo*. Acta Theologica Sloveniae, Družina, Ljubljana 2002, p. 54).

<sup>16</sup> E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. SCM Press, London 1995, pp. 198–243.

<sup>17</sup> Sophia/Hokhmah thus assumed the status of goddess or of the female pole of 'God,' who is together with YHWH the co-creator of all creation. In this case Sophia represents 'Lady Wisdom' or 'Woman Wisdom.' (See Clifford, op. cit., p. 105).

have enabled women to profess God in a way that vitalises their souls, sharpens their vision and gives new meaning to their ecstasies. What we should not forget, though, in this process of restoration, is that much of the Sophia lore was formed as part of androcentric traditions and should therefore be studied critically.<sup>18</sup>

### The Feminine Face of God and the Formation of a New Collective Awareness

The times of an authoritarian God ruling the Earth and the Universe have long passed. (...) Finally the moment has come to meet the female face of God, which can be called Goddess without associations with so-called “polytheism”. If God, why not (as an alternation) Goddess? If God is everything in everything, then God is Goddess, too.<sup>19</sup>

The contemporary awareness and observance of the theory of gender differences has thus opened up new dimensions for spiritual expression and spiritual practices, promoting the development of new forms of women’s spirituality. The traditional forms of spirituality are in their core markedly dualistic, with the material world, corporeality and femininity on the one side, and transcendence, spirituality and masculinity on the other. The tendency of modern forms of spirituality, however, is to search for holiness by and through solidary interconnectedness, interdependence and integrity.

The formation of new religious representations from a women’s perspective is facing numerous prejudices and negative gender stereotypes that stand in the way of the change we strive for. The modification and transformation of an exclusively unilateral patriarchal image of God as male and the accompanying patriarchal theological language into a symbolic understanding of God as a woman, Goddess, may seem simple, but it is anything but that. The integration of the female element into religious language and the image of God/Goddess in the process of transformation face numerous fears and legalised historical notions of the past. The unilateral patriarchal theological language and the de-

<sup>18</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *op.cit.*, pp. 232–243.

<sup>19</sup> M. Pogačnik, *Ko se Boginja vrne*. Bird Publisher, Mengeš 2009, p. 5.

inition and representation of God as exclusively male are a powerful heritage of our collective memory, with the latter representing a source of man's social connectedness.<sup>20</sup>

Our understanding of God, of ultimate reality and of ourselves as persons, is deeply interconnected. As embodied selves we are patterned by different genders. The findings and the presence of Christian feminist theology, the Goddess Movement, the revival of the lost folk religiosity of women and female pagan cults, thealogy<sup>21</sup> and various other movements of women's spirituality are of key importance in the reconstruction of the past from a female perspective, as well as in the very process of the transformation of the collective memory and current religious conceptualisation.

The call for the formation of a new collective consciousness and for reviving the feminine principle can be understood as a sign of activity of the spirit in modern culture that may lead to radical transformations and perhaps new beginnings.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza pointed out that the Goddess of radical feminist spirituality is not so very different from the God whom Jesus preached and whom he called care, peace, service, and community. In her opinion, traditions about the Goddess and those of the New Testament are conflated in the Catholic community's cult of Mary. The more the Christian understanding of God was patriarchalised and the more God became the majestic ruler and the stern judge, the more people turned to the figure and cult of Mary. One could almost say that thro-

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<sup>20</sup> This is for man a source of social connectedness. The collective memory can, in fact, be understood as a mechanism of intertwining the present and the past. Social beliefs are at the same time collective traditions and memories of the past, but also ideas and agreements of the present. In this sense, there is no social idea that is not also society's memory. Social thought is therefore memory, and the whole social context consists of collective memories or perceptions, but the only ones that matter are those we can reconstruct in any period. This is why man has to bring along some of the past to be able to shape their present and identity. Similarly, the community wants to awaken some of the past to be able to shape the current situation and discover the true foundations of the present.

<sup>21</sup> Thealogy can roughly be described as a term referring to studies of the female dimensions of divinity, also implying criticism of androcentric historical theologies. The term was first used by Neo pagan author Isaac Bonewitz in his article published in the American magazine *Gnostica* in 1974 (See T. Ban, "New age in ženska duhovnost", in: Furlan N., Zalta, A. (eds.): *Ženske in religija*. Poligrafi, Ljubljana 2007, p. 148.)

ugh the dynamics of this development of the gradual patriarchalisation of the God image, Mary became the other face – the Christian face – of God. All the New Testament images and attributes which characterise God as loving, life giving, compassionate and caring, as being with people of God are now transferred to the mother of God, who is accessible as was the nonpatriarchal God whom Jesus preached.

The cult of Mary thus grew in proportion to the gradual repatriarchalisation of the Christian God and of Jesus Christ. The Catholic tradition thus provides us with the opportunity to experience the divine reality in the figure of a woman. The Catholic cult of Mary also provides us with a tradition of feminine language and imagery with which to speak of the divine; this is also true of the theological language that speaks of the divine reality in feminine terms and symbols. This tradition encompasses the myth and symbols of the Goddess religion and demonstrates that feminine language and symbols have a transparency towards God.<sup>22</sup>

### Feminine Face of God - Goddess and the need to redefine the Earth and the Self

Feminism's paradigmatic transformation of God's/Goddess's image is implicitly directed towards questioning, re-defining and re-evaluating the relationship between man and the earth or nature. Anne Primavesi uses these terms to presuppose that the question of defining the self in relation to the earth becomes problematic for men and women alike when (personalised female) earth is seen as the archetypal Cartesian body without mind: that is, without rationality.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, we may suppose, without a self or, by implication, without self-worth? It is in these terms that we need to ask ourselves an important question: how are we to relate to the earth?

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<sup>22</sup> E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity, and Catholic Vision*, in: Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (ed.), *Womanspirit Rising*, HarperOne, New York, 1979, pp. 137–139.

<sup>23</sup> A. Primavesi, *Gaia's Gift: Earth, Ourselves and God after Copernicus*. Routledge, New York 2003, p. 78.

When China announced its programme to install a settlement of the Moon and the exploitation of its minerals and natural resources, this consequently provoked a primal response that reveals a strong-rooted stereotype, the concept of possession. Man, as the crown of creation, who is the master and the owner of the entire universe, is able to state: "The Moon belongs to us!"

If the concept of the logic of domination and a man as the crown of creation is so strongly rooted in our culture, it is a logical consequence that the conceptualisation of the Earth as our property is a part of the collective memory of consumer society. The logic of possession and consumerism is supported by the myth of a human superior nature that rules nature according to a theology of exclusion. The latter is, consequently, unable to understand the earth as a gift that is given to all by itself.

In *Gaia's Gift*, Anne Primavesi promotes the thesis that any religious perception of earth's givenness as intended for any being other than us, is ignored, indeed lost. In her opinion, no real sense of gratitude for this earthly gift is either felt or expressed. Instead Gaia's gift is seen as earned: either directly from human suppliers or religiously, as a reward from God for good conduct, for pleasing God. In these terms the gratitude for what earth freely gives is transferred onto other people or on to God. In this context, earth is overlooked to the extent that its givenness effectively disappears from view. The possibility of seeing Gaia's gift as freely given, without thought or expectation of return, is lost.<sup>24</sup>

Jean-Luc Marion Caputo warns us that "givenness", as the prior condition for and cause of our receiving gifts, should not be immediately or directly attributed to God.<sup>25</sup> Anne Primavessi elaborates Caputo's warning, in terms that the concept of God should not be reduced to that of a source or dispenser of gifts.<sup>26</sup>

Understanding Gaia's gift as taken for granted in today's consumer society is fundamentally rooted in the understanding of the biblical

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<sup>24</sup> Primavesi, op. cit., pp. 143–135.

<sup>25</sup> J. D. Caputo, Introduction: Apology for the Impossible: Religion and Postmodernism, in: Caputo, J. D. and Scanlon, M. J. (eds.): *God the Gift, and Postmodernism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1999, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> A. Primavesi, op.cit., p.133.

story of creation, from which we can derive the basic model, which God gave to humans, animals and plants. Adam, the first man, is the collective administrator of God's image, the character of God's reign on earth who dominates all living beings. In the background, it is once again possible to see the problem of conceptualising the image of God.

It is not just, as Marion Caputo says, that we lack intuitions concerning God. We lack concepts fitting God.<sup>27</sup>

### Earth healing Spirituality of Peace

During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all major world religions started to contend with the possible damage that their traditions had caused to the understanding of the environment, of nature and nonhuman beings, and began searching in their traditions for positive elements of an ecologically validating spirituality and everyday practice. In their third development phase, feminist theologies also expanded their criticism of determinate theologies in relation to their attitudes towards nature and nonhuman beings. Thus the various ecofeminisms or ecofeminist theologies critically question the correlation between gender hierarchies in an individual religion and culture and the hierarchical establishment of the value of man to be above that of nature. All types of theological ecofeminism thus strive for a deconstruction of the patriarchal paradigm, its hierarchical structure, methodology and thought. They try to deconstruct the entire paradigm of man's supremacy over woman, of mind over body, Heaven over Earth, of the transcendent over the immanent, of the male God, alienated and ruling over all Creation, and to replace all this with new alternatives. All major world religions are in this sense challenged to self-questioning and self-criticism in their judgement of the possible negative patterns that contribute to the destruction of the environment, and to restoring environmentally-friendly traditions. From an ecofeminist and environmentally just perspective, it is essential that religions do away with the negative stereotyped prejudices that strengthen man's domination over

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<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

nature at the same time as exercising social domination.<sup>28</sup> The Christian tradition, for instance, has (from an ecofeminist point of view) contributed several problematic images and symbols that have consolidated and survived in form of stereotypes and prejudices and taken root in the legacy of western philosophical-religious thought. Ecofeminist Christian theologies thus seek to revive the lost images and the symbol of understanding the universe as the body of God (Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sallie McFague). This metaphor, formerly widespread (albeit present in various forms), and the focal image of the sensibility of the western (Mediterranean) world, was replaced by a mechanistic worldview model in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Carol Merchant and Vandana Shiva). In 1972, the radical feminist theologian Mary Daly drew a link between the ecological crisis, social domination and the Christian doctrine. As an antithesis to the Christian ethics of missionary work in the sense of uncompromising Christianising (converting at any cost all pagans, who were considered barbarians), she offered a vision of a cosmic commitment to sisterhood that envelops our sister Earth and all its human and nonhuman inhabitants and elements. This would, in Daly's opinion, potentially enable a positive change in ecological awareness and environmental ethics and lead us from a culture of predators and desecrators into a culture of reciprocity and hospitality, from which we would be able to look upon the earth and other planets as individual parts of a whole, as being with us, not for us.<sup>29</sup>

In their criticism of patriarchal hierarchical subordination of women and nature, some ecofeminist theologians have worked within Christianity and offered a vision of a woman- and nature-friendly Christian theology that acts as a determined co-shaper of better quality relations in the interdependent web of life. Other ecofeminist theologians, on the other hand, have come to the realisation that the Christian doctrine is incurably patriarchal and as such incapable of the radical reform necessary for an inclusive ethics of responsibility towards all living beings. These latter have turned towards radical feminism or neo-pagan ecofeminism.

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<sup>28</sup> Radford Ruether, *op. cit.*, p. XI.

<sup>29</sup> Primavesi, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

In 1972, the theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether became one of the first ecofeminist voices within Christianity. Through the eyes of liberation theology – or, more precisely, from a feminist somatic and ecological perspective – she called attention to the basic dualisms, the origin of which she ascribed to the apocalyptic-Platonic regional legacy of classical Christianity. These include the alienation of the mind from the body, of the subjective self from the objective world; the subjective withdrawal and alienation of the individual from the wider human and social network; and the domination of the spirit over nature. For Ruether, in order to transcend these dualisms, we should first shape a new self-understanding of our own identity in relation to all other relationships within the web of life. In *New Woman, New Earth* Ruether strongly opposes the model of relations based on the logic of domination, stating:

(Wo)men must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination of one over another.<sup>30</sup>

We need a foundation for an ethical theory that is not based on a dualistic negation of the “other”, whether women, or animal or body, pagans ... as the bearers of our shadow.

The connection between God/Goddess and the world is represented by various symbols. Some resort to female personifications of nature and the divine (particularly the representatives of pagan ecofeminism or eco-theology), recognising the divine principle in the term Gaia and therefore naming it Goddess, Mother Earth. They see the Creation as one body incorporating different ecosystems; a multitude of diversity united and connected in coexistence and oneness. In such a Creation, each woman and each man is first a human; the beauty and greatness of this community that ecofeminists define as biotic are seen in the light of equal humanity and interdependent connectedness.<sup>31</sup>

From this standpoint, ecofeminism promotes global movement based on common interests and respect towards diversity as opposed to all

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<sup>30</sup> R. Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth*. Seabury Press, New York 1975, p. 204.

<sup>31</sup> M. Franzmann, *Women and Religion*, Oxford University Press. New York 2000, pp. 156–157.

forms of domination and violence. From an ecofeminist point of view, the continuation of life on this planet requires a new understanding of our attitude towards ourselves, our bodies, towards the other, towards nature and towards nonhuman beings. For the majority of representatives of theological (Christian) ecofeminism, this implies a thorough study, deconstruction and criticism of androcentric models of theology, particularly in relation to the image of God and his relationship with the entire cosmos. Merely including a female element into the existing theological agenda is not enough. According to ecofeminists, it is necessary to radically deconstruct the patriarchal theological frame of mind and the hierarchical structure. Ivone Gebara thus says:

Changing the patriarchal paradigm for an ecofeminist, one starts with epistemology, with transforming the way one thinks. Patriarchal epistemology bases itself on eternal unchangeable 'truths' that are the presuppositions for knowing what truly 'is.' In the Platonic-Aristotelian epistemology that shaped Catholic Christianity, this epistemology takes the form of eternal ideas that exist a priori, of which physical things are pale and partial reflections. Catholicism added to this the hierarchy of revelation over reason; revealed ideas come directly from God and thus are unchangeable and unquestionable in comparison to ideas derived from reason.<sup>32</sup>

In light of the discrimination and subordination of women and nature by the patriarchal system, ecofeminism critically points out the hierarchical evaluation and construction of certain dualities: culture/nature; male/female; self/other; reason/emotion; human/animal. In line with ecofeminist theory, the hierarchical structure of relationships in which nature is dominated by culture, woman and animals by man, emotion by reason, is ordered and created by the patriarchal system.

One of the common characteristics of the various forms of ecofeminism is that they all perceive the patriarchal system as a conflictive system building on a hierarchical relationship and unaware of the unity and connectedness of living beings. From an ecofeminist point of view, the patriarchal system destroys the harmonic connectedness between man and woman, man and nature. It is therefore a pest, having an

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<sup>32</sup> I. Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1999, p. 29.

injurious effect both on nature and women. Ecofeminism thus fights for a new awareness that could teach both sexes to live and operate in coexistence with each other and with nature. Members of Christian theological ecofeminism (Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sallie McFague, Cynthia Eller etc.) draw from the Christian tradition, of which they are convinced that it includes the mentioned concept of the oneness and interconnectedness of all God's creations. The interrelationship between woman and man, humans and nature, should be freed from all forms of violence and subordination, as only in the light of mutual respect and respect for nature can the harmony of God's love fully come to life. The world is in this sense the body of God/Goddess, whose limbs function in harmony and health.<sup>33</sup>

Fundamentally, feminist eco-theology brings the ethics of ecological egalitarianism, which is based on the theology of peace and non-violence. In place of patriarchal androcentrism and matriarchal utopianism, a cosmic ecological equality is placed at the centre of the cosmic order. Unlike androcentric patriarchal theology, which consequently spreads the relations of domination and exclusion, the feminist eco-theology that places a cosmic ecologic egalitarianism at the centre is an inclusive theology of nonviolence, peace and hospitality. As such, it calls on all institutionalised religions and spiritual practices to replace the discriminatory paradigm of the masculine God image and consequent relationships that are based on the logic of domination (relations of domination and victim-blaming theologies) with the logic of hospitality and the theology of nonviolence and peace and peace and healing or the earth healing spirituality of peace. The transformation of patriarchal victim-blaming theologies into earth-healing theologies of peace is the key to the transformation of the new ethical consciousness of peace. In other words:

To create a new society, we will need men and women with new psyches. Or as Rosemary Radford Ruether states:

A healed relation to each other and to the earth than calls for a new consciousness, a new symbolic culture and spirituality. We need to transform our inner psyches and the way we symbolise the interrelations of men and women,

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<sup>33</sup> Gebara, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–78.

humans and earth, humans and the divine and divine and the earth. Ecological healing is a theological and psychic-spiritual process.<sup>34</sup>

We must start by recognising that metanoia, or change of consciousness, begins with us.

### Conclusion

Theology that is based on the discriminatory principle of male-centred hierarchical domination of God's masculinity, as the almighty lord who has conquered all human and nonhuman beings, women and nature, is the theology of violence, which helps to create and spread relationships of domination and inhospitality. Relations of domination and victim-blaming theologies do not accompany an ethics of peace and harmony.

Therefore it is high time we found positive answers to the question of how to pray to Goddess and still remain within the framework of Christianity. Or, better, how to achieve the awareness that the female and the male principles have equivalent effects and power both within and outside the range of institutional religion. In my opinion, the transformation of theological language and the exclusively unilateral patriarchal image of God is therefore crucial to the process of the evolution of Christianity and of any other institutionalised religion and an urgent step in the process of evolution of humanity. As long as the understanding of God as She, as Goddess, carries a hint of heresy, fear and prejudice, we cannot speak about harmony, synthesis, equality and egalitarianism or peace. Only when a woman can freely, without fear of accusations of heresy and other prejudices, choose her own desired form of prayer to Mother Goddess and look at an image of God in the form of woman, Mother, and not exclusively Father, while remaining within Christianity, can we say that the old patriarchal patterns and

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<sup>34</sup> Radford Ruether, *op. cit.* 1992, p. 4.

our religious imaginative and representational faculty have attained a complete transformation.

The ecofeminist ethics of fundamental interconnectedness of all beings in the web of life represents a (new) theology of peace and non-violence. The awareness of fundamental interconnectedness, of the consequent interdependence and joint responsibility in the ethical-moral sense therefore represents the next step in the evolution of interpersonal relationships and all relations within the web of life. The conceptualisation of women's self and the self of earth, through the perspective of theological ecofeminism, establishes, above all, an ethical imperative of responsibility that an awareness of the fundamental interconnection presupposes. Ecocentric egalitarianism includes all humans as well as nonhumans. The awareness of this fundamental interconnectedness and of the consequent interdependence and joint responsibility in the ethical-moral sense, therefore represents the next step in the evolution of interpersonal relationships and all relations within the web of life.

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RAREFACTION  
METAPHYSICS, ETHICS, AND  
PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE:  
IMAGES OF METAPHYSICAL  
PEACE IN VENETIAN RENAISSANCE  
PAINTING (1480-1510)

Carlo Chiurco

1.

In his *Geburt der Tragödie* Friedrich Nietzsche quotes a famous painting by Raphael, the *Transfiguration*, as a perfect way to explain the power of Apollinism to hide the dark side of existence by projecting it over an Empyrean sky of archetypal perfection<sup>1</sup>. Such transfigurative power<sup>2</sup> perfectly summarises the variety of emotions we are driven to feel whenever we face an Italian Renaissance painting, with its perfect bodily proportions and calibration of gestures – indeed it looks as if they occur almost effortlessly – as well as the seemingly timeless atmosphere encompassing all the characters. Everything is set against a perfectly calibrated geometrical background, which can happen to be either an architectonical frame, or a landscape, or sometimes both. Nietzsche says that the power of transfiguration is what allows the Gods to walk on earth: it is the dream of a human life lived by the Gods – “the only possible theodicy”<sup>3</sup>. He does not, however, highlight the fact that this almost hypnotic fascination with classicism proceeds from a strong effort of de-materialisation, in order to ensure that everything in the work of art conjures the creation of an atmosphere of *rare* harmony,

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<sup>1</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, 4, in *Werke*, Bd. III/1, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 1972, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, 3, p. 32: “Einen verklärenden Spiegel”.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, 3, pp. 31–33; p. 32: “Die allein genügende Theodicee!”

where everything connected to heaviness and gravity is banned<sup>4</sup>. It is not pretentious, then, to state that Renaissance beauty mostly consists in rarefaction. No matter how sad is the story told in the painting, no matter how tragic and frantic is the action portrayed in it (say, a battle), everything looks as still as if a supernatural force had descended into the physical world in order to calm and slow down the natural flow of events. Rarefaction, in Italian Renaissance art, is thus the image of a perfect and transcendent – i.e. metaphysical – peace. It is almost a truism that Renaissance art portrays the ideal world of Platonic archetypes and ideas, which constituted the intellectual spine of the philosophy of the time<sup>5</sup>; yet these archetypes, far from consisting of a completely secluded, self-contained world, are surprisingly represented without any sort of mediation, simply standing in front of the beholder, sometimes even staring at him. This did not imply, however, that the archetypal dimension had suddenly become at hand; in fact, there was a sort of double enjeu that made such dimension accessible to those who were pure, while at the same time protecting it from those who were not. Only through a deep training in philosophy and by leading a virtuous life could the wise learn how “to see the intelligible form” buried within the bodily matter, in order to achieve an intellectual and then spiritual ascension<sup>6</sup>; that is, a spiritual understanding arising in the mind of the scholar when interpreting the visual images<sup>7</sup>, in a mutual involvement between ethics, metaphysics and philosophy of nature. To profane this

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that Nietzsche's strive towards achieving an *innocence* of Dionysism may also be seen as a quest for a non-Apollonian way to lightness.

<sup>5</sup> The decisive event for the spreading of Neoplatonism in Renaissance Italy was the foundation, in 1462, of the Florentine Academy under the patronage of the lord of Florence, Cosimo, from the Medici family. Led by outstanding intellectual figures such as Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, the Academy exerted an enormous influence over Renaissance artists of the like of Botticelli. On the importance of Platonism in the context of Italian Renaissance see R. Baine Harris, *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, Dominum, Norfolk 1976; J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols., Brill, Leiden 1990; id., *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols., Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma 2003–2004; on Ficino: M. J. B. Allen, V. Rees (eds.), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, Brill, Leiden 2002; on Pico: M. V. Dougherty (ed.), *Pico della Mirandola: New Essays*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge (Eng.) 2008.

<sup>6</sup> J. Gregory, *Neoplatonists*, Routledge, London 1999, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> A. Payne, *Antiquity and its Interpreters*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge (Eng.) 2000, p. 112.

spiritual dimension was impossible – or at least very difficult – for the unwise man would not be able to decipher the often esoteric references disseminated in the pictures; however, they were not so for the sake of being enigmatic in themselves, but in a clear analogy with the embodiment of the archetypes within earthly realities, which was at the same time both a self-manifestation and a self-concealment of the purely intellectual and spiritual realities. Thus the visible was such in the first instance not because it could be *seen*, but because the *invisible* buried in it could be perceived only by the purified mind, albeit with the help of the physical eyes.

## 2.

This in turn led to consider the power of art and the artist himself as almost divine entities, a view that conflicted with Plato's well-known criticism of art as imitation<sup>8</sup>. In fact, Plato tends to criticise art only as a form of *bad imitation*, not because it is an imitation in itself – nor, for that matter, does he criticise imitation *in itself* for being an imitation. For instance, the philosopher is said to be but a pale imitation of the god: he is someone who, as his very name says, “*pursues the goal of being a knower (philo-sopheî)*”, while the gods do not because they are *already* such<sup>9</sup>. In the *Theaetetus* Plato more explicitly calls this process “[to become] as similar as possible to a god (*homóiosis theôî katà tò dynatón*)”<sup>10</sup>, that is to strive to imitate him as far as possible by divinising ourselves: yet we would seek in vain here for a condemnation of philosophy for being an imitation. Therefore not all imitations are bad for Plato, nor are they bad in themselves, despite their obvious lower ontological status face to the originals (a remark that, in the eyes of Plato, comes as a perfectly objective one, and not as a sort of “moral condemnation”). This distinction is just as essential as it is too often overlooked. Moreover, it would be more correct to say that Plato cri-

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<sup>8</sup> On Plato's criticism of art, see I. Murdoch, *The Fire and the Sun. Why Plato Banishes the Arts*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978; Ch. Janaway, *Images of Excellence. Plato's Critique of the Arts*, Oxford UP, Oxford 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Plato, *Convivium*, 204a.

<sup>10</sup> Id., *Theaetetus*, 176b.

ticises *artists* rather than art. If man must essentially imitate the gods, then the artist stands for a *bad* imitation, because, if he is a real artist, he's inspired by the "divine fate and possession" (*theíai moírai kài katokochéi*), while the philosopher, on the contrary, is the best possible imitation of gods, he's god-like and divine, not least because of the perfect self-awareness and control he exerts over himself, never to be lost for any reason, not even faced with death, as Socrates himself had so masterfully shown. In the *Ion* Plato states that a true artist is such only when he is moved by a divine power: on such an occasion, he is by rights the last link in a long chain that extends back to the one of the great, "archetypal" poets, and through this chain the power of divine inspiration flows back and forth, thus annulling the otherwise unchallengeable men/gods divide<sup>11</sup>. Such power was traditionally considered to belong to poets and musicians only; however, already in the ancient world the great Latin poet Horatius had highlighted the similarity between poetry and painting (*ut pictura poesis*)<sup>12</sup> because of their common resorting to images (*picturae*). At length, this led to an overturning of the ancient view on the status of painters and sculptors, whom, being "hand-workers", were not considered to be "real artists" in Antiquity because of the contempt surrounding manual work at the time. While poets and musicians followed divine inspiration, painters and sculptors had instead to rely on the *technical* rules of art (*téchne*, in Greek) in order to create their works, which in turn were considered second-tier ones: they were therefore "technicians" and closer to craftsmen. Things started to change during the late Middle Ages<sup>13</sup>; by 1435, in Leon Battista Alberti's treatise on painting<sup>14</sup> the painter had been recognised as

<sup>11</sup> Id., *Io*, 535b – 536d.

<sup>12</sup> This favourite *topos* comes from Horatius' *Ars poetica*, 361, but is also present in other classical sources. It seems to date back to a formula by Simonides from Keos ("painting is inarticulate poetry, poetry is articulate painting") quoted and commented by Plutarch (*De gloria Athenensium [Bellone an pace clariores fuerint Athenienses]*, 3, 346f – 347a) and Cicero (*Tusculanae Disputationes*, 5, 39.114), while Aristotle linked painting and poetry to imitation as their common origin (*Poetica*, 4.2–6, 1448b).

<sup>13</sup> On the emancipation of artists (notably architects) in the 13th century as part of a then thriving "urban professionalism", see E. Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, The Archabbey Press, Latrobe (Penn.) 1951, ch. 2.

<sup>14</sup> L. B. Alberti, *Della pittura*, 3.52: the painter has to be "a good and well-lettered man" ("uomo buono e dotto in buone lettere"), "learned, as far as it's possible to him, in all the liberal

an artist and intellectual in his own right. However, he could still not claim to be directly inspired by God – to be “divine”, as it would be claimed for Raphael and Michelangelo in their times. Painters likely owed this last but essential achievement to Piero della Francesca. Piero not only took the command of the perspective technique in painting to unprecedented heights but also placed it within a clear intellectual frame, of which he was also the author. The usage of perspective, based as it was on strict geometrical and mathematical rules, marked a clear break with the ancient notion of the artist: he was no longer led by the force of inspiration but had instead become someone in possession of the inner (if hidden) rationality of the world, as well as being charged with the duty of making it manifest. If, during the Middle Ages, the realm of art had been allegory, now it looked more like “hard” science (*scientia, epistème*)<sup>15</sup>. By not contenting himself with painting, since he also wrote tractates<sup>16</sup>, Piero was not only in line with an age in which artists had achieved the status of intellectuals, he also showed that, in sharp contrast with Plato’s views, the painter could equal the poet or the musician in becoming divine, this time not by inspiration but by means of his fully rational art. The painter, then, imitated God as far as is conceded to a man because he was *a philosopher* at heart, and could then achieve that “divine” status, which had always been denied to Greek and Roman artists<sup>17</sup>. Therefore the *poetry* of rarefaction in early Italian Renaissance paintings comes as the outcome of a godly – that

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arts, but above all in geometry” (“Piacemi il pittore sia dotto, in quanto e’ possa, in tutte l’arti liberali, ma imprima desidero sappi geometria”: 3, 53). On the position of Alberti, Brunelleschi, Piero and Leonardo see the classical study by R. Wittkower, “Brunelleschi and ‘Proportion in Perspective’”, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953), pp. 275–291. On the evolution of the status of the artist and its link to the mechanical arts see Paolo Rossi, *I filosofi e le macchine (1400–1700)*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1971, pp. 29–31; see also note 23 below.

<sup>15</sup> Piero indeed calls perspective “scientia”: *De prospectiva pingendi*, it. transl. by G. N. Fasola, Sansoni, Firenze 1942 [repr. Le lettere, Firenze 2005], p. 128.

<sup>16</sup> Beside his *De prospectiva pingendi* Piero wrote also the *De abaco* and the *Libellus de quinque corporibus regularibus*, in all of which he showed a deep interest in geometry and algebra.

<sup>17</sup> On the subject of the divinity of the artist see P. Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist: From Dante to Michelangelo*, Brill, Leiden 2004. Such divinity could well have also resulted in the tendency, more and more common during the Renaissance, shown by artists to self-portray themselves in Christ-like fashion, of which the best example is of course Dürer’s famous self-portrait at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

is a rational, *philosophical* – power exerted by the artist in the name of God himself: what the artist paints is a sketch of the divine world as it is, without being veiled, and the meaning of his artwork – despite its appearing in front of us drawn in lines, figures and colours – is not immediately perceivable, just as Platonic ideas can be only hinted at from the physical realities in which they are concealed. Moreover, the *shape* – we could also call it the *language* – in which these ideas appear to be embodied, is marked by the contrast between the sweet poetry of harmoniously drawn and softly crafted figures and the perfectly calculated geometric frame in which they are set, dominated by perspective – the hidden and concrete mathematical fabric, of which the world is made. This adds to another (if newly claimed) power of the artist that also made him so similar to Plato’s philosopher: he could mediate between the vagary and freedom of the creative dimension and the severity of the necessary and unchangeable laws of “hard” knowledge. Therefore, the perfect harmony achieved in Italian Renaissance paintings is the outcome of an extremely difficult balance between two realms – emotionality and intellectuality; ultimately the divine and the human – that are often in strident contrast, if not perpetually at war.

## 3.

This notion of rarefaction as a perfectly still and resolved harmony was very common in early Renaissance artists, who basically shared the same Platonic culture. But at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, for the first time in modern Western art, Leonardo da Vinci introduced an essential element, which all the pictures made by his predecessors, despite their bright colours and harmonious character, had nevertheless lacked: air, or rather the atmospheric pictorial rendering of it<sup>18</sup>. This was not surprising, given that the world portrayed in those pictures was an *ideal*

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<sup>18</sup> On the rendering of atmospheric air by Leonardo – a technique known as the “sfumato” or gradient – see H. Ruhemann, “Leonardos’ use of sfumato”, in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 1 (1961), pp. 231–237; J. Bell, “Sfumato, Linien und Natur”, in F. Fehrenbach (ed.), *Leonardo da Vinci. Natur im Übergang. Beiträge zu Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik*, Fink, München 2002, pp. 229–256; Id., “Sfumato and acuity perspective”, in C. Farago (ed.), *Leonardo da Vinci and the Ethics of Style*, Manchester UP, Manchester 2008, pp. 161–188; E. J. Olszewsky, “How Leonardo invented sfumato”, in *Sources* 31 (2011), pp. 4–9.

one; yet to say that Leonardo was preoccupied with rendering the world of real phenomena because he was a scientist in the first place seems off the mark. Arguably, in the deeper sense of the term previously outlined, Leonardo was less of a scientist than an artist; that is to say, the artist-cum-philosopher that Piero della Francesca had led to the centre of the intellectual and spiritual stage. Indeed Leonardo shares with Piero a belief in the inner mathematical essence of reality, which he calls – philosophically enough – “necessity” (“neciessità”)<sup>19</sup>. However, in his undeniably mathematical experimentalism, it is not possible to see “the founding act of the experimental model of modern science”<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, it may not even move beyond a capricious *curiositas*<sup>21</sup>: Vasari described him – not without irony – as a man who loved “whimsically philosophising about natural things”, who thought of himself as “more of a philosopher than a Christian”<sup>22</sup>. Leonardo’s careful observation and descriptions of natural phenomena therefore owes less to an anachronistic (for his times) development of a “scientific mindset” than to an intellectual curiosity, which pointed towards a perfect imitation and rendering of nature pursued for its own sake. In other words, Leonardo was moved by a curiosity that was not scientific but essentially *artistic*, whose aim was basically to perfectly transpose the immense variety of natural forms in sketches, paintings and endless drawings (of which there is, definitely not by coincidence, a large number in Leonardo’s notebooks)<sup>23</sup>. Apart from this, Leonardo did not distance himself from Piero’s conviction

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<sup>19</sup> Jean-Paul Richter (ed.), *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, n. 1135, Phaidon, London 1970, vol. 2, p. 285: “La neciessità è maestra e tutrice della natura; la neciessità è tema e inventrice della natura e freno e regola eterna”. On Leonardo’s “philosophy” see Rossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–37; K. Jaspers, *Lionard als Philosoph*, Francke, Bern 1953; E. Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Meiner, Hamburg 2013 (esp. pp. 177 sg.); M. Kemp, *Leonardo*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2004; id., *Leonardo da Vinci. The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>22</sup> G. Vasari, *Le vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti*, Einaudi, Torino 1986, p. 550: “E tanti furono i suoi capricci, che filosofando delle cose naturali, attese a intendere la proprietà delle erbe, continuando et osservando il moto del cielo, il corso della luna e gli andamenti del sole. Per il che fece ne l’animo un concetto sì eretico, che e’ non si accostava a qualsivoglia religione, stimando per avventura assai più lo essere filosofo che cristiano”.

<sup>23</sup> Witness Leonardo’s famous letter sent to the Duke of Milan (*Codex Atlanticus*, f. 391 r.a., Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), in which he speaks of himself as an engineer, an architect *and* an artist (see note 14 above).

about the mathematical foundations of reality; therefore, the novelty of the introduction of the pictorial rendering of atmospheric air cannot be seen as marking a concession to “realism”. The world portrayed by Leonardo is as ideal as Piero’s; it is only the way it is approached that changes. Air is indeed a sort of veil between our eyes and the physical objects of the world: we never experience objects as sharp and clean-cut as they appear in Italian masterpieces of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Leonardo’s works, a thin veil of humidity surrounds all things, from the bodies of his Madonnas and angels to the trees painted in the background of his pictures. Colours become darker, with a predominance of brown; special attention is given to hues and gradients, and the boundaries of figures fade in evanescence. Truth – the divine and necessary mathematical essence of reality, “neciessità” – is better rendered not by a timeless perfection secluded from the dim unhappiness of our world but rather by denying that it can be contained within a single meaning or representation. Leonardo denies that the sense of meaning in general consists in a closure, i.e. that every meaning is well determined and given once and for all: hence also his perpetually restless *curiositas*. There is a close analogy between this conception of meaning and truth and the use of the line in the field of figurative arts. The line precisely symbolises such semantic closure: it’s the boundary that divides every object from the rest of the world. By introducing the rendering of atmospheric air, Leonardo weakens the power of the line – unchallenged until then – and abandons the confrontational notion of reality of early Renaissance in favour of a *porous* one, in which the boundaries between one object and another are neither clearly defined nor in principle definable. Reality is an infinite communication, an unstoppable passage of information between all the objects in the world, while air is the medium, at the same time physical and symbolical, which makes such a passage and communication possible. This also helps to explain the subtle eroticism underlying Leonardo’s works since Eros is precisely a demonic figure in charge of endlessly linking the sphere of the human with the sphere of the divine, binding the gods themselves together in just the same way as he binds together all the inhabitants of our physical world. According

to Plato's account in the *Symposium*<sup>24</sup>, Eros is perfectly equipped to do this because he's the quintessential *philosopher*.

## 4.

In 1504, Leonardo spent a short period of time in Venice. A young and exceptionally gifted artist, Giorgione, who had independently come to similar conclusions, was therefore given the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the Florentine's innovative approach<sup>25</sup>. As a result, he went even further, supplanting air with *light*. This was an all-philosophical choice in itself, since light is of course deeply connected to Neoplatonic philosophy<sup>26</sup>, according to which the world is but the product of the descent of God's light from the Heavens until it reaches the darkest regions of pure matter. Giorgione refused the traditional technique of painting, which consisted of first sketching a drawing in order to later fill the spaces in it with colour: he opted instead not to define the figures first, but to shape them out from "colour stains". Wood was also abandoned as the support material in favour of the canvas, which is more flexible and adapted to a technique that, not contemplating the help of drawing, was far more difficult to execute, and exposed to mistakes and mind-changes. Giorgione saw physical reality and even matter – so heavy, irrational and unspiritual as it may seem – precisely as the outcome of the never-ending interplay of *colours*. Colours, in turn, are but *light*: thus body flesh and its nuances, the colours of nature, the trembling light over a silk dress, the icy sparks flashing out of an armature, no matter how different they look and indeed are, still are all generated by the angle of incidence according to which the bodies are struck by light. Thus bodies – and reality in general – are best described and rendered not by using lines – which, in a drawing, define and bind them – but by colours; indeed, in the artworks of Venetian

<sup>24</sup> Plato, *Convivium*, 203d.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for instance P. Holberton, "Giorgione's sfumato", in S. Ferino-Pagden (ed.), *Giorgione entmythisiert*, Brepols, Turnhout 2008, pp. 55–69.

<sup>26</sup> On the Neoplatonic background of the Venetian culture of the time see W. Melczer, "Il Neoplatonismo nel Veneto all'epoca di Giorgione (1490–1510)", in R. Maschio (ed.), *I tempi di Giorgione*, Gangemi, Roma 1994, pp. 64–72.

painters, bodies become just a set of “colour stains”. If we look closer at each one of them, we see that the boundaries, which make the figure intelligible, disappear the closer we get to the canvas: figures re-emerge as well-determined characters, objects or locations only as we distance ourselves back from it.

## 5.

This artistic revolution brought about a completely different sense of the philosophical poetry of rarefaction. We already mentioned that every Italian Renaissance artwork encompasses a resolution of the contrast between the preternatural sweetness shown in the painted scene and the mathematical essence of the world that animated it. This contrast may of course be found also in Venetian painting. On the one hand, it’s an extremely idealistic art, since it is conceptually as well as technically based on the usage of light, which is the most immaterial i.e. “unreal” existent reality – a sort of borderline concept that is also a borderline reality. On the other hand, Venetian painting marks the triumph of a deeply naturalistic tendency that combined Leonardo’s atmospherism<sup>27</sup> with Northern European taste for minutiae in general and landscape-painting in particular. Besides inventing a new, drawing-less painting technique and introducing the use of the canvas, Venetian painting also regularly featured landscapes as the main character of its creations. The presence of landscape in paintings dates back to the late Middle Ages<sup>28</sup>; in early Renaissance masterpieces it is manifested as a highly intellectua-

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<sup>27</sup> Such atmospherism was already present in a famous drawing of a Valdarno landscape (Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence) sketched by a young Leonardo, which is also his first work to be dated (August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1473). The close tie between this technique and *landscape* is very likely not coincidental, and helps confirming the thesis here exposed. On landscape in Leonardo see E. Beuys Wurmbach, *Die Landschaften in den Hintergründen der Gemälde Leonardos*, Klüser & Schellmann, Munich 1974.

<sup>28</sup> On the history of landscape see N. Büttner, *Landscape Painting. A History*, Abbeville Press, New York 2006; on landscape in Renaissance art see E. H. Gombrich, “The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape”, in *Studies in the Art of the Renaissance, I: Norm and Form*, Phaidon, London 1966, pp. 107–121; on landscape in Venetian painting see A. Mariuz, “Il paesaggio Veneto del Cinquecento”, in *Tiziano. “La fuga in Egitto” e la pittura di paesaggio*, catalogue of the exhibition (Venice, August 29<sup>th</sup>–December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012), Marsilio, Venezia 2012, pp. 25–39; M. Lucco, “Da “paese” a “paesaggio”: le molte facce della natura veneta”, in *Tiziano*

lised reality that plays an ancillary role as sophisticated scenery designed to strengthen the sensation of great distance laying between our world and the sphere of pure archetypes. On the contrary, the landscapes in Venetian painting are, as a general rule, actual ones, describing the real places where artists were born and lived, where actual trees and herbs grew, beneath real yet distant mountains that can always be seen from the plains stretching at their feet and the hilly regions in-between, with genuine small villages and castles dotting the countryside almost everywhere; finally, with the high skies of the Veneto region seen at different times of the year (generally in spring and summer) or during the day (at dawn, midday, afternoon, dusk).

This choice has dramatic consequences. (i) First, if it is actual nature, not an idealised one, that becomes an almost perfect mirror of the divine, then *the whole of* it becomes “divine”, including the heaviness of matter, the seeming brute-ness of the bodies of animals, who are deprived of reason – even the dullness of trees and herbs, incapable of moving as they are. Yet, from a philosophical point of view, this is pure Neoplatonic orthodoxy: reality is nothing other than Light. Indeed we should not be surprised that the first greatest painter of animals in Western art, Jacopo Bassano, belongs to the third generation of Venetian painters. (ii) Secondly, this coming centre-stage of the landscape often confines human figures in a corner, rendering them as tiny or even making them almost disappear. As a result, landscape in Venetian painting is never a mere background, to the extent that “every tree eventually becomes a character”<sup>29</sup> of the elegant and complicated Neo-Platonic allegories these artists loved so much to paint.

## 6.

Therefore the philosophical poetry of rarefaction created by Venetian painters differs completely from that of their central-Italy predecessors – not only in the way it is represented but also in its meaning, which re-

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*e la nascita del paesaggio moderno*, catalogue of the exhibition (Milan, February 16<sup>th</sup>–May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012), Giunti, Firenze 2012, pp. 17–35.

<sup>29</sup> Mariuz, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

versed the static conception of 15<sup>th</sup> century classicism. If metaphysical peace stems now from the representation of *actual* nature – and not an ideal one – then this new dynamic equilibrium, in which nature is represented, cannot also exclude imperfection and uncertainty. It comes not as a timeless dimension but on the contrary is often a matter of a single ecstatic instant, just as in Giorgione's *Tempest*. Here nature is definitely an idyllic and luxurious Arcadia, as in Sannazzaro's eponymous poem, which was among the literary reference texts of these artists<sup>30</sup>; nevertheless, it is also untamed. It hosts human houses and villages but is not itself humanised; the landscape is innervated by a deep sense of almost unbearable tension, adding to a general and disturbing feeling of *fragility*. Such hidden tension is not a peculiarity of the *Tempest*; on the contrary, fragility became a subject in itself to be represented, as in the two paintings by Titian showing the immediate *aftermath* of the interruption of a concert<sup>31</sup> (a concert is of course the very embodiment of harmony), while the *Tempest* shows an equilibrium immediately *before* it cracks, broken by the thunderbolt<sup>32</sup>.

## 7.

The philosophical poetry of rarefaction displayed in the images of metaphysical peace in Venetian painting could then be defined as the poetry of an “imperfect perfection”, the like of which we can experience *in real life*. Indeed life's instability may, at a closer glance, reveal an immensely generative power, both splendid and terrible, of ever-new possibilities. Therefore in Venetian painting the artist is not just the shamanic bridge between the human and the divine, as it was in early Italian Renaissance painting, nor just he is aware of the never-ending labyrinthine nature of the real that is the key to understand the myste-

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. J. Sannazzaro, *Arcadia*, ed. by C. Vecce, Carocci, Roma 2013. The poem was written between 1485 and 1504.

<sup>31</sup> The *Concert in the countryside*, now at the Louvre, and the *Concert interrupted*, at the Galleria Palatina of Florence.

<sup>32</sup> An almost complete list of the many interpretations of the *Tempest* may be found in M. Paoli, *La “Tempesta” svelata. Giorgione, Gabriele Vendramin, Girolamo Marcello e la “Vecchia”*, Pacini Fazzi, Lucca 2011, pp. 9–109.

ries of nature, as it was in Leonardo's view. Here the painter is rather someone who, by means of light (the most divine nature in the physical world, far higher in lineage than air), is capable of reproducing in his creative process the same patterns of God's creation and creativity; he does so by representing the poetry of the infinite generative power of nature as seen in the harmonious but fragile perfection of its dynamic equilibrium, doomed in any case not to last any longer than a single instant. Finally, as in the previous early Renaissance conception, this notion of metaphysical peace has also ethical implications. If harmony is at the same time divine and natural, dynamic and harmonious, instantaneous rather than eternal, then we cannot rely only on *theoretical* knowledge and its fixed schemes and boundaries to lead our lives, but we must also lean on *wisdom*. As a virtue that is itself in balance, being at the same time theoretical and practical, wisdom comes as the very embodiment of harmony: it is art's sister. Indeed it lies in art's very essence to come to terms with imperfection (witnessed for instance by technical difficulties, changes of mind...); the same goes for wisdom, since it is the "art of living". By not excluding the imperfection of actual nature from its notion of metaphysical peace, but instead making it the undisputed protagonist of its artworks, while at the same time giving it a necessary role as well as a "divine" status (thus still coupling it with perfection), rarefaction in Renaissance Venetian painting came to eventually fulfil the goal of humanism: to reconstitute a truer image of the Human as a Whole.

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# MARS DISARMED BY VENUS AND THE THREE GRACES

L e v K r e f t

## The Mystery of David's Late Paintings

Jacques-Louis David was one of the great history painters; together with portraiture, it was his master genre. Some of his best known paintings, monumental in size as well as in terms of their message, are *The Oath of the Horatii*, *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*, *The Death of Marat*, *Napoleon at the Saint-Bernard Pass*, and *The Coronation of Napoleon*. David's history painting tends to represent history as a progressive force of humanity, which calls for the sacrifice of personal happiness and intimate values for the public good (*res publica*). These themes are presented as part of a story or a narrative that offers moral guidance for the contemporary society that is built on the free will of subjects and their ability to make good choices. It often seems as if David promotes the public good as the right choice under all circumstances, including when it requires sacrifice and extreme violence. During his earlier career he did produce several works that expressed less enthusiasm for violence to advance the public good, such as "The Intervention of the Sabine Women" and "Leonidas at Thermopylae"; however, it was the four canvasses he produced during his last years in exile in Brussels, where he died in 1825 at 77, that really astonished his admirers, followers and pupils. These paintings caused surprise, not just because they were so different from everything David had executed before, but also because they had such an enigmatic aesthetic appeal. During later periods, however, this part of David's opus was neglected, even seen as a failure due to his abilities deteriorating in old age or to his exile to Brussels and consequent isolation from the ambience of Paris, where a bitter fight between his classicist pupils and followers and the apostles of Romanticism was already taking place.

In *David to Delacroix*, Walter Ferdinand Friedländer dismissed late David's works: "In the work executed after David's banishment, the glossy over-all tone and the hard colour became constantly more disagreeable. His themes and composition (*Mars Being Disarmed by Venus* and the like) grew ever more conventional and empty. Unlike many great artists, David did not develop a mature style in his old age. He lacked those larger inner 'ideas' with which such geniuses as Titian, Rembrandt, and Poussin overcame their natural physical decline and rose to the sublime."<sup>1</sup>

Michael Fried, in tracing the development of French painting from absorption to theatricality, explained that David lost his confidence in non-theatricality when still in Paris: "In almost all David's late 'Anacreontic' paintings [...] the presence of the beholder is frankly acknowledged and the *mise-en-scène* assumes a more or less blatantly theatrical character. This suggests that as early as 1809, the date of *Sappho and Phaon*, David, recognising that it was becoming impossible for him to establish the fiction of the beholder's nonexistence, began to cast about for a subject matter and a mode of presentation that would allow him to embrace at least a version of the theatrical with open arms. The whole question of the signification of the 'Anacreontic' paintings, which historians of David's art have continued to find deeply puzzling, should be reconsidered in this light."<sup>2</sup>

Simon Lee is somewhat undecided in his evaluation of David's late works; however, he insists that these works cannot be analysed as the work of an old and therefore exhausted a painter: "These works from the last nine years of his life are somewhat puzzling and unexpected, though hints about their direction had been made in the *Sappho and Phaon* of 1809. It has been suggested by some that David's art went into a sad decline in this period and that the late paintings betray a dramatic loss of artistic powers. This is too harsh a judgement. It is true that David's history paintings executed in Brussels do look very

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<sup>1</sup> W. Friedländer, *David to Delacroix*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1952, quoted in: D. Johnson, "Desire Demythologized: David's L'Amour quittant Psyché", *Art History*, 4, 1986, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1980, p. 230-231 n. 59.

different to the muscular figures of the *Horatii*, the unity and sculptural forms of *Sabines*, or the crowded Napoleonic panoramas, but the differences come from a conscious change of emphasis and direction by the artist and should not just be seen as an old man's confused ramblings. David has an identifiable late style and the Brussels pictures need to be considered with the same degree of thought as any of his previous works.<sup>3</sup>

The only writer to dedicate full and continuous attention to late works is Dorothy Johnson.<sup>4</sup> She sums up previous issues with David's later oeuvre as follows: "Until very recently, David's late works have been neglected and largely misunderstood because they differed so greatly from the canonical works."<sup>5</sup> The first reason for that was prejudice, because these works were not painted in France, the second is the canonisation of David's heroic virtue style in art history. Johnson's explanation of David's turn from historic painting of past and actual history to historic painting of mythology is that "in early nineteenth-century France myth has become revitalised as a dynamic cultural force. Myths were understood to be expressive of the human condition, revealing universal truths about human psychology and development and containing relevant messages for contemporary individuals and society."<sup>6</sup> She also argues quite convincingly that David felt no depression because of his exile. Unlike many of his fellow-travellers who sent their letters of regret to Louis XVIII and were allowed to return to France, he certainly, did not want to do anything which would imply that he had renounced his republicanism, continuing to communicate with Paris through letters and his works which were regularly exhibited there. That is at least what he said to his friends: in a letter to Gros (1.1.1819), after most of the other exiles had already left for home, he wrote: "Let me enjoy the peace and tranquillity that I experience in this country."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> S. Lee, *David*. Phaidon Press, London 1999, p. 298-299.

<sup>4</sup> D. Johnson, "Desire Demythologized: David's L'Amour quittant Psyché". *Art History*, 4, 1986; D. Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David: The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis*. Getty Museum, Los Angeles 1997; D. Johnson, *David to Delacroix: The Rise of Romantic Mythology*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 2011.

<sup>5</sup> D. Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David: The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis*, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> From Jacques-Louis David's letter to Antoine-Jean Gros (1.1.1819), in: Johnson, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

To underline her point, Johnson discusses two paintings, which offer a psychological counterpoint to each other: *Cupid and Psyche* and *The Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis*. The first one, she argues, depicts the ugliness and mockery of adult lust while the other portrays a pure and virgin love that will never be realised. In a similar way, she discusses *Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Three Graces*, the painting declared by David at the same time to be his last and his best. If anything, it is even more puzzling and enigmatic than the other three late works, in which David is still displaying an obvious effort to translate myth into realistic scenery and even gods and heroes appear as ordinary persons. This work, however, is set in heaven, floating on half-dark half-white clouds. This “seriocomic work that subverts accepted conventions and norms by combining the parodic and the sublime, realism and idealism, constitutes his final aesthetic manifesto – it was the last painting he made before his death in 1825.”<sup>8</sup>

But what is the message of this manifesto, which is both serious and comic at the same time, what is it that is simultaneously sublime and an object of parody and why did he want to produce a painting which is realistic and idealistic at the same time – an impure and ambivalent message explicitly intended as a keystone to his vast and great opus and at the conclusion of artistic career?

Before we answer these questions, which call for a new appreciation of his history painting as such, we have to look into the issue of late style.

### Late Style

We owe the theory of late style to Adorno’s short essay on Beethoven<sup>9</sup>, which continues to be echoed in subsequent works, including Edward Said’s well known contribution to the subject<sup>10</sup> (Said, 2007). To put Beethoven and his case in perspective, Adorno’s main point is

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<sup>8</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Th. Adorno, “Late Style in Beethoven”, in: *Essays on Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002, p. 564-567.

<sup>10</sup> E. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature*. Vintage Books, New York 2007.

that all explanations of late style, which relate to the artist's "I" confronted with death, and expressing his or her feelings about imminent event, are wrong. Even more: they are a result of an abdication: "It is as if, confronted with the dignity of human death, the theory of art were to divest itself of its rights and abdicate in favour of reality."<sup>11</sup> But it is the author who dies, not the works; therefore it is they, the late works, which have to be analysed as any other works, with an intention to find their formal law, not their role as biographical clues. In this way, it is possible to separate what makes a work art distinct from a mere document.

Still, there are direct and indirect parallels between the late style periods of Beethoven and David, some of them perhaps more biographical, others perhaps more formal in terms of their relation to the corresponding works. We could, for example, compare their different exiles: Beethoven's internal retreat into deafness and David's external exile from Paris to Brussels.

But what is more intriguing is that their late style periods coincide perfectly. For Beethoven, his late or third period is from 1815 to 1827, in which year he died. Meanwhile, David left France in 1815, to settle in Brussels a year later, after declining an official offer to be exempted from exile as the greatest French painter. The late periods of David and of Beethoven started with Napoleon's second and final defeat in 1815, not because they were both really old at that time but because they were both republicans and liberals whose case was lost, as were the hopes of a whole revolutionary generation of artists and thinkers. Admittedly Beethoven had lost any faith in Napoleon long before, while David still supported him during the hundred days leading up to Waterloo.

Another parallel, which does not belong to any formal law of late style but to circumstances peculiar to the world of art, is a mystery concerning the artworks<sup>12</sup> which were begun immediately after their first performances: some thought they were great, others opined that the artist must have been mad or perhaps drunk during composition, while even their devoted public could not explain quite what it was that had

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<sup>11</sup> Adorno, *op.cit.*, p. 564.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 564-565.

been done and for what purpose it was done in such a way. This final defeat of Napoleon and the second restoration of Louis XVIII is also a date that separates enlightenment and classicism from mysticism and romanticism, a provisory boundary that located later understandings that both masters had also progressed from one form to another.

So, what can Adorno suggest, in the case of Beethoven, as a formal law of his late music? First, there is “the role of conventions”<sup>13</sup>, as they appear in a struggle with subjectivity: “...the relationship of the conventions to the subjectivity itself must be seen as constituting the formal law from which the content of the late works emerges... The power of subjectivity in the late works is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves.”<sup>14</sup> This is quite true of Beethoven, who, for instance, in his 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony already (1811–12), after titillating the audience’ expectations of musical pleasure with a progressing and culminating Allegretto, followed with an agreeable Scherzo, which, cut to such an abrupt stop as if to say: “We had enough of that!”, gets to the last movement, Allegro con brio, which throws us out of the conventional listening composure completely as it beats on and on around the same wild motif as stubbornly as a defeated boxer who will not stop without an external intervention. Adorno found in Beethoven’s late works “a catching fire between the extremes, which no longer allow for any secure middle ground or harmony of spontaneity.”<sup>15</sup> Here, we do not get “an expression of the solitary I, but of the mythical nature of the created being and its fall, whose steps the late works strike symbolically as if in the momentary pauses of their descent.”<sup>16</sup>

Late works are therefore a final comedy, but they also function as a *Divine Comedy* and as a genre which, following Hegel, stands at a point of repeated and final farewell from the past. At the final end, however, is the 9<sup>th</sup> symphony with its choral finale which, using Schiller’s words set to Beethoven’s divine music, calls us to enter the Elysium, i.e., nature itself as a pagan paradise where one can already find peace in the here and now.

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<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 565.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 566.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 567.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 566.

Can these parallels, and the stated formal law of the late style of Beethoven, help us to contribute anything to a solution of the mystery David's late works?

### The Peace of David

The first parallel is to open the others: not all artists develop late styles. It is not just about being old, or starting anew at a later age; it has to be in a curious, even mysterious relation with the artist's earlier work. The second: there is more to their positions of exiles than just a comparison between a musician getting deaf at Vienna, the capital of music, and a painter evicted from Paris, the capital of painting, to Brussels. They had both found themselves on the wrong side of a great historical movement, which they had enthusiastically supported and which had come to a crunch point. In terms of historical events of the epoch, Beethoven holds the position of Kant's enthusiastic beholder from *The Conflict of the Faculties*. Kant claims that the French Revolution is a demonstrative sign (*signum demonstrativum*<sup>17</sup>, which confirms that we are right to hope for something better. The reason found is not in what is going on in France and in Paris but in the attitude of those who watch what is going on there from a distance: "the mode of thinking of the spectators."<sup>18</sup> David was not a spectator; on the contrary, his art participated enthusiastically in representing the revolution. If the outcome of revolution is a hangover (i.e. Katzenjammer<sup>19</sup>, then David had more reason to have a headache than Beethoven: his farewell to enthusiasm might be tinged with a more personal failure, even a bad conscience. The mystery surrounding David's last painting(s) comes from the lack of understanding of the stylistic changes. David's recognisable touch at first glance suggests a classicist origin but immediately after confirming that it denies it, upsetting expected conventions with some devices borrowed from Rococo, as many noticed, but also with those expressing mockery, humour, irony – even a taste for the farcical – which might be

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<sup>17</sup> I. Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*. Alibris Books: New York 1979, p. 153.

<sup>18</sup> Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> K. Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 6.

found to be Romantic. If Beethoven develops his farewell to harmonious style into extremes, which suggest that the mythical nature of the created being is in essence tragic, David now finds reason for comical effect in dramatic oppositions he exposed in his previous history painting (intimate vs. public, male vs. female, individual happiness vs. human progress, etc.).

After the first recognition that it is indeed David the classicist who painted this, what we experience is a second recognition that he has deceived us because we are dealing with his painting but of a kind that represents a deconstruction of his previous modes of heroic history painting. There are clouds, but not friendly, white clouds, and there is an edifice built in the air. On a sofa, Mars is reclining with a lance in his right hand, holding it more as a pencil than as a weapon. In his left hand he has his sword turned around as if he is offering it to somebody else whom we cannot see. He is already decorated with flowers on his chest, and Venus, lying on the same sofa, turning her back to beholder, is holding a crown, which should end at his head. He looks detached, and is not watching the beautiful goddess, or as a beholder per se, but somewhere into the void in an attitude of resignation. Venus, a thin beauty looking into Mars' eyes – a regard he does not return. Cupid is kneeling at Mars's legs but he is more disarmed than Mars is: his mythical bow and arrows are lying on the ground – or, rather, on the clouds behind him – and he is undoing Mars's sandals as if that were his most dangerous weapon, or to prevent his escape from the sofa. Both Mars and the child have hidden genitals; Cupid by his casing, and Mars with a help of two turtledoves kissing like birds. In spite of this hideous gesture, which reveals the presence of a painter aware of cultural context, Venus is holding her hand just above one of the pigeons, at Mars's leg quite near the brown triangle that suggests the presence of his genitals. But Venus is watching Mars in awe, mouth open, as if persuading him to make love and not war in a moment of his indecision. In the right corner of the painting, or, at Mars's and Venus's left, are three graces who invest such an effort into being gracious that it shows. With them is what Michael Fried calls theatricality. They dance, or at least they hint at dancing poses. But their dance seems to be a mockery because of the expressions on their faces. One holds a jug and a cup, offering drink

with an exaggerated look of acquiescence on her face; another has taken Mars's shield with one hand and his bow with the other while smiling too sweetly, watching the beholder of the painting; the third holds his helmet in a crowning gesture with an undecided expression on her face, looking at Venus. The composition is very theatrical, pantomimic – or, better, ballet-like. This should not come as a surprise since David's models for this picture were taken from the *Théâtre de la Monnaie* of Brussels where Petipa (father of Marius Petipa, who was later to become famous ballet master at St. Petersburg) staged ballet productions. Venus is his star dancer Marie Lesueur, Mars is one of the subscribers, and Cupid is Petipa's other son Lucien who was to become a ballet dancer too. By the way, Marie Lesueur was well known to make a then scandalous gesture when still in Marseille theatre, turning her back on the public during her performance of *The Birth of Venus* in 1817, which was not only unconventional but even scandalous; however, she was pardoned for her uncalled gesture. Her appearance as Venus on David's canvass in a similar pose was for contemporaries who knew this story of her past as something of a repeated public joke.

Luc de Nanteuil interprets the painting as David's longing for absolute beauty and love: "How could anyone not be moved by this famous old man's farewell to painting – this is an enchanted world dedicated to grace and beauty, to their supreme victory over matter and force. What does it matter if the composition is theatrical? The smiles are light-hearted, the attitudes graceful, the gestures exquisite – and the female nudes are quite simply sublime. The ageing painter dreamt a final dream of beauty, more chaste than in his youth, but physically more perfect than ever, and this is how we shall remember him."<sup>20</sup>) If this is the correct interpretation, David's last painting is simply an apotheosis of Peace, a launch of the slogan that would later become famous: "Make Love not War!" But there is some surplus meaning in the painting, suggesting that something has gone wrong with this pacification, which remains ambiguous because Mars is not as decided as it seems, and the Graces are overdoing it, creating a farcical atmosphere. Mars looks similar to *Leonidas at Thermopylae* (1813–1814), but that is a picture of a neces-

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<sup>20</sup> L. De Nanteuil, *Jacques-Louis David*. Thames and Hudson, London 1990, p. 126.

sary public sacrifice, and Leonidas is seeing his and his warriors' imminent death. That really is a farewell painting, or, a painting of farewell to life, not *Mars Disarmed*, which was certainly intended as an allegory of a reluctant and excessively staged transition to disarmament and peace.

Let us compare this painting with two examples of its predecessors. The first one is Pompeo Girolamo Batoni's (1708–1787) *Peace and War* from 1776. Considered the greatest among Roman masters of the time, Batoni personified Peace as graceful virgin and War/Mars as belligerent youngster who has been arrested by her charms, to prove that he was really an elegant or Rococo painter. It seems that Peace is seducing Mars with her charms, while Mars has changed his mind and decided to protect her from evils of war, which are symbolised by a dragon on top of his helmet. The work was painted during a very short period of peace in Europe. It resembles *Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis*, but not *Mars Disarmed*. The second one is Louis Jean François Lagrenée (1734–1805) *Mars and Venus: Allegory of Peace* from 1770. Here, we have a morning-after scene: Mars is looking at Venus who is still sleeping (or pretending to sleep) with post-coital look of love. It is, again, a typically elegant rococo painting. Compared with these two, David (as some interpretations suggested) has not abandoned his classicist style, to return to elegant or rococo style from the previous period. What he did was to shed some doubt about this encounter between Mars and Venus, using ambiguity, irony and even farcical dance. Why?

In 1824, peace no longer meant what it used to mean during Napoleon's military campaign, when he was the one who was supposed to bring peace and freedom to the peoples of the European continent, as represented in Pierre-Paul Prud'hon's painting from before 1801. Also, it was not a peace signified by the erection of the *Arc de Triomphe*, which had been commissioned and designed in 1806 but actually begun in 1815, only to be abandoned the same year because of Napoleon's second defeat, and left unfinished until 1833, when new symbolic parts were added that diminished the Napoleonic ideology of the original design. The monument to French global aspirations was finally completed in 1836. It could not be the same peace added to the *Arc de Triomphe* at that later time by sculptor Antoine Etex because this came years after David's farewell to painting and to life. What this addition is expressing

is the idea of peace as it started in 1815 following Waterloo with a series of four peace treaties between France and each member of the anti-Napoleonic coalition (Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia). This peace signifies Napoleon's, France's, and revolution's defeat, and puts the final mark on an epoch which had begun in 1789, an epoch in which David had, not just as a painter, a very prominent public position.

Jacques-Louis David produced his last painting as a representation of the state of France and Europe after 1815, with peace and order restored but the hopes and will of peoples unsatisfied and deceived, following long years of war, terror and destruction in the name of liberty and freedom, without having achieved any result which could at least partially outweigh the price. Beethoven, an indirectly involved beholder and supporter, found a reason for tragedy, after a divine period of heroism brought defeat and hangover, and transported enlightenment's faith in the progress of humanity towards freedom into the realms of a cosmic struggle of opposites and its harmonious outcome. David, directly involved, defeated and exiled actor of the whole process from 1789 to 1815, found here a reason for comedy as human condition, and for mockery, laughter and irony, which are not only expressed as the grievances of an old republican against a reactionary outcome of the world's affairs but also as self-parody. This comic dance over a disarmed but equivocal Mars, who is unsure if he needs to accept the love offered by Venus, with Cupid behaving not just as a god of love but also as a god of history, who is postponing his decisive shot, is at the same time a criticism of the public virtue invested in struggle for freedom, a criticism of a farcical restoration of peace and order, and an ironic depiction of the fate of historical painting as the painter's life-long vocation.

The mythical idea of peace presented through an ironic attitude to actual historical peace coincides with Hegel's idea of the role of tragedy and comedy in history. With tragedy, humanity can express a farewell to its own past with an understanding that the old way of life was not a divine but rather a human product. But such a farewell leaves many afterthoughts, hangovers and nightmares. With comedy, a farewell to the past can be finally free not only of the past but also of all afterthoughts, hangovers and nightmares it leaves with us because we – and not gods or heroes – were responsible for it. When we are able to bid farewell to

our history in a comic adieu, we can finally dismiss the past and leave it in peace.<sup>21</sup> *Mars Disarmed by Venus and Three Graces* is David's last painting, and it is a farewell not just to painting but also to history, executed with an appeal to leave it in peace. But peace is not a heroic tragedy. It is a comedy with a touch of irony and even farce, which exposes "the mythical nature of the created being and its fall"<sup>22</sup> as a comic ballet.

The peace and tranquillity of David in Brussels were not of the same kind as the peace in Europe of that time. The conventions of the European restoration and David's subjectivity clash in his last, and – as he believed – finest work.

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<sup>21</sup> This topic was recently discussed (2012) by two authors: Rachel Aumiller in "Comic Anguish: Hegel and Marx on the Theatrical and Historical Style of Comedy", and Anna-Katharina Gisbertz in "On Karl Marx, the Sublime, and the Comical". Both articles will appear in Slovene translation in one of next issues of journal *Borec*.

<sup>22</sup> Adorno, *op. cit.*, p. 566.

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MUSIC AS PEACE:  
AN INTERSPACE OF  
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

M a j a B j e l i c a

As was stated in our conference's call for papers, "throughout history, sages, philosophers and theologians have searched for the proper measure to secure what in a most intimate sense could be described as 'peace'". It is probably uncontroversial to state that everyone can have her own understanding of the notion in question; therefore, this paper is not about to attempt to define it. Rather, in this paper I will attempt to demonstrate that it is through music that a kind of peace can be achieved – or, better, at least some understanding of what it might consist of. In order to be able to say something about the ontology of music, we could start from the same point as we just did with peace: "Throughout history ...". It is difficult to finalise a definition of music – already the line between music, sound, noise and silence is hard to draw. However, a crucial distinction we might make is this: differing from peace, music, in at least one of its ways of being, can be found everywhere and in every time. Maybe it is an overreaching statement; however, I am firmly convinced that it is not far from being the truth.

Music as a form of art – but not just that – is also a medium for nourishing peacefulness or/and an environment in which peace can prevail. Over the last decade some new literature has emerged on this topic: researchers, realising that music has an important social role in preserving and establishing peace, have been gathering their thoughts and data from the field in various special issue journals and readers. With the examination of some concrete examples from the field of intercultural conflict transformation, it will be shown how music can play a crucial role in achieving peace, truce, or, at least, closure. The presentation will include also some ethnomusicological thoughts: special consideration will be devoted to the Sufi music of two religious minorities in Turkey, the Mevlevi and the Alevi. Music has had an important role in their struggle for their own acknowledgement; even today, music plays a cru-

cial role in their rituals and everyday life. Moreover, a philosophical approach towards music will be presented, and some examples of ethical possibilities immanent to music will be pointed out, especially the approach that understands music as a kind of “neutral zone”, a place for a dialogue among and between cultures.

To sum up, this contribution will present an interdisciplinary account and a reflection on the interconnections and relations between music and peace. Unfortunately, there will not be much space for a detailed development of the instances presented, since these will be very broad. The main aim of the present contribution is rather to show the vast variety of possibilities that engaging with music might bring us in different times and places, in terms of enabling intersubjective relationships and intercultural dialogue.

### Musicking: Intercultural Communication for Peace

Over the last decade, some scholars have argued that communicating through music might be beneficial to the achievement of intercultural tolerance, understanding and knowledge. In the period before that, connections between music and peace were also being widely addressed, but more generally and without the same focus. Here three of the most obviously related issues will be presented: interestingly, none of them directly reference peace in their titles, but rather address conflict or conflict transformation, the latter being an activity of peace. While the three volumes described are not the only ones in the field, we can say that they are very much referenced and cited today.

In 2004 the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research established a project connecting music and peace, of which the four years subsequent result was the publication of a collection of papers entitled *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*,<sup>1</sup> to which a number of prominent scholars contributed. Even if they all had their own definition of peace, they were able to

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<sup>1</sup> O. Urbain (ed.), *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, I. B. Taurus & Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, London / New York 2008.

agree on a mutual framework, provided by one of the pioneers of peace studies, Johan Galtung, which defines peace as “the capacity to transform conflicts with empathy, creativity and nonviolence”<sup>2</sup>; therefore, each author provides an account of at least one of these elements. The articles present a framework for the connections between music and peace; thus combined together, these constitute a great force for good. Some instances of the political usages of music are also discussed alongside a consideration of the role of music in healing and education as well as some relevant anecdotes in the form of accounts of the personal experiences of the authors. In his search for interconnections between music and peace, Galtung explains in his article<sup>3</sup> that music can be uplifting – meaning that it can elevate an individual beyond the ordinary, detaching us from reality – and that this uplifting has the capability to unite us, because music as art is power. This unity is conducive to peace.

In order to provide concrete examples of the role of music in conflict transformation we might summarise two articles that each address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both presenting a specific musician with his own individual approach, both mainly taking on structural-constructivism approaches. The first of these musicians, presented by Karen Abi-Ezzi<sup>4</sup>, is Gilad Atzmon, who, with his Orient House Ensemble – of which the drummer is Israeli and the guest vocalist Palestinian – plays music from the Middle East, North Africa and East Europe, presenting Israeli soul music and Jewish folk music with a combination of Arab Palestinian flavours. With this activity, Atzmon is re-questioning the peace process, its status quo; at the same time as merging the separate musical traditions, he offers a fresh, innovative approach towards the need for unification of diversity, projecting the cultural fusion onto politics. The author argues that, in so doing, Atzmon is affirming art as a place of social activity, or, better, social activism, showing aesthetics to be the most effective way of increasing people’s awareness, conducting

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<sup>2</sup> Cited in O. Urbain, “Introduction”, in: Urbain 2008, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> J. Galtung, “Peace, Music and the Arts: In Search of Interconnections”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 53–62.

<sup>4</sup> K. Abi-Ezzi, “Music as a Discourse of Resistance: The Case of Gilad Atzmon”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 93–114.

to social engagement and action. Another artist, Yair Dalal, is presented by Oliver Urbain,<sup>5</sup> who shows the different ways in which the musician spreads his philosophy of peace through music: performing Babylonian music in order to assert, though problematically, the common roots nurturing both Jews and Arabs; playing both the violin and the oud; mixing Jewish and Arab musical styles; performing with musicians from both backgrounds and sharing his message through interviews. According to the author, Dalal presents music as a tool for searching for a possible resolution. Moreover, as Urbain says, both musicians, Atzmon and Dalal alike, even with their different approaches and views, are challenging the status quo and playing a crucial role for peace within the discussions about the foundations of constructed cultural and national identities. Of course, Urbain, in common with other contributing authors, doesn't believe that music has only a positive effect on relationships among persons and cultures, as he states:

“[...] like any other human endeavour, music can be used to enhance human life or to destroy it. [...] We are aware that these different ways in which music plays various roles for peace sometimes emphasize the bright side, sometimes the dark side, and that both are intertwined, like the yin and the yang, hence the book's subtitle”.<sup>6</sup>

Here we will elaborate only the brighter sides, leaving the darker ones for a future occasion. However, the understanding of the notion of peace offered by the editor might raise at least some question.

“I view peace as the vibrant and dynamic state of a society in which everyone can enjoy life to the fullest, with full employment, adequate social protection, abundant food, water, pure air, and shelter, warm and joyful communication between people, participation in governance, justice, equality, freedom, mutual respect, and a fulfilling intellectual and cultural life.”<sup>7</sup>

The definition here is compatible with the statement that peace does not simply consist in the absence of war; it is also consistent with the notion of peace as conflict transformation with the usage of empathy,

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<sup>5</sup> O. Urbain, “Art for Harmony in the Middle East: The Music of Yair Dalal”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 201–211.

<sup>6</sup> O. Urbain, “Introduction”, in: Urbain 2008, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

nonviolence and creativity. However, to keep the question that we might anticipate arising simple, why couldn't peace also be “a vibrant and dynamic state of mind” of an individual person to find herself in? We will make some connections with these questions later.

Another volume of *Music and Conflict*<sup>8</sup>, which addressed similar issues, was issued in the same year as the previous one, to coincide with a symposium of the International Council of Traditional Music, entitled *Discord: Identifying Conflict in Music, Resolving Conflict through Music*. This collection, released in 2010, brought together articles from ethnomusicologists worldwide who research the central role of music in the understanding and researching of conflict, more or less emphasising its polyvalence. Music is understood as a strong discursive tool, which should be always critically assessed in relation to its performative practices and social effects. Not having much space for a detailed account of this publication, let us mention the chapter *Music in Application*, in which the emerging field of the so-called “applied ethnomusicology” is introduced and which stresses the potential of music for overcoming conflicts, especially through educational programmes, cultural awareness and intercultural understanding with musical performance.

Another publication, a special volume of an electronic journal called *Music and Arts in Action*,<sup>9</sup> issued in the same year as the previous one, describes various roles that music and arts might play in social action and conflict transformation. An editorial review of the field points out some of its main problems and misunderstandings – even misuses. The authors issue an appeal to take some of their suggestions into account during the process of conflict transformations, such as: considering much more the points of view of the participants of these processes; not exaggerating the role of music or taking it out of context; being aware of the longitude of the process of building relationships through musicking; and the “not always effective” nature of the interventions of “outsiders”. Moreover, when working with traditions and multicultural issues, an emphasis on differences among participants is not an ideal

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<sup>8</sup> J. M. O'Connell and S. El-S. Castelo-Branco (eds.), *Music and Conflict*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana / Chicago / Springfield 2010.

<sup>9</sup> A. Bergh and J. Sloboda (eds.), *Music and Arts in Action. Music and Arts in Conflict Transformation*, 2, 2, University of Exeter, Exeter 2010.

first step to take, since it immediately points out the boundary between “me and you”. Furthermore, it is only through active engagement with musical activities that long-term personal and social change is likely to be achieved.

All of this, we might say, leads to an instrumentalised role of music; therefore it is not surprising that we have to take suitable precautions when using music as a tool for conflict transformation, i.e. peace. But what if we assume that music is NOT just a tool? Of course it can be; however, if we take it that way, our goal (of conflict resolution) is surely unlikely to be achieved. When making music, when musicking,<sup>10</sup> we have to want only musicking, to let ourselves go into the activity that should be experienced with the mind and body unified in breath. Let the other near us express herself through the universal metalanguage of music. Said differently: starting with “music for music’s sake,” we come to peace. Starting with “music for...” another reason or goal (propaganda), we don't know where it might lead us. Surely, it is a powerful vehicle in reaching ANY goal; however, understanding it as an inter-subjective space, in which all subjects can co-exist one with another in mutual respect and affection, might provide us with another opportunity to learn how to create an ethical world.

### Believing in and Reaching towards Peace through Music

Believers all across the world, followers of different religions, take different approaches to seeking a connection with their God or gods through music. But, as stated in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, even if there is a strong connection between music and religion, religious attitudes towards music are often quite ambivalent:

“Religious believers have heard music as the voices of gods and the cacophony of devils, praised it as the purest form of spirituality, and condemned it as the ultimate in sensual depravity; with equal enthusiasm they have pro-

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<sup>10</sup> The term “musicking” is the present participle of the verb “to music”, that encloses various kinds of musical activities. It was introduced by Christopher Small in English language; interestingly, a parallel “muziciranje”, meaning “making music”, has already existed for a long time in the Slovenian language. See C. Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening*. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown 1998.

moted its use in worship and sought to eradicate it from both religious and secular life. Seldom a neutral phenomenon, music has a high positive or negative value that reflects its near-universal importance in the religious sphere.”<sup>11</sup>

An example of these contradictory views is provided by the various roles of religious music in Islam – something that cannot be described as a unified notion. In orthodox Shi'a and Sunni communities there are no practices recognised as “music”, even if they seem musical to an outsider. Each religious practice is categorised in its own terms and none of them corresponds to music. Generally speaking, it could be said that it is actually only “sensuous music” that is forbidden, while calls for prayers, Qur'anic chants, celebration songs, military marches and similar examples are legitimate; however, at the same time they are not (called) music.<sup>12</sup> A different approach towards music can be observed in the so-called Sufi music, where instrumental music is performed, vocalisations of the names of God are very important and ecstatic movements and dance form a large part of ritual practices. A similar state of affairs obtains within popular Islam and heterodox Shi'a communities. Two examples of such musical practices in Turkish religious communities will be presented.

The Mevlevi, followers of the teaching of the 13th century mystic Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (Rumi in English; Mevlana in Turkish), put music and dance at the centre of their ritual, which they call *sema*. The *sema*, explained by some as a spiritual concert, is an event during which believers join in a mutual dance that is accompanied mostly by the live performance of an ensemble of musicians, also Mevlevi, in order to connect with God as directly as possible. The dance to the spiritual music consists in moving in a circle while also turning around their own axes. It was while so doing, according to their legend, that Mevlana was meeting God. In one of his major works of Persian mystical poetry, the *Masnawi*, he writes that “[s]ema is where the souls of lovers come to rest”, emphasising the inner peace that emanates

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<sup>11</sup> T. Ellingson, “Music and Religion”, in: Jones, L. (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 9., Macmillan Reference USA, Farmington Hills, MI 2005, p. 6248.

<sup>12</sup> See E. Neubauer and V. Doubleday, “Islamic Religious Music”, in: *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed on 28 Apr. 2014 <<http://www.oxford-musiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52787>>.

from the whirling.<sup>13</sup> These mystical dancers are more widely known as “The Whirling Dervishes”. Their dance, however, might take also other forms, such as moving in a closed circle, embracing each other and vocalizing or calling different names of God with emphasized breathing, while one of the dancers might also perform a *gazel* (we could say sing an ode). The breathing would provide also a rhythm for their movements, dancing and whirling.

Another Turkish religious group, the Alevi, a heterodox Shi'a community, which survived hundreds of years of persecution by the Sunni majority by living and practicing its rituals in seclusion, places music in a central position of their ceremonies, called *cem* (pron. 'jam'). It is a collective meeting of the whole community at which women and men come together in a joint prayer, recitation of mystic formulas, worshipping their saints and executing “breath exercises” with calling to God. All of that takes place in combination with their ritual dance, the *se-mah*, and the playing of the *saz* (folk lute). There are various types of *cems*; however, the attainment of ecstatic states is characteristic to all of them, mostly produced by dance, music and the repetition of their sacred words (names of God). Many scholars state that music is crucial to the *cem* because it provides the believers with a connection to the divine unity.<sup>14</sup> Due to the different forms of *cem* and the variety of occasions at which it is performed, it could be said that

“[...] the role of music can be identified as social, educational, in expressions of religious beliefs and cultural concepts, a means of preserving the core of culture, and even as providing aspects of governing and judicial roles.”<sup>15</sup>

Both of the rituals are quite complex to explain in a few paragraphs; nevertheless, let us examine some of their obvious differences. The *sema* is performed only by men, the instruments used as well as the musical forms and other elements are from the classical Ottoman tradition. The texts of the songs, which mainly derive from the written poetry collec-

<sup>13</sup> See S. T. Halman, “Love is All: Mevlana's Poetry and Philosophy”, in: Halman, S. T. and M. And: *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes: Sufi Philosophy – Whirling Rituals – Poems of Ecstasy – Miniature Paintings*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Dost Yayınları, Istanbul 2005, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> See G. L. Clarke, *The World of the Alevis: Issues of Culture and Identity*. AVC Publications, Istanbul 1991, pp. 88–93, 131–152.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

tions of Mevlana, are ecstatic avowals of unity with God, mutual acceptance and love. Turning towards the Alevi's *cem*, we can see that its participants are as often female as male, the instrument used is the folk lute and the musical forms as well as the modes in which they are performed are of folk origin. The words they sing might derive from the poems, mainly preserved orally, and composed by either known or anonymous *aşıks*, the wandering bards of the folk heritage of Anatolia. These songs don't only refer to mysticism, faith and philosophy, but also to friendship, peace, affection, tolerance, hospitality, love and destiny – some of them might offer a form of advice or even indulge in satire.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, one could say that they are not only worshiping life of God, life “on the other side”, but also emphasising the importance of our worldly lives, that should be lived well, justly and in the experience of solidarity with one's fellow humans. Spreading this message with music would have a strong influence on every community formation and each relationship, not only those characterised as religious. Interestingly, these most common Alevi songs are almost synonymously referred to as either *deyiş* (tr. sayings) or *nefes* (tr. breath), with the latter having a slightly more moral and didactic message.

Nevertheless, both ceremonies have in common the emphasis on direct contact with God, which might be reached through music, mainly with ecstatic dance, music and song performances, but also listening.<sup>17</sup> Another important element in common is the *dhikr*, the repetition of the different names of God, which might be explained also as rhythmical breathing exercises. All of this somehow shows that the mystical rituals described here very much engage the bodies of the believers in this spiritual process, allowing for a unification of body and spirit.

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<sup>16</sup> See M. Duygulu, *Alevi-Bektaşî Muziğinde Deyişler*. [Selfpublished], Istanbul 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. And, “Sema: The Spiritual Concert of the Mevlevis”, in: Halman, S. T. and M. And: *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes: Sufi Philosophy – Whirling Rituals – Poems of Ecstasy – Miniature Paintings*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Dost Yayınları, Istanbul 2005, pp. 77–105.

## Philosophy, Morality, Ethos

The belief that with music a connection can be established between the body and one's moral life is one of the points investigated by some contemporary philosophers of mind and music. Coming across the article "Music, Mind, and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic", written by two philosophers, Philip Alperson and Noel Carroll, revealed that it can be a quite diffused and relevant topic of research. The authors discuss how engagement with music can affect life in a community and its politics or social actions and that this can contribute to the moral life within the culture.

"We see that music is frequently regarded as reflecting and affecting moral conditions, as regulating behaviour in the service of supporting social norms, and of integrating the social fabric by reinforcing the sense of community and identifying key cultural values and activities of a culture, by enhancing interpersonal relations, by providing a healing or restorative function in times of sorrow or anxiety, by identifying social problems, and by encouraging action to address those problems."<sup>18</sup>

Among the features that enhance moral life within cultures we might consider music's pulse, which gives to listeners a feeling of movement and helps to coordinate their movement together – this can be linked to a response in the cerebellum (the part of the brain connected with movement). With its pulse and melody music also stimulates those parts of the brain that are connected with affect and in this way establishes a common mood among listeners and promotes a common feeling amongst the group. It can evoke a level of charged emotive bonding. It also affects the neural sites linked to the arousal of pleasure and displeasure. With all this influences we can easily agree that music has the power of fostering the feeling of cohesion among a group of people, without which there is no ethical life.

Songs, with their music, voice and propositional content,

"[...] can be joined with movement, including processions, marches, rituals, and social dances of an indefinitely large number of kinds and variati-

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<sup>18</sup> P. Alperson and N. Carroll, "Music, Mind, and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 42, 1, 2008, p. 10.

ons. When bodily movement, word, and music are mobilized together for a concerted effect in this way, so many dimensions of the person are engaged that the resulting states of bonding and affective affiliation can be nearly irresistible. That is why song together with dance and other sorts of movement may be regarded as a kind of primal social cement. Song not only functions to coordinate people in body and spirit, it is also an effective lever for educating people in the ethos of their culture.”<sup>19</sup>

The influence of music on the ethos of a culture is not, of course, a new topic. Probably all of us have heard about the Greeks' fondness for music due to its power to educate, cultivate and control citizens; other cultures also stress the importance of music, for example the ancient Chinese. Yuhwen Wang in his article<sup>20</sup> about the attitude towards music in Plato's writings and in the old Chinese scripts of Yue Ji and Yue Shu, shows that both cultures were evaluating music for its effect on the shaping of a cultivated individual and community. They both stress the affiliation of music with the universe and with spirit. Interestingly, however, the author shows that these two cultures differentiate greatly in stating the reasons and sources of the power of music.

For Plato, music works with harmony, according to the principle of “likeness”. That is to say, a beautiful melody will shape a beautiful character, a good rhythm will assimilate just words, and so forth. This is due to *harmonia*, the affiliation between the soul and the universe. The Chinese scripts also locate the power of music in its sonic features; however, they affirm that its influence on the ethos is derived through its influence on the body. A certain kind of music might provide a certain circulation in the body and therefore enhance the senses, providing for a better disposition to directing human customs and manners. The different explanations of the same fact of the two old traditions show, that music's

“[...] ethical power and utility for education, statecraft and its connection with the universe, therefore, may enjoy cross-cultural value and importance,

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<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Y. Wang, “The Ethical Power of Music: Ancient Greek and Chinese Thoughts”, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38, 1, 2004.

which need not be confined merely to the two ancient traditions. Rather, it deserves consideration for human beings today as well.”<sup>21</sup>

This short excursus in the combined fields of philosophy and music was made in order to see if there are some possibilities for understanding music as a rich environment for an ethics of intersubjectivity and intercultural dialogue. It is obvious that there are some grounds upon which we might proceed.

### Music as Ethical (Inter)space

Interestingly, music also plays a crucial role in the ethical world of the emerging age of breath, according to Luce Irigaray. In her writings it is possible to find some moments especially dedicated to music, that connect it with breath, voice, sound, silence, listening, openness, dialogue, hospitality, otherness, body and space. Further on, a brief disclosure of her views and understanding about the bonds among these notions will be attempted. Since her words have a poetics of her own, this will be mostly done by presenting the passages themselves, to which some comments will be added.

Wishing to link her thought with the view presented earlier, about music affecting moral life through directly influencing the body, we should surely present her thoughts from the chapter “Before and Beyond Any Word”<sup>22</sup> from her *Key Writings*, in which, stressing the importance of beginning with our present energy in order to become divine, she states that a

“[...] tradition which uses music rather than sermons to reach such an end is not mistaken. The choice of rhythm like the choice of tones can lead breath, and even blood, from centres of elemental vitality to the more spiritual centres: of the heart, of hearing, speaking and thinking.”<sup>23</sup>

One could say that the analogies among her statement and the thoughts of the previous sections of the text are not very hard to find.

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<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>22</sup> L. Irigaray, “Before and Beyond Any Word”, in: Irigaray, L.: *Key Writings*. Continuum, London / New York 2004, pp. 134–141.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

Further on, she says that the qualities of music let the breath stay fluid and that engaging with music allows

“[c]osmic and personal waves [to] vibrate together and, likewise, a field of interpersonal vibrations can be created.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it is clear that, for Irigaray, music does not only have an important role for the individual when attaining to a spiritual path, but also for the establishment of a relation with the other as a subject, a relation that remains open for whoever might be willing to listen. Listening itself is a fundamental step and an essential disposition in creating a space for intersubjectivity, which is shown in passages of another of her texts:

“If I am to be quiet and listen, listen to you, without presupposition, without making hidden demands – on you or myself – the world must not be sealed already, it must still be open, the future not determined by the past. If I am to really listen to you, all these conditions are essential. [...] Listening to you thus requires that I make myself available, that I be once more and always capable of silence. To a certain extent this gesture frees me, too. But above all, it gives you a silent space in which to manifest yourself.”<sup>25</sup>

In this way, listening is an elemental condition for silence to be offered to the other. It seems that Irigaray more often refers to silence than music, since her notion of the former is much more discussed than her understandings of the latter. In one of her more recent articles she reveals the main aspects of the importance of silence for an intersubjective place to emerge among two.

“Silence must be preserved before meeting the other as a place in which his, or her, otherness can be welcomed. Silence must intervene in a dialogue with the other, as the condition for an exchange between two discourses to take place, without domination or submission of one discourse with respect to the other. Silence must be kept in each one in order that a place of hospi-

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<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> L. Irigaray, “In Almost Absolute Silence”, in: Irigaray, L.: *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History*. Routledge, New York / London 1996, p. 118.

tality can be saved from appropriation or reduction of the real otherness of the other.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the welcoming of the other involves an unconditional invitation to the other to introduce her own voice into this silence that was offered to her. Its uniqueness will be expressed to its music, its sound characteristics, that are shaped from her being. This is a

“[...] music made from breath and soul, of which the body is the tool. A music that is the most beautiful word that can be offered to the other, and which can, from a distance, come to resonate in them.”<sup>27</sup>

One of her main arguments about music being the activity required to provide an environment for an intersubjective dialogue consists in its advantage over language in being much less coded or having the possibility of being un-coded. In her words, this is due to musical sound that “arouses an elevation of energy which does not end in a definite configuration”, which is also why “listening allows a becoming that is more flowing than looking.”<sup>28</sup> This might be an explanation, or at least one of them, concerning the reasons that

“[...] music allows communication in an instant between people more easily. Of course, differences exist between the musical choices of diverse cultures but sharing them seems easier than going from the logic of one culture to that of another. We can listen to different music but not to different languages. To share a rhythm or a melody is easier and quicker than to share a linguistic universe. Above all music remains faithful to bodily and cosmic waves and vibrations, which are universal, even if they are not equally discovered or awakened in all humans. Language is coded in a more artificial manner; moving further from natural reality, it is less open to becoming familiar to all, men and women.”<sup>29</sup>

Remaining close to the universal vibrations of the living world, the sounds give density to a space – leaving it free, untaken. Not belonging

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<sup>26</sup> L. Irigaray, “Ethical Gestures Toward the Other”, in: Škof, L. (ed.): *Ethical Gestures. Poligrafi*, 15, 57, Nova revija, Ljubljana 2010, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> L. Irigaray 2004, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 135–136.

to anyone, this space offers itself for being inhabited from this same anyone. These sounds

“[...] open and re-open a space outside bodies, in bodies and between them. They lay out a place for a possible listening-to, for the respect and articulation of difference, differences, maintaining or restoring each one in their singularity – outside the subjection of the one to the other, but not without passages between the two. Through the tonalities proper to each one, thanks to their voices, the one and the other touch and intertwine.”<sup>30</sup>

### Contemplative Thoughts

Departing with a multiple wideness of fields, the ones of peace, music and ethics, it would be a real surprise to not have for a result a fragmented account of their interconnections. Allowing ourselves the often methodologically ungrateful, sporadic explorations of different grounds, we might discover some unpredicted connections between them. Probably nothing concrete has been established; nevertheless, it is still a well-founded starting point for further investigations.

“A new culture of ethical gestures and hospitality is needed, one closely related to the human body [...] The highest ethical demands of ourselves are [...] represented as a sign of an absolute hospitality, a place that can be secured first in ourselves for others – in ethical as well as also in political contexts. This indeed is a difficult task to achieve. Breath, silence and listening are three elements for an ethics of attentiveness and care, [and are the] necessary steps on a way towards achieving this goal.”<sup>31</sup>

Concluding with our conference chair's words, calling upon a new culture of ethical gestures and hospitality, we might say that the way or methodology to find the place for hospitality is not yet defined. This is why the establishing of wide interconnections among different aspects of cultures and lives might show itself as fruitful, but only with time and patience. Saying that we are in search for a new ethical path makes

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<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>31</sup> L. Škof, *Breath of Hospitality: Silence, Listening, Care*. Draft version of the conference paper for the conference *A Meaningful Life in a Just Society: Investigating Well-Being and Democratic Caring*, Utrecht 2014, p. 2.

us explorers of our minds, bodies, relations, communities and world. Attempting to find in music an interspace for learning the first step onto such a way might be somehow overreaching but... what is there to lose?

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# THE AUTOPOIESIS OF PEACE: EMBODIMENT, COMPASSION, AND THE SELFLESS SELF

Sebastjan Vörös

## Introduction

In the past two decades, the interdisciplinary field of cognitive science has been undergoing significant changes. What I have *in mind* here, however, is not the advent of imaging techniques that allow us to peer *into the brain* and all too often provide us with a steady influx of studies, baffling both on account of their empirical prolificity as well as their theoretical naivety; instead, the changes I refer to are much subtler – if arguably more far-reaching – than the more glittering – though not necessarily as illuminating – dimensions of the so-called “neuroscientific revolution.”<sup>1</sup> These important shifts have been triggered by recent attempts to radically rethink received views about consciousness, cognition and the mind-body relationship, and to provide an alternative paradigmatic framework for the study of the mind. Note that the two events – the neuroscientific revolution and the mentioned paradigmatic shift – are not distinct; on the contrary, the latter has had a profound impact on the former (and *vice versa*). Yet what separates it from many other approaches within cognitive (neuro)science is its insistence that, in order to be able to conduct plausible empirical research, a coherent picture of the mind is needed, one that actually addresses (instead of

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<sup>1</sup> Some readers might be surprised at what seems like an excessively critical, perhaps even dismissive, attitude towards neuroscience. But it should be noted that I am *not* critical of neuroscience *per se*, but of (i) speculative, and arguably exaggerated, claims about the novelty, radicality and scope of its impact on our understanding of ourselves and the world; and of (ii) the proliferation of research that tries to conceal its dubious methodological and theoretical underpinnings by alluding to the authority of “the empirical”. For a critical assessment of neuroscience see Choudhury & Slaby 2012; Satel & Lilienfeld 2013; Tallis 2012; Uttal 2001, 2011; Vörös & Markič 2014.

merely brushing aside) the convoluted epistemological and metaphysical issues that are bedeviling the field.

This alternative paradigmatic framework – variously described as the “experiential” (Froese 2011) and “pragmatic turn” (Engel *et al.* 2013) in cognitive science – has become known as the *embodied* or *enactive approach to the study of the mind*<sup>2</sup>. It has been influenced by several “bodies of knowledge” (Varela *et al.* 1991), most notably by system theory (especially the theory of autopoiesis), phenomenological philosophy (especially the philosophies of late Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger), and contemplative “wisdom traditions” (especially Buddhism), and could probably be characterised best as a “disenchantment with the abstract” and a “re-enchantment with the concrete” (Varela 1995): the embodied/enactive models reject “the purely computational, logical, views of mind”, replacing them with the “concrete, embodied, lived description[s]” of cognitive phenomena (Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 39).

The fundamental assumption of the *classical (cognitivist) approach* is that the structure of the human mind is akin to that of a computer: cognition (perceiving, thinking, etc.) is conceived as *data-processing* in that it involves manipulation of (brain-instantiated) symbols representing the features of the outside world. The mind, in this view, is a symbol-manipulating machine, whose role is to internally portray (represent) external reality. The embodiment/enactive approach conceives of cognition in radically different terms: as *extended*, i.e., “cognitive states and processes can extend beyond the boundaries of the cognising organism,” *embedded*, i.e., dependent on “facts about our relationship to the surrounding environment,” *embodied*, i.e., dependent on “facts about our embodiment,” *enactive*, i.e., “dependent on aspects of the activity of the cognising organism,” and *affective*, i.e., “dependent on the value of the object of cognition to the cogniser” (Ward & Stapleton 2012: 89). The mind, according to the embodied/enactive approach (sometimes

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<sup>2</sup> The embodied/enactivist cognitive science is not a uniform field, but encompasses a diverse range of heterogeneous approaches (for a more in-depth analysis see: Fingerhut, Hufendiek & Wild 2013: 7–102; Kiverstein 2012). A comprehensive overview would greatly transcend the scope of this paper, so in what follows we will (for simplicity’s sake) refer to it as a unified position, disregarding important differences between individual approaches.

also referred to as the *4EA* approach), is *not* to be found “in the head”, but must be sought in the “brain-body-world divisions” (Thompson & Varela 2001). Further, since it is not limited to the confines of the cranium, but is situated in the body *as a whole*, it is believed that there is a “deep continuity between life and mind”:

According to this thesis, life and mind share a set of basic organisational properties, and the organisational properties distinctive of mind are enriched version of those fundamental to life. Mind is life-like and life is mind-like. (Thompson 2007: 128)

However, to get to these “basic organisational properties” of mind and life, the third-person methods of experimental science must be complemented with disciplined first-person methods of investigating subjective experience: the proper study of the “bio-physics of being” requires an ongoing *back-and-forth circulation* between science and lived experience (Varela *et al.* 1991).

The aim of this paper is to outline some of the basic features of this far-ranging shift in the understanding of life, mind and cognition, and to indicate how the overall framework on which it is based relates to the possibility of en-acting peaceful and compassionate coexistence. The paper consists of three parts. First, we examine the so-called autopoietic theory of life, as proposed by Maturana and Varela. If it is, indeed, true that mind and life share a common structure, then it is important, prior to delving into the realm of human cognition, to familiarise ourselves with the fundamentals of so-called bio-logic (the logic of living systems). Second, having elucidated a general anatomy of life, we try to delineate how the dialectical principles of bio-logic translate to the dialectical principles of neuro-logic and determine the fundamental nature of human beings as embodied organisms embedded in their environment. Third, drawing on the idea of the co-determination of the self and the world, which lies at the centre of the autopoietic theory of life, we go on to argue that the dialectical structure of life and mind manifests itself in a pre-reflective empathic openness towards the other and is thus not merely a theoretical postulate but an experiential (realisable) actuality that can be cultivated with various meditative/contemplative and therapeutic practices. This, as it turns out, is of utmost importance for the possibility of a sustained (*auto*)*poiesis of peace*, for it is only when

I actually *live (en-act)* – and not merely *think* – the co-determination (non-distinction) between my-self and the other that peaceful coexistence (genuine *inter-being*) can arise and propagate.

### Life: Bio-Logic, Autopoiesis, and the Double Dialectic

Let us start this discussion by delineating the biological roots of being. In their pioneering work on autopoiesis, Maturana and Varela set out to tackle what is arguably the central question of biology, namely “What is life?”<sup>3</sup> However, unlike most approaches that try to elucidate the phenomenon of life by providing a list of its characteristic features, Maturana and Varela take a radically different route:

Throughout history many criteria [of what constitutes life] have been proposed. They all have drawbacks. For instance, some have proposed as a criterion chemical composition, or the capacity to move, or reproduction, or even some combination of those criteria, that is, a list of properties. But how do we know when the list is complete? [...] We wish to give an answer to this question in a way that is radically different [...] To understand this change in perspective, we have to be aware that merely asking the question of how to recognise living being indicates that we have an idea, even if implicitly, of its *organisation*. (Maturana & Varela 1987: 42)

In other words, life is not so much a matter of chemical composition, reproduction and so on, as it is a *matter of organisation*. But what kind of organisation? What is it about the organisation of living (animate) beings, such as bacteria, plants and animals that distinguishes it from the organisation of non-living (inanimate) beings, such as rocks, crystals and minerals? According to Maturana and Varela, that which characterises living beings is their ability *to continually self-produce (ibid.: 43)*. An *autopoietic (self-producing) system is a self-organising*

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<sup>3</sup> Thomson contrasts the question: “What is life?” to the question: “What is living?” The first question, he claims, “treats life as an *object*”, while the second question treats it “as a *process*” and thus avoids the “objectifying attitude” that is commonly associated with the former (Thompson 2011: 114). Although I agree that there is an important conceptual distinction at work here, I have opted for a middle way: I intend to continue using the first question, as it is more in tune with the original writings of Varela and Maturana, but would like to emphasise that it is to be construed not in static, but in explicitly dynamic terms.

system defined by a double dialectic<sup>4</sup>: *dialectic of identity* (parts-whole) and *dialectic of sense-making* (interiority-exteriority) (Varela 1991). Let's look at each in turn.

First and foremost, an autopoietic system is “organised as a self-producing network of processes that also constitute the system as a topological unity” (Thompson 2011: 115). Take, for instance, the basic unit of life: a living cell. On the one hand, *cell metabolism* produces molecular components that constitute a network of dynamic interactions, some of which are responsible for the production of a semi-permeable *cell membrane*. On the other hand, the cell membrane houses these molecular components, thereby reciprocally enabling the proper functioning of cell metabolism and preventing structured chemical interactions from disintegrating into a “molecular mess” (Maturana & Varela 1987: 46). What is crucial here is that the dynamic network of molecular interactions and the boundary housing them are actually *parts of the same process*: metabolism creates the membrane, which in turn (reciprocally) enables and co-constitutes metabolism (see Figure 1).

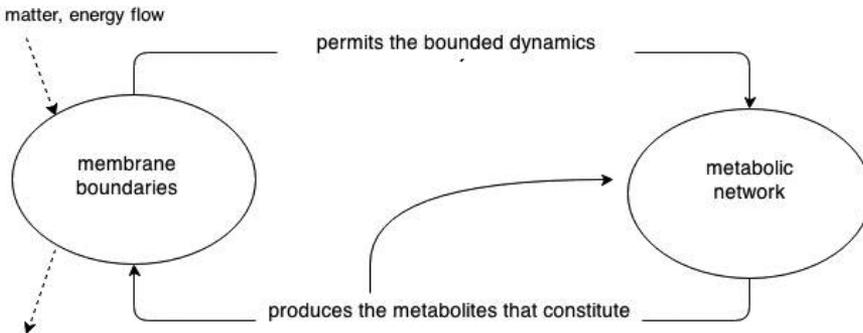


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the autopoietic closure of the living cell (cf. Varela 1997: 75).

<sup>4</sup> The term “dialectic” is to be understood here in the sense given it by Levins and Lewontin in their book *The Dialectical Biologist*: “These are the properties of things we call dialectical: that one thing cannot exist without the other, that one acquires its properties from relation to the other, that the properties of both evolve as a consequence of their interpenetration” (Levins & Lewontin 1985: 3).

The first dimension of autopoiesis can thus be construed as a biological dialectic between *parts* and *the whole*, between *local* interaction rules pertaining to the individual components and *global* properties of the emergent whole: on the one hand, the network of molecular interactions constitutes a distinct, discrete unit (cell); on the other hand, the emergent unit combines structural constituents (molecular components) into a dynamic network of interactions (*cf.* Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 31–32):

Metabolic processes within the cell determine these boundaries [e.g. the cell membrane], but the metabolic processes themselves are made possible by those very boundaries. In this way a cell emerges as a figure out of a chemical background. (Thompson 2007: 99)<sup>5</sup>

Autopoietic self-organisation constitutes living beings as *autonomous units*, i.e. it enables them to “to specify [their] own laws, what is proper to [them]” (Maturana & Varela 1987: 46). This “circular, closed, self-referential characteristic” of autopoietic systems is known as *organisational* or *operational closure* (Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 33) and refers to the fact that all changes occurring in an autopoietic unit are determined by their internal dynamics and not by external factors: “[E]very constituent process is conditioned by some other process in the system” (Thompson & Stapleton 2008: 24). Note, however, that “closure” is not the same as “closedness” or “isolation”: as autonomous organisations, autopoietic systems are *operationally closed*, but *thermodynamically open*. In other words, an autopoietic system is involved in an on-going exchange of matter and energy with its environment, while at the same time maintaining its identity by regulating the network of its self-constituting processes.

The *dialectic of identity* can thus be understood as an *on-going circular process*, in which “a cell produces its own components, which in turn produce it” (Thompson 2007: 98). It defines autopoietic sy-

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<sup>5</sup> A more precise definition is provided by Varela: “An autopoietic system is organised (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (synthesis and deconstruction) of components such that these components: (i) continuously regenerate and realise the network that produces them, and (ii) constitute the system as a distinguishable unity in the domain in which they exist” (Varela 1991: 81).

stems as: (i) *autonomous* (all changes that happen in the system serve to preserve its self-organisation); (ii) *individualised* (by preserving its self-organisation, the system actively preserves its identity); (iii) *units* (the self-constituting processes of the system define the system's boundary); and (iv) *operationally closed* (external perturbations can trigger, but cannot determine, internal structural changes) (cf. Možina & Kordeš 1998: 226).

Let us now move on to the dialectic of sense-making. The first dialectic, as we have seen, deals with the relationship between an organism and its components; the second dialectic, however, deals with the relationship between autopoietic systems and their environment. As Varela points out, what immediately strikes the eye is that autopoietic units are characterised by an intriguing paradoxicality:

[T]he living system must distinguish itself from its environment [operational closure], while *at the same time* maintaining its coupling [thermodynamic openness]; [however,] this linkage cannot be detached, since it is against this very environment from which the organism arises, comes forth. (Varela 1994: 7)

By constituting itself as a unit, the autopoietic system engenders its *interiority* and, at the same stroke, delineates its *exteriority*, i.e. that which counts as *the other* and thus remains *outside* of it. But this newly constituted alterity is not neutral: the maintenance and regulation of autopoietic organisation requires a structural coupling between the inside and the outside, which means that, for an organism, some interactions – those pertinent for preserving its structural coherence – are more important than others. Preservation of identity thus brings forth a *certain perspective*, an *environment-for-the-organism* (“environment for the system” in Varelian terminology) as distinct from the *environment-for-the-observer* (“environment of the system” in Varelian terminology). By distinguishing itself from, and constituting itself against, its “surroundings”, the autopoietic system simultaneously gives rise to its world<sup>6</sup> or niche (Uexküll's *Umwelt*, 1956). Unlike the physicoche-

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<sup>6</sup> The reader should note an important difference in terminology between Varela and Thompson: the former uses the terms “environment” and “world” to denote the “environment-for-the-observer” and the “environment-for-the-organism”, respectively, while the latter uses

mical environment (environment-for-the-observer), the world (environment-for-the-organism) is “a place of salience, meaning and value”, a place “of attraction and repulsion, of approach and escape” (Thompson 2004: 386; Thompson & Stapleton 2008: 25). To illustrate this, consider the example of motile bacteria swimming uphill in a food gradient:

The cells tumble about until they hit upon an orientation that increases their exposure to sugar, at which point they swim forward, up-gradient and towards the zone of greatest sugar concentration. Sugar is significant to these organisms and more of it is better than less because of the way their metabolism chemically realises their autonomous organisation. *The significance and valence of sugar are not intrinsic to sugar molecules; they are relational features, tied to the bacteria as autonomous unities.* Sugar has significance as food, but only in the milieu that the organism itself enacts through its autonomous dynamics. (Thompson & Stapleton 2008: 24–25; emphasis added)

Bacterial chemotaxis is a minimal but highly illustrative example of how a living being as an autonomous system gives rise to its own niche, its “environment of biological significance” (Thompson 2007: 153). Sugar, *in itself*, is devoid of meaning; its “surplus of significance” (Varela 1991) – its valence – is inextricably linked to the unique perspective of an individual organism. In other words, sugar can be perceived as a *nutrient* merely from the perspective of a bacterium as an autopoietic unit:

Physical and chemical phenomena, in and of themselves, have no particular significance or meaning; they are not “for” anyone. Living beings shape the [environment] into meaningful domains of interaction and thereby bring forth their own [worlds] of significance and valence. (Thompson 2007: 153–154)

According to the theory of autopoiesis, it is precisely this *sense-making*, this bringing forth of a world, that constitutes the essence of *cognition*. On this view, cognition construed as the act of sense-making

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the two terms in the exact opposite sense, i.e. as referring to “environment-for-the-organism” and the “environment-for-the-observer”, respectively. One of the main reasons for this “semantic inversion” was Thompson’s intention to better align the English with the German terminology of (particularly) the phenomenological tradition (the more accurate translation of *Umwelt*, an environment-for-the-organism, would be “environment” or “niche”, and not “world”, as originally proposed by Varela). The article, as the reader has undoubtedly noticed, follows the Varelian version in an attempt to stay closer to the original literature on autopoiesis.

is not a specifically human, but rather a universal biological quality: it is common to all living beings, from the simplest bacteria to the most complex vertebrates, and consists of a two-sided process in which a living being as an autonomous system brings forth itself and its world. Maturana and Varela claim that there is a strong *continuum* between life and cognition, an idea that is succinctly captured in a celebrated maxim: *to live is to know* (Maturana & Varela 1987: 174). Cognition is not limited exclusively to creatures with a central nervous system, but is incorporated into the very fabric of life (it is an integral part of its bio-logic); furthermore, it is not limited to the system's internal states, but is a relational process that takes place between the system and its world.

In short, the *dialectic of sense-making* could be characterised as the “dynamic co-emergence of interiority and exteriority” (Thompson 2007: 79): by establishing itself as an autonomous unity, an autopoietic system simultaneously gives rise to its world, i.e. its domain of meaning, significance and value. Note that sense-making is not to be construed as homeo-*stasis* but rather as homeo-*dynamis*: in order to preserve its autopoietic structure, an organism must endlessly enact structural alterations, i.e., it must engage in an on-going *dynamis*; any cessation of activity, any *stasis*, leads to disintegration and death. The autopoietic system is forced to constantly re-assert its individuality through meaningful couplings with its environment: *preserving* the structural coherence between the inside and the outside is thus, strictly speaking, always a matter of *re*-establishing it, of *re*-creating it, instead of simply maintaining it.

To recapitulate: A living being as an autopoietic system can be construed as an embodiment of a double dialectic:

- (a) *dialectic of identity* (parts-whole): dialectic between *local conditions* (network of metabolic interactions) and the *global autonomous entity* (cell as a membrane-bound unit);
- (b) *dialectic of sense-making* (interiority-exteriority): dialectic between the *emergent (minimal) self* and *its world* (the domain of valence and meaning).

Note that these are not two separate processes, but two aspects of the same process. A global autonomous entity, constituted against the

background of a network of metabolic interactions (operational closure), brings forth a world (surplus of significance); this world, in turn, delineates meaningful domains of interaction that are crucial for the undisturbed functioning of the metabolic network, and thus provides conditions facilitating the perpetual (dynamic) reassertion of the organism's autonomy (thermodynamic openness). The process itself is profoundly paradoxical: bringing forth a world is an attempt at re-establishing appropriate coupling with the environment so as to preserve the organism's autonomy; but in re-asserting itself as an autonomous unit the organism separates itself from the environment, thus giving rise to its distinct world (Varela 1991: 87).

The driving force of the double dynamics could thus be characterised as one of a "permanent *lack*"; a living being, in re-asserting itself as an autonomous entity, constantly gives rise to

a signification of what is *missing*, not pre-given or pre-existent. [...] The source of this world-making is always the "breakdown" in autopoiesis, whether minor, like [a] change in concentration of some metabolite, or major, like [a] disruption of the boundary. Due to the nature of autopoiesis itself [...] every breakdown can be seen as the initiation of an action on what is missing on the part of the system so that identity might be maintained. (Varela 1991: 86–87)

This rudimentary bio-logic can be systematically summarised as follows (points (1)–(2) relate to the dialectic of identity, whereas points (3)–(5) relate to the dialectic of sense-making):

- (1) *Life = autopoiesis*. Any living system is an autopoietic system.
- (2) *Autopoiesis entails the emergence of a bodily self*. A physical autopoietic system, by virtue of its operational closure (autonomy), produces and realises an individual or self in the form of a living body, an organism.
- (3) *The emergence of a self entails the emergence of a world*. The emergence of a self is also by necessity the co-emergence of a domain of interactions peculiar to that self, the organism's world or domain of significance.
- (4) *Emergence of a self and world = sense-making*. The organism's world is tantamount to the sense it makes of the environment. This world

is a place of significance and valence as a result of the global action of the organism.

- (5) *Sense-making = enaction*. Sense-making is viable conduct. Such conduct is oriented toward, and subject to, the environment's significance and valence. Significance and valence do not pre-exist "out there", but are enacted, brought forth, and constituted by a living being. Living entails sense-making, which equals enaction. (adapted after Thompson 2007: 158)

### Mind: Neuro-Logic, Embodiment, and the Selfless Self

As mentioned above, the basic structure of life, situated at the crossroads of the two dialectics, is said to lie at the heart of not only *uni*-cellular, but also *multicellular* organisms. Here, we will not concern ourselves with the progressive development of organisms of ever greater complexity (see Maturana & Varela 1987: chapters 3–5), but will move directly on to human beings. A human being is an *autonomous system* – however, it is *not* an autopoietic system, as autopoiesis is restricted exclusively to the cellular level<sup>7</sup> – which means that it consists of processes giving rise to its unity and simultaneously (co)creating its world. In the case of human beings, the overall picture is much more complex, because human beings consist of numerous mutually embedded (semi) autonomous subsystems in interaction and exhibiting a certain autonomy (operational closure) relative to other subsystems (this is especially true of the immune, hormonal and nervous systems). This complex, multi-layered organisation is "intrinsically fragile" and operates "at the edge of chaos" (Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 38); but in this multitude of mutually embedded subsystems one subsystem plays an especially prominent role in preserving their coherence – the *nervous system*.

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<sup>7</sup> As we will see shortly, the main difference between autopoiesis and autonomy *in the context of this paper* (for a different and more elaborate account of the topic see: Thompson 2007: chap. 5–6; Thompson & Stapleton 2008: 23–24) can be summarised as follows: autopoietic entities are *spatially bound* entities, which means that they emerge in the presence of a physical boundary, whereas autonomous entities are *behavioural* entities, which means that they emerge in the presence of a coherent (unified) behavioural pattern.

The development of the nervous system in multicellular organisms is related to *motion*; its main role is that of linking *effectors* (motor surfaces, e.g. muscles, secretion) and *effectors* (sensory surfaces, e.g. sense organs, nerve endings): “The fundamental logic of the nervous system is that of coupling *movements* with a stream of *sensory modulations* in a *circular fashion*” (Varela 1991: 89; my emphases). These *sensorimotor loops* – perception-action coherences – are, in turn, accompanied by large *sets (ensembles) of transiently correlated neurons* in interneuronal networks, which function as both the *source* and the *result* of the activity of effectors and effectors: “The neuronal dynamics underlying a perceptuo-motor task is, then, a network affair, a highly cooperative, two-way system, and not a sequential stage-to-stage information abstraction” (*ibid.*: 92). On this view, and in contradistinction to the view of traditional cognitive science, the functioning of the nervous system is not analogous to that of a digital computer, whose main mode of operation is linear and algorithmic, but is characterised by “a promiscuous tinkering of networks and sub-networks giving no evidence for a structured decomposition from top to bottom” (*ibid.*: 95).

The behaviour of such a complex system provides us with enough evidence to conceive of it in terms of *operational closure* and *autonomy* (again, “closure” here denotes recursive self-reference and not “closedness” in the sense of interactional isolation). As such, it can be – in line with our previous reflections on the bio-logic of life – situated in the matrix of the twofold dialectic. First, there is the *dialectic of identity*: the nervous system consists of an operatively closed network of reciprocally connected subnetworks that give rise to neuronal ensembles of coherent functioning; these ensembles, in turn, (i) mediate sensorimotor correlations between effectors and effectors and (ii) bring forth coherent behavioural patterns which constitute the organism as a unit:

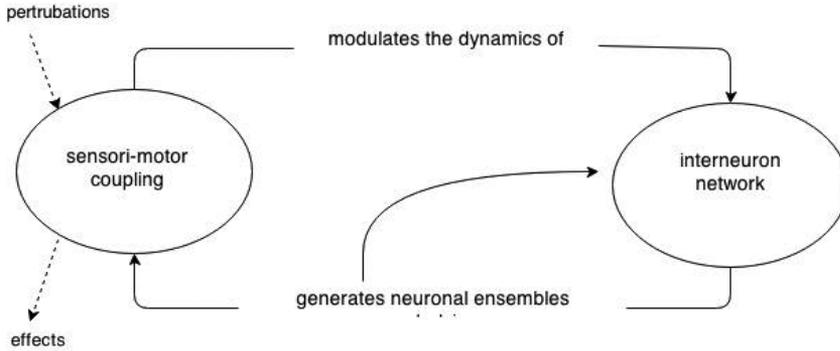


Figure 2: Schematic representation of the sensori-motor closure of the nervous system (*cf.* Varela 1997: 82).

As we can see, *neuro*-logic closely follows *bio*-logic. In both, there is a circular (recursive) interconnectedness between local parts and a global unit: on the *biological* level, a distributed *metabolic* process brings forth the “biological self”, while, on the *neurological* level, a distributed *neuronal* process brings forth the “cognitive self”. The main difference between the two is that, in the case of the biological self, the emergent unit depends on the presence of a physical boundary (cell membrane), whereas in the case of cognitive self, the emergent unity depends on the presence of a coherent behavioural pattern (perception-action coherences): the biological self is a *spatially bound* entity, while the cognitive self is a *behavioural* entity (Varela 1997: 83).

Second, there is *the dialectic of sense-making*: just as the emergence of the biological self brings forth an *environment-for-the-biological-self*, so too does the emergence of the cognitive self bring forth an *environment-for-the-cognitive-self*. Sensorimotor coherence as a means for maintaining structural coupling gives rise to a *unique perspective* and thus to a *surplus of meaning*.

[T]he nature of the environment for a cognitive self acquires a curious status: it is that which lends itself to a surplus of significance. Like jazz improvisation, environment provides the “excuse” for the neural “music” from the perspective of the cognitive system involved. (*ibid.*: 84)

Again, this surplus of meaning – the (co)emergence of the self and its world – might be said to arise from a *permanent lack*, i.e. from an incessant attempt to compensate for *breakdowns* in coherent behavioural patterns. As we have seen earlier, cognition is aimed at *what is missing*: it is a mode of behaviour that “fills-in” the structural gap between the organism and its world.

Note, however, that the nervous system is *not* to be equated with the human organism *as a whole*: although it plays a very important – perhaps even crucial – role in establishing its individuality and autonomy, it is still only *one among the many* subsystems that participate in the overall process. Sensorimotor coherence is not limited to the nervous system, but includes *the whole body* with its multifarious and mutually embedded components (sense organs, muscles, bones, immune and hormone systems, etc.). The operational closure of the nervous system can thus be said to *contribute* to the operative closure of the embodied system, but it *does not exhaust* it. The autonomy of the human organism – its perspectivity, its world – is based on the operative closure of the body, construed as a colourful *bricolage* of (semi)autonomous subsystems in interaction. In other words, the structural coupling between the human being and its environment is a function of its *situatedness*, its *embodied being-in-the-world*. Because of the dynamic and variegated nature of human embodiment, its operative closure is said to consist of numerous on-going *cycles of operation*: a multi-level motley of “individual concrete operations taking place during integrated sequences of behaviour” (Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 40). Cycles of operation include, notably, but not exclusively: (a) cycles of organismic regulation of the entire body; (b) cycles of sensorimotor coupling between organism and environment; and (c) intersubjective interaction (Thompson & Varela 2001: 424).

“The drama of the ‘cycles of operation’” takes place “within a very particular *field of constraints*, that of the entire organism and its surroundings” (Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 40), and it constitutes what to an outside observer looks like a set of coherent behavioural patterns. Through these patterns, a human being constitutes itself as a situated (embodied) being, thereby giving rise to its world (field of meaning). On this view, cognition is not to be construed as some abstract (disembodied, non-

-situated) entity, but rather as a *concrete (embodied, situated)* process: it consists of the active (re)establishment(s) of structural coupling(s) in the domain(s) that are of relevance to an individual organism (Varela 1995: 13). Or, to elaborate on a maxim mentioned above: cognition is *embodied* action (Varela *et al.* 1991: 172). This action is always oriented towards that which is *missing*, towards a *lack* or a *gap* (the “surplus of significance”) that needs to be bridged so as to preserve structural coupling. Cognition always takes place *against the horizon of meaning*, in the cosmos of the multifarious worlds engendered by the twofold dialectics.

Thus, according to Varela, a human being consists of a meshwork of “regional selves”, all of which have “some mode of self-constitution”, but which together, “in their overall assemblage”, form a coherent unit. He distinguishes five such regions of selfhood (though arguably there could be more): (1) a *minimal or cellular self*; (2) a *bodily self* associated with the immune system; (3) a *cognitive self* associated with the sensorimotor coherences; (4) a *socio-linguistic “I”* of subjectivity; and (5) the *collective multi-individual totality* (Varela 1991: 80). All these regional selves interconnect and intertwine in different ways, and although they differ in their specificity, they share a common logic: the circular dialectic of identity and sense-making (*ibid.*: 102). What is crucial here, however, is that these regions of selfhood are devoid of any substantiality, for although they serve as a mode of identity, they are, in the ultimate analysis, “virtual points with no localised coordinates” (*ibid.*: 79). This is what Varela had in mind when he spoke of a “selfless” or “virtual” self: “[A] coherent global pattern that emerges through simple local components, appearing to have a central location where none is to be found, and yet essential as a level of interaction for the behaviour of the whole unity” (*ibid.*: 95). What we call the “human mind” is thus a global emergent unity delineated against a meshwork of multifarious selfless selves, a “pattern in flux”, dependent on different levels of dialectical constitution (Varela in Rudrauf *et al.* 2003: 43). All attempts to reduce the mind to specific brain functions are therefore bound to fail: the mind is not in the head, but manifests itself in the “non-place of the co-determination of inner and outer”, it “neither exists nor does it not exist”, and “it does not physically or functionally reside anywhere”

(Varela in *ibid.*: 42). This, however, is not to be read as a plea for dualism, because the mind is not some ethereal substance haunting the human brain, but is firmly entrenched in the on-going dynamics between brain, body and world. In effect, what Varela is trying to do is to avoid all such dichotomies and pave the way to a conceptual *and* experiential middle ground between all metaphysical extremes (physicalism-dualism, realism-constructivism, etc.) (*cf.* Bitbol 2012).

### Peace: Non-Dualism, Empathy and Compassionate Interbeing

Thus, according to the embodied/enactive approach, the bio-physics of being in its entirety (from the organismic to the societal level) is pervaded by the double dialectics of identity and sense-making. Two points merit special emphasis in this regard. First, we note that on this view the edifice of being is erected on the *groundless ground*, on the *on-going, circular “betwixt”* between interiority and exteriority, self and world. Any attempts to *reify* or *substantialise* the double dialectic would miss the point completely, since it refuses to lend itself to either monist or dualist interpretation; instead, it should be understood as a dynamic, Janus-faced process that is *explicitly non-dualist*: “Not one, not two” (Varela 1976). Second, it was pointed out that the human mind, anchored in this non-dualist dialectical betwixt, emerges as a “pattern in flux” against the dynamic interrelations between the self and the world. Now, given that a significant portion of this world (the-environment-for-the-human-being) consists of other human beings, it follows that the human mind is *inherently intersubjective* (Thompson 2001). In other words, instead of the classical image of the mind as an encapsulated “solipsist ghost” (the so-called “brain in the vat”), enactivism sees the mind as inherently *open towards*, and *co-constituted by*, other minds. However, this co-determination of the self and the other is not a mere theoretical postulate, but manifests itself in our everyday lives as a pre-reflective empathic (self-)openness towards the other.

*Empathy* can be broadly defined as “the basic ability to comprehend another individual’s experience, a capacity that underlies all the particular feelings and emotions one can have for another” (Thompson 2011: 263). However, it is not a unified phenomenon, but encompasses

several distinct subcategories. According to the phenomenological tradition, we can distinguish at least 4 different types of empathy:

- (1) the passive/involuntary (pre-reflective) coupling or pairing of my lived body with the body of the other in perception and action;
- (2) the imaginary transposal (movement) of myself to the place of the other;
- (3) the interpretation or understanding of myself as the other for you;
- (4) ethical and moral responsibility in face of the other (Depraz 2001).

Note that, unlike types (2)-(4), which pertain to *reflective* cognitive acts, type (1) takes place at a *pre-reflective* level (i.e., it is passive, involuntary and bodily), and serves as the basis for the other three types:

When we see another person, we do not perceive his or her body as a mere physical thing, but rather as a lived body like our own. Thus empathy is not simply the grasping of another person's particular experiences (sadness, joy, and so on), but on a more fundamental level the experience of another as an embodied subject of experience like oneself. (Thompson 2001: 17).

Empathy, at its existential roots, is therefore not a secondary or derivative (reflective), but an integral and constitutive (embodied) element of a human being, i.e. "human experience depends formatively and constitutively on the dynamic coupling of self and other in empathy" (Thompson 2011: 263). Further, it underlies all the higher-order moral sentiments and emotions, such as sympathy and compassion, and is therefore a *sine qua non* for "concern and respect for others and persons in the moral sense – as ends-in-themselves" (*ibid.*: 269). All rationally-based moral principles tacitly presuppose a fundamental empathic openness towards the other, for otherwise they would be left without the existential *Urgrund* that accounts for why morally engaged action is supposed to be compelling in the first place.

Empathy as the *existential cohesive tissue* situated in the double dialectic can thus be said to form an experiential basis for what Thompson, following the Vietnamese Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hahn, calls *interbeing*: a peaceful, unitary and compassionate coexistence (Thompson 2001: 23). Of special importance in this regard is *compassion*, which has been termed by Thompson "the heart of interbeing" and "the

superlative expression of the human capacity of empathy” (*ibid.*: 27). Compassion is the radical instantiation of the non-dualist dialectic; it is the enactment of the selflessness of the self, where all distinctions between my-self and the other are obliterated. This unitive experience – the experiential realisation of existential groundlessness – is the well-spring of (en-)lived inter-being and the true abode of the (auto)poiesis of peace. It is only when I not only *think*, but also *live* the non-duality between myself and the other, that peaceful coexistence can truly arise and perpetuate itself. As such, compassion stands in direct opposition to the self-centredness that is prevalent in contemporary culture – note how even “altruism” is defined “in terms of an individual obtaining (psychological) utility from benefiting another” (Varela *et al.*: 246) – , and manifests itself as an attentive, mindful repose in non-duality, a purposeless and aimless responsiveness to the needs of the present situation (*ibid.*: 249–250).

But what, if any, implications does all this have for our everyday lives? We started out by saying that one of the most prominent features of the embodied/enactive approach was the “re-enchantment with the concrete”, yet we have ended up with such seemingly abstract and abstruse notions as “selfless self” and “groundless ground”. Where, the inquisitive reader might ask, is the “concrete” in the “non-dualist betwixt”? Does any of this have a pragmatic value or is it merely a reverie concocted by the overexcited spirit of speculation? The main problem, it seems, is that even if we embrace the proposed reconceptualisation of life, self, etc., our natural everyday attitude is likely to continue as if (almost) nothing had changed: we are still likely to conceive of our-selves as discrete, substantialised unities distinct from the (inanimate) world and other discrete (animate) selves (*cf.* Varela 1991: 101). But if we are truly interested in how selflessness and groundlessness may contribute to the enactment of interbeing and peace, then clearly what we are aiming at is not so much *theoria*, but *praxis*? After all, it is not the *noiesis* but *poiesis* of peace that we are after.

It will be remembered that at the core of the embodied/enactive approach lies an emphasis on a deep and on-going *circularity* between science and lived experience. On this view, theoretical reconceptualisation is but one (albeit a very significant) element in the overall trans-

formation of our approach to the human mind: it remains – regardless of how profound it might be – limited to conceptual reasoning and, as such, restricted to inquiry *about* experience, but not *in* and *through* experience (Bitbol 2012: 169). Thus, if we truly want to break out of our deeply entrenched ways of thinking about mind and nature, the transformation of (practical) *being* is no less important than the transformation of (theoretical) *seeing* (Varela 1976: 67). In words of Evan Thompson:

It's one thing to have a scientific representation of the mind as "enactive" – as embodied, emergent, and relational; as not homuncular and skull-bound; and thus in a certain sense insubstantial. But it's another thing to have a corresponding direct experience of this nature of the mind in one's own first-person case. (Thompson 2004: 382)

In search of pragmatic tools for the enactment of such profound existential and experiential transformations, the proponents of the embodied/enactive paradigm turned to various "wisdom" or "contemplative" traditions, particularly Buddhism (Varela *et al.* 1991). In the closing paragraphs, I would like to briefly sketch why Buddhist meditative practice, as well as some other existentially oriented approaches, might be of importance for the cultivation of a lived (auto)poiesis of peace.

The central tenets of Buddhist philosophy – emptiness (*sunyata*), selflessness or not-self (*anatman*), etc. – are not mere concepts, but are said to be realisable (experiential) actualities. They are understood as descriptive or evocative of our primary (original) mode of being, which is characterised by non-duality (living in and through the non-distinction between ourselves and others), and is constitutive of our everyday (derivative) dualist mode of existence. Buddhist traditions have thus developed rigorous pragmatic tools (see e.g. Wallace 1999, 2001) that concentrate on, and engage with, the subject-object barrier: they do so either *directly* – i.e. by gradually deconstructing the sense of a (separate/discrete) self (e.g. the practices of *samatha* and *vipasyana*) – or *indirectly* – i.e. by cultivating loving-kindness and compassion towards all sentient beings (e.g. the practice of *maitri*). The two approaches might seem different; however, in actuality, they are closely related. In fact, in the Buddhist tradition, they are said to be as inseparable as the two wings of a bird: just as a bird needs both wings to fly, so too must the genuine

realisation of selflessness be accompanied by the realisation of boundless compassion, and *vice versa*. In other words, “compassion without wisdom is bondage, and wisdom without compassion is just another form of bondage” (Wallace 2001: 213). Someone who has realised the emptiness of things (*sunyata*), i.e. who has directly experienced that things have no independent existence, but emerge in mutual co-determination, will be permeated with boundless compassion (*karuna*); and someone who has realised boundless compassion (*karuna*) towards all sentient beings, will grasp the emptiness of all things (*sunyata*). Again, the crucial thing here is that these are not abstract notions, but concrete, realisable actualities that can be experienced and cultivated.

Note, however, that these characteristics are not necessarily limited to Buddhism, but can be found, to a greater or lesser degree, in most mystical traditions (*cf.* Donaldson 1991; Vörös 2013 a, b), as well as in some psychotherapeutic approaches that emphasise self-transcendence and profound existential transformations (especially in humanistic/existential and transpersonal psychology). There are, of course, great differences both within and between these traditions; however, what they all seem to have in common is the emphasis on developing practical means to deconstruct the ordinary (dualist) mode of being and enact the (non-dualist) dialectic between self and other. The chasm of the groundless ground – of the dialectical betwixt – that opens up in such practices can be terrifying at first, but is ultimately comprehended as the existential wellspring of boundless compassion and limitless peace. When there are no more boundaries between myself and the other – when I am the other and the other is me – there can be no animosity, hatred or anxiety between us. This is the crux of St. Augustine’s famous saying: *Ama, et fac quod vis* (Love, and do what you will). Love – understood in terms of the Christian selfless love (*agape*), analogous to Buddhist compassion (*karuna*) – is the cohesive force of interbeing, the (groundless) ground of genuine peace and co-existence. It is only through non-duality and compassion that peace can generate and re-generate itself; it is only in the ever-elusive betweenness that it can become fully embodied and intertwined with the very fabric of our being. In other words, it is only when we have fully realised the autopoiesis of life – the bio-logic of the

double dialectic – that the autopoiesis of peace will be able to shine forth – freely and abundantly.

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PAX MYSTICA:  
MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF  
PEACE AND THEIR APPLICATION  
IN CONTEMPORARY  
INTERCULTURAL DISCOURSE

A l e n Š i r c a

Less than 50 years ago, a new field emerged within social sciences, called peace and conflict studies. A variant of this field, termed peace studies or irenology, consists of interdisciplinary research that deals with peace – or, better, with a wide range of pacifistic phenomena within the framework of many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, gender studies, religion studies, etc. However, one is tempted to suspect that irenology (also named paxology, though rarely)<sup>1</sup> as a science of peace is possible only against the background of a more fundamental science, that of war, called polemology.

Within the scope of this kind of research a number of questions can be raised. For example: What is peace? Are there multiple modes of peace? Etc. However, my contribution will deal mainly with non-dualistic, advaitic relations of inner and outer peace, which can be found in all the world's major religions, as well as with an examination of how spiritual practices function as a foundation for peace-making. In conclusion, I will attempt to highlight the importance of a non-conceptual notion of peace. Necessarily, this irenological discourse will be tinged with methodologies and terminology drawn from religious studies.

Notion of peace in Christian mysticism

I begin with a brief examination of three testimonies of mystical notion of peace that belong to medieval Christian mysticism. More

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, J. G. Starke, *An Introduction to the Science of Peace (Irenology)*, Sijthoff, Leyden, 1968.

precisely, to Rhineland and Flemish mysticism (that is, the speculative mystical strand that emerged in late medieval Germany and Low Countries).

In contemporary studies of Western mysticism, Meister Eckhart is often acclaimed to be the Christian mystic *par excellence*. As Bernard McGinn puts it: "Perhaps no mystic in the history of Christianity has been more influential and more controversial than the Dominican Meister Eckhart."<sup>2</sup> Surely, Eckhart is the father of new mysticism which had brought a vast democratisation of spirituality in the West, and it may be helpful to look at how Eckhart thematises the notion of mystical peace.

In his sermon number seven, peace is allied with God:

"Our Lord said: In me alone you have peace. So far into God, so far into peace [*als verre in got, als verre in vride*]. If anything of a man is in God, that has peace; whatever of him is outside of God has no peace. St. John says, "Whatever is born of God shall overcome the world" (1 John 5: 4). What is born of God seeks peace and runs into it. Therefore he said, "Vade in pace - run into peace." The man who is running, in a continual run, into peace, is a heavenly man. Heaven runs round constantly, and in its course seeks peace."<sup>3</sup>

Eckhart speaks in a similar fashion in another sermon: "Because as far as you are at peace, so far you are in God, and as far as you are out of peace you are out of God."<sup>4</sup>

For Eckhart, the essentially Neo-Platonic structure of *exitus de labore ad quietum* ("emanation from labour to quietude") consists in an ontological passing from becoming to being. In his sermon *Vidi civitatem sanctam jerusalem descendentem de caelo* etc. (sermon 57 in *Deutsche Werke*), Eckhart quotes from chapter 11 *De divinis nominibus* (*On the Names of God*), the renowned treatise of the so-called father of Christian mysticism, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Here it becomes clear that peace encompasses the *exitus* (emanation) and *reditus* (return) of

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<sup>2</sup> B. McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man From Whom God Hid Nothing*, Crossroad Publ., New York 2001, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart*, trans. and ed. by Maurice O'C. Walshe, revised with a Foreword by Bernard McGinn. A Herder & Herder Book / The Crossroad Publishing, New York 2007, p. 367.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 464.

all creation. Every (meta-)ontological phase, emanation, remaining and return, occurs within the “medium” of peace:

“First we should note the peace [*vride*] there should be in the soul. Therefore she is called 'Jerusalem.' St. Dionysius says divine peace pervades and orders and ends all things; if peace did not do this, all things would be dissipated and there would be no order. Secondly, peace causes creatures to pour themselves out and flow in love and without harm. Thirdly, it makes creatures serviceable [*diensthaft*] to one another, so that they have a support in one another. What one of them cannot have of itself, it gets from another. Thus one creature derives from another. Fourthly, it makes them turn back [*widerbougie*] to their original source, which is God.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that peace is the horizon within which one lives and is. In this context, Eckhart's claim that the human person should be “a face of peace” (DW = Deutsche Werke II, 351) is similarly of interest.<sup>6</sup> The birth of God in the apex of the soul transposes the human person into peace. In *ultima analysis*, man becomes Peace (or God-Peace) itself. This might be the deepest horizon of the meaning of *pax mystica* within the framework of Christian mystical theology.

John (Johannes) Tauler, perhaps one of Eckhart's most talented students, ranks among the greatest medieval mystical preachers and *lebensmeister* (literally, “master/director of spiritual life”). In his sermons, which reflect a very concrete and down-to-earth mysticism, Tauler, though redolent with Eckhart's neo-Platonic apophaticism, in some passages speaks of “essential peace” *weseliche friede*, a kind of peace that can – in our modern terms, of course – be called mystical. Considering Tauler's sermon *Ascendit Jhesus in naviculum que erat Symonis*, it becomes clear that essential peace is the result of a *weselichen kere*, an “essential turn” (this to say, in Greek, *metánoia*, radical conversion); its main feature is ineffability, since it transcends all senses and intelligibility. (“*Diser fried der volget dem weselichen kere, der vride der alle sinne übertriffet ...*”)<sup>7</sup>

Another major figure in Rhineland and Flemish mysticism, Jan van Ruusbroec, known as *doctor admirabilis*, “must rank as one of the finest

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>6</sup> See U. Kern, “Eckhart's Anthropology”, in: *A Companion to Meister Eckhart*, ed. J. M. Hackett, Brill, Leiden 2012, pp. 250–51.

<sup>7</sup> *Die Predigten Taulers*, ed. F. Vetter, Weidmann, Berlin / Zürich / Dublin 1968, p. 174.

mystical theologians of the late medieval period”.<sup>8</sup> His influence on later Christian mysticism was immense: “He played a preponderant role in mysticism in the Low Countries, and, because of the translations of his works into Latin, he was widely read throughout Europe from the fifteenth century on.”<sup>9</sup>

In his early work *The Realm of Lovers* (*Dat rijke der ghelieven*), Ruusbroec speaks about *ghemeyne mensche* (“common man”). He explains who these common people are:

“These are the ones of whom Christ says: Blessed are the peaceful, or the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God. The exalted spirits have made peace with God and with all their faculties and with all creatures, and have enriched and ordered all things, each in its nobility, and have possessed the realm in true peaceableness [*gherechter vreedzaamheit*], and they have been swallowed up into the ground of simplicity [*ende sijn verswolghen in den gront der eenvuldicheit*]. This is the highest (level) of the realm in eternal blessedness.”<sup>10</sup>

Similar passages are found in a number of Ruusbroec’s other works; however, let us focus on one significant passage from his best-known treatise, *The Spiritual Espousals* (*Die geestelike brulocht*). There we read:

“For those who are most simple are the most quiet and the most totally peaceful in themselves [*alre best in vreden in hen selven*], and they are the most deeply sunken away in God, and they are the most utterly enlightened in understanding, and the most utterly manifold in good works, and the most utterly common in outflowing love [*alre ghemeynst in uutvloeyender minnen*]. And they are the least hindered, for they are the most God-like.”<sup>11</sup>

Ruusbroec’s ideal is not the contemplative life, fruition of God, but the common life. This “is a life in which charitable activity and fruition of God – that active and contemplative life – are harmoniously

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<sup>8</sup> R. Van Nieuwenhove, *Jan van Ruusbroec, Mystical Theologian of the Trinity*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Ind. 2003, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> B. McGinn, *The Presence of God*, Vol. 5: *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism (1350–1550)*, Crossroad Publ., New York 2012, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Jan van Ruusbroec, *Dat rijke der ghelieven*, ed. G. de Baere. Brepols, Turnhout 2002, p. 383.

<sup>11</sup> Jan van Ruusbroec, *De geestelike brulocht (De ornatu spiritualum nuptialum)*, ed. J. Alaerts, Brepols, Turnhout 1988. p. 514.

integrated.”<sup>12</sup> It is a life of simultaneously knowing and loving God (and in him all creatures).

For Ruusbroec, there is no split between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. While they are not exactly the same, it may be said that are a-dual. In mystical experience, there is no duality, but instead a constant interplay between resting/enjoying in God and being in activity, between the peace of passivity and the peace of activity, between love and knowledge; then, between mythos and logos, between tradition and modernity, etc. The paradoxical fusion of resting in the abyss of (inner) peace and active (outer) love and compassion for all people is thus a distinctive characteristic of Ruusbroec’s dynamic Trinitarian mysticism. Here, indeed, is much that is reminiscent of Meister Eckhart. However, even though the themes are similar, Eckhart and Ruusbroec speak from a different point of view. Like Tauler, Ruusbroec is (literally) a very down-to-earth mystic: “The mystic [Ruusbroec] is not shuttled away to the clouds and back again, but remains planted on the native earth of ordinary humanity.”<sup>13</sup> To put it differently, in Ruusbroec, “common human experience is integrated into the heights of mystical love.”<sup>14</sup>

Not only medieval or early modern mystics, but also many contemporary spiritual thinkers or leaders would share his conviction that social and political problems are rooted in a profound spiritual crisis. Let us briefly look at some contemporary examples that come from Buddhism.

Nhat Hanh—a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, poet and peace activist who was exiled to France during the Vietnam War—has a number of important works on peace-making and on the dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism, both philosophically and in practices. He is one of the contemporary witnesses who suggest that to practice peace requires the attitude of peace, which is realised through the practice of spirituality. Two brief quotes would suffice to demonstrate the connection Nhat Hanh makes between the practice of peace and spirituality:

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<sup>12</sup> Van Nieuwenhove, *op. cit.*, p 191.

<sup>13</sup> P. Mommaers, *Jan van Ruusbroec. Mystical Union with God*, Peeters, Leuven 2009, p. 89.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

“The Sanskrit word ahimsa, usually translated ‘nonviolence,’ literally means ‘non-harming’ or ‘harmlessness.’ To practice ahimsa, first of all we have to practice it within ourselves.”<sup>15</sup>

Much of Nhat Hanh’s writing is concerned with how to practice ahimsa through mindfulness, sitting and walking meditation, and other spiritual disciplines: in another of his adages we read that “Those who work for peace must have a peaceful heart.”<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, the Dalai Lama, winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize said:

“Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way. [...] Love, compassion, altruism are the fundamental basis of peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she will create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world.”<sup>17</sup>

However, it is possible to claim that all spiritual practices are inherently tied with peace-making: “All major religious traditions maintain that such a compassionate life, the directions of which is toward peace, can only be brought about through the spiritual practice of pursuing inner peace.”<sup>18</sup>

A religious or mystical dimension of peace is ineluctable in any discourse about peace, even political peace. Any merely political struggle for peace can be counterproductive, in the worst cases leading to additional violence, even war: “... crusades of all kinds have been carried out to establish the reign of justice and peace – be it God or Democracy.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. K. Duffey, etc. (ed.), *Justice and Mercy Will Kiss: The Vocation of Peacemaking in a World of Many Faiths* (Marquette Studies in Theology), Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wis. 2008, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 15. For further research and bibliography on notion of inner peace in Buddhism, see K. Kraft, *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1992.

<sup>17</sup> See M. Jaoudi, *Christian Mysticism East and West: What the Masters Teach Us*, New York: Paulist Press, 1998, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> *Cf.* M. K. Duffey, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> R. Panikkar, *De la mística. Experiencia plena de la Vida*, Herder, Barcelona 2007, p. 61.

## Raimon Panikkar – interculturality, mysticism, peace

Now let us turn to Panikkar's hermeneutics of peace. Raimon Panikkar (1918–210), was an Indian, Roman Catholic theologian, well versed in Catholic, Hindu and Western philosophical thought. He was also an international authority on the study of religions and intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Panikkar emphasises the easy dichotomy of inner and outer peace. He accepts that inner peace paves the way to outer peace, be it social or political. Yet, without outer peace inner peace cannot be complete, since it is reduced to its psychological aspect: "Without outer peace, simple inner peace is but a chimera, or an exclusively psychological state of isolation from the rest of reality – an isolation that turns out to be artificial or costly."<sup>20</sup> Outer peace without inner peace is fragile. Because of lack of inner peace, inner disorder is the root of outer disorder, violence and war. This is the lesson we learn from all religions, at least monotheistic. We, for example, read in Gospel according to Matthew:

"For out of the heart [*ek gàr tês kardías*] come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Mat 15:19).<sup>21</sup>

To be at peace is not merely the absence of war and violence, and hostility. Yet one should not allow oneself to be trapped in the dialectical logic of peace and war: "Peace is not the contrary of war. The suppression of war does not automatically yield peace. The conquered cannot enjoy the peace of the conquerors. Peace is not the outcome of any dialectical process."<sup>22</sup>

Peace, furthermore, is not "quality of life". Peace too is also not pacifism. Peace cannot be reduced to ideology. Moreover, peace is an in-

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<sup>20</sup> R. Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament: The Way to Peace*, trans. Robert R. Barr, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Ky 1995, p. 17. Cf. R. Panikkar, *Paz e interculturidad. Una reflexión filosófica*, Herder, Barcelona 2006, p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> Eng. Translation according to NIV (The New International Version Bible). Greek words are inserted from Nestle-Aland Revised 28<sup>th</sup> Edition of New Testament (all data retrieved from *Bibleworks 9* software).

<sup>22</sup> Panikkar 1995, p. 19.

herently polysemic and pluralistic concept, which can lead to many misunderstandings: “My notion of peace can be nonpeaceful for others.”<sup>23</sup>

Although most of the wars in history that have been waged have been wars of religion, almost every religion proclaims that its chief concern is to bring peace to the world. Not peace as a doctrinal issue, or as a (monosemic) ideological construct, but in terms of an existential attitude. Religions thus purport themselves to be “institutions” that foster inner peace.

Peace or peacefulness is also not merely a virtue or a problem of morality. It is crucial to see that inner (or mystical) peace is encompassed by a horizon within which spirituality and ethics are fully integrated. It is from an attitude of loving knowing and knowing loving (the Other) that peace emerges.

This leads us to the notion of interculturality. Interculturality, according to Panikkar, is not something that is similar to interdisciplinarity, which points to mutual enrichment of diverse (scientific) disciplines in order to overcome the barbarism of specialism (Ortega Y Gasset’s *barbarie del especialismo*). Cultures cannot, of course, be like disciplines. In addition, we should too avoid the trap of multiculturalism or multiculturalism.<sup>24</sup> Multiculturalism, according to Panikkar, suffers from a colonialist syndrome. Because the State always represents a dominant culture (that is, a metaculture or superculture), it is the way of life and values of this dominant culture that frames the laws that all subcultures and minorities are forced to accept, and which, as such, can only ever be more or less inclusive or “tolerant” of these subcultures.

This is also the case with globalisation, which can be viewed as the imposition of a kind of Americanisation – or at least occidentalisation – a dominant culture whose values stipulate that everyone should engage in science, democracy, etc.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Panikkar 2006, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Hence the need for cultural disarmament: “Peace is not possible without disarmament. But the required disarmament is not only nuclear, military, or economic. There is also a need for a cultural disarmament, a disarmament of the dominant culture, which threatens to become monoculture capable of engulfing all other cultures and finally along with them. ... It is an all but immediate evidence that military disarmament is impossible without cultural disarmament” (Panikkar 1995, p. 62).

For Panikkar, every culture is a galaxy with its own *mythos* which means that every culture has its own conception of time, space, goodness, beauty, truth, even transcendence: in short, its own horizon of intelligibility.<sup>26</sup> We thus have a situation of cultural alterity. This kind of “horizontal” alterity is similar to the alterity that consists between human beings. So, every dialogue between different cultures is like a dialogue between persons. In this context, one must give up one’s hidden pretensions for a universality of human problems that are solely asserted in order to universalise one’s own perspective. Conversely, pluralism leads to an insoluble conflict of ultimate values, which can be fruitful for true dialogue and therefore intercultural and interreligious practices. As Panikkar argues, in the realm of interculturality, which is coextensive with *mythos* – as opposed to *logos*, which represents rationality – we are freed to dialogue: “Interculturality is the realm within which the myths intersect.”<sup>27</sup>

For this reason, we may take seriously Panikkar’s assertion that “any approach to another culture without love is a violation of the other culture.”<sup>28</sup> An approach to other culture without knowledge can in truth merely be a sentimental attraction, even a seduction. One must therefore surpass both objective information and subjective sympathy. Here ordinary empathy does not suffice.

Peace requires that we transcend the realm of ideologies into a realm higher than the merely intellectual and emotional, or psychological. For Panikkar this realm is, as already mentioned, *mythos* – the *conditio sine qua non* of all knowledge and intelligibility. In the depth of *mythos* we can establish communion with one another in love and knowledge.

Interculturality takes into account pluralism, since pluralism is inherent to *la condition humaine*. From a philosophical perspective this means that there cannot be such thing as a unique principle of intelligibility. Our goal should not be the production of a universal theory from a neutral perspective – this is the goal of the so-called comparative method, comparative philosophy, comparative religion, etc. – but

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Panikkar 2006, p. 34 ff.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

rather a deepening awareness of both our own and the other tradition that is aimed at a convergence of hearts. This is the framework within which the cross-fertilisation between cultures should take place. In this way cultural and religious diversity would not be a detonator for “Clashes of Civilisations”.

When mystical reality is correlative with what Panikkar terms “mythos”, then interreligious dialogue, as a fundamental phenomenon of interculturality, can only take place on a mystical level. In this context, Panikkar’s adage that mysticism and interculturality are inextricably connected sounds persuasive:

*La mística es el pasaporte para sobrepasar las fronteras culturales – y la mística no es auténtica si falta el amor.*<sup>29</sup>

“Mysticism is the passport to overcome cultural frontiers – and mysticism is not authentic if love is lacking.”

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise the transcendent character of peace itself. Peace is always a gift. It is received, not given. It cannot be the result of human striving. We cannot produce it as we manufacture everything else in our Western techno-scientific civilisation. Peace is not the outcome of our “good will”, it is not a question of morality. Peace is transcendent in itself. Therefore it can be argued that peace is a profoundly religious phenomenon. Speaking somewhat monotheistically, it is possible to assert that peace is “God”. In Semitic languages the word for peace is derived from triconsonantal root Sh–L–M (*Shin–Lamdeh–Mem*) and means “whole, safe, intact”. Furthermore, *Al-Salām* is one of the 99 names of God in Islam. God is All-Peace who calls whole humankind in general and Muslims in particular to enter into the ontological state of peace.

To be united with Peace is to be at peace with God and human beings – this, in fact, is, as lucidly stated by Angelus Silesius, the mystical poet of the German Baroque period in one of his epigrams: “peace above peace”:

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<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

Der innerliche Friede  
 In sich mit Gott und Mensch befriedigt sein und ein,  
 Das muss, bei guter Treu, Fried über Friede sein.

Inner Peace  
 Within with God and Man to be satisfied and one,  
 This must, in good faith, be peace above peace.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A more poetical translation would be: The Highest Peace // The peace most highly prized, which keeps the soul delighted, / Is knowing itself to be close with God's will united" (Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer*. Transl. Maria Shradly Paulist Press, New York 1986, p. 97).

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## A B S T R A C T S

Janko M. Lozar

*The Philosophical Poiesis of Zarathustra's Vision and The Riddle: Back into the Circle of Time Towards the Groundless*

In view of Heidegger's criticism of Nietzsche for his being the last metaphysician of the measureless Will to Power, this paper will focus on Zarathustra's vision and the riddle of all riddles, which, poetic and narrative-reliant as it may be, turns out to be of crucial philosophical importance in disproving Heidegger's claim, and may provide the best clue both on the one hand for demonstrating an essential close-relatedness between the two thinkers and, on the other, for a possible solution to the thorny, time-hallowed twin problem of time and being. The articulation of groundless attunements, already patently present in Zarathustra's vision and riddle, could thus be understood as a harbinger of the rediscovery of a lost measure of European humanity.

*Key words: Nietzsche, Heidegger, attunement, resentment, time*

Yūjin Itabashi

*No Effort, just Peace." The Ground-less-ness of Peace in Nishida's Philosophy*

Inspired by both Western philosophy and East Asian Buddhist thought, Kitarō Nishida 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), arguably Japan's most famous, significant, and influential modern philosopher, developed his own comprehensive philosophical theory. This paper shall focus Nishida's notion of the ground-less-ness (or nothingness) of peace, based on his own consideration of the self-creativity of the immediate experience. In his early monumental book *An Inquiry into the Good* (*Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究, 1911) and drafts for this book, Nishida remarks that peace can be brought about without any basis or ground, although more usually it is thought that it is finding some common purpose – which may be referred to as the basis or ground that brings about a settlement of differences – that can actualise peace among people.

*Key words: Nishida, An Inquiry into the Good, ground-less-ness, peace, immediate experience*

Tomaž Grušovnik

*The World Undone: Environmental Denial and Environmental and Animal Rights Education*

The paper sets out to show that the commonly accepted aim of environmental ethics and animal rights – i.e. the enlargement of the moral domain to non-human subjects – has to be seriously reconsidered, and, along with it, environmental and animal rights' education. This idea can be derived from the fact that humans suffer serious trauma if exposed or engaged in violence against animals and nature, implying that the sensibility that animal rights and environmental ethics strive for is already present, only to be suppressed and denied, and not something that has yet to be brought about. The emphasis of animal rights and environmental ethics education should thus rather be focused on the uncovering of the mechanisms of these denials.

*Key words: environmental ethics, environmental denial, animal rights, education*

Nadja Furlan Štante

*Goddess Gaia and an Earth Healing Spirituality of Peace*

The paper brings together ecology and feminism in the unified perspective of ecofeminism and provides the quest for earth healing relationship between men and women between classes and nations, and between humans and the earth. The centrepiece here is an analysis of the model of domination of women which has provided a key link, both socially and symbolically, to the identification of women with earth, matter, and nature, while identifying males with sky, intellect, and transcendent spirit.

The paper examines and criticizes classical Western (Christian) traditions which reinforced relations of domination and created victim-blaming spiritualities and ethics. The paper then moves on to consider the return of the religion of the Goddess (in Western cultures), as one of most unexpected developments of late twentieth century. The symbols and rituals of the Goddess bring to consciousness our sense of deep connection of interconnectedness of all people and all beings in the web of life.

*Key words: women, nature, religion, Goddess spirituality, interdependence, spirituality of peace*

Carlo Chiurco

*Rarefaction. Nature, Philosophy, and Ethics: Images of Metaphysical Peace in Venetian Renaissance Painting (1500-1510)*

The most distinctive features of the masterpieces of the Italian Quattrocento – harmony, exactness of proportions, perfect calibration of gestures – came as the outcome of a real revolution, in which the painter achieved the status of a man of the knowledge, that is a philosopher. Through the usage of perspective, the painter could manifest the inner perfect rationality that is the actual fabric of the world: hence the ensuing images of metaphysical peace of the Quattrocento display the static harmony of the world of the Platonic archetypes. Instead, Venetian Renaissance painting chose the opposite way round: by focusing on landscape as the main character of the artworks and not just a background, and by substituting the primacy of the line with the centrality of colors, Venetian artists came to define a new poetic, where harmony did not exclude tension, dynamism, frailty and even imperfection. Thus the images of metaphysical peace in the paintings by Giorgione and the young Titian, by reuniting nature, philosophy and also ethics, successfully strive to reconstitute a notion of the Human as a Whole.

*Key words: Venetian Renaissance, Giorgione, Titian, metaphysical peace, landscape*

Lev Kreft

*Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Three Graces*

Late paintings by Jacques-Louis David remain a mystery, because they represent unexpected break with historical paintings he produced from his beginnings up to 1814. Even if we consult that smaller part of otherwise vast literature on David which deals with these works, we remain unsatisfied. David believed, and expressed it openly, that his last work »Mars disarmed by Venus and the three Graces«(1824) is his best work. To explain why, a notion of late style which Adorno used to explain final stage of Beethoven's music will be consulted as possible approach to David's case. Some concordances between Beethoven and David will be discussed, to arrive at a point where the difference between Beethoven's and David's attitude towards the European peace after fall of Napoleon becomes visible – in David's painting.

*Key words: Jacques-Louis David, late style, Adorno, Beethoven, European peace*

Maja Bjelica

*Music as Peace: An Interspace of Intercultural Dialogue*

Music as a form of art is also a medium for nourishing peacefulness, or/and an environment where peace can prevail. In the last decade some new literature emerged on this topic – researchers realizing that music has an important social role in preserving and establishing peace, have been gathering their thoughts and data from the field in various special issue journals and readers. With the examination of some concrete examples in conflict transformation, it has been shown how music can play a crucial role in achieving peace, truce or at least closure.

The paper offers an interdisciplinary account and a reflection on the interconnections and relations among music and peace. The philosophical approach toward music is presented: the understanding of sound and silence, and the view on music as a point of reflection, peace and a moment to 'take a breath'. The article includes also some ethnomusicological thoughts: a special consideration is devoted to the music in the Shia Islamic minority in Turkey, the Alevi. Music has had an important role in their struggle for their own acknowledgement, and even today, music plays a crucial role in their rituals and everyday life..

*Key words: music and peace, music and philosophy, music and conflict transformation, applied ethnomusicology*

Sebastjan Vörös

*The Autopoiesis of Peace: Embodiment, Compassion, and the Selfless Self*

The aim of this paper is to detail a recent paradigm shift in the field of cognitive science (the so-called embodied or enactive approach to cognition) and to demonstrate how its unique approach to understanding life, the mind, and cognition might facilitate peaceful and compassionate coexistence. The paper is divided into three parts: first, it examines the so-called autopoietic theory of life, as proposed by Maturana and Varela. According to the embodied/enactive approach, there is a deep continuity between the structure of life and the structure of the mind, so, before delving into the realm of the mental, it is important to acquaint ourselves with the fundamentals of so-called bio-logic (the dialectical logic of living systems). Second, having elucidated a general anatomy of life, this paper goes on to discuss how the dialectical principles of bio-logic translate to the dialectical principles of neuro-logic and provides an outline of the fundamental nature of human beings as embodied organisms embedded in their environment. Third, drawing

on the idea of co-determination of self and the world, which lies at the heart of bio- and neuro-logic, it is argued that the dialectical structure of life and mind manifests itself in an empathic openness towards the other and is thus not merely a theoretical postulate, but an experiential (realisable) actuality that can be cultivated through the application of various meditative/contemplative and therapeutic practices. This, as it turns out, is of utmost importance for the possibility of a sustained (auto)poiesis of peace, for it is only when one actually lives (en-acts), and not merely thinks, the co-determination (non-distinction) between one-self and the other that peaceful coexistence (genuine inter-being) can arise and propagate.

*Key words: autopoiesis, embodiment, enactivism, non-duality, empathy, compassion, Buddhism, mysticism, psychotherapy*

Alen Širca

*Pax Mystica: Mystical Dimensions of Peace and their Application in Contemporary Intercultural Discourse*

The notion of inner peace can be found in all world's major religions. It could be argued that within Christian mysticism, with which this contribution deals at the outset, the most profound explication of the rich and complex semantics of peace comes from the Rhineland and Flemish mysticism that developed in 14th century. Here we learn that to be in peace is to be in God. But this is never understood as sheer passivity, for it has always an active turn: to be in God is to bring peace to others. Likewise, contemporary spiritual authorities of Buddhism, such as for instance Nhat Hanh, claim that to practice peace requires the attitude of peace, which is realized through the practice of spirituality. In the second half of the contribution the focus is on Raimon Panikkar's hermeneutics of peace. Panikkar too argues, in accordance with western and eastern religious thought, that there is no outer peace without inner peace and vice versa. And he goes on claiming that such notion of peace leads us to the notion of interculturality which is inherently pluralistic. Since it presupposes knowing loving and loving knowing the other, it is the only place where genuine, peace-making communion between different cultures can take place. In the end, we come again to mysticism: when considered in the light of mystical traditions, be it western or eastern, then Panikkar's adage that "Mysticism is the passport to overcome cultural frontiers" may not seem implausible.

*Key words: inner peace, Rheno-Flemish Mysticism, Buddhism, Raimon Panikkar, interculturality*



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## P O V Z E T K I

Janko M. Lozar

*Filozofska poiesis Zaratustrove prikazni in uganke: nazaj v krog časa naproti brezdanjemu*

Prispevek se z ozirom na Heideggrovo kritiko Nietzscheja kot poslednjega metafizika brezmerne volje do moči osredotoča na Zaratustrovo prikazen in uganko vseh ugank, ki se vsej poetičnosti in pripovednosti navkljub izkaže za filozofsko bistveno pri zavrnitvi Heideggrovega očitka. Obenem ponuja najboljši možni namig k razjasnitvi velike bližine med obema mislecema in nemara celo k možni rešitvi starega resentimentalnega problema časa in biti. Artikulacijo breztemeljnih razpoloženj, ki so implicitno prisotna že v Zaratustrovi enigmatični viziji, bi lahko razumeli kot obet vnovičnega odkritja izgubljene mere evropskega humanizma.

*Ključne besede: Nietzsche, Heidegger, razpoloženje, resentment, čas*

Yūjin Itabashi

*“Nobenega prizadevanja, le mir.” Breztemeljnost miru v Nishidovi filozofiji*

Kitarō Nishida 西田幾多郎(1870–1945), morda najbolj slaven, pomemben in vpliven moderni japonski filozof, je svojo celostno filozofsko teorijo razvijal pod navdihom tako zahodne misli kot vzhodnoazijske budistične misli. Članek je posvečen Nishidovemu pojmu breztemeljnosti (oz. nič-nosti) miru, ki jo utemeljuje na svojem razumevanju samo-kreativnosti neposrednega izkustva. V svojem zgodnjem monumentalnem delu *Preučevanje dobrega (Zen no kenkyū 善の研究, 1911)* in osnutkih za to knjigo, Nishida pravi, da je lahko mir dosežen brez kakršnegakoli temelja ali podlage, četudi pogosto velja, da je za udejanjanje miru med ljudmi potrebno, da najdemo nek skupen namen – ki bi mu lahko rekli temelj ali podlaga, na kateri se uskladijo razlike.

*Ključne besede: Nishida, Preučevanje dobrega, breztemeljnost, mir, neposredno izkustvo*

Tomaž Grušovnik

*Odnarejeni svet: okoljska zanikanja in vzgoja za okoljsko etiko ter pravice živali*

Prispevek želi pokazati, da moramo široko sprejet cilj okoljske etike in etike pravic živali – t.j. razširjanje moralne domene na ne-človeške subjekte – temeljito na novo premisliti, z njim pa tudi okoljsko izobraževanje in vzgojo za pravice živali. To idejo lahko izpeljemo iz dejstva, da ljudje utrpijo travmo, če so izpostavljeni ali vpleteni v nasilje nad živalmi in naravo, kar pomeni, da je senzibilnost, za katero si prizadevajo pravice živali in okoljska etika, vseskozi že prisotna, da pa je potlačena in zanikana, s tem pa ne nekaj, kar moramo šele proizvesti. Poudarek okoljskega izobraževanja in vzgoje za pravice živali bi se tako moral raje osredotočiti na razkrivanje mehanizmov teh zanikanj.

*Ključne besede: okoljska etika, okoljsko zanikanje, pravice živali, vzgoja, izobraževanje*

Nadja Furlan Štante

*Boginja Gaja in duhovnost sočutja ter zdravljenja Zemlje*

Prispevek povezuje vprašanje ekologije in feminizma v okviru ekofeminizma in predstavi iskanje in prizadevanje za zemlji prijazen in ozdravljajoč odnos med moškim in žensko, med družbenimi razredi in narodnostmi in med človekom in naravo oziroma zemljo. Poudarek je na analizi modela dominacije in zatiranja žensk, ki je posledično postal vzorčni model tako družbene kot tudi simbolne identifikacije ženske z zemljo in naravo, s snovnim, medtem ko je moškost identificirana z nebom, razumom in transcendentnim duhom.

Prispevek pregleduje in kritizira klasične zahodne (krščanske) tradicije, ki krepijo omenjene odnose dominacije in s tem posledično vspostavljajo duhovnost in etiko „grešnih kozlov“. V tej točki je nadalje predstavljena vrnitev kulta Boginje v zahodno kulturo, kot fenomen poznega dvajsetega stoletja. Simboli in obredi povezani s kultom Boginje namreč v našo zavest ponovno priključijo zavedanje globoke medsebojne povezave in soodvisnosti vseh človeških in nečloveških bitij, človeka in narave v mreži življenja.

*Ključne besede: ženska, narava, religija, kult Boginje, soodvisnost, miroljubna duhovnost*

Carlo Chiurco

*Razredčenje. Narava, filozofija in etika. Podobe metafizičnega miru v beneškem renesančnem slikarstvu (1500–1510)*

Najbolj značilne poteze mojstrov in italijanskega quattrocenta – harmonija, natančnost proporcev, dovršena kalibracija kretenj – so posledica resnične revolucije, skozi katero si je slikar pridobil status učenjaka, tj. filozofa. Z uporabo perspektive je slikar lahko izrazil popolno notranjo racionalnost, ki je dejansko tkivo sveta: zato kasnejše podobe metafizičnega miru iz quattrocenta prikazujejo statično harmonijo sveta platonskih arhetipov. Beneška renesansa pa si je izbrala ravno obratno pot: z osredotočanjem na krajino, ki je tako postala glavni motiv slik in ne več zgolj ozadje; in s tem, da je primat linije zamenjala osrednja vloga barv, so beneški umetniki definirali novo poetiko, v kateri harmonija ni izključevala napestosti, dinamizma, šibkosti in celo nepopolnosti. Podobe metafizičnega miru v delih Giorgioneja in mladega Tiziana tako s tem, da ponovno združijo naravo, filozofijo in tudi etiko, uspešno oživijo pojem človeka kot celote.

*Ključne besede: beneška renesansa, Giorgione, Tizian, metafizični mir, krajina*

Lev Kreft

*Marsa razorožijo Venera in tri gracije*

Pozna dela Jacquesa-Louisa Davida ostajajo skrivnost, ker predstavljajo nepričakovan prelom s historičnimi slikami, ki jih je ustvarjal od svojih začetkov pa do leta 1814. Tudi vpogled v manjši del sicer obsežne literature o Davidu, ki se ukvarja s temi deli, nam ne pomaga preveč. David je bil prepričan in to tudi javno izrazil, da je njegovo zadnje delo »Marsa razorožijo Venera in tri gracije« (1824) njegovo najboljšo. Kot možen pristop k Davidovem primeru bomo za pojasnitev uporabili pojem poznega sloga, s katerim Adorno razloži zadnje obdobje v Beethovnovi glasbi. Z diskusijo o nekaterih ujemanjih med Beethovnom in Davidom bomo dospeli do točke, kjer razlika med Beethovnovim in Davidovim odnosom do evropskega miru po padcu Napoleona postane očitna – v Davidovem delu.

*Ključne besede: Jacques-Louis David, pozni slog, Adorno, Beethoven, evropski mir*

Maja Bjelica

*Glasba kot mir: medprostor medkulturnega dialoga*

Glasba kot umetniška zvrst je tudi medij ohranjanja miroljubnosti oziroma okolje, v katerem lahko prevlada mir. V zadnjem desetletju je vzniknilo nekaj literature na to temo – raziskovalci, ob spoznavanju, da ima glasba pomembno družbeno vlogo za ohranjanje in vzpostavljanje miru, so svoje misli in odkritja zbrali v raznih posebnih izdajah revij in zbornikov. Z raziskavo in analizo nekaterih konkretnih primerov spreminjanja konfliktov so prikazali, kako lahko glasba odigra ključno vlogo ob doseganju miru ali premirja.

Pričujoči članek ponuja interdisciplinarni uvid in refleksijo o povezavah in odnosih med glasbo in mirom. Predstavljen je filozofski pristop h glasbi: razumevanje zvoka in tišine ter pogled na glasbo kot mesta refleksije, miru in trenutka »zajetja sape«. Prispevek vsebuje tudi nekaj etnomuzikoloških misli: posebna pozornost je namenjena glasbi šiitske islamske manjšine v Turčiji, to je Alevijev. Glasba je imela pomembno vlogo v njihovem boju po pripoznanju in tudi danes zaseda ključno mesto v njihovem obredju in vsakdanjem življenju.

*Ključne besede: glasba in mir, glasba in filozofija, glasba in spreminjanje konfliktov, aplikativna etnomuzikologija*

Sebastjan Vörös

*Autopoiesis miru: utelešenost, sočutje in brezjazni jaz*

Namen tega članka je očrtati paradigmatični obrat, do katerega je pred kratkim prišlo na področju kognitivne znanosti (t.i. utelešeni ali udejanjeni pristop h kogniciji), in pokazati, kako lahko edinstveni pogled na življenje, duha in kognicijo, ki je povezan z njim, prispeva k mirnemu in sočutnemu soobstoju. Prispevek se deli na tri dele. V prvem si nekoliko pobližje ogledamo t.i. avtopoietično teorijo življenja, ki sta jo razvila Maturana in Varela. Model utelešene/udejanjene kognicije trdi, da obstaja med strukturami življenja in strukturami duha globoka kontinuiteta, zato je ključno, da se pred analizo duha in zavesti seznanimo s temelji t.i. bio-logike (dialektične logike vseh živih sistemov). Po orisu splošne anatomije življenja skušamo v drugem delu prispevka prikazati, na kakšen način se dialektična načela biologike zrcalijo v dialektičnih načelih nevrologike, ter zagovarjati tezo, da je človeško bitje po svoji naravi utelešen organizem, vpet v svoje okolje. Izhajajoč iz ideje o sodoločenosti jaza in sveta, ki leži v osrčju bio- in nevrologike, skušamo v tretjem delu pokazati, da se dialektična struktura življenja in duha udejanja v

empatični odprtosti do drugega in potemtakem ni zgolj teoretični postulat, ampak izkustvena (udejanljiva) dejanskost, ki jo je mogoče gojiti z vrsto meditativnih/kontemplativnih in terapevtskih praks. Izkaže se, da je to ključni pogoj za trajno (avto)poiesis miru, saj se miroljubni soobstoj (pristna med-bit) lahko poraja in širi, šele ko so-do-ločenost (ne-ločenost) jaza in drugega ne le mislimo, ampak jo dejansko do- in za-živimo.

*Ključne besede: autopoiesis, utelešenost, enaktivizem, nedvojnost, empatija, sočutje, budizem, mistika, psihoterapija*

Alen Širca

*Pax mystica: mistične dimenzije miru in njihova aplikacija v sodobnem medkulturnem diskurzu*

Na koncept notranjega miru naletimo v vseh poglavitnih svetovnih religijah. V krščanski mistiki, ki je obravnavana na začetku prispevka, najdemo eno izmed najglobljih razlag bogate semantike miru v rensko-flamski mistiki, ki se je razvila v 14. stoletju. Ta nas pouči, da biti v miru pomeni biti v Bogu. Vendar tu ne gre za golo pasivnost, saj gre hkrati za aktiven pomen: biti v Bogu pomeni prinašati mir drugim. Na podobne misli naletimo tudi pri sodobnih budističnih duhovnih avtoritetah, kot je, recimo, Nhat Hanh. Ta trdi, da praksa miru zahteva držo miru, ki jo lahko uresničujemo samo prek prakticiranja duhovnosti. V drugem delu prispevka je v ospredju pozornosti Panikkarjeva hermenevtika miru. Tudi Raimon Panikkar v skladu z zahodnimi in vzhodnimi duhovnimi izročili trdi, da brez notranjega miru ni zunanega in narobe. Takšno pojmovanje miru pa, nadalje, vodi k pojmu interkulturalnosti, ki je v temelju pluralističen. Ker predpostavlja ljubeče spoznanje in spoznavalsko ljubezen do drugega, je edini kraj, kjer se lahko udejanja resnično, mir prinašajoče občestvo med različnimi kulturami. Na koncu znova dospemo do mistike. Če Panikkarjev izrek, da je »mistika potni list za preseganje kulturnih mej,« motrimo v luči mističnih izročil, naj bodo zahodna ali vzhodna, se nam takšna sodba utegne zdeti prepričljiva.

*Ključne besede: notranji mir, rensko-flamska mistika, budizem, Raimon Panikkar, interkulturalnost*



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Izr. prof. dr. *Janko M. Lozar*, predavatelj fenomenologije in filozofije religije na Oddelku za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani, avtor knjig *Vedrenje vedrine*, *Fenomenologija razpoloženja* in *Nietzsche skozi nihilizem*. S svojim raziskovalnim delom se umešča v fenomenološko polje in izhaja predvsem iz razmislekov o nihilizmu, krizi evropske umnosti in zgodovini biti, kot so jih razvijali Nietzsche, Husserl in Heidegger.

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#### TOMAŽ GRUŠOVNIK

Dr. *Tomaž Grušovnik* is assistant professor at the Faculty of Education and research associate at the Science and Research Centre, both at the University of Primorska. His current research is dedicated to the philosophy of the enviro-

nment and animal ethics, the philosophy of Stanley Cavell, and philosophy for children.

Dr. *Tomaž Grušovnik* je docent za filozofijo vzgoje na Pedagoški fakulteti in znanstveni sodelavec na Znanstveno-raziskovalnem središču, oboje na Univerzi na Primorskem. Njegovo raziskovanje je usmerjeno na področje filozofije okolja in etike živali, ukvarja pa se tudi s filozofijo Stanleyja Cavella in filozofijo za otroke.

#### NADJA FURLAN ŠTANTE

Dr. *Nadja Furlan Štante* is Research Associate at Science and Research Centre, University of Primorska and Associate Professor at Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska where she lectures History of Religions. Her current research interests are women's religious studies and ecofeminism.

Dr. *Nadja Furlan Štante* je znanstvena sodelavka na Znanstveno-raziskovalnem središču Univerze na Primorskem in docentka na Fakulteti za humanistične študije Univerze na Primorskem. Na Oddelku za filozofijo predava Zgodovino religij. Fokus njenega znanstvenoraziskovalnega dela je osredinjen na ženske religijske študije in ekofeminizem.

#### CARLO CHIURCO

*Carlo Chiurco* was born in Trieste in 1971. He currently teaches philosophical anthropology at the University of Verona, Italy. His main research subjects include the ethics of caring, from a cross-discipline approach involving philosophy and medicine, and philosophy of art, as a way to reconstruct the different visions of man and the cosmos hidden in artworks, particularly those of Italian Renaissance.

*Carlo Chiurco* je bil rojen v Trstu l. 1971. Trenutno predava filozofsko antropologijo na Univerzi v Veroni (Italija). Najpomembnejše tematike, ki jih raziskuje so etika skrbi z interdisciplinarnega stališča, ki vključuje filozofijo in medicino; filozofija umetnosti kot način, na katerega se da rekonstruirati različne poglede na človeka in kozmos, ki se skrivajo v umetniških delih, še posebej tistih, ki so nastala v italijanski renesansi.

## LEV KREFT

*Lev Kreft* (1951), Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Ljubljana. Research areas: contemporary art, historical avant-garde, struggles on the artistic left, totalitarian art and aesthetics, post-modern and post-socialist art; aesthetics of sport, philosophy of sport.

*Lev Kreft* (1951), profesor estetike na ljubljanski univerzi. Raziskovalna področja: sodobna umetnost, historična avantgarda, spopadi na umetniški leviici, totalitarna umetnost in estetika, postmoderna in postsocialistična umetnost; estetika športa, filozofija športa.

## MAJA BJELICA

*Maja Bjelica* is an assistant and a young researcher under the mentorship of Professor Lenart Škof at the Institute of Philosophical Studies at the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska. In 2010 she completed her two-course undergraduate study in philosophy and musicology at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. She has been complementing her doctoral research studies in anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities with the themes from the institute's project, titled "Between politics and ethics: towards a new world culture of hospitality and nonviolence".

*Maja Bjelica* je na Inštitutu za filozofske študije (UP ZRS) asistentka in mlada raziskovalka pod mentorstvom red. prof. dr. Lenarta Škofa. Leta 2010 je zaključila dvopredmetni dodiplomski študij filozofije in muzikologije na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Doktorsko raziskovanje v okviru študija Antropologije na 3. stopnji na Fakulteti za humanistične študije združuje s temami projekta »Med politiko in etiko: k novi svetovni kulturi gostoljubja in nenasilja«, pri katerem tudi sodeluje.

## SEBASTJAN VÖRÖS

*Sebastjan Vörös* is an Assistant Professor and a Research Fellow at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana). He graduated in 2008 with a joint MSc in English Language and Literature and Philosophy (double-major study programme). In 2009 he received the University Prešeren Student Award and the Award for the Contribution to the Development of Society by the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund for his MSc thesis in Philosophy

(*Metamorphoses of the Butterfly: From Substantial Dualism in Classical Modern Philosophy to Property Dualism in Current Philosophy of Mind*). He was employed as a Junior Researcher at the Philosophy Department at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, from 2010 to 2013, where he successfully defended his doctoral thesis *The Images of the Unimaginable: Cognitive, Phenomenological and Epistemological Aspects of Mystical Experiences*. The thesis was later published in a book form (*The Images of the Unimaginable: (Neuro)Science, Phenomenology, Mysticism*). He has published several articles and translations in the fields of analytic philosophy, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophy of religion and cognitive science. Some of his most important translations include: Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2008), Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (2008), Daniel Psaute, *Fragments of Light* (2012) and Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (2012). He is also currently finishing a parallel MSc study in History.

Sebastjan Vörös je docent in znanstveni sodelavec na Filozofski fakulteti univerze v Ljubljani. Leta 2008 je diplomiral iz angleškega jezika in književnosti ter filozofije na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani. Za diplomsko nalogo iz filozofije *Od substancialnega dualizma v novoveški filozofiji do dualizma lastnosti v sodobni filozofiji duha je leta 2009 prejel univerzitetno Prešernovo nagrado in Nagrado za prispevek k razvoju družbe Javnega sklada Republike Slovenije za razvoj kadrov in štipendije*. Od leta 2010 do leta 2013 je bil na Oddelku za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete zaposlen kot mladi raziskovalec, kjer je 2013 tudi doktoriral z nalogo *Podobe neupodobljivega: kognitivni, fenomenološki in epistemološki vidiki mističnih izkustev*, ki je bil v knjižni obliki izdan v sozaložništvu KUD Logos in Znanstvene založbe FF (*Podobe neupodobljivega: (nevro)znanost, fenomenologija in mistika*). V tem času je objavil vrsto prevodov in avtorskih člankov s področja analitične filozofije, filozofije znanosti, filozofije duha, filozofije religije in kognitivne znanosti. Med prevodi bi veljalo omeniti zlasti Antonio Damasio, *Iskanje Spinoze* (2008), Peter Singer, *Praktična etika* (2008), Daniel Psaute, *Drobci luči* (2012) in Daniel Dennett, *Pojasnjena zavest* (2012). Trenutno zaključuje tudi vzporedni dodiplomski študij zgodovine.

#### ALEN ŠIRCA

Alen Širca has received PhD from University of Ljubljana where he studied comparative literature. His main research interest is Christian spirituality with its manifestations in the fields of literature, philosophy, and theology. He is the author of two scientific monograph (*Theopoetics*, 2007, and *Bottomless Flood*, 2012). He is also engaged in translating scientific and belletristic literature in

the field of Christian philosophy and spirituality. He is currently working on postdoctoral thesis on Slovene Baroque Literature at University of Primorska.

*Alen Širca* je leta 2012 doktoriral iz literarnih ved na Oddelku za primerjalno književnost Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani. Ukvarja se zlasti z raziskovanjem krščanske duhovnosti in njenimi manifestacijami v literaturi, filozofiji in teologiji. Je avtor dveh znanstvenih monografij (*Teopoetika*, 2007, in *Brezdanji val*, 2012). Poleg tega prevaja strokovno in leposlovno literaturo s področja krščanske filozofije in duhovnosti. Trenutno je zaposlen na Univerzi na Primorskem, kjer v okviru postdoktorskega študija raziskuje slovensko baročno književnost.





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