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On Becoming a Subject

PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN DISCIPLINES SERIES

2022

Volume I

Contents

RESEARCH PAPERS

What We Think We Are: Maximizing the Subjects in the Human Sciences	1
The South and Religion in William Faulkner's <i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	35
Ethics of integrity warnings - between social conditioning and moral stakes	53
Initiation of Native Language in Education Policy: A Study on the Role of Language in Pre-Primary and Primary Level of Education in Bangladesh	65
Civic conscience and the social organism during the pandemic	73

ESSAYS, PRESENTATIONS, REVIEWS

An Ethics for the Human Cyborg	87
Individual and Society in Medical Crisis	101

RESEARCH PAPERS

What We Think We Are: Maximizing the Subjects in the Human Sciences

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Abstract

The human sciences, differ from the natural in significant ways. The complexity of subject matter may be to blame. Bases of controlled experiments differ, some human-subjects research hard to control, and there are moral constraints on what can be done to a human research-subject. Human-science subjects have a peculiar trait: Subjects' concepts concerning themselves play into what they are, even if some such concepts are false. The human sciences, in their struggle for objectivity, often commonly have allowed only limited role for subjects' concepts about themselves. This article contends that a significant amount of peoples' ideas and theories do influence their behavior – and most significantly, those ideas about themselves or reflexive concepts. Taking into account subjects' ideas of themselves appears to be needed in much human-sciences research to maximize study accuracy and completion.

Keywords: *epistemic predicament, grouping by natural kinds, grouping by social construction, objectifying vs. introspection / subjectifying, self-identity.*

Introduction

Despite aspirations to unify the sciences (Winch, 1990; Dupré, 1993), the human sciences, including psychology, anthropology, economics, and sociology, appear to differ from the natural in many ways. Complexity of subject matter and limited human capacities themselves may be to blame. It remains hard to trace the sudden upheaval of a riot to a set of quantum leaps. The bases of controlled experiments differ. Some human-subjects research is, again, hard to control in terms of reducing controls and experimental factors to basic particles. There are also moral constraints on what can be done to a human research-subject.

Furthermore, human-science subjects have a peculiar trait: Subjects' concepts concerning themselves play into what they are, even if some such concepts are false. Investigators can study these reflexive concepts, and

individuals have varying capacities to articulate these concepts, if called upon.¹ Volcanos, amoebae, and neutrons are assuredly incapable of communicating such concepts. However, the human sciences, in their struggle for objectivity, often commonly have allowed only limited role for subjects' concepts about themselves. As Winch (1990) criticizes Pareto (1935) for sustaining this approach,

Pareto urges we must accept that the ideas and theories which people embrace have little influence on the ways they otherwise behave; embracing the theories cannot be a valid explanation for why people behave in the given way, for that behavior goes on even after the theories have been abandoned. (p. 104)

Like Winch, this article contends that a significant amount of peoples' ideas and theories do influence their behavior –and most significantly, those ideas about themselves or reflexive concepts.

Certainly, methods of interview and questionnaire are used in human sciences from cultural anthropology to economics. But such methods rarely rely upon questions about who the subjects think they are for the purpose of categorizing them for assigning each to a study group. In fact, the very study-group categories are commonly pre-assigned, before the study and its design. Gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, caste, sanity, cognitive capacity, and so on are all super-groups whose categories often reflect those the society itself has established.

Such categorizing seems condonable because human sciences often study societies, and societies often employ rigid classification schemes for their members. The question arises as to whether adopting these groupings wholesale as a means of objectifying the study is for the best interests of both the subjects (and their society) and the study. There appears to be little room for considering what subjects believe they are, what their idea of their identity, even though what a human is qua human is partly a matter what you think you are. Such subjectivity seemingly has no place in objectivity.

The philosophy of human sciences has had extended, heated discussions over whether groupings of subjects reflect natural kinds vs. the contention that group classifications are social constructs. The former side may help ensure that groupings used are differentiated among one another essentially by the laws of nature and evolution. The latter side doubts such universality and can fuel

¹ While “concepts” and “ideas” differ in reference or extension, here I assume ideas are the broader in reference and thereby encompass the narrow “concepts.” I believe that both apply to this article’s contention about human subjects of study. They have concepts about themselves and thus they have ideas about themselves but possibly not vice-versa. In the text I may sometime use either term but speak more often of concepts about themselves.

skepticism as to whether the groupings are set and open to social-political manipulation. The historical importance of this debate underlies this article's background and focus. The differences in these views can be so severe as to be unbridgeable. However, in the course of this article, it will become apparent that these views need not be incompatible.

A central concern here is about an epistemic predicament. On the one hand, although researchers seek knowledge and understanding about human groups, as social distinctions and traditions seem only to muddy and obscure understanding of subjects. Racism or racial prejudice is a typical example of agents' obscuring facts about other groups' individuals, often seeing the groups but not the individuals. On the other hand, researchers concretize these group distinctions and traits in the act of selecting groups, say by race or gender distinctions which are the very traditions and distinctions that obscure potential objective knowledge. For example, a common belief, such as the notion that women are harmed by abstract male education, now becomes, gratis the research itself, a more firmly socially entrenched notion. The predicament is that by adopting and continuing the gender categorization itself and partitioning the population, the research endorses the partitioning, which contradicts the very normative axiology impelling much social-science research programs, focusing on social problems to create tools for solving them.

I cover this epistemic predicament more in sections to come. Even my brief mention of what is to follow may trigger some readers to object to any such predicament. It is seemingly impossible *not* to adopt these characterizations to improve our understanding the subjects and who they represent in the study, such as those who have faced discrimination. However, one point of this article is to challenge such assumptions about studying and ameliorating social categorization and prejudice.

Before going further into the epistemic predicament and attempts to resolve it and aid social understanding, I provide some relevant background on recent discussions of natural kinds as well as introspection's role in human sciences.

2. The Epistemic Predicaments' Context in Two Ongoing Debates About Human Sciences' Methodological Assumptions

2.1 NATURAL KINDS AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

The notion of natural-kinds categorization of subjects of study has provided powerful explanation of what are the actual subjects of study in the sciences (Dupré, 1993). Nature simply appears to be cleanly cut into parts ("bits and pieces that can be isolated" for study Kitcher, 1999, p. 196). The hundred+ boson and

fermion types are the most evident and basic examples of nature's presumed precise taxonomy. Elegant equations explain and support these particles' existence and taxonomies into families. Similarly do the elements of the periodic table clearly and cleanly divide the types of matter into neat families. The taxonomies of biological species exhibit – at least in a synchronic time-slice – ready classification in to genus, family order, and so on.

Here, though, the rumbling of discord concerning natural kinds threatens. Some living species do abide by the usual definition of species as those individuals who can have viable reproducing offspring. The neuter mule, offspring of horse and ass, indicates these two as separate species, But the two species red wolf and coyote can have viable reproducing offspring. Life makes categories messy.

But at the molecular stratum, genes are not readily distinguished one from the other, either (Hull, 1978; Dupré, 1993; Waters, 1994; Kitcher, 1999). Kitcher (1999) proposes two basic ways of considering and distinguishing genes: at the molecular level, in terms of stretches of DNA, or as Mendelian units of inheritance. Kitcher asserts “some important biological regularities cannot be captured in the language of molecular biology” (1999, p. 200). The molecular level has its functions of transcription, translation, and so on. But these, including the enormous lengths of DNA that can be isolated as shown as not being involved in these functions, do not map cleanly to the unit of Mendelian inheritance. One stretch of DNA from which a hereditary unit appears to arise upon translation – a polypeptide chain – often does not correspond to a “gene.” The DNA unit used to make a protein has long stretches at either end used only to help orient the RNA translation process and it is not clear whether these stretches are part of the gene.

Furthermore, a protein is composed of several folded polypeptide chains, each of these units corresponding to a separate DNA stretch, to make a “quaternary” structure of the protein. It is not clear which is the “gene,” the individual DNA stretch for each polypeptide, or the combined DNA stretches corresponding to the combination of the individual polypeptides. In any case, the “gene,” as a classificatory unit, does not correspond to any precise material entity; it does not appear to exist as a material object. Instead the term “gene” is a convenient way to speak about certain biological behaviors, as in the inheritance of traits. It seems not to be a clean natural kind.

The apparent natural kinds at the molecular level do not functionally correspond to units of inheritance, obscuring the presumably clean partitioning of the material object of study.

Even the modes by which evolutionary inheritance unfolds – genes, individual, group, or species – are not cleanly partitioned. (See Sternelny &

Kitcher, 1988, p. 339 for further discussion, and Sober & Lewontin, 1982 for more on how the monistic solely genic approach falls short in explanatory adequacy.)

Matters get messier than material life itself, with human and social classifications (Hacking, 1990, 1991, 2007; Devitt, 2008, 2010; Haslanger, 2012; Mallon, 2016; Greenwood, 2020; Tsou, 2020). Our species appears to be composed of groups of individuals with defined physical traits, such as skin color or eye shape. These so blend from one alleged group to the next, especially given to steady inter-population mixing, that “race” is not scientifically applicable to these groups. Instead, what seems to be “race” is minor variations. Race, then, comes to be understood as a social classification, and not a natural kind. (See Hacking, 2007 and Mallon, 2012 for general discussions of social construction and natural kinds in humans. For persistence of groups over time, see Greenwood, 2020.)

However, other investigations into the human being, such as medicine, psychiatry, clinical psychology, and other areas of psychology and anthropology, more plausibly categorize among natural kinds (Boorse, 1977; Nisbet et al., 2001; Kendler, 2011; Tsou, 2013; but see Sontag, 1978; Haslanger, 2012; Hacking, 2007). Certainly, pathophysiology breaks down human diseases into kinds, often according to microbial etiology, autoimmune responses, and so on. Even these have been disputed as being more socially constructed than natural kinds (Sontag, 1978; Senior & Viveash, 1997; Hopwood, 1997). The touchiest areas of human sciences may be psychiatry and clinical psychology because these bring in normative issues of autonomy, fault, blame, responsibility, free will, and guilt. Malfunctioning behaviors are often stereotyped. A patient P with an often-fatal eating disorder M may exhibit certain stereotyped behavior. say excessive desire to please others, seen in most M patients. To chalk up the behavior as merely due to M denigrates the patients’ seemingly free choice to please, as though they are unfeeling automata and lacking autonomy and carry out apparently positive behaviors only thanks to a malady’s program. It is as if they are stripped of their capacity to do wrong or right. Contrast a systemic disease S , in which almost all patients wake in the middle of the night with highly elevated temperature. The symptom does not signify the patient has lost autonomy of behavior, reduced to a mere automaton.

In the case of mental disorders, attributing the behavioral symptom to a subset of the natural kind M poses a threat. If M is a natural kind and P has no control over it, P ’s autonomy is threatened. However, if M can be attributed to a social construct, then considering one is a member of the society and thus has some corner of input into the society’s constructions, there may be some prospect

for empowering *P* and gaining some control over the condition. As Boghossian (2006) observes, building on Hacking's social constructionism appeals because of its potential liberating outlook: If setbacks and menacing challenges arise due merely to social conventions, in contrast to the rigidity of natural kinds, then it seems possible to change them into how we would rather have them be.

This article does not intend to resolve this conflict of natural kinds. Rather, I have brought it up to position the article's suggestion for subject-grouping in human-science research as arising somewhere between natural kinds and social constructs. Given its position, it might well offer useful new perspectives for both sides of this debate.

2.2. INTROSPECTION VS. OBJECTIVITY, AND VARIANTS THEREOF

I am not who you think I am; I am not who I think I am; I am who I think you think I am. – Charles Cooley

The self-reference concept and subjective states implied by the discussion make place for potential criticism. (For a variety of views, see Shoemaker, 1968; Gopnik, 1993; Fynder, 1995.) Skeptical readers may maintain that subjects' presumed "inner" life or alleged subjectivity has scant role in human sciences, such as psychology. Alongside with the proliferation of focus groups, questionnaires, polls, and interviews, the human sciences often rely on subjectivity, introspection, and subjects' "inner" life for data. But these methods primarily gain opinions rather than agents' reflexive concepts. To assume that humans have opinions, a researcher need not take a stance on behaviorism vs. mentalism, or introspection vs. objectivity, or similar dyads. Even moving beyond opinions, into attitudes, mental health, and even personality traits, one need not abandon one's behaviorism or mentalism. The main issue here is the specific outlook on the notion of introspection by which a subject can presumably attain accurate knowledge of oneself by introspecting. The concern is that we can make mistakes about our individual nature, attitudes, personality, even beliefs (Tsou, 2020). Our presumed knowledge gained by such introspection is then far from accurate. Since knowledge must be accurate to qualify as knowledge, then whatever this introspection gathers is not knowledge. Opinions about oneself do not count as valid.

In sections to come on the epistemic predicament, there is no need to resolve the objectivist/self-negating view or the subjectivist/introspective. Yet the position therein does give credence to how subjects identify themselves socially can usually be taken as serious and accurate data when apportioning them to social groups for the sake of study (Haslanger, 2006). As such methods as interviews and

questionnaires can be used without assuming a subject has an “inner life.” So may similarly acquired data about the subject’s social identity. Even a woman born with XX chromosomes who has been hetero-non-normatively married decades and had children and has risen to the heights of corporate ranks but seriously answers that she identifies as a male must be taken seriously. If a scholar and lawyer running for president were born to a black father and white mother but seriously identifies with the white mother’s race despite what the hundred-million voters see otherwise, there is good reason to count her as black. To deny such data’s validity is paramount to denying a central feature of human beings – that they have concepts about themselves, and these can be determined by objectify methods such as questioning. To deny as much could only demerit the study’s validity.

3. The Epistemic Predicament: The Frozen Specimen vs. the Always Changing Subject

Generally, we inquire into the nature of society and the human condition not merely out of scientific curiosity but because we want to improve them. Humans also clamor with a need to answer such burning questions as “How and why did we arrive here in the universe?” These may evoke some motivation even for much of biology and cosmology as well. The fact that geneses of the human sciences are intertwined with the drive to improve the human state is apparent by the eighteenth century, when “psychology, sociology, and economics were known as... «moral sciences»” (Root, 1993, p. 10). Hacking has described how the rise of social statistics in the nineteenth was linked with state programs to improve its administration (Hacking, 1990). Many subdisciplines of psychology, particularly as fashioned by Freud and the clinical schools, have been driven by the need to treat mental and emotional ailments.

Root has noted that Weber, Mill, Sigdwick, and Keynes argued against the promotion of values in the human sciences. As Root (1993) quotes Keynes: “It is not... the function of science to pass ethical judgments; and political economy regarded as a positive science may, therefore, be said to be independent of ethics.” (p. 33) Yet, Weber concedes that

When it comes to discovery... personal, cultural, moral, or political values cannot be eliminated from the social sciences; what social scientists choose to investigate or discover, they choose on the basis of the values they expect their investigation to advance. (Root, 1993, p. 33)

While human science researchers, like their natural-science peers, develop methods to help minimize personal bias and increase “objectivity,” what they choose to research continues to reflect a socially ameliorative teleology. To this

extent, Root cogently describes how the human-scientist's values influence the "choice of what data to collect and how to collect them and the influence of the gathering of the data on the values of the surrounding community" (1993, p. 124). Root also argues how theorizing in developmental psychology, functional sociology, and positive economics, for example, relies on "judgments of value beyond the judgments that appear in the ordinary course of discovery or justification in science" (1993, p. 53).

Almost any study in a human-science journal reveals subject-foci (Root, 1993: 33) that have socially ameliorative potential. A social-psychology study may reveal the relation between subjects' viewing violent crime in the arts and the perpetration of violent crimes by viewers. An economics study may find that consumer choices are not made rationally but according to various irrational value perceptions. Much work in developmental psychology and gender studies can help substantiate reasons and arguments for why women and men should have full equality not only under the law but in all aspects of society. Root goes on to argue that, given such tendencies in human sciences, they could be made "open and deliberate in their ties to partisanship... openly perfectionist and... communitarian" (1993, p. 250).

However, there is a flip side to this ameliorative teleological tendency in the human sciences: What if those, the subjects of the study, who represent a subpopulation whose lot the researcher aims to improve, do not conceive themselves to be in the set the researcher believes them to be, do not feel in need of improvement, or do not want the kind of improvement the study would imply? As for the categories of subjects created by the researcher, Root also notes that this sorting of data "by race rather than sex, sex rather than class, or class rather than education... is not value-neutral" (1993, p. 149). Researchers cannot help but impose their classification scheme upon the population. Thus, their presumed target subjects may not be their target subjects. They may be doing not only inadequate science but faulty (or even unethical) social work.

In social psychology and gender studies, Gilligan's (1982) pioneering work asserted that women showed different patterns of moral development from those of men. Women's moral development was oriented more around notions of care and responsibility, whereas men tended to be geared toward a rights morality based on blind justice, abstract principles, and impartiality. Work by Mary Belenky et al (1986) has taken a parallel approach in the study of women's intellectual development. They found that women tend toward a subjectively, emotionally, and intuitively based way of knowing and thinking, with an emphasis on connections to personal experience and other people. In fact, these authors adopt the metaphor

of the ear and silence as women's way of knowing, contrasted to a more masculine way of knowing through vision and "the mind's eye": The ear is considered to be more intimate, empathic and connected with others and less distancing, abstract, and separate than the eye. The authors conclude with programmatic suggestions for restructuring teaching – "connected teaching" – so that it better accommodates women's way of knowing. Other studies in social and educational psychology have found other educational factors that point to changes that can be made to improve women's education, such as the finding that scores of women students are higher when no men are in the room.

Such studies, though, as with much of those in human sciences, face the quandary of whether they are doing epistemic justice² to their target group (not to speak of ethical justice in their programmatic suggestions). Some researchers in women's education, such as Gilligan or Belenky, appear to be interested in inequalities in education that is modeled on education traditionally geared toward men. Such a model ramifies into broader social inequalities because the women concerned are not in a position to compete fairly with men. A predicament emerges from the fact that researchers must make the same classifications of their subjects which the presumed social tradition has made and which has led to the inequality. The researchers are making a concrete selection of subjects from a population, whereas the tradition itself, not being a conscious force, has made no such concrete selection. Individuals are variably affected by social and cultural traditions, some to a great extent, others little at all. The predicament is epistemic because the researchers must concretize or "freeze" their subjects in a moment of time and as a product of tradition. Yet, their subjects actually are changing through time and highly differentially affected by traditions: There is a knowledge gap between a the apparently clean-edged category – i.e., "woman" – and a jagged reality of the category of each subject.

3.1. HOW THE PREDICAMENT ARISES

An epistemic predicament, then, arises because we want to know facts about a group of people which seem to be obscured by socially given distinctions, such as gender behavioral traditions. But those traditional distinctions have often been vague. Some women, for example, are far more affected by gender traditions than other women (maybe still other women affected little at all by certain behavioral traditions). However, the researcher concretizes the traditions when selecting groups by gender for the sake of studying a social trait within a group. By thus

² By "justice" here I mean not justice in the ethical sense but in the sense of being most accurate in the gaining of knowledge.

“concretizing,” the researcher essentially declares that all individuals in that group are susceptible to that distinction, solidifying a distinction that heretofore was nebulous, existing vaguely or by hearsay, in the culture. In an important way, the researcher sacrifices the individual’s individuality, often, ironically, for the ultimate aim, given ethical or ideological motivation, of furthering individuals’ ends qua individuals and group members.

The predicament is epistemic because it concerns ways of knowing or methods of gaining knowledge. A tradition, that was once indistinct, such as the notion (variously circulated among members of society) that women are harmed by abstract male education, is now solidified into a distinct method of partitioning a population: “You are a woman (or you are a man), therefore you were subject to X or Y assumptions about your intellectual development.” A social-science goal would be to see through this cloudy tradition to the clear facts of individual personality or beyond. The concrete block of new knowledge, formed from and despite that cloud of tradition, is superimposed upon the search for clarity. Does it actually block knowledge that lies behind it?

The predicament can be put another way: We seek a certain kind of knowledge about what we human beings are so we can find out what we *can* be. All that we can fall back upon to assess ourselves, however, is the thing we have been, which does not include what we *can* be. We feel that at heart we are, say, egalitarian; we want to implement this “egalitarian core” of ourselves. But to characterize what we are, all we have available to rely upon is our present non-egalitarian condition. How can we bridge this gap? Which is the “real” us – the egalitarian core we believe we are or the old non-egalitarian persons we have always proven to be? The predicament is epistemic.

3.2. PRACTICAL QUESTIONS DERIVING FROM THE PREDICAMENT

In practical terms, there is a problem for such social psychology studies, along with comparable human-science studies that divide the population into women and men or other group distinctions with an eye on the inequality between these groups,³ is that the supposed subject population may not so clearly be the subject population. First, are all the women in the subject population primarily women vis-à-vis the subject focus? In the study of Belenky et al., the subject focus is intellectual development. By “primarily” women, I mean that, for every subject, is the subject’s “womanness” the aspect of that person that forms the prime factor

³ Also, all human-science studies that classify their populations, or “sort their data” in Root’s terminology, as by ethnic group or race or occupation, share a similar predicament. Later, I discuss such cases in a specific example, which can be generalized to the others.

in that person's intellectual development? This question would be difficult to answer in field-studies. However, the study's design, which divides the general population into women and men for the sake of assessing intellectual development, presumes that gender is a factor in intellectual development.

Let's consider a study that divides the population into *A*, music lovers, and *B*, non-music lovers. It then presumes that for the *A* subjects, music-loving is the primary factor that differentiates their intellectual development from that of non-music lovers *B*. The case is harder to see for men and women because we so broadly tend to assume that people are raised according to the gender corresponding to their apparent sex. But gender is as much as a trait of a subject's "choice" as music-loving. Dividing the general population by the gender criterion vis-à-vis intellectual development is to grant that, just as tradition leads us to believe, intellectual development indeed is dichotic along gender lines. Gender is made the primary factor that distinguishes the intellectual development of one group distinct from another. For the purposes of the study, the gender of the individuals of that group becomes in essence the primary factor in that individual's intellectual development. Whether or not this assumption holds true for each individual is, of course, not easy to answer. But answering it is incumbent upon the researcher if they seek epistemic justice.

Second, are all individuals in the group indeed of the female gender? The fact of there being more than two genders has only recently arisen (Hamzelou, 2011); earlier studies cannot be expected to speak to it. Nonetheless, all studies that henceforth classify subjects by gender need take this fact into account in gathering and sorting data. (I return to this question later.) How many subjects were androgynous or of any of a number of kinds of queer or transsexual or transvestite? To ignore these gender types would be to ignore the reality of gender, even if that gender is assigned by the individual subjects themselves. The researcher may contend that societies generally assign one of two genders – for example, in terms of education – and so the study faithfully reflects this division. However, in making parallel assignments in the study, the researcher brings in the bias of the gender division itself and so perpetuates the tradition. How can results of this study be of use to persons of different genders?

The third practical concern for the researcher is the subject-focus itself: In the case of Belenky et al. (1986), the focus is intellectual development by gender. Presumably, men and women have traditionally been reared so that certain types of education are conducive to nurturing masculine minds and other kinds of education are conducive to nurturing feminine ones. Yet, this very division has been a formative element in the inequality between these two genders, with the

feminine allegedly of “inferior” status (Wollstonecraft, 1792). How could giving an education that best nurtures this feminine mind, which in turn was integral to this inequality, possibly halt this inequality instead of perpetuate it all the more efficiently? This practical concern addresses the theorizing more than data gathering and sorting, which the other two practical concerns considered. However, it could bear on study design insofar as potential theorizing from anticipated results could influence the way researchers plan studies, establish the subject focus, and formulate the subject population.

3.3. FACING AND SOLVING THE PREDICAMENT

Predicaments are not always insoluble but may point to where solutions lie. This one appears to arise from a basic gap in human cognition: the gap between what individuals are or believe they are at a given moment and what they aspire to be. Which is the real “them”? It is a problem for human sciences as well, but examining it points to a particular way of understanding in the human sciences as distinct from the natural sciences. This understanding, if it doesn’t dehorn the predicament, at least points to ways human-science researchers may deal with some of the epistemic predicaments discussed already.

4. *Reflexive Concepts*

Of the enigmatic burdens that the human sciences may face, one derives from the nature of the concepts thriving in their human subjects themselves (Fodor, 1994). Humans operate both with concepts of what they believe themselves to be and of what they believe they should or can become (Gopnik, 1993; Funder, 1995). Both kinds of concepts are relevant to human sciences not only in that they are parts of the subjects who are studied but also because these concepts may affect the practice of the science itself – what it should study, how the results are interpreted, and what are done with them in society. Yet, these two kinds of concepts can often be at odds with one another and thus may create difficulties for the human sciences.

Many people in democratic societies, for example, aspire to a belief in egalitarianism, holding that all persons, whatever their social division, whether by ethnic group, cosmological belief, gender, class, or age, have certain rights of life and happiness and liberties. However, when it comes to raising their own children, these same people commonly may not inculcate their children with all the possibilities that will allow the freedom of choice in life which an egalitarian society requires. Significantly, they commonly mold the child’s gender into one they feel matches the child’s supposed biological sex. A “nimby” attitude

pervades: “Yes, every woman out there should have equal access to jobs, salary, freedom, and happiness. But my boy is going to be a *man* and not pushed around by other boys. And my girl may have a career, but she is going to be a woman and be attractive.” While such parents may aspire to egalitarian ideals on the one hand, on the other, they recoil from what lies ahead and resort to the comfort of what human beings have been for centuries: non-egalitarian creatures. After all, as such parents may assure themselves, men are men and women are women.

If both kinds of concepts, fairly inconsistent, are central to the human sciences, should practitioners consider which of these conceptions of ourselves best represent ourselves – what we aspire to be or what we feel we are? In one light, the question may not seem pressing to some human sciences. Each of them apparently deals with this enigmatic quality in their subjects, in different ways, generally by looking at the totality of individuals’ behaviors and not to such existential inconsistencies within individuals. Human sciences may be said not to be in the business of determining which of these parts of individuals is somehow more “real” or more representative of their subjects. Economics is concerned primarily with its subjects’ consuming and producing behavior. Cultural anthropology may take into account such concepts about oneself (or the collective’s concepts about the collective) by way of characterizing belief systems, myths, taboos, and religions. However, anthropological studies do not tend to declare that the aspirations of a culture are more (or less) indicative of that culture than the structures currently seen in that culture.

Psychological studies are often focused on behavioral outcomes rather than subjects’ alleged beliefs. Some subdisciplines of psychology may acknowledge that beliefs comprise an individual’s mental makeup and so may account for how these beliefs affect behavior. For example, social psychologists may study parents for the way they apportion toys to their children by the “gender” of the toy. They may even account for whether the parent has egalitarian beliefs and note whether these beliefs are reflected in behavior. However, they do not intend to assess whether these beliefs represent what the subjects “really” are. Individuals, though, may feel that where they are headed is what they really are, somewhat as a chrysalis, if it could think, might consider itself a butterfly. A person becoming a musician may feel she really is a concert pianist. An egalitarian may feel he really is spreading equal rights in the world even while he pushes his son, but not his daughter, to stand up for himself and fight other children. Are these two cases of the same type? Is the egalitarian really no more than a dreamer like the beginning pianist? It seems that the human scientist should have no problem here, since people often fool themselves about what they are (Gopnik, 1993; Funder, 1995),

and the human scientist must look at the behaviors, however hypocritical those behaviors may be (although hypocrisy itself may be a topic of research).

The problem, though, is that what people feel they are or can become may affect what they are as subjects of study. (Furthermore, the subjects of study, individually and as a whole, are de facto arbiters – the voting public, one might say – of the human sciences, so what they feel they are or can be may exert influence on the practice of the human sciences themselves.⁴) How does what people feel they are or can be then affect the human sciences?

In addressing this question, any concepts about what one is I call “reflexive concepts,” those concepts about what one currently is are “concurrent reflexive concepts,” and those about what one should or can be, “projective reflexive concepts.” These may relate to a specific area, such as one’s gender, which would be “gender reflexive concepts.”

5. Human Concepts in the Human Sciences

In this section, I contend that most human sciences depend to some degree upon humans’ conceptions of themselves. In other words, many or most human sciences would have no subject if humans had no conceptions of themselves. (Natural sciences, by contrast, do not focus on quasars’, gold’s, or bacteria’s conceptions of themselves for the trivial reason that these objects likely have no conceptions of themselves.⁵) Some disciplines of the natural sciences do study humans, as in anatomy or physiology, but when the subject focus is exclusively on human reflexive concepts (or, as I will argue later, human concepts generally), we peculiarly call the study one of human sciences. Whether or not the human-science in practice acknowledges it is studying human concepts is another issue. Even disciplines such as economics which are often characterized as the most “objective” have a subject focus that subsumes human reflexive concepts at least in part. There may be hybrid studies, as in medicine, that incorporate human reflexive concepts into their subject-focus, such as a study of testosterone levels in gay men. So, natural sciences may optionally subsume human reflexive concepts in their subject-foci; but for most disciplines, what we call human sciences must to some degree subsume reflexive concepts, as shall be contended below.

⁴ This problem is a reverse of Hacking’s “looping effect,” by which the results of human sciences influence what people consider themselves to be and thus, often, what they are.

⁵ Higher apes, such as chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans may have some degree of conceptions of themselves, and so sciences studying the behaviors of these subjects may need to consider these animals’ conceptions of themselves if possible.

A full argument for this position is beyond the scope of this paper, as it would entail an extensive analysis of what is meant by human concepts and reflexive concepts, what are the subject-foci of the different disciplines of human sciences, how reflexive concepts of “what I am” differ from “what we are,” and what does it mean to say that reflexive concepts must be integral to the subject-foci – in theories, data gathering and sorting, and explanations. I will, though, indicate the basic elements of the argument.

It hinges upon more than the trivial fact that humans have conceptions of themselves and any science studying human actions cannot help but somehow study these conceptions as part of their subjects. Instead, my case is that what we call human sciences – as opposed to the biological or biomedical sciences – are in fact those for whom human conceptions of themselves are the *sine qua non*.

The argument is not simply one of “mentalism” versus “behaviorism,” even though I often use extreme behaviorism as a “devil’s advocate,” or a benchmark for whether my argument can hold across the spectrum of theories about human-scientific theory. Furthermore, by stating that the researcher increases the accuracy of a study by designing it in a way that more fully incorporates the subjects’ reflexive concepts, I am not taking any side on the mind-body debates; a brain in a monistic world can easily have concepts. Even if the brain is somehow “fooling” itself that it has concepts, as extreme behaviorism may imply, such fooling is so overwhelming in our lives, and human language is so imbued with the notion that we have concepts, that trying to circumvent the use of concepts altogether leads researchers into tying themselves into knots, as I describe.

5.1. THE TWO SCIENTISTS

Instead of diving directly a full argument, I begin with an illustration indicating the gist of the argument. Take two scientists *A* and *B*. *A* is studying mice; *B* studies humans. *A* weighs and calipers her subjects and does skin cultures, blood counts, fecal examinations, and brain MRIs. So far, she is doing biomedical science. She then puts the mice through maze tests, runs operant conditioning tests with food rewards, observes copulation patterns and describes all the different murine squeaks with a “translation” to English of what these communication signals mean. These are only some of her behavioral tests. She can run such tests *ad infinitum* and generate an indefinitely large set of data, and her science will, as far as sciences are commonly considered to do, grow more complete and explanatory.

B proceeds similarly with his two humans, *X* and *Y*. He runs the biomedical tests. He runs the behavioral tests. But with the behavioral tests, he has different problems than *A* does.

5.1.1. Economics

B undertakes studies of *X*'s and *Y*'s economic behavior (behaviors not seen in *A*'s subjects). Sometimes *X* acts as a seller, sometimes as buyer; similarly for *Y*. *B* posits certain laws of economic behavior and ends up with something like the classical law of supply and demand. This law stipulates that price increases with consumer demand. *B* then finds that in explaining human economic behavior, he must invoke human concepts in at least two ways: 1) conceptions of the marketplace and the operations within the marketplace, such as demanding, as well as buying, pricing, and selling; 2) conceptions of who they are within that marketplace, such as buyer or seller. I contend that *B* cannot completely describe the system without invoking these concepts. The first are required because of *B*'s reliance up his subjects' own notions of demand. When *X* is the seller and *Y* the buyer, *X* raises prices when she detects *Y* has increased demand for the product. That is, the rise in price depends upon *X*'s conception of demand. Yet, *B* must also incorporate yet a higher-order conception, that is a reflexive concept: *X* raises the price because she understands herself as a seller, that is, an actor who must implement certain strategies in order to maintain that role. *Y* may have no concept of himself as buyer but only feel a desire for the product as *A*'s mouse does for the food; *Y* is only the "supplier" of the demand. Yet, *X* must be aware of herself as seller in order to adjust prices.

Let's say *B* alternatively attempts to follow scientist *A*'s approach and describe the mechanical actions of *X*'s and *Y*'s moving certain products back and forth over the counter. He may invent a term "seller" and "buyer" and describe the altering rates of product movements in relation to supply and *Y*'s advancing or retracting behavior. He may chart the movement of prices. But he may start running into problems. Sometimes *Y* comes in and asks repeatedly for the product but does not buy, and still *X* raises the price. *X* has raised the price without an overt movement of product. *B* can account for the change in price only because *X* has sensed an increase in demand from *Y*. In explanations, *B* must invoke *X*'s understanding of herself as seller responding to demand. *B* may attempt some kind of "verbal behavior" fix that accounts for *X*'s price change. However, notice that any verbal-behavior account that attempts to circumvent *X*'s understanding of herself as seller may easily get involved in a vast cataloguing of verbal exchanges,

all of which could more elegantly be summarized by the fact “*X* considers herself as seller.”

However, if *B* wants to take on the possibility of infinitely accumulating verbal behavior data instead of summarizing it all with a reflexive concept-acknowledging theory, he still has to account for *X*'s and *Y*'s possible role reversal. *Y* may sometimes come into *X*'s store himself buying as a seller. He may want to fool her into increasing her prices so that he may lower prices in his own shop and undersell her. *B* could either postulate that *Y* is considering himself a seller acting as a buyer, or *B* could tie his data and his theories into exponentially complicating knots with renditions of verbal behaviors. In sum, it is simpler, more elegant, and thus more conducive to robust explanation to invoke both his subjects' conceptions of marketplace and their conceptions of themselves within that marketplace.

5.1.2. Anthropology

Next, *B* sets out to study his subjects' familial practices, religion, and other cultural practices, the usual domains of anthropology. He likely runs across *X*'s and *Y*'s concepts of themselves as “The People.” In religion, he discovers their concepts of themselves as certain kinds of creatures. In familial relations, he encounters *X*'s and *Y*'s conceptions of themselves as woman and man, mother and father, brother and sister. As with economic behavior, he may try scientist *A*'s approach and catalogue all the verbal behaviors and relate them to other behaviors, avoiding the assumption about his subjects' reflexive concepts. But, in turn, he will find that positing these concepts will make his explanations simpler.

In fact, to circumvent all diction concerning reflexive concepts in these areas of study would necessarily be to overlook many of the concerns of culture and religion. Culture *involves* assigning social roles, such as brother, wife, and daughter, which require types of reflexive concepts, and religion *involves* both delineating what the person is as a human (concurrent reflexive concepts) and what the person or society should be (projective reflexive concepts). These and other concepts are the very subject of such studies. Even if *B* takes the most “behavioristic” approach, he will inevitably find himself positing reflexive concepts. He may try to say “*Y* functions as so-and-so's male sibling” instead of saying “*Y* considers himself someone's brother.” But when he finds that *Y* and all males in the society call each “brother,” he may try to explain how all male members treat each other as male siblings. But such an explanation fails because it will not hold true that they do so treat each other. He may say that the society maintains social cohesion and this is reflected in the way the males call each other by the term for “male sibling” even though the behavior exhibited to non-siblings

is not the same as that to siblings. Somehow, the men are extracting a kind of commonality of inter-sibling behavior and applying it to non-siblings.

However, already his phraseology, while he tries to sustain behavioristic ideals, is hedging around the notion of reflexive concepts. If the men can select from among their repertoire of inter-sibling behaviors and apply some of those to non-siblings, then they have some kind of mechanism – whether or not one wants to invoke a mentalistic term “concept” – of selecting SB_i from among “sibling behaviors” SB and generalizing them to non-siblings. That is, in whatever form “knowledge” consists, they have a way to “know” that certain types of behavior directed at one subclass of people is to be applied to a larger class as if that larger class were the same as that smaller class. The analogy of

$SB : SB_i : : \text{smaller class} : \text{larger class}$

is doing the same work as “ Y conceives non-siblings males as much like his brothers and treats them accordingly,” which avoids the circumlocutory behaviorist verbiage.

In other words, an extreme behavioristic approach, in the way it hedges around reflexive concepts, acknowledges those concepts, but it would function more elegantly by overtly acknowledging them and then phrasing its observations in whatever terminology it sees fit. However, much anthropology proceeds by working with these concepts anyway. A researcher who tries to explain how a religion tells its followers who they are as creatures and what they should be, or the way that cultural notions tell society members who The People are, but never acknowledges the existence of these reflexive concepts, would be inconsistent.

5.1.3. Psychology

For studies of psychology or social psychology, B will also encounter reflexive concepts. Let’s say he is studying how X and Y raise their baby Z . B ’s biological studies have posited Z as a female. And yet Z is being dressed in clothes more resembling Y ’s, taught to fight other children, play football, and other behaviors and traits that B had previously considered male. How does he explain X ’s and Y ’s behavior? He could say that X and Y have raised Z , a biological female, to be a male. Why did they do so? A radical behaviorist could do little more than repeat this explanation. But contemporary psychologists should have little problem with posing the question to X and Y , who reply, “We consider all babies should be reared in the way the society considers is for males only.” This projective-reflexive concept provides B some good explanatory power: It gives him an explanation for behavior that he would not have without incorporating reflexive concepts. (He even has a new area of research: The relation between

concurrent reflexive and projective-reflexive concepts, and how one influences the other.)

Further, it turns out that everything *Z* does in life is much like what *B* thought males should do, including marrying a biological female. Again, the description that *Z* is a biological female who does everything like what a stereotypical biological male does is, indeed, no more than a description. What's the explanation? Is *Z*'s behavior due purely to the way her parents raised her, that is, to their projective reflexive concepts? Or to hormones? Hypothalamus? *Z*'s case poses a set of predicaments about causal factors in human behavior, of the sort that underlies much of psychology: Just what causes a given human behavior or type of behavior? I contend that, in explanations of behavior, reflexive concepts play a role, although a varying one, sometimes prominent, sometimes less so. I want to clarify how these concepts figure into explanations.

Let's say that *Z* considers himself male. In *Z*'s case, it is not convincing to say that *Z* performs male-stereotypical behavior (MSB) *because* of this reflexive concept. Rarely do people set out in the morning to put on boxer shorts because at that instant they think they are male and so should wear boxer shorts. In such instances, gender reflexive concepts correspond to the habits. Perhaps some habits were formed because one considered that he is of the male gender and so must habitually act in a certain way, but those reflexive concepts do not cause particular behaviors. It may be the case that one has a gender reflexive concept of a given kind *because* one has a certain habit, formed in *Z*, perhaps thanks to *X*'s and *Y*'s efforts. On other occasions, say in a confrontation with another person, *Z* may think, "I have to respond with my fist because I am male." Again, it is hard to say to what degree the concept causes the behavior as opposed to playing a part in a complex of causes, such as physiological states, habits, and social contexts. (These relations between habits, reflexive concepts and particular behaviors are in themselves appropriate subject foci for psychological studies.) However, whether or not reflexive concepts are direct causes of behaviors in particular instances, they play a role in the way that behavior types are apportioned to a given individual as opposed to other behavior types apportioned to another individual – *and thus must influence the way B himself categorizes those behaviors in data gathering and sorting.*

B can only make a limited amount of explanatory headway by describing behaviors according to whether he perceives *Z* as biologically male or female and whether *Z* is behaving according to stereotypical biological-male or – female behavior types. *B* must also take into account what *Z* considers himself to be, in terms of gender reflexive concepts. If the concept does not provide *B* a direct

explanation of particular behaviors, it provides a heuristic to guide *B* into finer-grained distinctions of behavior types than biological-sexing of his subjects can alone provide. Considering the subjects' gender reflexive concepts, in other words, leads to the distinction that psychologists and other human-scientists make between biological sex and gender.

Taking into account reflexive concepts can lead *B* into even finer grained gender distinctions than between male and female (Bornstein, 1995). Gender studies has described multiple, recognizable genders, such as androgynous, various kinds of bisexual, butch, and other kinds of queer (see <http://thepbhscloset.weebly.com/> for a list). Each of these has distinct behavior patterns and may or may not combine various elements of the broader male and female stereotypical behaviors or add others outside those domains. For researcher *B* to set out in the laboratory of the world and attempt to decipher all these different genders without a guide from the reflexive concepts themselves would waste time and resources, to say the least. Consider *B*'s passing through the streets, bars, homes, offices, and bedrooms of cities with his clipboard, trying to observe thousands of people and make sense of the countless data so that he comes up with the gender categories he may have gotten more easily by asking his subjects. These very ways that people categorize and apportion their behavior types are the very categories that *B* will want to use to understand and explain their behaviors. Thus, reflexive concepts become de rigueur for *B*'s research.

If the need for these concepts holds true for the more extreme case of studying the wider range of gender types, it should hold true as well for the common case of studying the two genders once considered to comprise the gender universe, male and female. That is, the extreme case makes it obvious that *B* could well use the individual subjects' gender reflexive concepts to categorize people according to the many different genders. Yet, the same logic, concerning the way that people apportion their behavior types according to gender reflexive concepts, applies to the two presumably most populous genders. These two are so pervasive that *B* may feel that he can, by mere observation in the world laboratory, assign behavior types according to biological sex. But even with these two genders, the ways that people, or society, have apportioned behaviors by gender form the heuristic by which *B* actually sets out to observe and explain their behavior. That is, male and female gendering as a reflexive concept exists in society. (See Ridgeway & Correll, 2004 for more detail.) Although these genders roughly correspond with biological sex and so *B* may think he is setting out in his researches by examining biologically apportioned sexes, just as scientist *A* might

do with her mice, in humans *B* actually is studying conceptually apportioned genders.⁶

B will face a similar situation with regard to other categorizations of his subjects than gender. Root (2001) has described how a person’s race varies in the course of life and even in different circumstances, not only by how other people describe the subject’s race but how she herself describes it. Other categories by which *B* may want to type his subjects are more apparently conceptual, such as ethnic group, religion, and occupation. Some physical categories, such as age, height, and weight, seem to offer examples of how *B* may categorize his subjects for study purely by biological category, without reference to reflexive concepts.⁷ Such studies present good case studies in just what distinguishes psychology or human science from biology. If *B* is pursuing psychological studies, he is working with more than purely physical parameters, and there will be a reflexive-conceptual component in at least one of two ways.

First, consider a study with purely physical parameters, such as “How high can people of a given weight jump?” or “What are the heights of people of a certain age?” These questions are all biomedical. Now consider a study such as “How tall are American women?” This is a possible human-science study, and it brings in the reflexive concepts of gender and culture. One may draw up indefinitely long lists of studies on human subjects, and one starts to see a pattern and can divide them by biomedical or psychology/human science:

<i>Biomedical</i>	<i>Psychology/Human Science</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fetal Effects of Alcohol Consumption in Mothers • Cortisone Levels in 12-Year-Old Boys⁸ Correlate with Asthma Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Occupational Effects of Alcoholism in Mothers • Lower Test Scores in 12-Year-Old Boys Correlate with Increased Asthma

⁶ In fact, as *B* studies other cultures than that of the United States, he may discover other sets of multiple genders than the one described for the United States; many cultures have more than two genders (See Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

⁷ However, see Baars, 2012.

⁸ “Boy” can be taken as purely biological sex. However, by allowing this exception, I risk the criticism of why I allow research that I call “medical” to distinguish sex of its subjects without reference to gender while I do not allow “psychological” research to apportion behavior types according to what *B* perceives to be purely biological sex. I can only suggest the argument in defense of this discrimination, as it would be extensive, but it would involve the fact that the biomedical study does not investigate behaviors that the investigator is typing by apparent sex, and if she were to do so, she would, as I have indicated already, actually be referring to behavior types that are apportioned by gender-reflexive concepts. Although her perception of subject *Y* as “boy” or “young human of male sex” arguably arises from her own culturally shaped concepts, as does her perception of “quasar” or “quark,” she can correctly refer to *Y* as “boy” in her biomedical study

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- | | |
|---|--|
| • Carbohydrate Intake Impact on Lowered Weight of Obese Adult Females | • The Impact of Lowered Carbohydrate Intake on Self-Esteem in Obese Women |
| • Change in Testosterone Levels upon Viewing of High-Violence-Rated Movies in Adolescent Boys | • Incidents of School Violence Correspond Positively with Viewing of High-Violence-Rated Movies in Adolescent Boys |

The list could go on. I include the last pair of studies as a “difficult case” illustrating not only how hard it can be to distinguish between biomedical studies and psychological studies but also how it is still possible to so distinguish them, according to the way the study ultimately hinges upon, or is about, reflexive concepts. In the testosterone study, the stimulus – movies rated as violent – may itself be a reflexive-conceptual object. After all, movies rated as violent require our ideas of violence, which themselves arise out of our reflexive concepts of who we are as a civilized people. Yet the subject-focus of the study is about changes in hormone levels – and we might substitute for movies any of a number of stimuli, such as marauding bears or sodium iodine infusions, and the focus in all cases is merely about a shift in a biochemical level. But in the right-hand study in the chart, the subject-focus is on incidents of school violence, and which is a reflexive concept-dependant parameter, just as B’s study about Z’s male-like behavior is about a gender reflexive concept. Although the left-hand study would not exist without the reflexive conceptual objects “violent movies,” those objects are only contingent in the study, which is essentially about a physical parameter. The right-hand study depends necessarily upon a reflexive-conceptual parameter.

There may also be hybrid studies, such as those Root (2001) describes, about biomedical/physical parameters within a socially defined group, such as rates of tuberculosis among African-Americans, in which the focus is both on a physical parameter (tuberculosis) and a reflexive-conceptual one (African-Americanism). And there may be some studies whose types are virtually impossible to decide upon, such as “Rates of Sexual Intercourse Correspond to Viewing of High-Violence-Rated Movies in Adolescent Boys,” in which the parameters seem physical (or the stimulus is contingent, such as the movies) and yet intuitively the study seems to have a social character.

because (in most cases) she is referring to a physical fact about the subject, whereas in a study about how a boy behaves qua boy, she is asserting a gender alter-reflexive concept, or a concept about what another person is. (I acknowledge that this argument demands full fleshing out to avoid circularity, and though I can only assert that I believe it can be done, this hiatus leaves a hole in this discussion.)

There is a second way in which *B*, in pursuing psychological studies, is working with more than purely physical parameters, so there may be a reflexive-conceptual component: Even studies that focus on physical traits – whether a study purely of physical traits or one that mixes physical and reflexive conceptual – should at least consider that people are rarely purely “physical.”⁹ That is, what they are may be influenced or reflected by what they consider themselves to be. A 12-year-old girl may be classed with other 12-year-olds but may justifiably consider herself adult in the way she behaves, thinks, converses and looks. A 5’0” Euro-American male may justifiably consider himself not short in the way he behaves and thinks.¹⁰

In sum, it appears that, in pursuing what are normally termed psychological studies, *B* must incorporate reflexive concepts into his study, in its subject-focus or data gathering and sorting, or acknowledge them in his explanations. As with his economics and anthropological studies, such concepts are a *sine qua non* of his research. If there were no such concepts, for the studies I examined he would then have no viable studies. Yet, in purely physical studies, he could still have legitimate studies without reflexive concepts, even if some physical studies used reflexive-conceptual parameters.

(For the case of linguistics, which poses a special challenge in determining whether it subsumes reflexive concepts in its practice, I refer the reader to the Appendix.)

5.2. THE BROADER ROLE OF CONCEPTS IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES

So far, the illustration of scientists *A* and *B* has indicated how reflexive concepts are a *sine qua non* for many human sciences as distinct from the biological sciences. At least for economics, anthropology and psychology (though possibly not for linguistics), *B* must employ at some level the human concepts of who or what we as *Homo sapiens* are and what we think we should be in formulating scientific studies or explanations of the observed phenomena, whereas *A* requires no comparable concepts for her scientific explanations about murine behavior. With this foundation, I suggest further that these human sciences do not simply require reflexive concepts but that human sciences in general require human concepts in general. These concepts are in fact their general subject focus, which distinguishes them from the biological and physical sciences.¹¹ With this

⁹ Again, this statement does not assume dualism or deny monism.

¹⁰ In a later section, I will discuss what role these kinds of reflexive concepts should play in human sciences.

¹¹ It may be objected that natural sciences are actually about human concepts because “star” or “gold” are actually concepts, so astronomers and chemists have concepts as their subject foci as

suggestion, I do not mean the trivial case that if humans were not conceptual creatures we would not be wise enough to pursue human sciences; for in that case humans would also not have the physical sciences, and so there would be no demarcation between physical and human sciences. Instead, I mean that the biomedical sciences, with the exception of hybrid studies, can research the human without reference to the concepts of their subjects either in the particular focus of the study or in the explanations. Human sciences, by contrast, are those that necessarily subsume the concepts in their subjects, either in the focus or the study or in the explanation.

More broadly, the subject of the human sciences is precisely human concepts, whether reflexive or other types. Thus, concepts of what we are figures prominently in anthropology and psychology and to some degree in economics. But the entire range of the human conceptual universe is game for human sciences. Art and manufactured objects are the subjects of art history and archaeology, music the subject of musicology, winemaking the subject of enology, gender the subject of gender studies. The sciences and social sciences, as bodies of concepts, are themselves subject to scientific study. Strip away human concepts, the human can still be studied, but the result is what we call biology or biomedical sciences. The terminology distinguishing the biological and human sciences is not arbitrary and reflects this one criterion: The subject of the latter is necessarily concepts; the subject of the former optionally involves concepts.

A complete taxonomy of the different disciplines and practices of the human sciences might be made according to the classes of concepts in their subject foci, but such is not my purpose. I merely want to propose how the universe of human concepts is the *since qua non* of human sciences and their subjects of study and that particular disciplines depend upon reflexive concepts – both concurrent and projective – particularly social psychology.

My explanation here is then descriptive. I have been looking to the sciences according to the taxonomy applied to them – anatomy and cosmology being natural sciences, economics and social psychology being human sciences – and

well as the human sciences do. I counter that when astronomers study a star, they are not studying the concept of the star but the thing behind the concept. When psychologists study the effects of gender upon intellectual development, they are studying something which is a concept, “gender” – there is not “thing” behind that concept which is not a concept, as in the case of a star. The counterargument would hold that there is no “thing” behind “star,” either – but at this point the debate evolves into a metaphysical issue of whether there are any real things beside concepts; I have to hold that there are real things behind the concepts of those things that we ascribe as real things, but that there are some entities, such as “gender,” that are no more than concepts and have no real things behind them.

seeking a characteristic that distinguishes the two as practices. My prescriptive suggestion for the human sciences, particularly social psychology, based on this description, is to follow.

6. More Finely Positioning Reflexive Concepts in Psychology

If the universe of human concepts is is true subject matter of the human sciences, psychology takes a subset of these. Reflexive concepts are crucial elements in at least some subdisciplines. I hesitate to say that reflexive concepts are central in the subdisciplines that border on the biomedical sciences, such as some neuropsychology. The study of how certain areas of the brains of cats are activated as they view certain kinds of motion is arguably psychology yet not in the human sciences, although such work can inform the human sciences. The study of psi phenomena and other purely perceptual studies in humans presents another problem to the idea that the human sciences are about concepts. Psi-phenomena research has little to do with the subject's concept of who she is or what she can be. However, it is concerned with the concepts of how we perceive certain kinds of objects and motion. We may perceive two perfectly still objects as moving across a continuous space if they are presented in rapid succession. The question then is whether this study of perception actually involves concepts in the way I have been contending. The subjects may conceive that they are perceiving motion, but subject focus of the study is not their conception but perception. I might then respond that percepts are building blocks of concepts, but then I run into a slippery slope: Is the study of the building blocks of percepts also psychology? The slope then slides on down the line to cells, atoms, and quarks. Thus, purely perceptual psychology presents one problem case for whether concepts are the subject matter behind all human sciences. At best, it represents what happens at the periphery of the human sciences, before they shade into biomedical sciences: They become less about concepts than about the ingredients of concepts.

Social psychology, though, clearly depends upon concepts and probably on reflexive concepts. The "social" element itself implies that there are concepts involved as to who a person or what a society is and, often, what they should or can be. Studies in social psychology classify individuals into groups – Asian, lawyer, adolescent, housewife, Baptist, Albanian, identical twin, liberal, or avid comic-book reader. These classifications ultimately depend on how the individual conceives himself. Often the classification also is influenced by what other people think the person is, via a type of concept related to reflexive concepts, alter-reflexive concepts. In society itself, these alter-reflexive concepts often play a

highly influential role in not only shaping the person's own reflexive concepts but also delimiting that person's life choices. For example, in the many states in Southern United States up until the 1960's, being one-sixteenth African-American could classify you as black, however you may have been raised, and influence how easy it might be for you to vote or get a job or where you sit on a bus. As described already for studies assuming gender classifications, the difficulty for social psychology is that too often the researchers also assume these alter-reflexive concepts for their subjects and gathers and sorts her data accordingly.

What is more accurate for a social psychological study: to rely on reflexive or alter-reflexive concepts for classifying subjects? It depends on the study. If the study is *about* the way society or its classification systems classifies people, then it accurately assumes alter-reflexive concepts in its data gathering and sorting. For example, a study into depression caused by racial discrimination may resort to classifying its subjects by alter-reflexive concepts, since it is these concepts by which its subjects experience discrimination. However, a study into how persons of different genders develop morally is not *about* the alter-reflexive gender concepts. Indeed, the study may need to acknowledge those gender concepts in its report, since those concepts are relevant to the subjects' moral development. The study instead is about how individuals develop morally, and those individuals come in different genders. Those genders may be affected by alter-reflexive concepts, but those genders are ultimately decided by the subjects themselves. The researchers, as in the case of Belenky et al. (1986), may assert that they have made such an allowance, since on their questionnaire they included questions about what the subject feels that being a women means to her. This approach, however, already assumes the same gender typing as that of the at-large alter-reflexive gender concepts of tradition. Furthermore, it does not address the issue raised earlier of how to ensure that the phenomenon of the subject-focus (such as intellectual development) is primary for the subject vis-à-vis the subject's classification (such as being a woman).

Granted that studies in social psychology must gather and sort their data according to the reflexive concepts of its human subjects. How can the researcher use this understanding about social psychology to deal with the epistemic predicament? It is useful to look at related studies, one set of studies being hybrid (from biomedical science with elements of human sciences), the other from social psychology.

7. On the Way to Solving the Epistemic Predicament

The two examples do not explicitly try to circumvent the epistemic predicament but represent methods either that 1) tackle alter-reflexive concepts directly in their data gathering and sorting or 2) at least do not further the alter-reflexive (gender) concepts of tradition by superimposing them upon subjects for data sorting. Nonetheless they reflect how the alter-reflexive concepts shape our thinking and acting and so point to ways of how we can “be what we can be.”

7.1. ROOT: RACE IN MEDICINE

In “The Problem of Race in Medicine,” Michael Root (2001) describes how, although race is non-biological, the myth of its existence is so prevalent in the United States that it affects what health care various persons receive. Race is so unstable and desultory an alter-reflexive concept that it can change radically throughout an individual’s life, due to different criteria that different bureaucracies use for assessing race. As a result, he notes, “one can be black at birth, American Indian at 40, and white at death.” Easily, one’s reflexive concept can differ vastly from the alter-reflexive. Root’s point is that many people face discrimination in health care because of the alter-reflexive concept of race given to them. However, he notes, certain diseases are more likely in an individual if that person’s mother is classified as black, or other diseases are more likely if the father is classified black. Thus, “epidemiologists are likely to incorrectly measure a racial difference in health risk or to improperly explain the risk if they employ the same definition of black and white in the study of every disease” (2001, p. 22). While Root finds that epidemiologists must still use these alter-reflexive concepts for their subjects as long as society uses such concepts to discriminate in individual health care, he calls for floating criteria in assigning these concepts. An individual thus is not designated by an alter-reflexive concept that stamps her throughout life like a brand, whatever her own reflexive concept may be. Instead, the epidemiological studies must adjust the way that alter-reflexive concepts apply to that person according to how the given subject issue, such as fetal alcohol syndrome or byssinosis, applies to her vis-à-vis the alter-reflexive concept.

7.2. EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION BY GENDER

Valian (1998, pp. 127-128) describes social psychological studies about how people’s gender schemas operate. In one study by L. S. Fidel, 10 PhD resumes for a professorial job-position were sent to 147 academic department heads, and six male- and four female-typical names were affixed to the resumes. Furthermore, the names were rotated on different resumes to assure a good mix of name-recognition with resume. The department heads gave the male names an associate-professor

position, and the female names the assistant-professor label. The study reveals that a strong gender schema at work in the respondents. The study also provides useful information for those seeking ameliorative policies. For example, one might develop ways for department heads to use certain strict or “objective” criteria to assure fair assessment of resumes. Also, the study itself might raise awareness of gender schemas in department heads and help them consciously to counter these schemas when assessing resumes. However, no subjects themselves were assigned to traditional alter-reflexive gender concepts.¹² The study ingeniously taps into our current non-egalitarian human condition, in order to point to ways we can live up to our projective reflexive concepts, or what we can be.

7.3. OPTIONS FOR SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

What can researchers such as Gilligan and Belenky et al. do to overcome the epistemic predicament? How can they investigate alter-reflexive concepts without concretizing those concepts in their subjects and obstructing view of those subjects’ reflexive concepts, both concurrent and projective? One step for all studies involving their subjects’ genders is to ensure they precisely assess their subjects’ own gender reflexive concepts – what those subjects consider themselves to be, genderwise, whether any of various types of queer, various types of hermaphrodite, or asexual. They might also assess what their subjects’ genders are vis-à-vis particular situations. In a combat situation, a subject may consider herself traditional male; in another, she might be asexual. The subject’s reflexive gender concepts vis-à-vis the subject area may be entirely significant to the study. In a math classroom, I may be alter-reflexive female, but I may otherwise be reflexive asexual or male, so that boys’ presences either make no difference, or even make me more competitive, in my math scores. Would it be accurate science to say I am a member of a group that performs more poorly in the presence of boys? Further, would it be fair to put me in a classroom with all alter-reflexive females as a result of this study? No, and no.

However, if the subject issue concerns gender discriminatory practices, it might be useful, along the lines Root (2001) suggests for race in medicine, to note by which gender the subject may be assessed via alter-reflexive concepts within a given situation. How this discrimination relates to the subject’s reflexive gender concept could be a useful parameter as well. Generally, as social psychology must

¹² Valian (1998) does not note the gender of the respondents, though I understand from Alison Wylie (personal communication) that the respondents’ gender was noted in the study, revealing that gender of the respondent made no difference in the rating of the resumes. However, this use of the subject/respondents’ genders was only incidental, not integral, to the study. That is, the subject focus of the study was not the subject’s or respondent’s alter-reflexive gender concepts.

take into account what we are, and what we are is decided as much, if not more, by reflexive concepts as by alter-reflexive, studies in this subdiscipline must always take into account their subjects' reflexive concepts, generally and, if relevant, particularly vis-à-vis the subject issue.

8. Conclusion

Given the characteristic that distinguishes the human from the natural sciences – the former necessarily have human concepts as their general subject matter – I contend that practices such as social psychology would do more robust science by maximizing this characteristic and this subdiscipline must acknowledge reflexive concepts in its study designs.

One enigma remains unanswered: Which is the “real” us – what we currently are and what we conceive ourselves to be, or what we can be, are striving to become? If we professedly are egalitarians but still make our daughters wear dresses but not our boys, are we then *not* egalitarian? It seems that the human state is a Heraclitian one of constant transition. Human-scientists must perform the impossible task of somehow at once freezing their subjects in place and yet not subtracting from their transitory nature. However, it is possible to devise studies that can extract facts about what the subject has been and still allow a view into where that subject can go. As Weber acknowledged, the human sciences will probably always have an ameliorative element.

In a way, all of us are subjects of human-science studies because these studies attempt to add to, if not shape, our reflexive concepts. And in turn, the human sciences represent an effort of our species to fulfill our projective reflexive concepts and become our own ideals. We can choose to ignore the results (although too often we eagerly accept the sacred edicts of science and activate Hacking's “Looping effect”), Congress can suspend funding, and we can even undermine vast human-science experiments, as was done to those of the Soviet Union. There is some amount of ongoing weeding process. However, it is incumbent upon human-scientists themselves to adjust their methods so they are studying not the concretized, unchangeable us but the fluid, ever-mobile us. Both of these aspects comprise the real us, the real subject, but the former cannot be studied at the expense of the latter, as too often is the case. With such care in the work, researchers in the human sciences can more assuredly be, as Root phrases it, “openly perfectionist” (Root, 1993, p. 250).

How do these results stand in terms of natural kinds vs. social construction, or introspection vs. objectivity, as brought up early as contrasts to this article's

positions? In human sciences, there are plausible cases of a degree of natural kinds, as in cross-cultural mental disorders. Many anthropologists acknowledge the likelihood of many cross-cultural traits (Brown, 1991, 2000), from abstraction in thought and speech to baby talk, from classifications of plants to those of sex. It is very hard to sustain that these hundreds of listed common traits just so happen to have arisen in every culture and so are all socially construction. Yet, ascribing all human social traits to natural kinds would stretch plausibility. The fact that humans have sexual behavioral codes is one matter, but the vast differences among these in how they manifest among societies almost stretches the vary concept of sexual customs. I suggest that the notion of reflexive concepts comes somewhere between these two endpoints. Natural kinds point to the fact there are broad categories that characterize the human being such that we can even have the referent of the concept of human in the first place. But given those broad distinctions, social constructs can help us hone in on the details exhibited by individualism to look more to the individuality which is a strict character of the species, which is composed of individuals. Reflexive concepts help articulate individuals' distinction even if their articulations thereof are not wholly accurate or redoubtable over time. Those distinctions are, of course, strongly influenced by social factors. This compromise between the two endpoints is comparable to that to the similar nature vs, nurture debate. Acknowledging that nature has a great part in fashioning the general human form while nurture can account for the fine details manifest in every individual. Recognizing these two endpoints not only need not be inconsistent but instead be entirely consistent with the empirical facts.

But is recourse to reflexive concepts not a concession to introspection to the expense of objectivity? This article contends that reflexive concepts are no more a compromise of objectivity than is use of interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and other such means of obtaining information about a subject from the subject. "Introspection" as a concept of its own has troubles of vagueness and even its ontology: Just what in the mind is looking at just what? And indeed, people may have inaccurate notions about themselves and ever their opinions, discounting much claim to self-knowledge. Yet, if we as natural-language speakers and listeners cannot rely to a reasonable degree on what people say about themselves however exactly thy derived such possible information, then indeed, as some analytic philosophers have bemoaned, human language is useless for finding out anything about anything. But the sciences have grown tremendously by using natural language. As the article has argued, it is a given that concepts are central and essential to what human beings are and thereby, articulated via subjects, are central to account for in studying these subjects. The methods of using subjects'

inner-derived concepts and perspectives may proceed whether through a behavioristic or mentalistic framework. Insofar as reflexive concepts and alter-reflexive concepts hold potential information about the subject, and these data-gathering methods discussed can – as they very presumably can – yield useful information and concepts are indeed crucial to the human being, then this whole approach to/suggested program for studying humans can be objective.

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The South and Religion in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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Abstract

*This paper argues that Benjy and Dilsey, the narrators of the first and last part of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, function as loyal embodiments of the image of the South and of the religious feelings and beliefs fostered by the author's particular vision of the South. Terms like the soul of the South, the mind of the South, pastoral grace, refinement, the Southern Belle, the myth of chivalry or tradition, used in relation with a literary and cultural movement called the Southern Renaissance, end up defining a world long after the realities that made that world were themselves obsolete. Even though Benjy lacks the possibility to express himself and Dilsey cannot explain what the beginning and the ending really are, it is Faulkner's intention to make them representative for his artistic creed.*

Keywords: William Faulkner, literary criticism, pastoral grace, myth, religion, the South.

Dealing with the metaphors of Incarnation,¹ Faulkner brings up two distinct and serious literary themes. On the one hand, the author is faced with the intricate images of the South, and with his own projection of a fictional space, that of the Yoknapatawpha County. On the other hand, still related, but leading to another direction, there are the religious or mythical visions of the characters peopling this particular space, together with Faulkner's own religious beliefs. Even if these two themes are constantly interwoven, this paper is an attempt to argue that Benjy and Dilsey, the so-called narrators of the first and last part² of *The Sound and the Fury*

¹ "Faulkner seems to think of writing as a kind of consecration. And he seems to consider the characters in his stories as if they were performing a ritual, enthralled by the same sense of dedication as his own. The writing in relating to ritual is taking part in it, in a religious effort to justify the sense of consecration." (Arthos, 1954, p. 101) Also, "the word can be made flesh" is one of Benn Michaels's assumptions in discussing *The Sound and the Fury* (Michaels, 1995, p. 2).

² In Dilsey's own words, "I seed de beginning, en now I sees de endin" (p. 185).

function as loyal embodiments of the Faulknerian image of the South and of the religious feelings and beliefs fostered by this particular vision of the South.

Moreover, Faulkner claims, be it directly or not, for him the challenging status of a world-creator,³ thus having the creative power of the word under intense scrutiny. Nonetheless, his consecutive narratives reveal a world in itself, a world having as its foundation both the projection and the retrospection of a loss. The outcome of such an endeavor is a challenge Faulkner does not hesitate to confront. Writing about loss, dissolution and fall brings about the author's vision of the South as a doomed reality, lacking proper ways of expression and, as a terrible consequence, unable to be created as such.

Cultural critics and historians often refer to the South as perceived by the Southerners as the embodiment of a "lost cause" which was provoked by their defeat in the Civil War. In fact, the war and, soon after, the Reconstruction efforts face the Southerners with difficult identity issues. As the generations are able to trace themselves back to the first colonizers, they seem now to lack the power and strength to replicate further. Everything they believed in comes to a halt and it is replaced by an illusion, because "[t]he author is concerned with the creation or recreation of a world specifically based on false dreams of departed glories" (Gresham, p. xii).⁴ An investigation of these illusions will clearly expose the Southern myth.

Terms like the soul of the South, the mind of the South, pastoral grace, refinement, the Southern Belle, the myth of chivalry, tradition, etc., used in relation with a literary and cultural movement called the Southern Renaissance, end up defining a world long after the realities that made that world possible were themselves obsolete. Moreover, they are powerful enough to demarcate the past from the present, the old from the new. Even if they have never signified real entities, they are regarded as potent burdens by those incapable of reaching out to their forefathers deeds. When Richard H. King characterizes the "Southern family romance" as representative for the "South's dream", he accentuates the common belief that perceived "society as the family writ large. [...] The actual family was destiny; and the region was conceived of as a vast metaphorical family, hierarchically organized and organically linked by (pseudo-)ties of blood" (King

³ Faulkner himself considered his writing like a religious endeavor and referred to Sartoris as "the germ of my apocrypha" (Gwynn & Blotner, p. 285).

⁴ Ascribing four themes (self, sex, race and religion) to four novels (Sartoris, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!*) Gresham's study concentrates on the romantic concept of "selfhood" (identity) as rendered by the prototype of the Cavalier, seriously damaged by sexual, racial and religious issues, which the Southern idealism could not hide nor solve.

250).⁵ As expected, the father is the “presiding presence”, a stereotype of medieval Cavalier, leading the war against the Yankees, whereas the mother is looking after the children and the slaves.

The acuity of this patriarchal pattern is totally subverted in the case of the Compson family. True to it in the past, the family seems to have lost the mythical structure, even though Quentin still strives to recapture it in his failed incestuous attempts. His death, his suicide, represents Faulkner’s take on the dissolution of the myth of the South itself.⁶

In fact, Faulkner’s attempt is to re-mythologize the South. His literary account of the South, both the old and the new one, blends history and religion in an effort to reconcile myth and history. Commenting on Richard King, John Irwin and David Minter, John Sykes argues that “Faulkner saw the cultural edifice of the South as a mythic construct which sought to evade history” and he disputes that the author of *The Sound and the Fury* “seeks to fashion a new myth through art in order to supply the imagination with the order lacking in history itself”. Sykes, then, concludes that “Faulkner’s project in the Yoknapatawpha fiction is a religious enterprise” (Sykes 15).⁷

Religion, like everything else in Faulkner’s writing, is far from being unequivocal. Ambiguity, multiplicity and plurivocality undergo the test of the religious pattern in *The Sound and the Fury*. This is a fact clearly identified by William Mallard in his study *The Reflection of Theology in Literature*. In the chapter consecrated to Faulkner’s novel, Mallard concludes that

⁵ It is interesting to note that there are also critics who dismiss the acuity and relevance of a Southern myth. For instance, in her essay “Faulkner’s American”, republished in the critical edition of the novel, Carolyn Porter argues that instead of being a “remembrance of a glorious time passed” the Southern narrative served the interests of the “aspiring men” who reinvented the Old South for the pure economical reason of using its resources.

⁶ In the essay “Faulkner’s Fiction and Southern Society”, also republished in the critical edition of the novel, Myra Jehlen discerns between two perspectives regarding the South, that of the farmer and of the planter, and contends that Faulkner was unable to fully approve of either of one. In Jehlen’s view the “hopelessness of *The Sound and the Fury* is the author’s failure to visualize the past in other than conventional terms”, that is, in the terms of the patriarchal Southern family, whereas my belief is that Faulkner’s vision of the past, far from being conventional, plays with the convention in order to construct an artistic distinctiveness capable of explaining the dissolution of the myth.

⁷ Sykes argues that Faulkner’s “ultimate hope, partially realized in *Go Down, Moses*, is to discover a myth which will reclaim history, but in the bulk of his great fiction the relation between myth and history is simply antithetical”, whereas I contend that in *The Sound and the Fury* history and myth are not antithetical, since they are represented by Benjy and Dilsey, characters who are everything else but antithetical.

In the past, Christian commentary on Faulkner's work has suggested that the characters of Benjy and Dilsey are bearers of grace in the novel. But this is to give up the center of the novel to "sin and damnation" in order to find the redeeming Christian God in the book at some other point. Rather, Benjy and Dilsey share in the entire structure, which must be judged as a whole. A reminiscence of the Christian story is present: yet the theology is a reflection in which the lines between God incarnate and the general human condition are inconclusive. (Mallard, p. 181)

While it gives good reasoning to the assumption that Benjy and Dilsey are also capable of redeeming their entire reality, Mallard's point also argues Faulkner's theological reflection as well.

Interestingly enough, commentators imposed various religious expressions on the author as well as on his work. A synopsis of all these aspects is realized by Alma A. Ilacqua in the article "From Purvey of Perversion to Defender of the Faithful". As far as the author is concerned, Faulkner was read, almost from the beginning of his prodigious career, as a traditional moralist and his religious vision consisted of "a series of related myths (or aspects of a single myth) built around the conflict between traditionalism and anti-traditional modern world in which it is immersed" (Ilacqua, 1981, p. 35). This conflict, and with it, the polarity good and evil, with Calvinist, Puritan or Nihilistic influences is considered to be the foundation of Faulkner's religious plight. The shift from the immorality of his world, as seen by early commentators when faced with the brutality, the skepticism and the inhumanity of Faulkner's writing, to the morality of his literary endeavor posits the author in a real religious perspective, in which sin and damnation are redeemable.

Religious symbols represent vehicles for conveying literary meaning and character contour. *The Sound and the Fury* uses innumerable Biblical symbols in an attempt to originally portray the fall of a family and, with it, the fall of a historical epoch. Blasphemy and orthodoxy interweave in Faulkner's novel in an effort to better express the author's vision of a both doomed and redeemable reality. Following the Biblical pattern of creating a world by the power of his word, Faulkner argues that the word has lost its creative power leaving the world to replicate itself. The historical time and its progression are featured in opposition with an original blend of mythical time and its constant repetition.

Benjy's apprehension of time is representative for Faulkner's idea of his major fictional design of the Yoknapatawpha County. That is, Benjy, as a character, simply exists, as the county itself has its own history, without having a clear definition of time and its progression. The fact that he turns 33 in the Holy Saturday of 1928 places him exactly between historical and mythical time, i.e. a day after Crucifixion and a day before Resurrection. Thus, Crucifixion represents

The South and Religion in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury

history, while Resurrection represents religion. Moreover, Benjy's inability to speak, that is to communicate and interrelate with the others and with the surrounding reality, clearly demonstrates his impossibility to integrate into a natural development. Even if he is physically turning 33 he is in no position of acquiescing this fact, leaving him outside history and religion. As Dilsey, Benjy is a witness, rather than an actor, of the fall, historically represented by the decline of the Southern society, and literary rendered by Caddy's loss of virginity.

Moreover, for Dilsey, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection represent the beginning and the end in an effort of restoring the natural order over the social one. It might be the end of history, represented by the fall of an epoch, clearly rendered by the impotence of all the three Compson male heirs, but, for Dilsey, the natural law, the unequivocal order of things, her own sense of religion make her feel that redemption is attainable at the price of sacrifice. The novel's use of the temporal structure ironically pairs Dilsey's beliefs. The fact that Benjy's section opens the novel partly represents the "beginning". The reader is introduced into a reality which is chaotic, a-temporal and representative for a Faulknerian sample of an uncreated world. Quentin's section brings along some sense of order, by imposing the myth of the Southern tradition over the yet uncreated world. Finally, the last two sections actually represent the full embodiments of Crucifixion and Resurrection, be it only for the reason that they are chronologically placed on the Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Thus the novel ends with Dilsey's natural revelations as counteracting Jason's social and familial repulsions.

The New South as Benjy

In *The Sound and the Fury* William Faulkner represents the fall of the South through the fall of a famous aristocratic family. The fall itself is expressed through a powerful series of losses: the loss of purity, the loss of authority, the loss of fortune, and, eventually, the loss of the Southern American pastoral innocence. The outcome of such a fall soon exhibits a sense of blurred reality which provokes the characters to make serious efforts to re-order it. For Benjamin alone this new sense of reality is the only available reality, and its order is his order. When Faulkner experiments with the new limited objective narrative of Benjy's section, he experiments with his own vision of the new South, because Benjy represents the new South, both as a doomed force and as a redemptive one.

After the Civil War and the Restoration this new South is on a search for a new identity. In his novel, Faulkner deals with this search in various ways. One of them pairs Benjy's vision of reality with the new Southern reality and his actions,

combined with the other characters' attitude toward Benjy shape this reality. When Maury's retardation is discovered, the family, Mrs. Compson especially, wants to change his name into Benjamin. "Benjamin came out from the bible" (p. 37) Caddy informs Dilsey, who does not understand the relevance of such an endeavor, because "name aint going to help him. Hurt him, neither" (p. 37). Dilsey is basically right, but she fails to understand that this baptism is going to help or hurt at a symbolical level those who have advocated this name change. Benjamin "it's a better name for him than Maury" (p. 37) for a couple of reasons. First, as soon as she realizes that her last born is going to be mentally retarded, Mrs. Compson needs a new name to replace the old one in order to exonerate her family's good name, because Maury would probably be a shame for her brother's reputation, Maury Bascomb.

Second, Benjamin is constantly referred to as a punishment for Mrs. Compson: "I thought that Benjamin was punishment enough for any sins I have committed" (p. 65). That is to say that Mrs. Compson is acknowledging her sins and is now accepting her son as a burden meant to redeem her. In fact, one of the Biblical translations of the name is "the son of sorrow" – "Benjamin the child of my sorrowful" (p. 109). The other one refers to "the son of my right arm", the right arm being the south, which makes Benjamin the "son of the south", hence Benjy being the South in Faulkner's vision.

As soon as Maury becomes Benjamin, the boy's status changes inside the family, as well as inside the development of the novel. For his mother, the name itself seals her faith, becoming in time an omen for the sacrifices she is supposed to endure by marrying "a man who held himself above me" (pp. 65-6). She willingly takes the blame for her family's misfortune by trying to play the role of a great tragic character. When she learns about Caddy's pregnancy, Mrs. Compson explains "I see now that I have not suffered enough I see now that I must pay for your sins as well as mine" (p. 66). This represents Mrs. Compson's confirmation of the sins she now has to redeem.

Moreover, the wages of sin make her slowly acknowledge herself as a burden for the family when she says: "I know I'm just a burden to you" (p. 139) and her long-projected death signifies for her redemption itself: "I'll be gone soon. Then you will be rid of my bothering" (p. 40). Even though her laments and wailings are treated with irony by her husband, and sarcasm by Jason, Mrs. Compson takes her sorrow in serious terms. That is why, for her, her sorrow and her self-proclaimed suffering are not to be questioned. Once they have been comfortably embodied in Maury's new name, everybody must acknowledge it. She fiercely scolds Caddy when the sister wants to take care of her helpless

brother: "You humor him too much. You don't realize that I am the one who has to pay for it" (p. 41). Everything outside her suffering is vulgar, common, and silly: "It was bad enough when your father insisted on calling you by that silly nickname, and I will not have him called by one. Nicknames are vulgar. Only common people use them. Benjamin" (p. 41). For the daughter, Benjy is a helpless human being in need of love, care and protection; for the mother, Benjamin is merely a name, an alibi for a self inflicted sorrowful faith.

Benjy's mental illness projects upon himself and upon the other characters a special kind of stigma, which functions as a powerful symbol. The fact that he is denied the power of speech implies that the others can always take action on his behalf, by trying to use Benjy as a signifier for two different realities. For Dilsey and Caddy, his real mother figures, and possibly for Quentin I and Mr. Compson, Benjy is an innocent soul, "the Lawd child", in need of love, care and attention. For Mrs. Compson, Jason, and Quentin II, as well as for some of the people in Jefferson, Benjy is just an idiot, a retarded person, a burden, whose place is in the mental institution in Jackson.

This constant balance between two different representations, between an innocent soul and a shameful and burdensome body, leaves Benjamin very limited options. In fact, all his movements are within confined areas. The fact that these areas can be divided into two contrasting sets of "prisons" does not abolish the reality of his entrapment. Moreover, he is always guarded. On the one hand, there are his real "prisons": his body, the kitchen, or the yard. In these places he is "fenced" all around. His castration and his eventual seclusion in the mad house leave him no way out. On the other hand, there are potential liberating "prisons". His pasture, the fireplace and the library, his cemetery, as well as the church are obvious hints to a possible sense of freedom. Even though the pasture is sold and he burns his hand in the fire, an eminent redemptive feeling allows Faulkner to portray the South after the fall as embodied in Benjy's doomed character, acknowledging his dispossession of property and his denial of knowledge as a new reality he is forced to cope with.

Perhaps, the greatest challenge of Faulkner's narrative of the new South as being a sign is that it does not have a voice, therefore it cannot communicate. For Benjy, both a soul and a burden, the impossibility of expression outside his own significance is the ultimate sense of confinement. Soul locked inside body, body trapped inside a limited space – these all represent the new reality of the South. Benjy's only communicative actions, his trials of breaking his limitations are rendered by constant wailing and bellowing, as well as by innumerable attempts to get out through the gate. But he is always guarded by three generations of the

family's servants, themselves prisoners on the Compsons' domain. He is hushed, whipped and, in the end, castrated. His only comfort is in toying with surrogates of unattainable dimensions. A muddled slipper represents Caddy's way out, by willingly choosing a new reality outside family and conventions; similarly, his graveyard represents another way out, in death, an exit chosen by both his father and brother.

His lack of expression invariably leads him toward his damnation. The first time he manages to get out of the gate alone is also the last: "I opened the gate and they stopped, turning. I was trying to say, and I caught her, trying to say, and she screamed and I was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began to stop and I tried to get out" (p. 34). In this crucial scene, his intended action is misread. What is thought to be an attempted rape is in fact his ultimate effort to express himself, by asking the girl about Caddy. His lack of language conditions the loss of his manhood.

His limitation and lack of a voice thus represent Faulkner's vision of a new South which did not find its voice. But a reality without language is nothing but chaos. And yet, Benjy's constant attempts to free himself from his condition leave space for a possible order. Any fall is ultimately followed by resurrection. Redemption is embedded in doom.

For Benjy the fences that imprison him do not represent barriers. They keep him inside, but they also contain gates, passages, which might allow him to get through. It is true that at the beginning the gate represented Caddy's return from school, which symbolizes a return to love and maternal security, and, with this, a sense that whatever exists outside the gate might be freeing and liberating. That is why the three places he is allowed to leave for can represent redemptive journeys. Just by being outside his symbolic prison, these three places cease to represent maternal security, becoming more and more an ordered reality.

When Mrs. Compton takes Benjy to the cemetery (one of the places outside), and T.P. replaces Roskus as the carriage driver, Benjy has a clear sense of the passage: "We went through the gate, where it didn't jolt anymore" (p. 7). This means that outside the world is structured, lean and smooth, in complete contrast with the world inside. Moreover, it opens with a road, a way toward something, even if that something is the cemetery. A few lines further, Benjy gets a glimpse of freedom: "Then it was broader" (p. 7), meaning that there is possible way for action.

Similarly, when Dilsey takes Benjy to the church (the second place outside his confinement), by ceasing his moaning, Benjy realizes he is on a possible way out: "They reached the gate. Dilsey opened it. They passed out the gate. Ben

ceased" (p. 180). By contrast, when they return, he starts whimpering: "They reached the gate and entered. Immediately Ben began to whimper again" (p. 185). His going to the church is meaningful enough, but his idea of adopting a different behavior once he leaves through the gate signals that here is a place where he needs to try to overcome the stranded reality. Probably, it is time to try to start talking. Finally, the third place outside is at the branch. But this is not a real way out. Still, it gives Benjy a sense of the world outside just by going along the fence and passing through the "broken place" (p. 3) in it. The snagging nail is there to inform him about his confinement.

The way they are, these three places outside can signify a certain Biblical load to Benjy's attempts for redemption. Leaving aside, the church and the cemetery and other religious hints in the text, the branch can represent the river of Jordan and Benjy's baptism. His repeated going back to the branch has two meanings. On the one hand, this is the place where the Compson's falling was foreshadowed by Caddy's wetting her dress. On the other hand, this might be the place where the resurrection might be predicted, by Benjy being degraded embodiments of either Christ or John the Baptizer. Doom and redemption are thus combined.

The moment when Maury becomes Benjamin is a critical point in Faulkner's vision. Even if it has no relevance for the character himself, the name change succeeds in dividing the family into its original components: the Compsons and the Bascombs. Following the painful discovery of Maury's mental illness, the name change brings compassion and love for Benjy's innocent soul or shame and disgust for his retarded mind and useless body. Metaphorically, for the Compsons – Mr. Compson, Quentin and Caddy – Benjy represents a reality they cannot cope with, that is why they all choose to desert it, leaving Dilsey alone to substitute their care and attention for Benjy. For the Bascombs – Mrs. Compson, Maury Bascomb and Jason – Benjamin is a reality they would rather use or deny, for their own benefit. Thus, Mrs. Compson considers Benjamin a punishment for her sins and also, through self-induced suffering, a vehicle for salvation. The use of Benjy's ambivalence, sin-salvation, doom-redemption, is best reflected in Maury Bascomb's case. The adulterous letters that Benjy dispatches for his uncle perpetrate without a doubt a sinful affair. But when he fails to deliver the letter to Mrs. Patterson, when Mr. Patterson intercepts the letter, Benjy is in a position of exposing the affair, ending it and giving his uncle a chance for salvation. Benjy's eventual confinement into a mental institution will signify his ultimate negation. By doing that, Jason will not only deny a certain reality, but he will also deny a final chance for redemption.

This separation within the same family, between the Bascombs and the Compsons, between the mother's and father's side, represents Benjy's attempt to re-order reality. By not being a Bascomb or a Compson, Benjy is Faulkner's vision of the new South. Both innocent and full of sin, the new reality is in search for a way of expression, constantly denied, but presumably there, in Benjy's repeated attempts to exit the gate.

The New South as Dilsey

Language and its power of action play an important role in the last section of the novel as well. But contrary to Benjy's futile efforts of apprising language, in Dilsey's case language is no longer a goal. At the same time, language is no more than a means of communicating the world. For Dilsey, language is a way of assessing identity and transcending the social order into a natural and mythical one. In her mind, as well as in her beliefs, she does not have to relate to language as Benjy does. Moreover, she does not have to influence it, like Quentin uselessly tries to, in his efforts to create a reality out of his verbal fantasies. All she has to do is to re-act to language and simply assert her presence into a world which finds itself written, i.e., created, from the beginning until its end.

When Caddy informs her about Maury's change of name, Dilsey clearly expresses her natural beliefs in the preeminence of religious expression, represented by her presence in the Book, and accepts with stoicism the "wearing out"⁸ of her name in this world:

Benjamin came out of the bible, Caddy said. It's a better name for him than Maury was.

How come it is, Dilsey said.

Mother says it, Caddy said.

Huh, Dilsey said. Name aint going to help him. Hurt him, neither. Folks don't have no luck, changing names. My name been Dilsey since fore I could remember and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me.

How will they know it's Dilsey, when it's long forgot, Dilsey, Caddy said.

It'll be in the Book, honey, Dilsey said. Writ out.

Can you read it, Caddy said.

Wont have to, Dilsey said. They'll read it for me. All I got to do is say Ise here.
(pp. 37-38)

⁸ In the appendix written long after the publication of the novel, Faulkner refers to Dilsey with an integrating and intriguing phrase: "They endured!" (p. 215).

The South and Religion in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury

As it is, this childlike⁹ dialogue has unexpected influences for the consequent development of the novel.

First of all, it indirectly instills in Caddy a strong belief that her future deeds are beyond her control and that she can eventually assume responsibility for her actions, but she cannot be blamed for them, since everything she will do has already been written out. Then, the dialogue clearly unites Benjy and Dilsey under the auspices of religious symbolism. While Benjy “comes from the bible”, Dilsey has her name “writ out in the Book”. The difference between the “bible” and the “Book” is that between the social order or history and the natural order or Faulkner’s vision of religion. As shown before, Benjy represents the realities of the new South as an entity that lacks expression, but it is on the verge of acquiring religious significance due to Benjy’s resemblance to a Christ figure. As it remains to be shown, Dilsey represents Faulkner’s projection of natural order and religiousness, due to Dilsey’s emphasis, in her dialogue with Caddy, on the importance of every people’s significance over their names, considered to be mere signs. Moreover, when significance and sign melt down into a perennial identity, like in Dilsey’s name “writ out in the Book”, it is obvious that this Book is Faulkner’s creation of his apocrypha.

The interplay between the sign and its significance also constitutes a major achievement in Faulkner’s depiction of the sermon Reverend Shegog is giving to Dilsey’s congregation on the Easter Sunday. Donna L. Potts argues that Faulkner’s perspective resembles the folk art which is characterized by faulty vision and emphasis on pattern and detail. Thus, the church is on a scene which is “as flat and without perspective as a painted cardboard set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth”; the church is a room decorated “with sparse flowers from kitchen gardens and hedgerows, and with streams of crepe paper”; “a battered Christmas bell” hangs above the pulpit (p. 182); the men are “staid, hard brown or black, with gold watch chains and now and then a stick”; the children wear “garments bought second hand of white people” (p. 181). The reverend himself is an “undersized insignificant looking man” (p. 182).

Once the sermon begins, everything changes. The flat earth gains symbolical perspective, the “tortured crucifix” counterpoints the Christmas bell and Reverend Shegog transcends his “shabbiness and insignificance” (p. 183). Even though the preaching is a mere rehearsal of major critical points in the Bible which resemble

⁹ “[T]he family romance also claimed that blacks were «childlike» and thus permanent members of the metaphorical Southern family.” (King, 1994, p. 254).

the thematic patterns of naïve folk art, the impact of the word is beyond control.¹⁰ By wearing himself out, “he was like a worn small rock whelmed by the successive waves of his voice” (p. 183), and by being incarnated into the word, “with his body he seemed to feed the voice that, succubus like, had fleshed its teeth in him” (p. 183), Reverend Shegog enters Dilsey’s vision and reaches significance. In fact, the whole congregation is consumed by his voice:

and the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and there was not even a voice but instead their hearts were speaking to one another in chanting measures beyond the need for words, so that when he came to rest against the reading desk, his monkey face lifted and his whole attitude that of a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and insignificance and made of it no moment, a long moaning expulsion of breath rose from them. (p. 183)

This whole transformation happens only when the Reverend gives up his white man’s language and this signifies a transition from the white man’s bible, from history, to Dilsey’s Book and religion. The reading desk is there, the Reverend rests against it like a “tortured” but “serene” crucifix and Dilsey is ready, if asked for, to respond “Ise here”.

After the sermon, on the way home, Dilsey lets Frony know that she has seen “de first en de last” (p. 185). But these words, Dilsey’s “I’ve seed de first and de last”, with the variation “I seed de beginning, en now I sees de endin” (p. 185) are

¹⁰ Dealing with the relevance of Reverend Shegog’s Easter sermon, in a chapter discussing the American nativism in his book “Our America”, Benn Michaels argues that in *The Sound and the Fury* a certain fantasy about the language doubles a fantasy about the family. His suggestion is that the sign “might function, in effect, onomatopoeically, without reliance upon a system of syntactic and semantic conventions” and that the family “might maintain itself incestuously, without reliance upon the legal conventions that turn otherwise unrelated persons into husband and wife” (p. 2). While Benn Michaels’s take is rather complex and draws upon the relations the Compson brothers have with their sister (as in Quentin’s case) or with her substitutes (Benjy with the caddie and Jason with Quentin the niece) in order to present “identitarian claims” based on “difference” and not on “inferiority”, two of his basic assumptions give substance to my paper. First, the notion of transubstantiation, “once the sign becomes the thing it need no longer function as a thing” (p. 5), gives credit to Faulkner’s attempt to present Dilsey as his religious vision of the South, since Dilsey’s transformation is achieved during the Easter sermon. Second, Benn Michaels writes that “every chapter in *The Sound and the Fury* involves the effort to replace arbitrary or social relations with natural ones, which is to say that every chapter imagines the disappearance of the of the sister, Caddy, as the introduction of the arbitrary, and so every chapter involves some attempt to keep her from going or to imagine her brought back” (pp. 5-6). This is basically true and there is no doubt about the fact that Caddy’s sexuality brought the fall of the natural order, hence the recurrent efforts of bringing her back and thus restoring the world as before the fall, but I contend that Dilsey, as Faulkner’s representative of religiousness, is able to bring back a certain sense of the natural order, without the need for Caddy’s recovery, since Caddy, along with her sexuality, is comprised within the natural order.

a doubling of Reverend Shegog's visionary sermon, the way his "I got the ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb" (p. 184) is a doubling of the previous white-voiced "I got the recollection and the blood of the Lamb!" (p. 183). Explaining this address, Benn Michaels questions its significance: "Does the bread and wine eaten and drunk "in remembrance" of Jesus *symbolize* Jesus (and thus remember him while acknowledging his absence) or does it *embody* him ("This is my body") (and thus remember him by making him present)?" (p. 4). He then answers that "in Reverend Shegog's sermon [...] language appears to achieve the identity of word and thing" (p. 4). Thus, with a second degree referent, Dilsey is able to see the beginning and the end in Reverend Shegog's sermon. Unable to read, Dilsey *sees* everything in the Book: "de light en de word", the Calvary, "de resurrection en de light" again. Redemption is finally possible: "I sees the doom crack en de golden horns shoutin down the glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb" (p. 185). In the end, Dilsey herself is *seeing* the teachings of the Book.

The sermon is over and Dilsey cries without sound as a consequence of her transformation, making her daughter ashamed of her mother's tears. When Dilsey tries to explain her revelation, Frony bluntly questions her "Firs en last whut?" (p. 185). The reply returns with "Never you mind" and this is Faulkner's way out of his plight by positioning Dilsey's religious beliefs beyond words. Like Benjy, who "sat, rapt in his sweet blue gaze" (p. 185), Dilsey is witnessing an experience she cannot put into words. Analyzing this "verbal impotence", Alexander J. Marshall notes that

The sermon evokes the ultimate nonverbal response, a "concerted" "Mmmmmmmmmmm!" from the congregation, "and still another, without words, like bubbles rising in water". Even one member's attempt at analysis finds language insufficient – "He sho a preacher, mon! He didn't look like much at first, but hush!" – the concluding imperative a colloquial inexpressibility topos. The entire sermon has been towards this silence, the effective death of the word. It is Faulkner's religious paradox: only through its apparent death can the finite signifier hope to transcend its limitations; the death of the Word is the precondition of its resurrection. Like the soul that comes from God and only through death can return to everlasting life, the word comes from the silence of the writer's creative imagination and can only find meaning in the silence of the reader's re-creation. (p. 187)¹¹

¹¹ A few lines further, Marshall provides an interesting reading of the novel narrative technique as being summarized by Reverend Shegog's sermon which "recapitulates in reverse the narrative strategies of the novel itself, from the cold, rational "white man's language" of Jason to the irrational language of Quentin to the meaningless yet meaning-full moan of Benjy. The sermon is an eloquent example of transcendent, nonverbal communication in a world of verbal impotence".

Marshall is right and considering the fact that the characters also come from the “silence of the writer’s imagination”, both Benjy and Dilsey are capable of finding meaning in their silence, natural in Benjy’s case, supernatural in Dilsey’s.

Conclusion

In the end, the assumption that Benjy represents Faulkner’s projection of the new South and Dilsey fulfills the author’s vision of the religious beliefs undergoing the new reality is reinforced by the relations the two characters have with Mrs. Compson. Her hypochondria and senseless behavior make her a destitute image of the old South. A bad mother for all her children, including her grand-daughter for whom she wants to be a real mother¹², but fails miserably, as well as a whimsical and neurotic master, Mrs. Compson helps the development of the two characters in representing Faulkner’s vision. She is the one who changes Maury’s name into Benjamin and her deed, considered the consequence of a superstition, sets forth Benjy’s transformation. With no links to the past, symbolically represented by Mrs. Compson’s brother’s name Maury, Benjy comes to embody the new reality. Thus, the new South, entrapped in Benjy’s image, is in search of a new identity and of a new way of expression. More than that, the religious element also originates in Mrs. Compson’s attitude toward religion. Not only that Benjamin “comes from the bible”, as Caddy informs Dilsey, but, for Mrs. Compson, her son is a “burden” and a “punishment”, as the new reality certainly is for those who cherish the old one. But this is a paradox, since Mrs. Compson relates to religion more out of constraint than out of belief. For example, she tells her brother that “nobody knows how I dread Christmas” and that “I am not one of those women who can stand things. I wish for Jason’s and the children’s sakes I was stronger” (p. 6); and Jason, her son, bluntly questions her “You never resurrected Christ, did you?” (p. 174). By contrast, Dilsey, who does not dread Christmas and resurrects Christ, ends up playing the role of the real mother figure for the Compson family.

This fact is, above all, accentuated by Dilsey’s religious beliefs, in natural order, and the protective duty of nature. The difference between Dilsey and Mrs. Compson, between their own personal religious feelings is conclusive once the two women are presented together, like in this short encounter from the Easter Sunday:

¹² The way Mrs. Compson relates to Quentin, Caddy’s daughter, lays down two intriguing interpretations. Either that Mrs. Compson considers Quentin to be Caddy, thus trying to treat her like a daughter, or she considers herself Caddy, thus trying to escape a Southern tradition, and like Caddy to oppose it.

The South and Religion in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury

"You might hand me my bible."

"I give hit to you dis maning, befo I left."

"You laid it on the edge of the bed. How long did you expect it to stay there?"

Dilsey crossed tot the bed and groped among the shadows beneath the edge of it and found the bible, face down. She smoothed the bent pages and laid the book on the bed again. Mrs. Compson didn't open her eyes. Her hair and the pillow were the same color, beneath the wimple of the medicated cloth she looked like an old nun praying. "Don't put it there again," she said, without opening her eyes. "That's where you put it before. Do you want me to have to get out of the bed to pick it up?"

Dilsey reached the book across her and laid it on the broad side of the bed. "You cant see to read, noways," she said. "You want me to raise de shade a little?"

"No. Let them alone." (p. 187)

Everything, from the position of the Bible, "face down", and the attitude, wanting the Bible, but not reading it, to her depiction as an old nun praying with her eyes closed, makes Mrs. Compson a false pretense of motherhood and religious feelings. In opposition, Dilsey is helpful, active and determined. This encounter, following Dilsey's participation to the Easter sermon, with her family and Benjy, describes her religious experience and sense of redemption, by the way she handles the Bible and by her willingness to raise the shades so Mrs. Compson can read. Dilsey is a messenger Mrs. Compson denies.

Mrs. Compson's refusal of light (so she can read the Bible) represents her inability to relate both to her son and servant, who, unlike her, have seen the light. The Easter sermon functions as a transition from "bible" (narrating the realities of the old South) to the "Book" (the new South), from historical order to a religious order. In fact, Reverend Shegog's sermon links the Genesis to the Revelation in an effort to redeem and restore the natural order, as represented by Benjy and Dilsey. The Compsons history, as representative for the Southern society, is passing to a new level. All the critical points of their story are matched with counterparts from the biblical saga. Thus, "Dey passed away in Egypt, de swinging chariots, de generations passed away" (p. 184) represents the Exodus, an in Faulkner's account of the Compsons four characters choose to pass away, Jason and Quentin in death, Caddy and Quentin in the world; "I sees the Calvary" (p. 184) is the symbolic illustration of Benjy's distress; finally, "I sees the resurrection en de light; sees de meek Jesus sayin Dey kilt me dat ye shall live again; I dies dat dem whut sees en believe shall never die" (p. 185) this is the promise of deliverance, which so intricately moves Dilsey, that the old servant is convinced that the world has a divine significance and that time and order coincide on an universal scale.

Two things finally meet in conforming Faulkner's vision: the power of the language and its capability of representation. Even though Benjy lacks the possibility to express himself and Dilsey cannot explain what the beginning and the ending really are, it is Faulkner's intention to make them representative for his artistic creed. Thus, he looks, "through the fence, between the curling flowers", into a world "created" by a mentally retarded person and "saved" by an illiterate woman.

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Ethics of integrity warnings - between social conditioning and moral stakes

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Abstract

The issues related to the ethics of integrity warnings are not new, they were signaled even before the advent of legislation dedicated to this phenomenon, even in American culture, which gave the world the concept of whistleblowing, the parallels with the terms “informer” and “snitch” have always been present and continually assumed ethical and moral implications. Romania, as a case study, can easily move, at least in appearance, from a country of alleged security informants, to a country of integrity warners, at least according to DNA (National Anti-corruption Division) and ANI (National Integrity Agency) statistics. We will seek to demonstrate that the ethical attitudes underlying public warning are closely linked to the behavior encouraged by society over time, including during the communist period.

Keywords: *active matter, nonlinear causality, relativisation, singularity, potentiality of the matter, ontic rejection of the active form.*

Argument

“Integrity warnings”, so called in the European legal literature, “whistle blowing” in the American literature, in the sense defined by Romanian law as “a notification made in good faith regarding any act that involves a violation of law, professional ethics or the principles of good administration”, (LAW no. 571 of December 14, 2004, on the protection of personnel from public authorities, public institutions and other units that report violations of the law), will always suppose moral and ethical reports.

We refer here, first, to the primary assessment made by the future “whistleblower”, then to his ethical decision to perform the “reporting” action, then to the methods of making the reported situation known. From a first assessment, we find a whole set of moral and ethical determinations that the person who decides to make the warning must go through. However, we will have

to base on the historical aspects of the phenomenon that we study, and which we call from the beginning as an “ethical attitude”.

We will, throughout this paper, outline, rather than analyze, some of the possible historical determinations of this “ethical attitude” in order to outline its moral motivations, suggested or encouraged by legislation or the cultural-historical model, paying attention to the communist period and the return to Europeanism.

In this way we will approach the answer to the undertaken research question: “Which moral considerations can put an individual in the position of using the integrity warning?” Throughout this paper, we will theoretically frame both the moral premises of “integrity warnings” and the connection between them and the social model sustained throughout history in different eras.

Prolegomena to this paper

The public debate, minimal in fact, simultaneously appeared with the need for the adoption in Romania of “Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons reporting breaches of Union law” is a sufficient opportunity to make a few launches and questions of consistency on the “social conditions and moral stakes” of the public warning act, as it is provided in the new Romanian legislation.

Starting from the philosophical foundations of ethical behavior (Sextus Empiricus, Thomas Aquinas, J. S. Mill) we will highlight the way in which the simple ethical theory of goodness becomes a social debt and a duty to react to injustice, abusive behavior or illegality. The reported issues will later help us to clarify the “behavior of contemporary man”.

In the second part of the paper we will theorize the “historical human model”, reviewing some references to the different historical concepts and idealizations, consistently projected in relation to the moral values encouraged at the time (P. Hazard, P. Mason, J. Sevilla, F. Fukuyama, P. Drucker). The highlighted hypostases will bring us closer to the overlap of the concept of “human model” with that of assumed ethical behavior.

In the third part we will, in order to get closer to the conclusions we are trying to reach, tackle the way in which the Romanian communist society, and not only, aimed at changing the scale of moral and ethical values (R. Guenon, S. Huntington, P. Karnouh), with the clear aim of controlling the population in the light of the “great communist aims”. The aspects are important both from the perspective of the obsolescence or disqualification of the scale of social values, and from the perspective of the influences they can (possibly) exert in the

contemporary societies of the countries after the “Iron Curtain”, especially in Romania.

We are thus approaching a question, that of the evolution of the idea of “reporter of the violation of the laws” in the post-communist society, following the possible overlaps with their concept known as “informants” and “collaborators” of the Intelligence and Population Control Services.

In the conclusions of the paper, showing that historical epochs automatically change the ethical behavior of the model man, we show that today, in line with the projected ethical model, the typical behavior of the whistle-blowing phenomenon is, as expected, as present. Regarding the overlaps between the two behaviors, that of “caster” and that of “integrity warning”, we stir the reader’s curiosity on our notes. We only point out from now on that we find more interesting from an ethical perspective the motivations of individuals who decide to make so-called “reports of violation of the law” for personal reasons, not for the order of social ethics. Here, it seems to us, lies the specific configuration of the contemporary Romanian society.

I. Social ethics and social duties

Ethical behavior can have as its simple explanation “the desire to do what is right.” But no matter how simple we try to explain, this desire involves an attitude, desire or impulse, and an evaluation of what is “good.” Both the impulse and the evaluation represent subjective feelings, which are the result of the personal and social evolution of the individual, including education. “Firstly one must learn the nature of the good itself, then in this way one will understand that it is useful and worthy – for themselves – and worthy of our choice; and thus one will understand that it is the maker of happiness,” says Sextus Empiricus in *Philosophical Works*. And below, he also tries to refer to his “source”: “So it remains to say that good is related only to the soul” (Empiricus, 1965, p. 151).

We need confirmation, trying to prove that first the impulse, then the evaluation, and later the decision to act to pursue the good are all subjective feelings. Moreover, an important aspect of our work, is that these decisions involve, in addition to moral feelings, even taking risks. Thomas Aquinas is the one who explains the risks taken, by the theory of “ethical debt”, in our case, of debt to society. “I answer affirmatively that, according to the above-mentioned, a certain sense of virtue is naturally inherent in man, but the very perfection of virtue requires that man attain it by a certain discipline.” (Aquinas, 2005, p. 184), and below, the emphasis is: “To the first objection, I answer that, as the Apostle says,”

all human power is from the Lord, and therefore „he who opposes power”, in the sense of power as an order, “opposes the command of the Lord” and, according to this, ends up guilty in regard to conscience (Aquinas, 2005, p. 202). A pious orientation, both towards power, therefore towards divinity, and towards social order as a “divine will”.

Later, in the history of social ethics, John Stuart Mill brings new configurations. “So what are the legitimate limits of an individual’s sovereignty over himself? Where does the authority of society begin? How much of human life should be left to individuality and how much to society?” (Mill, 2017, p. 111), asks the utilitarian philosopher. The accents are obvious below: “Man must be free to do what he pleases in matters that concern him; but he must not be free to do as he pleases when acting on behalf of another on the pretext that the other’s business is his own. The state, while respecting the freedom of everyone in matters concerning it, must maintain vigilant control over the exercise of any power which an individual is permitted to have over others.” And with regard to the obligations of the state, the philosopher addresses the issue of universal education.

In this way we return to the already presented launch of Sextus Empiricus on education. The difference that Mill makes is that of general interest, which once educated individuals could serve: “The principle of freedom is based on individuality, which has value in itself for welfare, when it is instilled in people’s lives, being just as important an instrumental value as humanity progresses.” (Ene, 2000, p. 158)

In fact, this is the vein that interests us from the perspective of the next subchapter of our paper, the one dedicated to moral values and ethical behavior specific to each historical period. Specifically, on the unfairly thin thread of this paper, we seek to recall how social ethics distances itself from the vein of the “doctrine of social obedience” and increasingly values individuality, assumption, action and social attitude.

We call on Schneewind to emphasize the pursued perspective: “During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, established concepts, such as obedience, came to be increasingly challenged by the emergence of moral concepts such as self-government.” (Schneewind, 2003, p. 28). With a necessary reference to Kant, the author completes the short journey we tried above: “Kant is the one who proposed a true and revolutionary re-evaluation of morality. He is the one who stated that we are self-governing by virtue of the fact that we are autonomous.”

From obedience to self-government, then to utilitarianism – Mill’s liberalism, the whole evolutionary course of social ethics is in fact the progress of mankind in the direction of the fundamental value of humanity, namely dignity. If

we have succeeded, more or less, in arguing that the whole ethical behavior of individuals is socially grounded, we will continue to highlight how the human specific model to each era changes, in direct connection with the evolution of morality and social ethical regulations. All from the final perspective of our paper, which seeks the answer to a simple question: “Has humanity reached the stage where moral values and ethical frameworks can be assumed by individuals who exponentially multiply the ideal human model?”

II. The individual model through the ages

Not only morality and ethics, through the values proposed and supported by them, know historical pulsations. Automatically, and with them, the social model does, too. For, in the end, the archetype of modern man is nothing but a reflection of the values and behaviors that the age cultivates.

Closely related to these, the place and role of the individual in society as well as the encouraged human model, know different valences and nuances. The way the model man gets involved, takes attitude, participates and even models, is closely related to this projection. Over the centuries, this model has undergone evolutions and changes that we can observe and evaluate more easily today, taking into account even the historical experience:

“The world is in one of those moments, interesting to be surprised, when the screen is blurred, when different images overlap, one delaying its disappearance, another still lacking in clarity and security,” observes Paul Hazard, referring to the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. “The gentleman was fading, the bourgeois was slowly taking shape and color. The world no longer wanted dominant aristocratic principles until then. Farewell to the warrior, said the author, referring precisely to the change of the human ideal.” (Hazard, 2007, p. 336)

Continuing the narrative, another contemporary author wonders what the current model of human projection is, starting from Hazard’s data. “If feudal society had as its perfect model the medieval knight, and capitalism the bourgeoisie, then who is in the historical scheme of things, the bearer of post-capitalist social relations?” (Mason, 2022, p. 179), Paul Mason questions the historical radiography of the evolution of the model man.

On the contrary, this new type of man would be able to take responsibility and take research products in narrow fields, to apply them in general: to apply the theory of chaos in economics, genetics in archeology, or extraction knowledge of data in social history. (Mason, 2022, p. 179)

In the order of historical evolution, capitalism has the task of creating the “new man.” For Marxism failed, Drucker believes. “But as a creed, Marxism collapsed because it did not create the «New Man»” (Drucker, 1993, pp. 12-13). Moreover, in the order of social morality, it proved to be a negative experiment. Has this created a vacuum of “human model”?, because we cannot overcome the finding of a Karnoouh:

In other words, in order to face the challenges of late modernity - which destroyed political liberalism in the early twentieth century, liberals have nothing to offer their fellow citizens but ideas that were once successful. And we understand why their speech is less and less appealing. (Karnoouh, 2000, p. 24)

Therefore, we cannot fail to notice the generally recognized argument: with the eighteenth century the aristocracy loses the primacy of imposing its own model, the knight, in front of the bourgeoisie, which proposes instead the trained and socially concerned individual. Communism appears as an “intermezzo” towards the end of the capitalist era, with its maturation, and only in half of Europe, but failing in the effort to impose a new model of society, but contributing to the decline of the bourgeoisie, liberal doctrine. So what is the post-capitalist model? Is there another social model that thinks in the spirit of morality, acts in the spirit of ethics and assumes the “duty to do good”? as we saw in the previous part of the paper?

Generations born in peacetime, whose parents did not even know the war, cannot understand that millions of people defied death to defend their homeland. (...) Some generations accustomed to claiming rights how can they understand the phrase “do your duty?” (Sevilla, 2012, p. 128)

Because we are in those moments of history when, according to Hazard, the images overlap, the old pictures are blurred, many new ones appear and are configured.

We are therefore talking about the individual involved and concerned with fate and social destiny, as he becomes more and more informed, with democratization and universal access to decision. We are talking, most likely, about the new society, made up of individuals with ethical attitudes, interconnected through the media and social media, able to obtain information about it, and, at the same time, to carry out gregarious actions that support increasingly ethical attitudes. We are almost certainly talking about a society that the model individual knows, can model by intervening, in order to reach its ideal, a society in which, as Fukuyama claims, one reaches “trust”:

Social capital is a capability that arises & om the prevalence of trust in a society or in certain parts of it. It can be embodied in the smallest and most basic social

Ethics of integrity warnings - between social conditioning and moral stakes

group, the family, as well as the largest of all groups, the nation, and in all the other groups in between. (Fukuyama, 1996, p. 26)

Fukuyama's social capital, trust in people, laws or institutions, automatically lead to a functioning society, in which individuals cooperate:

Cooperation brings with it an increase in productivity as a consequence of the combined power of the people. (...) Above all, repeated cooperation involves employment, ie the reduction of options, and the channeling of resources in one direction, ignoring the normal oscillations when temporarily, personal disadvantages outweigh the advantages. (Boari, 2006, p. 145)

Cooperation and employment are the two terms we stick with from the author. It is responsibility that still interests us.

III. The ethical parenthesis of communism

We approach the communist period, as well as its attempts to change the social structure, as a suspension from the natural evolution of society. Unfortunately, Drucker's findings, which we return to, are entirely true, especially from the perspective of social morality.

On the contrary, it brought to light and consolidated everything that was worse in "Old Adam": corruption, thirst and a desire for power; social envy and distrust, flattering tyranny and secrecy; theft, lying, denunciation (denunciation) and, above all, cynicism (...) (Drucker, 1993, pp. 12-13)

Communist regime of Soviet origin, imposed on Eastern Europe in the immediate aftermath of World War II, remains recognized precisely for this type of attempt: overthrowing of moral values, changing of interpersonal ethics, manipulating of specific ethics, of professions considered relevant for the transmission of official state propaganda: the community of scientists, the representatives of "people's democracy" – political activists, intelligence workers, high-level intellectuals (engineers, teachers, doctors, etc.). none of these categories remained untouched in the sense of changing the hierarchy of ethical values.

But the great aggression promoted by this type of regime consists precisely in the attempt to "re-educate the population", with objectives that went down and affected the interpersonal ethics. The well-known tendency to overturn values, especially social ones, and automatically personal ones, had come to transform attitudes such as respect for one's privacy into a duty to follow it, the type of mutual trust in the obligation of denunciation, the kind of respect for the other's opinion in a clear assimilation of enmity towards the annihilating regime, with claims to hold the absolute truths sustained in the name of "communist social equity". And in order to reach such social horrors, communism proceeded to

subvert the fundamental values of morality, precisely to ensure the freedom of its route. “The overthrow of any hierarchy occurs as soon as the temporal power wants to become independent of the spiritual authority and then subordinate it to it, asking it to serve political purposes; (...)” (Guénon, 2003, p. 129).

A logic in the name of which, according to Huntington’s theory, state institutions end up serving their own interests, transformed into superior state reasons, a classic case of mass manipulation.

In contrast to the theory of representative government, under this concept, government institutions derive their legitimacy and authority not insofar as they represent the interests of individuals or any other group, but insofar as they have distinct interests, their own from other groups. (Huntington, 1999, p. 33)

Automatically, with this whole process, subversive and demolishing, the consequence also appears: the “model man” of the communist society, who takes over and uses the above mentioned concepts from Drucker’s work. Everything, in a frantic dandy, accompanied by a deafening background: the communist ideology, exclusive, supreme, irrational.

Man is declared omnipotent and ideology oversees the identification of the abstract individual with concrete power. The veneration of power has its origins in contempt for traditional values, including those associated with the survival of reason. Therefore, it is important to repress the temptation of critical reflection, since reason is the enemy of total regimentation. (Tismăneanu, 1997, pp. 22-23)

Contempt for traditional values, regimentation, obedience – all as a result of communist totalitarian ideology. Hence the new man: indoctrinated, submissive, militant, servile. The remaining steps are few to reach the informer – the final hypostasis.

The study of these aspects, the mistreatment of personal ethics and the overthrow of moral values have already been dealt with by well-known authors of consistent studies on the period.

Claiming to give a total answer to the whole economic, social, political, artistic and even private life, Russian communism was on the same position as the Christian World before the first cracks threatening the unity of the Church in its Roman version. (Karnoouh, 2000, p. 64.)

Conclusions

The condition of whistle-blowers has never been comfortable in history:

Still suffering from purulent wounds, one of the “conspirators”, Gabriel Malagrida, was in the prisons of the Inquisition, and on September 21, 1761, he was burned alive in front of the crowd gathered on the quay in Lisbon, the last person to be burned by Inquisition in Portugal. (Green, 2019, p. 504)

Until the end of the 18th century, therefore, people could die at the stake for revealing the abusive actions of the authorities. The twentieth century, unfortunately, has not been overshadowed by the totalitarian communist experiment. “Assumptions, public statements or opposing attitudes filled prisons and then cemeteries with those who assumed the condition. In the homogeneous space of total domination, the opposition is equivalent to crime, and the opponents are treated as real criminals.” (Tismăneanu, 1997, p. 24)

The democratic environment of the 21st century brings us into the position of finding the phenomenon of “warning” that we do not assimilate to political dissent, but which has obvious similarities with it: “Blowing the whistle on an organization is an act of dissent somewhat analogous to civil disobedience” (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 4).

We find only for the moment that the struggle between the individual and the authority has experienced horrors throughout its social development, even if it has meant the physical disappearance or total aggression of the former.

In the light of those presented and assumed, some conclusions can be drawn, at our own discretion:

1. Throughout history, the “encouraged human model” itself has been democratized. From the narrow caste of aristocrats to that of the bourgeoisie, and today to that of “individuals with white wires, instantly connected to information” (see Attali, 2016), the number of those who could assume the condition of human model has expanded continuously;
2. We find that, even subjectively, the first condition of the model man in any society was education, as long as, fact demonstrated by us through education, society forms the characters it needs to survive;
3. The communist period is recommended, at any consistent evaluation, as a suppression of the natural evolution of the encouraged human model, making only a negative embrace in terms of this concept and the reversal of the scale of moral and ethical values.
4. With the democratization of the human model, through secured access to universal education, the action of “whistleblowing” becomes morally necessary and ethically expected, as long as the information has become public and quasi-transparent, and the concepts of “social justice”, “Fair treatment”, “non-discrimination” or “conflict of interest” are now available to evaluate any minimally involved and decently educated subject.
5. With this, we assume today the research thesis of our present paper: The social model encouraged by capitalist society brings with it the action taken

by the “integrity warrior”, ie the individual who takes inherent risks in order to achieve a higher ethical action: approval of the common interest.

We evaluate, at the end of our paper, as superior the tendency towards democratization of action and information, ideal goal and objective sought by modern society, first through the universalization of the right to education, then by assuming consistent goals (see EU Agenda 2020) to expanding the number of higher education graduates, thus making obvious the ethical stakes of modern society.

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Initiation of Native Language in Education Policy: A Study on the Role of Language in Pre-Primary and Primary Level of Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper has focused on the language issue of the current education system and its impact on the indigenous population in Bangladesh. Recently a new policy has been adopted in Bangladesh featuring pre-primary education for the indigenous kids in their mother language. The research would analyze the reaction of indigenous people and effects on education regarding this new policy adopted by the government, and suggest some practical steps relevant to the findings. A qualitative study was designed as an in-depth interview where the data was acquired from the semi-structural form participated by twenty-five indigenous candidates. The finding of the research has showed a dilemma where they require their mother tongue to help them preserve their cultural and ethnic identity on one side and the anxiety of getting more isolated in the long run on the other. Taking this dilemma in consideration, this research attempts some practical suggestions that roam around the concept of considering indigenous languages as a third language to be included in the national curriculum.

Keywords: *Chittagong Hill Tracts, Language policy, Ethnic Identity, Internationalization, Multicultural Education.*

Introduction

Very recently Bangladesh government has taken an initiative on the application of indigenous language in education. Under this new policy, kids from five different indigenous groups of Bangladesh is getting their primary education in their mother tongue, whereas previously they had to continue their primary education in national language, Bengali. This paper is going to show the current educational system and policy in Bangladesh, collecting and analyzing the reaction of indigenous students regarding this new initiative, and finally figuring out their

hypothetical position in case of higher study in indigenous language. After analyzing their position, here we have tried to suggest some possible moves to overcome the upcoming situation.

The education system of Bangladesh has been divided as four major stages: pre-primary and primary education, secondary education, higher secondary education, and tertiary and higher education. Equal opportunity policy has been initiated in every stage; especially the Government is focusing on equality in primary education irrespective of ethnicity, socio-economic conditions, physical or mental challenges and geographical differences. A competency based curriculum was commenced in 1992 by the sector of primary education and it was being revised alter in 2010. Here it reserves special assistance for marginalized indigenous children. However, this curriculum follows a certain way to achieve the learning outcomes based on the grade and subject knowledge. Primary schools of Bangladesh are usually government operated and they follow the curriculum set by the government. These schools prefer the national language “Bengali” as their medium of instruction. Only English text books are different naturally, they are in English language. A point should be noted here, though this curriculum recommends special assistance for marginalized indigenous children, in language issue, the kids had to adjust with the national language which was totally a new language for them. Moreover they also learn a third language, English. However besides this general primary education, here found two different type of primary schools, and they are “English Medium School” (a type of urban elite schools) and “Madrasha” (type of rural religious-based schools) who follow the curriculum determined by the British and curriculum set by Madrasha Education Board respectively.

In general pre-primary and primary sector, academic year starts with new books freely distributed to the students by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). This practice of producing and distributing books is a decade old venture where the books are designed based on the British designed curriculum. Moreover, it is imperative to note that no supplementary books are recommended at the primary level of education. This year the “book giving ceremony” has added a new dimension as children from five different indigenous groups have got their books in their mother tongue rather than national language. Those five ethnic groups are Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo and Shadari.

Literature Review

Today the power of globalization is strong enough to intimidate many cultural minority and language groups. It is said that only hundred languages are used by 90% of world population, whereas rest 10% population use around six thousand languages (McCarty, 2005). So it is quite natural that indigenous kids need to compromise with mainstream language in any mainstream education system. For example, there is no organized education policy for the indigenous students in Canada in terms of using their mother tongue (Sarkar & Lavoie, 2014). So it is clear that the language issue in education system is not a matter of developing or developed countries, it exists all mainstream education system.

The conventional education system, that is the minority have to adjust with mainstream's education, is going to face challenge in this century (Ainscow & Miles, 2011). Readjusting the educational policy for migrated population, ethnic and religious minorities, local and international minorities is the highest challenge for 21st century. In conventional education system all learn through mainstream language, whereas research shows that in the primary level of education, it seems very hard for the children to understand any other language than mother language in terms of reading books and getting instructed in the class. Therefore, it may pose a serious threat to the cognitive development of the child and debar their self-confidence to a certain extent (Jhingran, 2009). Bangladesh is not out of this concept. Here the major challenge for indigenous kids is not only the reading material, but also the medium of instruction to be comprehended properly in classroom (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2008).

Bangladeshi society is primarily homogenous in nature where the percentage of Bengalese is about 98.8 and they are considered as mainstream. For these people, Bengali is the most dominating language. Rest 1.2% people are from different ethnic group who have their own mother languages (Barkat et al., 2009). If we consider the historical background of the education system of Bangladesh, it will be evident that no equal opportunity was provided to the people, especially to the children. Therefore, education system before 1759 was highly manipulated by religious sentiment like Hindus prefer *Tol* and Muslims prefer *Madrasah* to receive education. Even after 1759, Missionary education had been institutionalized by the British East India Company which took religious-centered education one step further (Riaz, 2011), and the conventional Muslims and Hindus never showed any interest in this new education system. In addition, the attachment between the locals and the regular schools was also very weak.

Nevertheless, the participation of the indigenous kids in the non-governmental education at urban centers founded by the church had been in Chittagong Hill Tracts since the time of colonization (Bleie, 2005).

Nowadays scenario is changing and the national curriculum and textbooks issued by the government are followed by the government primary schools located in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which is similar to the primary schools all over the country. According to a report by Reid in 2011, the reading and writing ability of the aboriginal students highly depends on how the schools and communities are connected to each other. In 2012, Bayat mentioned Lee's (2001) note, and that is language is a tonic to the psychological and cognitive maturity for a child. Nevertheless, the children without proper practice of the dominant language as a medium of instruction in their family life may face language difficulty at schools. Thinking overall on the issue, Government of Bangladesh has taken the initiative to ensure primary education in their native language and consequently, five different indigenous groups namely Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo and Shadari get their pre-primary and primary books in their native language. There are 46 different ethnic groups belong to Bangladesh, roughly around 1.2 percent of total population. This initiative is appreciable though it is a small step comparing with the ethnic diversity. However this new policy may almost solve or is going to solve the problems arisen by the previous scholars. At the same time, these kids are facing some difficulties like not getting sufficient teachers who can teach them in their language and lack of learning friendly environment.

Methodology

This research has been conducted using a qualitative method. In qualitative research, there is no need to consider a whole population or large sample because the purpose of this sort of study is to discover the meaning and understanding rather than generalize public opinions (Ledger et al., 2014). This research, being a qualitative one, has taken twenty-five indigenous people as a sample to analyze their reaction to the commencement of this new policy. For conducting this study, two academic institutions were chosen as the research sites by Chittagong Hill Tracts. One of the institutions was a government primary school, and another was a private higher secondary college. To achieve both variety and regularity, the sample was chosen with the greatest possible diversity in terms of linguistic beliefs and practices (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Here, the data was collected through an in-depth interview of twenty-five participants. Ten of the participants were current teachers at those institutions. Five of them had completed their graduation in a

Initiation of Native Language in Education Policy

second language or national language (Bangla), five of them were continuing their graduation in a third language (English), and the rest of the twenty participants were current students. We chose them as participants because they had experience of primary education in another language than their mother tongue. At the same time, they were now in the teaching profession, so they knew the challenges of students. The researchers used Creswell's (2017) qualitative data analysis and representation technique to analyze the information. In order to examine the collected data, a multi-step data analysis technique was used. The authors transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim, and sections of the transcription that were in Bengali were translated into English. The transcriptions were returned to the 10 interviewees for cross-checking to verify validity and reliability. The transcriptions, including the translated sections, were thoroughly coded. As representatives of the entire collection of data collected, all of the preliminary codes were grouped into two main topics. To make sense of the obtained data, the themes were interpreted and explained in larger segments of discussion. These interpretations were then presented and thoroughly discussed, with the required comparisons made between themes and other contextual analysis.

Findings and Discussion

PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NATIVE LANGUAGE

In pre-primary and primary level, the dropout rate is almost 40%, and the dropout rate is high in Chittagong Hill Tract area where a large number of indigenous people live (UNESCO, 2005). The participants believe that pre-primary and primary education in native language will decrease the dropout amount. The indigenous kids had two major challenges: first, they had to learn a new language as medium of instruction, and second, contents became uninteresting and tough for them because of language barrier. They highly appreciate the new policy. The debate arises from next step, whether they want native language only in primary level or in secondary and later too.

LACK OF APPLICATION:

The participants get divided into two sides in their opinion. One group highly appreciate teaching their mother tongue, and they believe that it is important for preserving their language, culture, particularity; or we can say overall identity. The other group emphasizes the national language as well as international language as they do not prefer to keep themselves isolated from the mainstream. They prefer a national language over their mother language to get a better job or to attend higher studies because educated indigenous people, having

good command over Bengali and English, get preferences in government job recruitment. They also claim that they are capable of learning three languages: their mother tongue, Bengali (national language), and English (international language) which may help them get jobs in the national government system and globally. It seems effective for them because job is of paramount importance in Bangladeshi socio-cultural context. They think that Bangladeshis are open minded and government also reserves especial opportunity for them. These two domains of thought are related with the theoretical perspectives of Essentialism and Social Constructionism. Essentialism depicts the characteristics which are natural and inherent in objects regardless of any social or historical context. Their inner sense is fixed and perpetual. On the contrary, social constructionism shows the characteristics deeply based on social, political or historical context. Their inner sense is changeable with the change of social perspectives to keep pace with time. So we can relate the first thought of keeping own identity alive with the essence of essentialism, and second one of getting internationalized with the essence of social constructionism.

However, based on their opinion we find a major dilemma, a dilemma of preserving ethnic identity versus internationalization (Sugimura, 2015). The dilemma is not only an issue for the Bangladeshi indigenous people, but also an issue worldwide. In Germany, the new Turkish generation prefers to go to German speaking school rather than Turkish school as they prefer to make themselves ready for global world, and they do not want to be isolated with their own culture. By the name of globalization or internationalization, does the mainstream (even the minority people) merge the cultural diversity?

LANGUAGE POLLUTION:

Five indigenous languages out of forty-six seems a small step, but Bangladesh government has planned to extend it gradually. One of the main challenges of extending this policy is many indigenous languages do not have any alphabets; some of them had lost their alphabets and a very few of them are oral language, so there is no question of alphabets. Initiation of new alphabets could be a suggestion for these oral languages, but this raises another problem to polluting the oral language. At the same time, those people need to cope with the current reality, and this is a pragmatic demand. Again, other minority people who have their own alphabets also do not know how to use their alphabet (Mullah et al., 2007). However this initial step not only solves the previous problems (problems like drop-out, equal language facilities, etc.), but also raises some new possible difficulties that we found this research.

Conclusion

Currently in many countries, indigenous students are provided with extra care in terms of institutional education. Keeping this in mind, Bangladesh, as a developing country, is also taking the initiatives to help the indigenous children learn in a more comfortable environment using their mother language in primary level of education. In this way of deformation, Bangladeshi government is also getting support from international donor agencies. This policy results in a nice step to start equal educational opportunity for the indigenous people; five indigenous groups has got their pre-primary and primary education books and notebooks this year in their own mother languages and we also know that Bangladesh government has arranged free primary education for all since 1992.

First and foremost, introducing multicultural education in national curriculum might be a possible solution in this regard. The national curriculum of Bangladesh is highly dominated by Bengali culture; the stories, culture, history, name of characters all are just about Bengalese. Government may initiate a multicultural curriculum where ethnic histories, cultures, stories can also be included. Multicultural education may help the mainstream to be more open to overcome the mono-cultural attitude, and can ensure equal rights of education among the indigenous population to keep their heritage intact and being a global citizen at the same time. Besides, sufficient number of trained teachers can facilitate the learning process to make the initiative successful. The initiative also requires good coordination between National Curriculum and Textbooks Board (NCTB) and the Directorate of Primary Education to implement the plan more effectively. Finally, a third language can be added in national curriculum from 46 different indigenous languages of Bangladesh. It may preserve their identity and particularity, and may not make them isolated. By initiating third language it may possible to solve the language pollution case. Oral languages may be practiced by mainstream and other indigenous students.

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Civic conscience and the social organism during the pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our capacity of understanding the gravity of situations, has showed how vulnerable the relationship between citizens and the elite is, has tested the veracity of the moral values we all claim during non crisis periods. We could have overcome this crisis more easily if we all had developed the civic level of our conscience. “Queen” of the conscience structure, the civic conscience makes us understand the citizen-society symbiosis, opens up our channels of communication and helps us heal in one another the alienation brought by the virus, fear, and isolation. A democratic society, by having active and conscious citizens, heals faster and more cleverly/sensibly/smarter. It learns progressively and it perfects itself.

Keywords: *civic conscience, society, system, organism, pandemic, crisis.*

What is civic conscience?

Civic conscience, a component part of the whole structure of conscience of a human being, is dependent on its inferior levels, is powered by their values, but the same time, it feels with even more amplitude the imbalances and movements in its structure. Dependent on self consciousness and moral conscience, civic conscience represents the final layer of the structure of conscience, whose birth comes with the perception and activation of the symbiosis between the individual and the society. Similar to a physical construction, the human personality starts being configured from the first years of life of an individual, its components being shaped and starting to gradually assemble. Self consciousness is crystallized first and implies managing both the relationship with the exterior and one's own self. The outline of a the future mature person that is being shaped now feeds from the perception and experimenting of the outer world, through discovering the universe that is less and less close, through the meaning things and phenomena acquire. In this construction of the self, fed thus by the exterior, values find their place as real magnetic centers that connect new experiences. Every decision taken by the

conscious self confirms or refutes the significance of the value that motivated the will and the decision of an individual. It is a living system, in perpetual movement, with values that continue to strengthen their priority status and others whose significance fades out after being invalidated too many times. The axiological structure is thus, purely subjective and offers an identity to the human self. Moral conscience mixes with self consciousness; setting a clear boundary between the two would be difficult, as the self does not distinguish that well between the decisions that are for the self and the ones for others. Practically, “decisions for the others” do not even exist; the moral value of a decision is never separated from the self. Doing something good for another person bounces back to the self as a satisfaction of goodness so morality is also full subjective. From this point onward, the human being starts to comprehend that it needs social relationships, and the Aristotelian “zoon politikon” is demonstrated with each child whose formation and development depends on the ones that guide their steps of cognition and understanding. Moral conscience is formed strictly in relation to the social environment; first, one that is close and then one that is wider and wider, thus making known the first traces of civic conscience.

Strictly from a moral point of view we speak about passing from anomie – without law, outside the rules – to heteronomy – law imposed by others – socionomy – law deriving from society – and autonomy – the law imposed by the self (Peters, 1965, p. 108). Yet, moral independence does not have to be seen as pure objectivity, but as pure subjectivity. The decision is dictated by the moral structure formed that offers the self the satisfaction of a good choice. Here comes into picture the role of the extended family, the city. The duties of others arrive with the social meanings and rules. It is an environment that the self must get to know gradually, in the same way it deals with the other aspects of the universe. This “must” is justified by the interdependency between people in a society. The “other” is a given, and is a necessary given, because through it comes forth information, the experiences of the past, the experiences of the “other”, meanings and values. The “other” can shake up the whole structure of conscience through its own values, which can be either a danger or an expansion for one’s horizons. The social will affect the self as a necessity, and the good and the evil will be felt by the self depending on how balanced is the self’s own structure. So the “other” can either be a friend or an enemy, but the self cannot escape from it no matter what.

The citizen-society symbiosis

Society needs to be understood as being an organism, or a larger family, where people need each other. Systems such as the economic, the cultural, the educational and healthcare systems are essential for the self's stability, and these systems cannot function in a stable manner unless the citizens behave as in a family. In a close family, a sick or unstable member also affects the others. Either in a good or bad manner. The natural development of the family life is halted by the therapeutic process, if it is resorted to one. If the condition is neglected, the consequences can be serious and can shake the foundation of the family's structure and balance. Similarly, in a society an ill, unbalanced "other" affects the ones around it. The sickness of our peers, their scarcity, their emotional troubles, incapacity, helplessness, the decisions and solutions they apply to overcome a situation, they all affect the social organism. Economics show that all social categories have to be taken into consideration and they have their own role in a strong economy. Political science also showed throughout its history that the excessive poverty of some has also, sooner or later, destabilized the rich. Mental illness, the same as the helplessness of the "other", is a danger to the people around as much as it is to the self. The incapacity of a leader has major effects on the lives of all those who he is in charge of. These are a few examples that show that the self can be affected negatively by the social "other" or that it can be helped by it if instead of disharmony it finds energy, solutions and initiative to stabilize the self. This is the big achievement of civic conscience: an individual understanding the fact that an ill society will affect him sooner or later; that its normal development and securing the topmost and democratic chances, depend on the social organism's health. The symbiosis between the two, society and the individual consists in the fact that one has an essential need for the other. A sick, alienated society endangers the rights of its generic citizen. It refuses or it misses the mission of securing for the citizen a collection of spiritual values that help its development, and the material ones are on hold. At the same time, an estranged citizen, that does not see his purpose in a society, that does not react to abuse, that does not monitor the political class, that does not take a stance when there are serious deviation from the norms that were agreed on, will affect through its behavior the social equilibrium and create an environment for society's alienation, and the effects will return with a boomerang effect.

The concept of "system" in a social context has dated from a few decades ago, the perception of the social organism in a systematic manner highlighting

exactly the interdependence of its components, the capacity and necessity of self-adjustment, the focus towards common objectives. Defined as

an ensemble of identifiable, interdependent components, that have such a relationship in which if one of them modifies, the others modify as well, and consequently the whole system's ensemble modifies, it transforms ...a limited ensemble whose limits are defined on the objectives (purpose, projects, finalities, teleonomy, properties) that are favored. (Carpinschi & Bocancea, 1998, pp. 155-156)

the social system is of interest in order to show the importance of the civic conscience of each member. Part of a subsystem, every human being can balance or imbalance the pieces it is linked with, and similarly to a domino, to generate reactions to a smaller or larger extent in the whole system. It is of equal importance that the rules of functioning of a system can be used in order to make it better. In other words, through the power of intervening, through initiative, searching for solutions and deciding to get involved, the human being can restore balance to the whole system. This can happen only if the citizens have a strongly formed civic conscience, if social moral values are properly crystallized, if critical thinking and a knowledge base are ensured.

Civic conscience and, by default, the health of the social organism are tested by periods of crisis. The immune system of the social organism is represented by the democratic mechanisms, by the promptitude and efficiency of the chosen solution, but also by the citizens' solidarity. Using rationality, analyzing the situation in order to choose the most suitable solutions depends, however, on the civic conscience being formed or not, if it is healthy and active, or on the contrary, if it is undeveloped or alienated. Such a trial for the human society was the crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. It tested both the way in which nations, its officials and institution know to collaborate in order to diminish the havoc as much as possible, and the manner in which citizens are able to perceive their role in the fight against the calamity. It showed how prepared everyone is to view the phenomena adjacent to the pandemic as they are, such as fake news and conspiracy theories, and what it may possibly be the most important, to see beyond their immediate personal interests that were insufficiently understood. Practically, people were asked to understand, and demonstrate that they do, that sacrificing some of their freedom, and more precisely a series of sacrifices, can save the life and health of the others around them, and even their own. An analysis of the decisions taken by the social figures involved show how just much human society is prepared to confront crisis or, better said, how strong is the social immune

Civic conscience and the social organism during the pandemic

system. Is civic conscience really formed and strong enough? Are the state institutions modern, cooperative and mature?

Vulnerabilities and solutions in the fight against the pandemic

Firstly, the values related to international and interstate collaboration were the chapters in which the states totally failed the test, immediately after the start of the pandemic. One by one, the states announced the closing of their borders, isolation being the primary method of facing the COVID-19 wave, giving up, for example, on the values of the European community that were well praised in theory. Free movement was suspended, as if the society paralyzed while waiting for the first wave of the new virus. Italy was hit first, and the Italians felt on their own skin the isolation on the battlefield. Fortunately, once the pandemic had installed in Europe, officials remembered the community values, devising and putting into practice mechanisms for solidarity. Donating equipment, dispatching medical teams and medicine, housing and treating patients from neighboring countries, and the repatriation of citizens stuck in other states, were all manifests of political solidarity. (European Commission, n.d) Another extremely difficult trial for the states was the acquisition and distribution of anti-COVID-19 vaccines. Administrations that had the financial prowess acquired much over the necessary amount of vaccines, with huge quantities ending up being discarded, while the overwhelming majority of the world's poor population had no access to the vaccine. Both the United States of America¹ and the European states were accused of excessively accumulating the vaccines on the basis of a narrow-minded nationalism, the unequal distribution of the vaccine at a global level making possible "the emergence of the Omicron variant, and the longer inequity continues, the higher the risks of the virus evolving in ways we can't prevent or predict".² But officially, the European Commission boasts that it

coordinated and co-financed deliveries of over 190 million medical and personal protective equipment, reinforced hospitals with additional medical staff, and provided over 10.5 million vaccine doses to over 55 countries in Europe and

¹ The Guardian shows in US throws out millions of doses of Covid vaccine as world goes wanting that "At least 15m doses were scrapped in the US between March and September, according to one analysis of CDC data. A separate investigation found 1m doses were discarded in 10 states between December and July (...) But the news comes as millions of people around the world wait for their first doses. Only 1% of the populations of low-income countries had received first shots as of July, compared with more than half of those living in a handful of high-income countries." (*The Guardian*, 2021).

² Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesu, quoted by BBC - Covid-19: WHO chief optimistic disease will be beaten in 2022 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-59840513>.

worldwide via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. In addition to its coordinating role, the EU finances 75% of the transport costs of the dispatched assistance.
(European Commission, n.d)

If officials may be able to understand when they are mistaken and correct their manners of response, the situation becomes even more problematic when it comes to decisions at a citizen level. The ethics of the pandemic have been deeply tested by the citizens' behavior in various parts of the world. Solidarity at the micro-social level, a proper way of getting informed, critical thinking and combating the fake-news phenomena and conspiracy theories have posed, and continue to pose, major issue to the population. A lack of human solidarity has often been the tragic manifestation that showed an alienation of civic conscience. Citizens from various corners of the civilized world have shown a sinister lack of concern towards the possibility of the virus spreading. Protests against the restrictions set by officials to limit and control the pandemic phenomenon have brought into light an accentuated lack of trust. State institutions, researchers, politicians, the people around, friends, have all been targeted one by one for the strong manifesting of this lack of trust.

The large-scale protests in major European and American cities, chanting for the right to freedom and seemingly campaigning for democracy, could be interpreted as a manifestation of civic conscience, but such an interpretation is flawed. According to the right to The Greatest Happiness, as the theorist of liberalism himself states (Mill, 1863, p. 5), human actions are useful and right if they tend to produce happiness, and they are wrong if they tend to produce the opposite of happiness, that is, suffering. Rejecting restrictions as a freedom manifest does not lead to the greatest happiness, as it was chanted, because the pleasure produced could easily transform into suffering for the self or for others. Disease and death are intense and heavy forms of suffering, which means reason can easily show the right decision between: being free but a risk to your own health and that of others, on one hand, and being constrained in your activity by a series of limits designed to reduce the effects of the pandemic, on the other. Refusing the restrictions can only be attributed to two possible explanations. One is the lack of trust in officials and in the existence of the virus/disease, and the other points to the extremely deranged moral structure of those who, even though they know the virus exists, value their own freedom more than the life and health of those around them. Viewing the human being with the optimism and respect it deserves, we will consider correct the option in which the protesters against protective masks, distancing measures or circulation restrictions wanted their freedom left untouched because they did not believe in the virus and its

devastating effects. This lack of trust is actually directed at the authorities, either scientific or political ones.

The phenomenon of negation is not a novelty in social philosophy. The denial of aspects of reality that are evident and justified by specialists does not even need to be caused by insufficient knowledge of the topic in question, but by self-interest, group, cultural or identity interest. It has been shown (Bardon, 2019) that people contradict and interpret evidence in the light of a predetermined conclusion, and this is especially true with people that had intellectual training. The simplest example is the rejection of climate change and the necessity for measures to rebalance the environment. Conservatives in denial reject this aspect of reality, regardless of their cultural level. Economic, religious and also political decisions are thus affected in a negative way, with effects which can further accentuate the imbalances that are rejected purely because they are not part of their own ideology. However, when their personal interest or the group interest is endangered, the perspective of negation changes substantially. This means that, after reflecting on the case history of infections and deaths, ones that were skeptic of the virus had other explanations for rejecting restrictions. Some of them were precisely linked to their personal interest or political group interests in order to capitalize electorally people's dissatisfaction.

This was the context in which fake news and theories revealing hidden conspiracies appeared. These forms of misinformation and manipulation took on substantial proportions with the shift of the communication space from "face-to-face" to a virtual space. Information bubbles created for those who believe in certain theories, for those united by certain ways of reacting to reality, functioned perfectly in rejecting ideas contrary to the theories already crystallized in their conscience. Therefore the explosion of information in the virtual space often did not help, despite the tumult of scientific information that anyone interested could, and even now, can find if they truly seek it. Around the globe, circulated theories such as the micro-chipping the population through the vaccine, the crypto-monetization of the global economy in the interest of the elite, the only one that will survive the economic crisis induced by state institutions, and many more scenarios designed to explain the "real" meaning of the pandemic, beyond the official "manipulations".

In order to escape from the bubbles that were blocking contrary information and protecting them from the official reality considered far too sinister, citizens needed help. They could have found support in those near them, or a hand could have been extended from specialists and researchers. The reaction of the public opinion regarding news invented to misinform was, however, weaker than anti-

covid or anti-vaccine propaganda. In European countries, at least. A civil movement of protest against disinformation started in the United States with the so-called “Birds aren’t real” movement, sparked by the conspiracy theories that arose during the electoral polls, and therefore prior to the pandemic, but which perfectly aligned with the conspiracy boom around COVID-19. It is a movement through which ordinary citizens aim to demonstrate that the awareness level regarding reality, be it factual or informational, is higher than it may seem. The campaign is, at the same time, a form of protest against the mass of people allowing themselves to be drawn into such ridiculous, illogical and dangerous conspiracies.

A different type of help was expected from specialists and researchers, due to the ethical responsibility of researchers (Huidu, 2020) which, in such times of crisis, must turn to the general public and disseminate information that can heal alienated consciences. They were expected to explain to the public the principle of the relevance of a source of information, the method of identifying the identity of a source, and how to detect the conflicts of interest behind fake news. To show the connections with no scientific basis between events that in reality are not determined by one another, but merely linked by a context, and at the same time to warn them of the basic principles of bioethics: beneficence and non-maleficence. The ability to protect yourself, and not fall under the influence of hidden interests that distort reality, can be formed thanks to education and training. Hence, the essential role of teachers, specialists and researchers is visible.

However, the reception of information and efforts made by specialists also requires the trust of citizens, and the pandemic has revealed a severe lack in this sense. The level of vaccination in countries with the financial prowess to provide the antiviral vaccine also showed such a lack of trust, the most affected being those that were removed from democratic exercise, for several decades, by communism. According to “Our World in Data”, with a latest update from 21 February 2022, the European countries with the highest vaccination rates are the western ones; meanwhile, in the former Communist Bloc anti-vaccine propaganda and the distrust in officials have led to much lower percentages of a fully vaccinated population:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Moldova	26	Andorra	69
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26	Liechtenstein	69
Bulgaria	30	Latvia	69
Armenia	30	Lithuania	69

Civic conscience and the social organism during the pandemic

Georgia	31	Luxembourg	71
Ukraine	35	UK	72
North Macedonia	40	Cyprus	72
Albania	41	Greece	72
Romania	42	Netherlands	72
Montenegro	45	Austria	72
Kosovo	46	Norway	73
Belarus	46	Germany	74
Azerbaijan	47	Sweden	74
Serbia	47	Finland	76
Russia	49	France	77
Slovakia	50	Belgium	78
Croatia	54	Isle of Man	78
Poland	58	Iceland	78
Slovenia	59	Italy	78
Turkey	62	Ireland	79
Estonia	63	Guernsey	81
Czech Republic	64	Denmark	82
Hungary	64	Spain	83
San Marino	64	Faroe Islands	83
Monaco	65	Malta	89
Switzerland	68	Portugal	91

The data shows that democracy is the social context in which times of crisis can be faced more easily, and in which citizens can become aware of their own role in society and understand that an ill society will, sooner or later, also infect them. It is the framework in which civic consciences are formed and activated whenever necessary.

A suggestive metaphor to explain the clash between society and the COVID-19 pandemic is the one used by an analysis from Ukraine (Hanaba, Mysechko & Bloschynskyi, 2020), which sees this century's malady as a cancer that takes over more and more cells. Facing such an invasion, the social organism can defend itself only if it coordinates all its efforts and follows an integrative strategy. Cooperation, or the solidarity of efforts, is manifested through the communication of information between countries, the sharing of experiences and a more efficient selection of solutions, by offering specialists and medical infrastructure, and organizing the economies, which, if not done collaboratively, can lead to chaos and the crisis deepening. Cooperation must also be viewed in the relationship between citizens and the state, so that the former can make informed decisions and

the latter can better fight the waves of infection. The solidarity of joint efforts is therefore the key to emerge from the crisis.

But this crisis, like any other crisis, brings us hope that this pandemic will help humanity realize the danger of global separation. Global cooperation will become a victory not only against the coronavirus, but also against future epidemics and crises of the century. (Hanaba, Mysechko & Bloshchynskyi, 2020, p. 37)

wrote our colleagues in May 2020. Unfortunately, shortly after, another crisis fell upon Ukraine and, consequently, the entire world, and it is proving to be devastating. Whether countries will know how to unite their efforts in order to fight the new scourge brought by Russia's invasion of Ukraine will be visible. From the statements of Ukrainian officials, they are beginning to fight on their own the monster represented by the Putin administration. However, the protests of solidarity in the world's major cities, including the ones among Russians that are sacrificing their own safety, prove that the pandemic has indeed strengthened the civic conscience of citizens. We shall see whether the world's political leaders will also demonstrate that they understand the treatment through cooperation needed for the social organism.

Conclusions

In the context in which the lack of coordination of joint efforts between states, or in the direction of citizen-elites, has resulted in unnatural reactions from some of us, putting the lives and health of ourselves and of those around us at risk, often with tragic effects, an analysis of what could have helped is required. The context of the pandemic proves once again that human society has not managed to shape to its true value the psycho-social concept of "civic conscience".

If we would benefit during our upbringing from a real crystallization and education of the civic conscience, each and every one of us would succeed in making a contribution to the functioning and evolution of society. The continuous modernization of society is more than necessary in order to guarantee a framework in which individuals can develop to their full potential. And this stage is none other than the one where the human being moves their own cogs in the social machinery, ensuring, even by a small step, its evolution.

The citizen-society symbiosis, however, is absent from the conscious universe for many of us. Civic education, as well as moral education, has major shortcomings in upbringing the generations, alienating citizens and triggering behaviors that are hesitant, apathetic and that lack reason.

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ESSAYS

PRESENTATIONS

REVIEWS

An Ethics for the Human Cyborg

Review

We Have Always Been Cyborgs: Digital Data, Gene Technologies, and an Ethics of Transhumanism (2021): Bristol University Press
by *Stefan Lorenz Sorgner*

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We are all members of that league of the superhuman – or would be, if we but had eyes to see. (Robert A. Heinlein – Lost Legacy)

We Have Always Been Cyborgs is part of the author's lifetime work to make among the wider public the "unthinkable" perspective on transhumanism a "sensible" subject, if not a "popular" one. His challenge is a very tough task, as long as for many their own transhuman condition, as Robert Heinlein claims, is too radical for being accepted. In this book, Sorgner touches upon the main topics related with far-reaching transhumanism materialization as digitalization, mind-uploading, cyborgisation, or gene technology. The overall conception on humans-technology relation is congruent, although different, with Stiegler's epyphilogenesis of humans' trough technology.

His pledge for human evolution and development is definitely circumscribed to the transhumanist creed of the accomplishment of full potentialities of humanities by means of technological enhancement based on the fundamental premise that any social and individual change is mostly self-transformation. Nonetheless, at the same time, Sorgner's view stands out vivid and original in the transhumanist landscape.

Two reasons make Sorgner special in the transhumanists ideological club. Firstly, because he promotes a metahumanist perspective, as he defines it. It is a transhumanist conception both beyond (*meta-*) and in the middle of (*meta-*), i.e. it lies in between Posthumanism and Transhumanism position.

Metahumanism strives to mediate among the most diverse philosophical discourses in the interest of letting the appropriate meaning of relationality, perspective, and radical plurality emerge. (Sorgner, 2020, p. 41)

Secondly, it is his genuine naturalist conviction. His naturalism is not a “naïve materialist understanding of the world”, but embraces “a postmodern alethic nihilism, which again can be explained most plausibly on the basis of a naturalist ontology of continual becoming” (pp. 19-20). His argument is that we are from the beginning technologically upgraded being. Reason is not a common natural trait, but an ability that is nurtured through education. Reason is an updating ability, “a technology, a technology which has become a part of who we are” (p. 13). He diminishes the importance of other issues as the mind-uploading golden path of posthumanists as being highly problematic, in the favor of gene and cyborg technologies “as the most promising means for expanding human boundaries” (p. 8). In his view, the simulation argument is not the “crux concerning whether someone counts as a transhumanist or not” (p. 29). On the contrary, for him, the simulation argument is a sterile endeavor with a pragmatic relevance no more than Middle Age teleological debates on how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Mind-uploading issue has poor pragmatic relevance because there is “no indication for believing that digital life can even be possible”, it is a “highly dubitable procedure”, there are no strong scientific “reason for regarding it as a likely option”, and is “highly problematic as well as implausible”.

In the first chapter, Sorgner develops his philosophical position on transhumanism as being a nihilistic, positive pessimism. As he argued in a previous work (Sorgner, 2007) naturalism leads to a philosophical pessimism. In the tradition opened by Buddhism, Schopenhauer, or Nietzsche, he argues that naturalist ontology of continual becoming inevitable results in ontological pessimism. The suffering has a constant presence along the pleasure, the wellbeing is never complete, the life is an incessant struggle for living and surviving, and the absolute truth are nowhere to be found. Nevertheless, the ontological pessimism is not necessary linked with a negative perception of the world. On the contrary. Due to the creative and constitutive (*epiphylogenetical*) role of technology for the human species, the technological progress allow for a life-affirming form of pessimism, a positive ones. Hence, even if the technological progress is not perfect, it undoubtedly brought many advantages: the obvious improvement of quality of life in the past centuries, the decreasing percentage quotas of absolute poverty, the medical technologies of reduction the physiological pain, increasing of life expectancy throughout the globe, the diversification of entertainment

technology for the good life, and so on. The entire book exhibits a contagious technological optimism. Even if the technological progress brought about new dangers and perils, the transhumanist conviction is that the same technology is the answer. “Climate change is a challenge, but I regard it as a challenge which we can deal with by means of new and innovative technologies.” (p. 15)

From the ontology of continual becoming results two different types of nihilism: alethic nihilism and ethical nihilism (Sorgner, 2010). “Alethic nihilism implies that all philosophical judgements are interpretations, whereby the concept of interpretation does not imply that it has to be false, but merely that it can be false.” (p. 11) A condition shared with scientific statements. Ethical nihilism, “affirms that any non-formal judgement concerning the good life is plausible.” (p.11) At this point transhumanist perspective starkly reveals its postmodern appurtenance. All judgements are interpretation being either tautologies or pragmatic truths. The consequence for ethical judgement is that “no non-formal judgement of the good is plausible for all people” (p. 19).

In the rest of the second chapter, *On a Silicon-based Transhumanism*, Sorgner discusses some of the most pressing issues of nowadays society related with technological progress in the light of his philosophical framework. The digitalization of all processes of the lifeworld is a fact. Even if this conclusion can sound at odds for a person committed to the ideal of maximizing the negative freedom, he considers data collection as a necessary measure for ensuring freedom and progress. “There are a great number of plausible personal as well as political reasons for digitally collecting data.” (p. 31) One example is the biotechnological research and medical interventions, he claims, is in the benefit of ourselves due to the correlations between genes and ageing, life-style choices and wellbeing. He tries to make a point, from pragmatic reasons, that Chinese model of collecting data in order to promote security, taking knowledgeable public policies and promoting economic processes is preferable to European reluctance and overwhelming safety measures, which restrain such practices in the name of freedom and privacy values. This policy is also detrimental to the financial wellbeing that will decline significantly and will result in the civil wars. As consequence, the “internet panopticon” is practically inevitable in the name of personal wellbeing, social progress, and promoting... negative freedom. The ethical nihilism supports the as-good-as-it-gets solution. He points out that democratic usage of our digital data is not only desirable, but also a pragmatic necessity.

For Sorgner, a much bigger danger to social democracy and negative freedom are paternalistic ideological systems of any nature: political, cultural,

moral and alike. His philosophical meta-position support his view on the necessity to reject grand narratives, immutable values, religious ideals, or political utopias. All will become, sooner or later, harmful for some of the people. All social goals should be conceive flexible, but not without rigor, better, but not the best, “as-good-as-it-gets”, but not ultimate solutions.

The chapter on *Carbon-based Transhumanism* deals with the problems of moral bio-enhancement, gene modification and gene selection. He further argue for the idea that previous essentialist ethical system are unable to deal with the challenges raised by genomic technologies. In fact, the fundamental state of continual becoming of human being makes any absolute and fixed system of knowledge detrimental to the liberal-democratic values in long term. “Ontological judgements as part of the legal system are inevitably in contradiction to the foundations of a liberal-democratic system.” (p. 47) The ethical nihilism is contrasted with any fixed ethical system which is inevitable inappropriate for the continual becoming state of humans as transhuman, due to its specific qualities.

Firstly, ethical nihilism demands continual criticism of encrusted totalitarian structures; secondly, ethical nihilism rejects the necessity of transcending a nihilist society so that a new culture becomes established; thirdly, ethical nihilism demands promotion of institutional changes so that plurality is acknowledged, recognized, and considered appropriately on legal, ethical, and social levels. (pp. 67-68)

He illustrates the superiority of ethical nihilism conceptualization against others concepts of the good by four examples: incest, hybridization, three biological parents, and selection after IVF (*in vitro fertilization*) and PGD (*preimplantation genetic diagnosis*). In each case, no one is harmed, but the autonomy of decision for adult parents, is still violated.

In the question of moral bioenhancement, although he think that it would lead to increase likelihood of human beings to act morally on the social level, he doesn't bet on the “technological gambit”: “It is highly unlikely that moral bioenhancement will do the trick within a sufficiently short time” (p. 82), he states.

On the issue of gene modification as legitimate moral procedure, Sorgner builds his case on refuting Habermas' argument against the conception of educational and genetic enhancements as being parallel and analogous events. He provides arguments that “there is a structural analogy between educational and genetic enhancement by modification, such that the moral evaluation of these two procedures ought to be viewed as analogous” (p. 83). He points that abilities brought about genetic enhancement are not always irreversible, while the educational enhancement can have irreversible consequences. He rejects Habermas' autonomy argument, according which the enhancement limits the

potential for an autonomous way of life, on the base of that is difficult to distinguish between what *was grown* and what *was made*. The instrumentalization argument is neutralized on various bases, the most important being that it “presupposes a radically dualistic ontology that is highly dubitable” (p. 93). He contends that the inequality between genetically enhanced and those that are not, even if potentially promotes an asymmetric relationship, is not affecting at all the equality as a normative ideal. At least not more than education does. Further, he highlights the contradiction in Habermas’ view that still considers genetic therapy as morality legitimate. Sorgner shows that both have more in common than are different each other. Both presupposes a sort of alteration of genes, there is no clear-cut distinction between genetic therapy and genetic enhancement, and both cases involve the same morally legitimate parents’ decision to promote child’s life span and health.

On the *gene selection* topic, Sorgner develops an argument to show that *principle of procreative beneficence*,¹ proposed by Savulescu & Kahane (2009), is less morally plausible than *principle of reproductive autonomy* (or *procreative liberty*).² More than that, he contend that “the principle is inconsistent and that it violently attacks human beings who disagree with it, which is the reason why I regard it as an immoral principle” (p. 100). In his view, the *principle of procreative beneficence* is threatening the very goal of negative freedom and it is haunted by the shadow of eugenics.

The last chapter, *A Fictive Ethics*, is addressing to the most important ethical issues concerning transhumanism: the question of what good life means; the meaning of life; the genetic enhancement and parenting; the transhumanist key virtues of truthfulness, mindfulness and impulse control; what counts as morally right from a transhumanist perspective; and the need to considerate a plurality of concepts of the good and the relevance of expanding the health span as central guidelines for human goals in all circumstances, instead of pursuing any utopian ideal. It is a genuine type of a comprehensive ethics of technology. It illustrates the *embracing position* of a positive attitude toward technology and the belief in the manageability of the technological progress (Popoveniuc, 2022b). In this chapter,

¹ “If couples (or single reproducers) have decided to have a child, and selection is possible, then they have a significant moral reason to select the child, or the possible children they could have, whose life can be expected, in the light of the relevant available information, to go best or at least not worse than any of the others.” (Savulescu & Kahane, 2009, p. 274)

² “If reproducers have decided to have a child, and selection is possible, then any procreative option selected by reproducers is morally permissible as long as it is chosen autonomously.” (Savulescu & Kahane 2009, p. 279)

Sorgner develops the consequences of his metahumanist vision on human deeds and provides a veritable exercise of metahumanistic reasoning.

This illustrates a progressive and enlighten Weltanschauung that accomplishes his pledge for understanding transhumanism as an insightful, aspirational future state of mind, person and society.

It is non-utilitarian, nonutopian, and non-linear. It does not imply strong truth-claims. It is also non-anthropocentric, non-essentialist, and non-dualistic like most critical posthumanist philosophies. Hence, it lies in between post- and transhumanism. (p. 110)

The pillars of Sorgner's anti-utopian transhumanism vision are the dynamic dialectical relationship of freedom, equality, and solidarity, the radical plurality of goodness, and the affirmation of a culture of plurality, science, and relationality. All of these are conceived realistic, as part of the continual becoming state of human being, and not as absolute and final utopian goals. The utopian unconditionality dangers of perfect society are tempered by moderate goals of *a decent work-life balance with a lot of vacation time, non-violence as a social and a lived ideal, and an increased lifespan or even better: a longer-lasting health span.*

The entire book has a very captivating and engaging style. The examples are very illustrative although the most ideas are the result of very powerful and deep philosophical insights. It is enjoyable to read such an enthusiastic and confident depiction of our society in its way of becoming and I think I am among those who "can hardly wait for our posthuman future to occur." Although it shares the same hubris feeling which feeds the transhumanist creed in its deepest roots, it is not an unmeasured or reckless one, but a tempered and realistic. This thing provides a comfortable and secured feeling of hope and confidence. The advantage of transhumanist (in particular, metahumanist) vision over posthumanist one is that the former is driven by the wish for *better*, not for an utopian and dangerous, uncertain and impossible to be apprehended *best*. In fact, this is what transhumanism is: the continual bettering of human species. I am agree with that and totally embracing it.

Nonetheless, what I see in our past and all around the world nowadays makes me wonder if while reading Sorgner's book, I did not fall under the spell of transhumanist wishful thinking. The *ought*, fictitious or not, have to be always built on what it *is*. Otherwise, it is doomed to fail. The "solution" of pervasive surveillance is a very dangerous enterprise. Even if "there seems to be no other way", at the present level of moral development of human species which is still mostly characterized by features or strong tendencies toward paternalism, tribalism, nationalism, racism, parochialism, religious dogmatism, fundamentalism

and so on, I doubt that the political power of the required panopticon will not be diverted to harmful scopes. Consonant with Sorgner, “I wish to stress very much that my analysis is not one about which I am happy” (p. 38). Throughout human history, too many desirable and noble political and social ideals and principles in many political ideologies, in theory, became social nightmares, in practice. For this reason, how the metahumanist principles can be implemented without being perverted, become more decisive than their substance. The proposed liberal ethics of a fictitious autonomy, that realization of negative freedom implies, is hard to be sustainable in a society, more and more fluid and virtualized, where people have many troubles to keep with simpler traditional principles of ethics. The crush of pluralist ethics is even a more difficult task, more than promoting a relational ethics. But Sorgner warns us that relational ethic “restores dangerous totalitarian and paternalistic structures that must be avoided at all costs” (p. 47). In the best case, this is a conundrum. The implementation at cultural and social level of the liberal ethics of a fictitious autonomy is very improbable. Contrasting, there is an ontological support for relational ethics. The contemporary society is more relational than ever and the individual selfhood is nurtured and built by the specific roles and relationships in which it is engaged (Rachels, 1975). As Charles H. Cooley said, *people are not who others think they are or who they think they are, but people are who they think others think they are*. In the present deeply networked *onlife* living, even the traditional concept of privacy cannot be conceived in an essentialist way, but have to be lessen to a more fluid and relational form as “contextual integrity” (Nissenbaum, 2010). The fact that the negative freedom can be conceived in unnumbered conflicting ways by various individuals it is a recipe for conflict and violence.

So, there are few reasons to believe that society can naturally embrace a liberal ethics of a fictitious autonomy in a sustainable way. At the same time, there is no sound solution offered in the book. The envisaged paths are still debatable. The perspective is enthusiastic, based on a natural democratic functioning of check and balance and an overconfidence in human reasonableness. If people would understood that the differences and conflicts results from the plurality of goodness held by equally trustful and sincere individuals they would cease to dispute and embrace the suggested ethical vision.

Moreover, there is the unbalance between liberal democratic and authoritarian-paternalistic values. The liberal democratic tolerates the pluralistic types of good, but traditional ones don't. How will be set the course toward transhuman society and mentality if, from the democratic liberal perspective, any

axiological interference is forbidden? The pluralistic tolerance promotes negative freedom and rejects any manipulation or coercion.

Instead, moral psychology provide evidence that the social-democratic political perspective of transhumanism is hardly compatible with the libertarian goal of maximizing the negative freedom and accommodating the various concepts of the good. Those who advocate genuine democratic moral foundations as Fairness/Unjustice or Harm/Care have difficulties in getting along with those who embraces radically different social views (Haidt, 2012; LaFollette & Woodruff, 2015).

Definitely an ethical nihilist conception and a liberal ethics of fictive autonomy offer solid foundation for negative freedom and strong defense against “dangerous totalitarian and paternalistic structures that must be avoided at all costs” (p. 47). But the critical question is how such conceptions can culturally prevail? This is the big challenge. Not only what kind of ethics and political regime is theoretical preferred, but how it can be realized in practice? The scientific knowledge on human psychology give us little hope that an individualist ethics of maximizing negative freedom is sustainable. At least not at this time. It requires not only individuals able to live in a democratic system with judicial benchmarks for blatant breakings of ethical and moral standards, but individuals with higher levels of moral competence and critical thinking (Lind, Sandberger & Bargel, 1985; Lind, 2012; Popoveniuc, 2022a).

The healthy ethical individualism characteristic, in part, to consolidated democracies is in permanent danger of failing into autarchic individualism and social autism (Gavreliuc, 2011). The technological power, the promises for unlimited individual enhancing and happiness up to the limit of godlike state touch upon the limits of ethical reasoning and humans’ moral. Good life, well-being, happiness, pleasure, extended lifespan all trigger human frenzied hubris alike religious promises of afterlife, blessing, choosing, fortune or safekeeping. In this matters the people’s moral competence reaches its limits, as studies show (Lind, 2003). Even those with higher moral competence on judging regular or basic ethical-moral dilemma, can fail to the level of moral incompetence on the issues with higher stakes as gene selection, bioenhancement, euthanasia, abortion etc., phenomenon known as “moral segmentation”. Higher moral and civic competencies required for the envisaged transhuman democratic society depends on the quality of education, the applied curriculum, and the type of socialization (Aghbal, 2014). The negative freedom maximizing society prerequisites a very elevated moral and ethical understanding of commonality and shared concern in collective interest matters. Unfortunately, this is not the case, at least at this

moment, in any country in the world. The limits of negative freedom sustainability have revealed harshly and painfully during COVID-19 pandemic, in the climate change crisis, and in all mankind “tragedies of the commons” (Hardin, 1968).

In this point, the transhumanism paradigm reveals its true status close to a young cultural paradigm still closed to a social wishful thinking. The metahumanist perspective are discursively “meta”-supported, that is it remains in between, incomplete and partial, reasoning is not complete, the premises support conclusion in part. It leaves the impression that the reasoning is substantial and very convincing, but still something important is missing. It depicts *how the things have to be* if we will be trustful, honest and open-minded. However, what is omitted is precisely the details *how the things can become* as such. Higher social ideals are to be found in the entire history of human species, but until now, only very feeble forms of sustainable beneficial regimes were accomplished. In fact, the reasoning is a paradoxically self-supporting, because we will naturally think in this way if we would be transhuman. But we are not. A wishful-thinking feeling accompanies us throughout the book. As in the case of presentation of last century progress of humanity toward liberal and democratic values that seems enough (Fukuyama, 1989), but an unbiased look reveals it is not (Brown, 1999). Old moral and human character flaws are present everywhere together with the tribal, paternalistic, and totalitarian “virtues”. The promotion of as-good-as-get negative freedom with pluralist concept of good presupposed a majority with a higher level of understanding and open-mindedness such as the argument has a breeze of circularity. For the same reasons, the anti-utopian conception of as-good-as-it-gets continual becoming solution for political regime, public policies, although seen as continuous process, it also sound as a utopic (dynamic) state.

Regarding the concept of fictive ethics, it remains suspended without any criteria, at the will of the relative and arbitrary as-good-as-it-gets solution of everyone is considering from the perspective of its history, education and origin.

Even though any concept of the right is regarded as fictive, this does not imply that it is arbitrary. We do have criteria for evaluating moralities. These criteria are historically and culturally embedded, but this does not mean that they are meaningless. They are meaningful for our lives. (p. 109)

As such, they are likewise crushing (Huntington, 1997). From my perspective, even the ground for sound and beneficial moralities is arbitrary, the most different types of moralities can be consistent and nonexclusive if their bearers are moral competent and critical thinkers. Plural moralities can live together only under the conditions that their bearers are capable of being aware of the fact that any true moral is inherently deluded in part and a possible source of

needless intellectual and emotional suffering and frustration. At the same time, they must be able to embrace an Ethics of As-If (*Als Ob*) as is the case with all human culture demoted to the level of useful fictive creations (Vaihinger, 1925). The fictive autonomy and nihilist ethics supposed the ability to accomplish an ethical *epoché* (conceived by analogy with the Husserl's (1983) phenomenological reduction) of bracketing or parenthesizing (*Einklammerung*) the ethical principles that were formerly had taken for granted in the natural attitude. And this is a tremendous difficult task, which very few can master.

The alethic and ethical fictionalism is also a tough bet. Its challenge can be illustrated by the two-fold hermeneutic interpretations of William Blake's (1901, II.3. [15]) phrase: "No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings". From a optimistic motivational perspective, it could be read that *humans are capable of achieving their full potentialities only if they rely and believe in themselves*. From a realistic perspective, it express the delusion of *a bird flying in the air that could think that it will do better if it would flying in the void*. "If there are no facts, but only continual becoming, then a judgement cannot correspond to anything." (p. 18) The negative freedom is free to flourish, only on the expense of epistemic and ethical confidence altogether. Alethic nihilism is inexistent in scientific perspective and debatable in philosophical speculation (Asay, 2021). It shares the same problem with postmodernist paradigm, in general, as being self-contradictory self-referential. As Sorgner analysis reveals, the popular image of transhumanists as positive visionaries and activists conceals its roots in a philosophical pessimism vision of the world as a place of suffering with short and temporary reliefs (p. 13).

There are many other issues on which the Sorger's insights that are worthy to be deepened and developed. Sorgner ingeniously shows how the pessimism, intrinsic to the naturalist view of a natural world devoid of transcendence, myths, and higher moral worlds, can support a positive epistemology. As is expected, the technology is the key. However, technology understood not in its narrow sense of engineered devices, but as everything epigenetic which enables us to improve the quality of life. The technological enhancement is functionally substantial identical with education.

The kybernaetes is the helmsman of a ship, the one who steers and directs a ship. Our organism is directed by our educators. Hence, we are steered organisms, or in other words "cyborgs". We have always been "cyborgs" since we became Homo sapiens sapiens. (p. 13)

The Reason is a technology in its quality of being an instrument for surviving, self-enhancement and gaining satisfactions. The Reason made us who we are, as humans. It is a mean and a part of us. However, I think that a distinction

between technology and *technê* would be appropriate here. Reason is not as much a technology, but a *technê*. Education is not technology as vaccination, which also it enhances human capacities, but it does it a different way, as *technê*.

Furthermore, the question of mind uploading and simulation argument, as a significant theme of transhumanists and posthumanists conception, is worthy to be developed and nuanced. The popular image of uploading (downloading?) the neuronal map on a hard-drive provides a poor framework for understanding the issue. What we call experience is already, as Sorgner points out, a created reality. We have no access to the reality in itself, but we are living in a simulated reality. Nonetheless, our experienced realities are presumably alike, although not identical, due to the common psycho-physiological embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended (4E) cognition (Newen & De Bruin, 2018) and shared education and culture. The reason and education, as enhancing technologies, assure the synchronic individualization, because they are both shared “egopoietic technologies” (Floridi, 2011). To the extent that the self is (made of) information, we are already living in our individual simulated reality as psychological creation of the world (by our sensations, perceptions, cognitive schemas, personal narratives and any other informational process) (Durt, Fuchs & Tewes, 2017). In an increasing technologically XR, ICTs are also technologies of the self. The cognition, consciousness are gradual virtualization within the process of self-individualization (Floridi, 2011). In this sense, we already live in a simulation, the shared cultural reality, and soon in more and more substantial XR. From this perspective, the projected uploading the mind is a non-sense. We should talk instead about developing and enhancing the human Xmind.

No change was possible in the history of humankind without the work of enthusiastic visionaries. Either the transhumanism is in the making or it stays about to be born, it requires such insightful and prospective visions for moving it from unthinkable domain toward acceptable for public perception and, why not, ending in desirable. Sorgner entire life work, not only this book, circumscribes to his manifest of a moderated visionary hubris as a continuous process of bettering, thus avoiding the trap of dangerous well-established utopian goals. It conveys a passionate, but assuring feeling of trust in the (trans)human progress. It opens mind and enlarges the perspective on what can possible mean the individual and collective development, progress, and enhancement.

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Individual and Society in Medical Crisis

Review

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*Sustainability of Philosophical Thinking in Post-pandemic Society
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I present the volume “The sustainability of philosophical thinking in the post-pandemic society” (Chişinău, 2020), a very important and valuable research coordinated by Ph.D. Ana Pascaru Researcher Associate Professor from Moldavia. The volume consecrates to sustainability of philosophical thinking in our times which, after a series of global crises, the sanitary one affected the society in new aspects, is the result of a valuable research.

Crisis of COVID 19 led to social and human problems which affected the individual as all the countries, social relations, communication, the human interaction. It affected the ethical thinking in problems of social security and individual security, led to new values pyramid. All these put the individual in front of a new social reality, a new social interaction, led to new priorities and new ethical values.

Social communication reduced in favor of virtual communication, isolation led at loss of rhythm of daily life, of interaction, affected the relation of human beings because of fear of infection.

The ethical problems and dilemmas had as priority the society and medicine. All which limited the spreading of virus and medical security overtook as importance the ethical values of world before COVID 19: human rights, social liberty, communication.

Individual, put in front of fear, isolation, reduction of right to circulate, social interaction reduced at minimum, the interdiction of socialization and presence in social spaces, virtual communication, was deeply affected. Remaining

at the place of residence, in isolation for himself safety, led to renunciation at freedom, society, led to changing the social behavior.

The value of health safety, the value of social safety had ethical maximum and overtook the ethical values of freedom of circulation, of decision, of human rights. The social necessities changed the ethical values pyramid.

Much more other features were changed: the individuals, isolated and alone in front of infection danger, understood society, fear and communication differently. All these new features of social reality, of human condition, of communication led to a difficult adaptation.

Philosophy, as ethical philosophy, with themes as values, communication, human interaction, because of new economics and family situations proved its sustainability.

Human personality, in a new social, ethical, communicational environment, with a socialization reduced at family, in the space of his residence, passed by a changing more perceptible in future.

The sustainability of philosophical thinking consist in comprehension of seriousness of global situation, who led at changing of values of communication and ethics and importance of individual judgement in such situation.

During the social crisis, society asked the individual, his judgement not to infect, to obey social rules. Philosophy, as meditation, as raising of the judgement, sustained the individual in new social conditions, very different, gives a image of society during the more grave medical crisis of our world.

The volume includes interactions between individual and society, rights and duty, isolation and communication in medical crisis.

The sustainability of philosophical thinking begins with the comprehension of society and individual in essential features. We are in a front of a very important study, necessary to understand the crisis which put in danger the basis of individual, identity and changing.

References:

1. Pascaru, A. (coord.) (2020). *Sustenabilitatea gândirii filosofice în societatea post-pandemie [The sustainability of philosophical thinking in the post-pandemic society]*. Chişinău: Institutul de Istorie.