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**European Transpersonal Association
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Maskavas iela 222c-1B
LV 1019 Riga
LATVIA

**Centro para una psicología de la consciencia
(OXIGEME)**

Vicente Ferrer, 16
28004 Madrid
SPAIN

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Addicted to Ecstasy: A Misguided Search for Bliss

Adictos al éxtasis: una búsqueda equivocada de la felicidad

Stanley Krippner

Saybrook University
San Francisco, California, U.S.

Dustin Dunbar

Institute for Medicine and Advanced Behavioural Technology
Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico

Abstract

Addiction has been described from many perspectives, learning theory, neurobiology, and habituation among them. The eclectic model that we have advocated in this article explains why the mechanism of addiction is different for different individuals, and that each case must be considered on its own merits. As a result, it presents a challenge to social policy and to psychotherapy. Both the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (DSM) and the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Disease* (ICD) have devoted considerable space to this topic, and the results are summarized here.

Keywords: addiction, dependency, ecstasy, DSM, ICD

Resumen

La adicción ha sido descrita desde muy diferentes perspectivas, teorías del aprendizaje, neurobiología y habituación. El modelo ecléctico que defendemos en este artículo explica por qué el mecanismo de adicción es diferente para cada individuo, y por lo tanto cada caso ha de tratarse individualmente. Como resultado, este trabajo presenta un desafío para la política social y la psicoterapia. Tanto el *Manual Diagnóstico y Estadístico de los Trastornos Mentales* (DSM) de la Asociación Americana de Psiquiatría, como la *Clasificación Internacional de las Enfermedades* (CIE) de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, han dedicado bastante atención a este tema, y aquí presentamos un resumen de los resultados.

Palabras clave: adicción, dependencia, éxtasis, DSM, CIE

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Ecstasy (from the Greek, *ekstasis*: distraction; derangement; astonishment) (Merriam-Webster, 2000) is (1) an emotional state so intense that one is carried beyond rational thought or self-control; (2) rapture associated with mystical experience.

History and Overview

Since prehistoric times, most human cultures and many animal species knew about and used psychoactive, or mind-changing, substances. Historical records indicate that many ancient societies had easy access to powerful plants and human-made concoctions, yet were able to regulate their use. Some of these substances were used for medications to alleviate distress and diseases, some were used to evoke transcendence during sacred rituals, and some were used to enhance hedonic pleasure during celebrations. In the Middle East, Eastern Asia, and North America, Cannabis compounds found a place in all three of those venues. Ancient Egyptians crushed the psychoactive blue lotus and mixed it with wine to induce euphoria. For two millennia, Grecian priests led initiates besotted with *kykeon* (a brew laced with a psychoactive ergot fungus) through the Eleusinian Mysteries. Amazonian shamans concocted *yagé* from a combination of rainforest plants. Psychoactive cacti and morning glory seeds were used by religious functionaries throughout Mexico and Latin America; in some areas, they also utilized psychoactive mushrooms, relatives of those ingested from time immemorial by Siberian shamans. Various liquors, inebriants, teas, and herbs were eaten, swallowed, and smoked to attain ecstasy, and when a participant overindulged or reacted, there were rites and antidotes to ease the hapless voyager back to consensual reality. Mircea Eliade (1964) referred to shamans as “masters of ecstasy” although he considered the use of drumming, chanting, and dancing superior to consciousness-altering substances.

Many tribes in the Americas used tobacco or coca leaves in their ceremonies, and fermented beverages were imbibed around the world to attain bliss. When Western societies learned how to distill alcohol and manufacture opium, the stage was set for epidemics of what would later be called “substance abuse.” The colonists’ sale of distilled spirits to Native Americans, followed by rampant alcoholism, and Britain’s lucrative opium trade in China following the 18th century Opium Wars were examples of commercial greed preempting traditional patterns of controlled inebriation.

In recent decades, “drug cartels” and “drug lords” have undermined governments and corrupted legitimate businesses. In many parts of the world, thefts committed by users of illicit substances to support their “habit” are an everyday occurrence. Intravenous drug use has spread the HIV virus; entire communities are broken by drug procurement and use; impoverished young people often consider the local drug dealers their “role models” and are all too eager to serve as apprentices. Soaring health costs, broken families, and lost wages are some of the other side products of this “addiction to ecstasy.” The filmmaker and actor Woody Allen once sardonically commented, “Life is full of misery, loneliness, and suffering – and it’s all over much too soon.”

“Addiction” as a Social Construct

Kenneth Gergen (2000) has noted that humanity delights in labeling objects and experiences, but often forgets that these social constructs might not be adequate maps of the territories they are describing. The label of “drug addiction” was socially constructed by physicians in the 19th century, who considered it a vice, a symptom of *akrasia*, a Greek term indicating the weakening of “will power.” During the 20th century, the term was medicalized and “drug addiction” was reconceptualized as a “disease” (e.g., Leshner, 1997). The consequences of this “addiction” were brought to public attention, where they became the subject of negative and sensationalized media publicity and served as stimuli for restrictive legislation.

However, the resulting laws varied from region to region and from historical era to historical era (Haskell, 1993). For example, In the United States, alcoholic beverages survived the eras of prohibition to become an economic windfall when legal distilleries reopened. For many years, opium, heroin, and cocaine were used medicinally and as ingredients in cough syrups and/or soft drinks until they were declared illegal and their manufacture and use was severely punished. In 1875, “opium dens” were outlawed in San Francisco, the first legal measure taken against illicit drugs in the United States. The

Pure Food and Drug Act was passed in 1906, requiring testing and standardization of consumable items, including medicines.

Nonetheless, illegal trade has flourished and entire communities make their livelihood in the growth of these plants and the extraction of their mind-changing ingredients. Many stimulants (e.g., methamphetamine) and psychedelics (e.g., mescaline) were synthetic compounds based on ingredients found in plants that have distinct mind-changing properties. Military and medicinal uses were found for many stimulants (i.e., the amphetamines), but psychedelics were too unpredictable to find military applications and too controversial for their medical and psychotherapeutic potentials to gain widespread acceptance.

In this article, we take the position that “addiction” is a social construct, a term that reflects a societal convention as much or more so that its manifestation in the consensual world. Its definition differs from “expert” to “expert” and from culture to culture. Further, “addiction” (from the Latin *addicere*, to announce the transfer of a possession to another person) has accrued a variety of meanings (Hillman, 1991).

From our perspective, the term “addiction” implies a compulsive repetition of a pleasurable behaviour to the point that other activities are neglected or overlooked, to the detriment of the “addict,” his or her family, and/or society-at-large. Because many addicts realize that the compulsion is not beneficial to their superordinate goals, bizarre reactions often result. F. Scott Fitzgerald, the celebrated author, ordered his household staff to keep him away from liquor, but sneaked drinks when they were not looking. Another writer, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, moved into his physician’s home under the condition that he not be allowed any opium. He immediately suffered acute withdrawal symptoms until his publisher smuggled laudanum, an opium-laced tincture, into the doctor’s house.

With the development of the neurosciences, psychologists, psychiatrists, and neurologists have developed new insights into how the pleasure-seeking, hedonic use of psychoactive substances can lead to a repetition of certain actions so frequently and with such compulsivity that it qualifies as an “addiction.” Some of the same mechanisms are at work in addiction to substances with few psychoactive properties and to repetitive activities that evoke ecstasy, at least at the beginning of their employment. Examples would include compulsive food consumption, compulsive gambling, compulsive sexual activity, and compulsive ritualistic behaviour (from shoplifting to religious observances), among others. Most people can enjoy the bliss provided by these experiences, finding ways to integrate them into their overall repertoire of life activities. For others, there is a disruption of responsible behaviour and social commitments to the point where one might say that these men and women have become “addicted to ecstasy”. This article focuses on hedonic drug use, since that is the area that has evoked the most scientific research, especially from the perspective of neuropsychology. However, other activities will be cited to round out the spectrum.

DSM and ICD

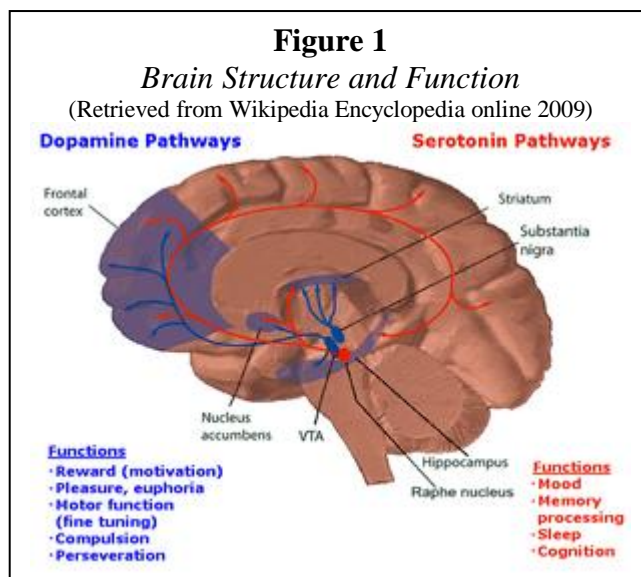
The American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* does not give a specific diagnostic category to “addiction,” but it classifies “addictive disorders” and uses the term *dependence* synonymously with “addiction.” It states that “addiction/dependence” be “considered a manifestation of a behavioural, psychological, or biological dysfunction”.

The World Health Organization’s *International Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders (ICD)* (see Appendix A) states in its clinical descriptions and diagnostic guidelines that “addiction” is considered a *dependence syndrome*, and is a cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of a substance or a class of substances takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value. A central descriptive characteristic of the dependence syndrome is the desire (often strong, sometimes overpowering) to take psychoactive drugs (which may or may not have been medically prescribed), alcohol, or tobacco. From the ICD perspective here may be evidence that return to substance use after a period of abstinence leads to a more rapid reappearance of other features of the syndrome than occurs with nondependent individuals.

We will keep these synonymous uses of “dependence” and “addiction” in mind while we examine the neuropsychological and the neurobiological substrates of addictive behaviour (Rains, 2002).

The Neuropsychology and Neurobiology of Hedonic Drug Use

Both neuropsychology and neurobiology, aim to understand how the structure and function of the brain and body relate to specific psychological and biological processes (see Figure 1). They are scientific in their approach and share an information processing view of the brain with cognitive-affective neuroscience (Kesner & Martinez, 2007; Rains, 2002). They are interdisciplinary in nature, overlapping at times with areas such as neuroscience, biology, philosophy (particularly philosophy of mind), social psychology, psychiatry, and computer science (particularly by making use of artificial neural networks). As mentioned earlier, we take the position that “addiction” is a social construct; nevertheless, it is important to determine the neuropsychological and neurobiological bases for behaviours that qualify for that label (Erickson, 2007). This allows us to incorporate data into our model that indicate that there are important genetic and social factors at play in hedonic drug use (Derringer, Krueger, McGue, & Iacono, 2008). We surmise that susceptibility to addiction may be epigenetic, due to an interaction between genes and their environment in the womb. This susceptibility sets the infant on a trajectory that can lead toward or away from addiction, depending on later interaction with family, peers, and the social environment. Hence, addiction can be seen as having predisposing, actuating, and maintaining factors, as is the case with many other human behaviours (Krippner & Winkler, 1996).



The brain’s nucleus accumbens is a common neuroanatomical focus for the molecular actions of so-called “addictive” drugs in experimental animals, and probably in humans as well. Thus, addiction can be viewed as an adaptive response of the rest of the brain to the chronic effects of these agents. The nucleus accumbens is at the junction of a number of interacting memory systems in the brain that link emotions to behaviour (Kassel, 2010; Marlatt et al., 1988; Robinson & Berridge, 2003).

Hedonic drug use, when it transitions to addiction and, in some cases to relapse (or re-addiction), can be understood as forms of aberrant learning in which substances (or neurochemical changes resulting from compulsive behaviours not associated with substance ingestion) have subverted the natural "conditioning" mechanisms that organisms employ to anticipate important events and make constructive plans (Szasz, 1996). A somewhat different position has been taken by Robinson and Berridge (2003) who stressed the aberrant motivation aspect of addiction, and the triggering by cues as a learned motivation response of the brain. In either event, environmental stimuli that predict hedonic drug effects come to exert increasing influence on behaviour in the drug-dependent individual. This learning is affected by structures of the brain (e.g. the amygdala, the hippocampus, the prefrontal cortex). These structures communicate directly with themselves and the nucleus accumbens, serving to regulate its output (Robinson & Berridge, 2003). In other words, the process of addiction can be viewed from a social psychological and cognitive-affective level (involving learning, memory, emotion, and social milieu) as well as from a neuropsychological and neurobiological level (involving brain and body mechanisms).

From these points of view, addictive behaviour can be seen as a repetitive, compulsive self-defeating pattern of activities accompanied by intense emotion and that is impervious to rational thought and self-regulation. We would not describe frequent lovemaking or skydiving, extended periods of crocheting or meditation, or the enjoyment of dark chocolate or kumquats as “addictive” unless they became self-defeating rather than directed toward goals that the individual considers to be conducive to life mastery.

Both of these perspectives are necessary to resolve some of the contradictory data that appear in the literature about addictions. On the one hand, it is claimed that a person who uses a drug frequently becomes “tolerant” and “dependent,” undergoing withdrawal symptoms when the drug is no longer available. However, this does not apply to gambling and compulsive shopping, which trigger endorphin-like opioids that produce a “high.” It does not apply to patients who receive large doses of morphine-like opioids with little or no subsequent addiction. It does not apply to people (musicians, writers, and psychiatrists themselves) who are casual users of substances that the media considers so addictive that one injection will “hook” a person for life. It does not apply to the U.S. combat veterans who became “addicted” to high grade heroin in Vietnam, most of whom quit “cold turkey” on their return to the United States. It does not explain the mounting evidence that there are strong genetic, social, and environmental determinants of addiction that can mitigate drug use and other behaviours (Cheung & Erickson, 1997; Cohen, 1989; Robins et al., 1975). It is significant that the American Psychiatric Association shifted pathological gambling from being an impulse-control disorder to the addiction and related disorders category, reflecting these complexities and the severity of the condition (Gold & Werner, 2011).

The Development of an Addiction

There is controversy over whether activities such as compulsive gambling, compulsive sex, or compulsive computer use should be placed in the same category as shooting, snorting, or sniffing heroin (e.g., Robinson & Berridge, 2003, p. 46). Although we understand the logic of this argument, for the purposes of this article, we will tilt toward those writers who consider them “addictions,” since all lead to the experience of ecstasy, bliss, and euphoria, at least in their initial stages. Therefore, we conceptualize addiction as a compulsive life-denying craving for the effects of a substance or behaviour that takes precedence over life-affirming activities. These individuals are not addicted to gambling per se, but to the “rush” that the experience provides. Nor are they addicted to methamphetamine per se, but to the “high” it yields. Someone might joke that they are “addicted” to chanting mantras, to working out in a gym, or to playing chess. From our perspective, these pastimes all enhance a person’s quality, enjoyment, and affirmation of life. Only if they are done to the exclusion of social engagements, work commitments, and healthy living habits could they be considered life-denying. Until recently, this description would have been considered unduly “subjective,” but the advent of “positive psychology” has brought with it a number of operational definitions of “strengths” and “virtues,” as well as ways in which they can be measured (e.g., Snyder & Lopez, 2007).

In an attempt to construct an integrative and eclectic biopsychosocial model that could help resolve these contradictions, we propose that the development of an “addiction” involves a simultaneous process of 1) increased focus on and engagement in a particular behaviour and 2) the attenuation or “shutting down” of other behaviours, especially those that could service as life-enhancing alternatives. For example, under certain experimental circumstances such as social deprivation and boredom, animals allowed the unlimited ability to self-administer certain psychoactive drugs will show such a strong preference for that activity that they will forgo food, sleep, and sex for continued access (Goeders & Smith, 1983). The neuroanatomical correlate of this is that the brain regions involved in driving goal-directed behaviour grow increasingly selective for particular motivating stimuli and rewards, to the point that the brain regions involved in the inhibition of behaviour can no longer effectively send “stop” signals. A useful analogy is to imagine flooring the gas pedal in a car with very bad brakes. In this case, the limbic system is thought to be the major “driving force” and the orbito-frontal cortex is the substrate of the top-down inhibition. However, consistent with our model, the animals in the cited study did not compulsively choose to ingest drugs if other enjoyable alternatives were available.

A specific portion of the limbic circuit known as the mesolimbic dopaminergic system has been hypothesized to play an important role in translation of motivation to motor behaviour- and reward-related learning in particular. It is typically defined as the ventral tegmental area (VTA), the nucleus accumbens, and the bundle of dopamine-containing fibers that are connecting them. This system is commonly implicated in the seeking out and consumption of rewarding stimuli or events, such as sweet-tasting foods or sexual interaction. However, it’s important that addiction research goes beyond its role in

what is considered to be “natural” motivation. While the specific site or mechanism of action may differ, all known drugs with the propensity for addiction elevate the level of dopamine in the nucleus accumbens. This may happen directly, such as through blockage of the dopamine re-uptake mechanism (as with cocaine and tobacco). It may also happen indirectly, such as through stimulation of the dopamine-containing neurons of the VTA that synapse onto neurons in the accumbens (as with the morphine-like opiates). The euphoric effects of these drugs of abuse are considered to be a direct result of the acute increase in accumbal dopamine (Pich et al., 1997).

The human body has a natural tendency to maintain homeostasis, and the central nervous system is no exception. Chronic elevation of dopamine will result in a decrease in the number of dopamine receptors available in a process known as *downregulation*. The decreased number of receptors changes the permeability of the cell membrane located post-synaptically, such that the post-synaptic neuron is less excitable, in other words less able to respond to chemical signaling with an electrical impulse or action potential. It is hypothesized that this dulling of the responsiveness of the brain's reward pathways contributes to the inability to feel pleasure, known as *anhedonia*, often observed in many longtime addicts. The increased requirement for dopamine to maintain the same electrical activity is the basis of both physiological tolerance and withdrawal associated with addiction.

Downregulation can be classically conditioned. If an activity consistently occurs in the same environment or contingently with a particular cue, the brain will adjust to the presence of the conditioned cues by decreasing the number of available receptors in the absence of the behaviour. We suspect that many drug overdoses are not the result of a user taking a higher dose than is typical, but rather that the user is administering the same dose in a new environment, one in which the conditioned cues are no longer operating.

In cases of physical dependency on depressants of the central nervous system such as morphine-type opioids, barbiturates, or alcohol, the absence of the substance can lead to symptoms of severe physical discomfort. Withdrawal from alcohol or sedatives such as barbiturates or benzodiazepines (such as the valium family) can result in seizures and even death. By contrast, withdrawal from morphine-type opioids (such as opium and heroin), which can be extremely uncomfortable, is rarely if ever life-threatening. In cases of physical dependence and withdrawal, the body has become so dependent on high concentrations of the particular chemical that it has stopped producing its own natural versions (the endogenous ligands) and instead produces opposing chemicals. When the addictive substance is withdrawn, the effects of the opposing chemicals can become overwhelming. For example, chronic use of sedatives (such as alcohol, barbiturates, or the benzodiazepines) results in higher chronic levels of stimulating neurotransmitters such as glutamate. Very high levels of glutamate kill nerve cells, a phenomenon called *excitatory neurotoxicity*.

This discussion has described how a person's brain and body become physically dependent on a substance (Jacobs-Stewart, 2010). However, we have emphasized that the addict typically becomes psychologically dependent upon the experiences evoked by that substance (or activity). Hence, our eclectic model proposes that a neuropsychological and neurobiological understanding of addiction needs to be understood in tandem with associated social and cognitive-affective data. For the former disciplines, the term “dependence” would seem to be a more appropriate descriptor than the term “addiction”.

In either event, we would consider many people not to be “addicts” but “users”, drinking regularly without becoming alcoholics or experimenting with illicit drugs; 90% of Americans who have tried illegal stimulants, depressants, psychedelics, or marijuana do not become addicted (Heyman, 1996, p. 563). We would identify another group as “abusers,” for whom drug use leads to serious problems but not to withdrawal symptoms or compulsive use. Users and abusers might end up as addicts, but we conjecture that most of them do not cross that line.

Educational Models: Learning, Memory, and Choice in Addiction

Some psychologists and psychiatrists have suggested that the terms “addict” and “addiction” have become unduly reified and that this has led to punitive legislation and counterproductive social practices. For example, Thomas Szasz (1996) has denied that “addiction” should be considered a psychiatric

problem. Rather, he has considered it a metaphor for a ritualized *social habit* that reflects a choice, and that a “drug addict” is a person who simply prefers to ingest a socially taboo substance rather than, say, to engage in team sports. In his 1996 book, *Our Right to Drugs*, Szasz cited a statement of the social activist Malcolm X to corroborate his views towards the way that the term “addiction” is applied to users of some substances and not to others. Malcolm X claimed that quitting cigarettes was more difficult than shaking his heroin “addiction” but society did not label him a nicotine “addict”. Szasz postulated that humans inevitably have a choice, and it is simplistic to call someone an “addict” just because he or she prefers a drug-induced euphoria to a more conventional pastime.

Szasz is not alone in questioning the disease model of addiction. John Booth Davies (1998) in *The Myth of Addiction* has proposed that “people take drugs because they want to and because it makes sense for them to do so given the choices available” as opposed to the position that “they are compelled to by the pharmacology of the drugs they take” (p. 18) Davies used an adaptation of attribution theory (one he called the *theory of functional attributions*) to argue that the statement “I am addicted to drugs” is functional, rather than veridical; it refers to behaviour rather than to the person engaging in that behaviour. Stanton Peele (1989) put forward similar views, arguing that addiction occurs with regard to educational experiences generated by various involvements, whether drug-induced or not. He proposed that addiction is both more temporary and situational than the medical model claims, and (in accord with our eclectic model) is often outgrown through natural processes. To Peele, the fallacy of the disease model of any kind of addictive behaviour is that it does not treat the activity in question as something for which the individual assumes some degree of responsibility. Peele insisted that the aim of treatment should be to help people replace the concept of themselves as “recovering victims” with a self-concept of self-efficacy. The disease model promulgates a dependence on others and an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for one’s own behaviour.

Heyman (1996) agreed that drug consumption is a goal-oriented act, but asked how such an act, one that often requires considerable planning and preparation can be “out of control”? In their definitions of “addiction”, both the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th edition) and the World Health Organization’s *International Classification of Diseases* (10th edition) use the term “out of control.” This dilemma is at the heart of the disagreement between the medical model of drug addiction, one that sees it as “involuntary” and the educational models of Szasz, Davies, and Peele who see it as a voluntary preference.

The author Williams Burroughs (1977) wrote, “You become a narcotics addict because you do not have strong motivations in any other direction. Junk wins by default” (p. xv). In examining this and other autobiographical accounts, Heyman (1996) found several common themes: recreational drug use slides into addiction, sometimes imperceptibly; addiction wreaks havoc on friendships, occupations, family life, and health; attempts to stop the addiction have mixed results; drug use becomes the focal point of everyday life. The street addict’s daily routines become organized around the ability to “score” drugs; the professional worker’s social life become organized in terms of the amount of liquor the host is likely to provide. If the addict ever gains control over the drug use, it frequently follows “hitting bottom” or some other dramatic event (p. 562). For example, the “bottom of the barrel” is a common theme in the stories told by members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a group that never quite accepted the medical model, preferring to replace the “spiritual rapture” reported by many alcoholics with “surrender” to a “higher power.” For AA, there is nothing amiss about searching for bliss as long as one finds it in all the right places.

An Attempt to Resolve the Contradictions in Addiction Research

As we noted early in this chapter, there are many ways of ingesting a natural substance or a chemically constituted drug just as there are many different cultural ways of eating or drinking. Many ancient cultures knew how to regulate taboo substances and high risk social behaviour. (Before we romanticize indigenous societies, we need to recall that several of them provided leadership opportunities to women and to sexual minorities, and nurtured their children well; but other societies were sexist, homophobic, and abused children both emotionally and physically.) Nonetheless, in our opinion, too

many contemporary cultures are maintaining taboos on ecstatic experience that have outlived what usefulness they ever had, a restriction that is especially punitive to those seekers of pleasure and euphoria in ways that if properly regulated would harm nobody but themselves, and may even be of social value.

The disease model holds that addiction comes about as a result of either the impairment of neurobiological or neuropsychological processes, or some combination of the two. In the United States, the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the American Psychological Association all have policies which are predicated on the theory that addictive processes represent a diseased state. Most treatment approaches, as well, are based, at least to some extent, on elements of physical or mental disease (Prescott & Kendler, 1999).

An example of the educational model has been proposed by Nils Bejerot (1980) for whom addiction is an emotional fixation (or sentiment) acquired through learning, either intermittently or through the force of a natural drive, aiming at a specific pleasure or the avoidance of a specific discomfort. The pleasure mechanism may be stimulated in a number of ways and give rise to a strong fixation on repetitive behaviour. Stimulation with drugs is only one of many ways, but one of the simplest, strongest, and often also the most destructive. If the pleasure stimulation becomes so strong that it captivates an individual with the compulsion and force characteristic of natural drives, then an “addiction” exists. The pleasure model is used as one of the reasons for advocates of “zero tolerance” programs for illicit drug use.

Numerous models of addiction compete for attention, for example, those that highlight genetic predispositions (Iacono, Malone, & McGue, 2008), “opponent processing” (in which an addict’s pleasure turns to pain, leading to more drugs, more food, or more alcohol; Solomon, 1980), and the influence of an addiction-prone culture, ethnicity, or family (Bennett & Holloway, 2005).

Heyman (1996) has read numerous biographies of addicts, both unknown and celebrated, finding exceptions to each of these explanations. For example he has cited evidence that cost, probability of arrest, and embarrassment are potent factors in curbing addictive behaviour but did not easily fit into existing explanations, especially the disease model. Eliciting stimuli and reinforcing consequences are difficult to separate because they act in concert. Withdrawal symptoms indicate that drug consumption has brought about biological changes, but not all addictions produce withdrawal when terminated, hence it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for addiction (p. 566). Most educational models postulate that behaviour can be controlled by its consequences. However, in operant conditioning, aversive consequences are held to decrease behaviour, a phenomenon not found in addiction (p. 567). Learning theory also holds that pleasure is reinforcing, but the addict has many other reinforcements in his or her life, many of them at odds with the addictive behaviour (p. 567).

Instead, Heyman proposed a “matching law” theory of choice for addicts. The elementary process governing choice is not maximization of costs and benefits (which hardly explains addictive behaviour) for “ameliorization” where existing choices compete against each other and the choice that seems best at a given moment is the one that prevails. Immediate pleasure may win out over long-term gains. A quick “fix” and the euphoria it brings is chosen over future adverse effects. Many drug effects are marked by *tolerance*; the addict must take more and more of a drug to obtain a similar effect. In hospital settings, a patient with access to his own dispenser might increase his daily dosage tenfold. Tolerance also occurs with alcohol, stimulants, and nicotine. The increased demand for the addictive substance of activity exacts steep costs on the addict’s everyday responsibilities. The process of ameliorization causes these activities to retain a diminishing value as the addiction continues. As what seems to be the “best” local value goes up, the value of the competing local and global rewards goes down. It is as if there is a hidden bookkeeper, one whose function needs to be switched from focus on immediate local values to long-term global values. When drugs are inaccessible and choices are under scrutiny (such as by fellow members of an AA or other 12-step program), the addict is less likely to use them. But if the drugs become available at a time when the support group is not present, relapse may easily occur.

In summary, Heyman’s model is not compatible with the idea that addiction is an involuntary state or that the addict is “out of control”. The addict is very much in control, but is making choices, even if the reward is small in comparison with a “larger but later” reward (p. 572). Since addiction depends on elementary choice mechanisms, “everyone is a potential addict” (p. 573). Addictive behaviour is voluntary even though its effects are aversive. “The matching law” emphasizes local and immediate

rather than global, overall values. Indeed, Heyman's (2009) "matching law" and "meliorization" can be applied to gambling, credit card abuse, sexual exhibitionism, and other behaviours often considered "addictive." He concluded; "Meliorization is the product of an experimental procedure that unfortunately confounds two processes, over evaluation of immediate consequences and mis-estimation of delayed consequences" (p. 574).

The eclectic model that we have advocated in this article finds eloquent expression in Heyman's resolution of the contradictions in addiction research. It explains why the mechanism of dependency is different for different individuals, and that each case must be considered on its own merits. As a result, it presents a challenge to social policy and to psychological therapy. However, a collection of essays published by the American Psychological Association (Marlatt & Witkiewitz, 2009) is an example of an attempt to present what is currently known about the effects of drug action, the epidemiology and etiology of drug and alcohol abuse, the design of prevention programs, understanding the trajectory of substance abuse and family risk factors, screening and assessment, identifying the most suitable models of treatment, and comprehending the needs of specific populations.

Coda

Some readers of this article may be puzzled why we have not mentioned the popular drug "Ecstasy" in our discussion. We have saved it to make a final provocative remark. In 2009, the Chair of the British Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs called for Ecstasy (methylenedioxymethamphetamine or MDMA) to be downgraded to a Class B (rather than a Class A) substance. He observed that an "addiction to horseback riding" caused some 100 road accidents and 10 deaths in 2008 compared with about 30 deaths attributed to organ failure due to ingestion of contaminants found in street MDMA or Ecstasy (Bates, 2009). Although heavily criticized for this remark, it serves as a reminder that social policy often uses drugs as scapegoats for political reasons, when there are other social ills, and even socially approved paths to ecstasy (e.g., horseback riding, deep-sea diving, installing home electrical appliances, and mountain climbing) that put more people at risk for health, for safety, and for life itself. Eckhart Tolle (1999) has reminded us that:

For most humans, the only respite they find from their own minds is to occasionally revert to a level of consciousness below thought. Everyone does that every night during sleep. But this also happens to some extent through sex, alcohol, and other drugs that suppress excessive mind activity. If it weren't for alcohol, tranquilizers, antidepressants, as well as the illegal drugs, which are all consumed in vast quantities, the insanity of the human mind would become even more glaringly obvious than it is already. The drugs, of course simply keep you stuck in dysfunction. The widespread use only delays the breakdown of the old mind structures and the emergence of higher consciousness. While individual users may get some relief from the daily torture inflicted on them by their minds, they are prevented from generating enough conscious presence to rise above thought and so find true liberation (p. 102).

In other words, ecstasy, euphoria, and bliss are great – but let not your search be misguided.

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Appendix A

The World Health Organization's categories of addictive behaviours due to psychoactive substances.

The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders: Clinical descriptions and diagnostic guidelines

F10 - F19

Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use.

Overview of this block

F10. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol

F11. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of opioids

F12. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cannabinoids

F13. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of sedative hypnotics

F14. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cocaine

F15. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of other stimulants, including caffeine

F16. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of hallucinogens

F17. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of tobacco

F18. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of volatile solvents

F19. – Mental and behavioural disorders due to multiple drug use and use of other psychoactive substances

Four- and five-character codes may be used to specify the clinical conditions, as follows:

F1x.0 Acute intoxication

.00 Uncomplicated

.01 With trauma or other bodily injury

.02 With other medical complications

.03 With delirium

.04 With perceptual distortions

.05 With coma

.06 With convulsions

.07 Pathological intoxication

F1x.1 Harmful use

F1x.2 Dependence syndrome

.20 Currently abstinent

- .21 Currently abstinent, but in a protected environment
- .22 Currently on a clinically supervised maintenance or replacement regime [controlled dependence]
- .23 Currently abstinent, but receiving treatment with aversive or blocking drugs
- .24 Currently using the substance [active dependence]
- .25 Continuous use
- .26 Episodic use [dipsomania]

F1x.3 Withdrawal state

- .30 Uncomplicated
- .31 With convulsions

F1x.4 Withdrawal state with delirium

- .40 Without convulsions
- .41 With convulsions

F1x.5 Psychotic disorder

- .50 Schizophrenia-like
- .51 Predominantly delusional
- .52 Predominantly hallucinatory
- .53 Predominantly polymorphic
- .54 Predominantly depressive symptoms
- .55 Predominantly manic symptoms
- .56 Mixed

F1x.6 Amnesic syndrome

F1x.7 Residual and late-onset psychotic disorder

- .70 Flashbacks
- .71 Personality or behaviour disorder
- .72 Residual affective behaviour
- .73 Dementia
- .74 Other persisting cognitive behaviour
- .75 Late-onset psychotic disorder

F1x.8 Other mental and behavioural disorders

F1x.9 Unspecified mental and behavioural disorder.

This block contains a wide variety of disorders that differ in severity (from uncomplicated intoxication and harmful use to obvious psychotic disorders and dementia), but that are all attributable to the use of one or more psychoactive substances (which may or may not have been medically prescribed). The substance involved is indicated by means of the second and third characters (i.e. the first two digits after the letter F), and the fourth and fifth characters specify the clinical states. To save space, all the psychoactive substances are listed first, followed by the four-character codes; these should be used, as required, for each substance specified, but it should be noted that not all four-character codes are applicable to all substances.

Diagnostic guidelines

Identification of the psychoactive substance used may be made on the basis of self-report data, objective analysis of specimens of urine, blood, etc, or other evidence (presence of drug samples in the patient's possession, clinical signs and symptoms, or reports from informed third parties). It is always advisable to

seek corroboration from more than one source of evidence relating to substance use. Objective analyses provide the most compelling evidence of present or recent use, though these data have limitations with regard to past use and current levels of use. Many drug users take more than one type of drug, but the diagnosis of the disorder should be classified, whenever possible, according to the most important single substance (or class of substances) used. This may usually be done with regard to the particular drug, or type of drug, causing the presenting disorder. When in doubt, code the drug or type of drug most frequently misused, particularly in those cases involving continuous or daily use.

Only in cases in which patterns of psychoactive substance taking are chaotic and indiscriminate, or in which the contributions of different drugs are inextricably mixed, should code F19. – be used (disorders resulting from multiple drug use).

Misuse of other than psychoactive substances, such as laxatives or aspirin, should be coded by means of F55. – (abuse of non-dependence-producing substances), with a fourth character to specify the type of substance involved. Cases in which mental disorders (particularly delirium in the elderly) are due to psychoactive substances, but without the presence of one of the disorders in this block (e.g. harmful use or dependence syndrome), should be coded in F00 – F09. Where a state of delirium is superimposed upon such a disorder in this block, it should be coded by means of F1x.3 or F1X.4.

The level of alcohol involvement can be indicated by means of a supplementary code from Chapter XX of ICD-10: Y90. – (evidence of alcohol involvement determined by blood alcohol content) or Y91. – (evidence of alcohol involvement determined by level of intoxication).

F1x.0 Acute intoxication

A transient condition following the administration of alcohol or other psychoactive substance, resulting in disturbances in level of consciousness, cognition, perception, affect or behaviour, or other psychophysiological functions and responses. This should be a main diagnosis only in cases where intoxication occurs without more persistent alcohol- or drug-related problems being concomitantly present. Where there are such problems, precedence should be given to diagnoses of harmful use (F1x.1), dependence syndrome (F1x.2), or psychotic disorder (F1x.5).

Diagnostic guidelines

Acute intoxication is usually closely related to dose levels (see ICD-10, Chapter XX).

Exceptions to this may occur in individuals with certain underlying organic conditions (e.g. renal or hepatic insufficiency) in whom small doses of a substance may produce a disproportionately severe intoxicating effect. Disinhibition due to social context should also be taken into account (e.g. behavioural disinhibition at

parties or carnivals). Acute intoxication is a transient phenomenon. Intensity of intoxication lessens with time, and effects eventually disappear in the absence of further use of the substance. Recovery is therefore complete except where tissue damage or another complication has arisen.

Symptoms of intoxication need not always reflect primary actions of the substance: for instance, depressant drugs may lead to symptoms of agitation or hyperactivity, and stimulant drugs may lead to socially withdrawn and introverted behaviour. Effects of substances such as cannabis and hallucinogens may be particularly unpredictable. Moreover, many psychoactive substances are capable of producing different types of effect at different levels. For example, alcohol may have apparently stimulant effects on behaviour at lower dose levels, lead to agitation and aggression with increasing dose levels, and produce clear sedation at very high levels.

Includes:

Acute drunkenness in alcoholism “bad trips” (due to hallucinogenic drugs) drunkenness NOS

Differential diagnosis.

Consider acute head injury and hypoglycemia. Consider also the possibilities of intoxication as the result of mixed substance use.

The following five-character codes may be used to indicate whether the acute intoxication was associated with any complications:

F1x.00 Uncomplicated Symptoms of varying severity, usually dose-dependent, particularly at high dose levels.

F1x.01 With trauma or other bodily injury

F1x.02 With other medical complications. Complications such as haematemesis, inhalation of vomitus.

F1x.03 With delirium

F1x.04 With perceptual distortions

F1x.05 With coma

F1x.06 With convulsions

F1x.07 Pathological intoxication. Applies only to alcohol. Sudden onset of aggression and often violent behaviour that is not typical of the individual when sober, very soon after drinking amounts of alcohol that would not produce intoxication in most people.

F1x.1 Harmful use

A pattern of psychoactive substance use that is causing damage to health. The damage may be physical (as in cases of hepatitis from the self-administration of injected drugs) or mental (e.g. episodes of depressive disorder secondary to heavy consumption of alcohol).

Diagnostic guidelines

The diagnosis requires that actual damage should have been caused to the mental or physical health of the user. Harmful patterns of use are often criticized by others and frequently associated with adverse social consequences of various kinds. The fact that a pattern of use or a particular substance is disapproved of by another person or by the culture, or may have led to socially negative consequences such as arrest or marital arguments is not in itself evidence of harmful use.

Acute intoxication (see F1x.0), or “hangover” is not itself sufficient evidence of the damage to health required for coding harmful use. Harmful use should not be diagnosed if dependence syndrome (F1x.2), a psychotic disorder (F1x.5), or another specific form of drug- or alcohol-related disorder is present.

F1x.2 Dependence syndrome

A cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of a substance or a class of substances takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value. A central descriptive characteristic of the dependence syndrome is the desire (often strong, sometimes overpowering) to take psychoactive drugs (which may or may not have been medically prescribed), alcohol, or tobacco. There may be evidence that return to substance use after a period of abstinence leads to a more rapid reappearance of other features of the syndrome than occurs with nondependent individuals.

Diagnostic guidelines

A definite diagnosis of dependence should usually be made only if three or more of the following have been present together at some time during the previous year:

(a) a strong desire or sense of compulsion to take the substance;

- (b) difficulties in controlling substance-taking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or levels of use;
- (c) a physiological withdrawal state (see F1x.3 and F1x.4) when substance use has ceased or been reduced, as evidenced by: the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance; or use of the same (or a closely related) substance with the intention of relieving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms;
- (d) evidence of tolerance, such that increased doses of the psychoactive substances are required in order to achieve effects originally produced by lower doses (clear examples of this are found in alcohol- and opiate-dependent individuals who may take daily doses sufficient to incapacitate or kill nontolerant users);
- (e) progressive neglect of alternative pleasures or interests because of psychoactive substance use, increased amount of time necessary to obtain or take the substance or to recover from its effects;
- (f) persisting with substance use despite clear evidence of overtly harmful consequences, such as harm to the liver through excessive drinking, depressive mood states consequent to periods of heavy substance use, or drug-related impairment of cognitive functioning; efforts should be made to determine that the user was actually, or could be expected to be, aware of the nature and extent of the harm.

Narrowing of the personal repertoire of patterns of psychoactive substance use has also been described as a characteristic feature (e.g. a tendency to drink alcoholic drinks in the same way on weekdays and weekends, regardless of social constraints that determine appropriate drinking behaviour). It is an essential characteristic of the dependence syndrome that either psychoactive substance taking or a desire to take a particular substance should be present; the subjective awareness of compulsion to use drugs is most commonly seen during attempts to stop or control substance use. This diagnostic requirement would exclude, for instance, surgical patients given opioid drugs for the relief of pain, who may show signs of an opioid withdrawal state when drugs are not given but who have no desire to continue taking drugs.

The dependence syndrome may be present for a specific substance (e.g. tobacco or diazepam), for a class of substances (e.g. opioid drugs), or for a wider range of different substances (as for those individuals who feel a sense of compulsion regularly to use whatever drugs are available and who show distress, agitation, and/or physical signs of a withdrawal state upon abstinence).

Includes:

Chronic alcoholism

Dipsomania

Drug “addiction”

The diagnosis of the dependence syndrome may be further specified by the following five-character codes:

F1x.20 Currently abstinent

F1x.21 Currently abstinent, but in a protected environment (e.g. in hospital, in a therapeutic community, in prison, etc.)

F1x.22 Currently on a clinically supervised maintenance or replacement regime [controlled dependence] (e.g. with methadone; nicotine gum or nicotine patch)

F1x.23 Currently abstinent, but receiving treatment with aversive or blocking drugs (e.g. naltrexone or disulfiram)

F1x.24 Currently using the substance [active dependence]

F1x.25 Continuous use

F1x.26 Episodic use [dipsomani]

F1x.3 Withdrawal state

A group of symptoms of variable clustering and severity occurring on absolute or relative withdrawal of a substance after repeated, and usually prolonged and/or high dose, use of that substance. Onset and course

of the withdrawal state are time-limited and are related to the type of substance and the dose being used immediately before abstinence. The withdrawal state may be complicated by convulsions.

Diagnostic guidelines

Withdrawal state is one of the indicators of dependence syndrome (see F1x.2) and this latter diagnosis should also be considered. Withdrawal state should be coded as the main diagnosis if it is the reason for referral and sufficiently severe to require medical attention in its own right. Physical symptoms vary according to the substance being used. Psychological disturbances (e.g. anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders) are also common features of withdrawal. Typically, the patient is likely to report that withdrawal symptoms are relieved by further substance use.

It should be remembered that withdrawal symptoms can be induced by conditioned/learned stimuli in the absence of immediately preceding substance use. In such cases a diagnosis of withdrawal state should be made only if it is warranted in terms of severity.

Differential diagnosis.

Many symptoms present in drug withdrawal state may also be caused by other psychiatric conditions, e.g. anxiety states, and depressive disorders. Simple “hangover” or tremor due to other conditions should not be confused with the symptoms of a withdrawal state.

The diagnosis of withdrawal state may be further specified by using the following five-character codes:

F1x.30 Uncomplicated

F1x.31 With convulsions

F1x.4 Withdrawal state with delirium

A condition in which the withdrawal state (see F1x.3) is complicated by delirium (see criteria for F05. -). Alcohol-induced *delirium tremens* should be coded here. *Delirium tremens* is a short-lived, but occasionally life-threatening, toxic-confusional state with accompanying somatic disturbances. It is usually a consequence of absolute or relative withdrawal of alcohol in severely dependent users with a long history of use. Onset usually occurs after withdrawal of alcohol. In some cases the disorder appears during an episode of heavy drinking, in which case it should be coded here. Prodromal symptoms typically include insomnia, tremulousness, and fear. Onset may also be preceded by withdrawal convulsions. The classical triad of symptoms includes clouding of consciousness and confusion, vivid hallucinations and illusions affecting any sensory modality, and marked tremor. Delusions, agitation, insomnia or sleep-cycle reversal, and autonomic overactivity are usually also present.

Excludes:

Delirium, not induced by drugs and alcohol (F05. -)

The diagnosis of withdrawal state with delirium may be further specified by using the following five-character codes:

F1x.40 Without convulsions

F1x.41 With convulsions

F1x.5 Psychotic disorder

A cluster of psychotic phenomena that occur during or immediately after psychoactive substance use and are characterized by vivid hallucinations (typically auditory, but often in more than one sensory modality), misidentifications, delusions and/or ideas of reference (often of a paranoid or persecutory nature), psychomotor disturbances (excitement or stupor), and an abnormal affect, which may range from intense fear to ecstasy. The sensorium is usually clear but some degree of clouding of consciousness,

though not severe confusion, may be present. The disorder typically resolves at least partially within 1 month and fully within 6 months.

Diagnostic guidelines

A psychotic disorder occurring during or immediately after drug use (usually within 48 hours) should be recorded here provided that it is not a manifestation of drug withdrawal state with delirium (see F1x.4) or of late onset. Late-onset psychotic disorders (with onset more than 2 weeks after substance use) may occur, but should be coded as F1x.75.

Psychoactive substance-induced psychotic disorders may present with varying patterns of symptoms. These variations will be influenced by the type of substance involved and the personality of the user. For stimulant drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines, drug-induced psychotic disorders are generally closely related to high dose levels and/or prolonged use of the substance.

A diagnosis of psychotic disorder should not be made merely on the basis of perceptual distortions or hallucinatory experiences when substances having primary hallucinogenic effects (e.g. lysergic (LSD), mescaline, cannabis at high doses) have been taken. In such cases, and also for confusional states, a possible diagnoses of acute intoxication (F1x.0) should be considered. Particular care should also be taken to avoid mistakenly diagnosing a more serious condition (e.g. schizophrenia) when a diagnosis of psychoactive substance-induced psychosis is appropriate. Many psychoactive substance-induced psychotic states are of short duration provided that no further amounts of the drug are taken (as in the case of amphetamine and cocaine psychoses). False diagnosis in such cases may have distressing and costly implications for the patient and for the health services.

Includes:

alcoholic hallucinosis
alcoholic jealousy
alcoholic paranoia
alcoholic psychosis NOS

Differential diagnosis.

Consider the possibility of another mental disorder being aggravated or precipitated by psychoactive substance use (e.g. schizophrenia (F20. -); mood [affective] disorder (F30-F39); paranoid or schizoid personality disorder (F60.0, F60.1). In such cases, a diagnosis of psychoactive substance-induced psychotic state may be inappropriate. The diagnosis of psychotic state may be further specified by the following five character codes:

F1x.50 Schizophrenia-like
F1x.51 Predominantly delusional
F1x.52 Predominantly hallucinatory (includes alcoholic hallucinosis)
F1x.53 Predominantly polymorphic
F1x.54 Predominantly depressive symptoms
F1x.55 Predominantly manic symptoms
F1x.56 Mixed

F1x.6 Amnesic syndrome

A syndrome associated with chronic prominent impairment of recent memory; remote memory is sometimes impaired, while immediate recall is preserved. Disturbances of time sense and ordering of events are usually evident, as are difficulties in learning new material. Confabulation may be marked but is not invariably present. Other cognitive functions are usually relatively well preserved and amnesic defects are out of proportion to other disturbances.

Diagnostic guidelines

Amnesic syndrome induced by alcohol or other psychoactive substances coded here should meet the general criteria for organic amnesic syndrome (see F04). The primary requirements for this diagnosis are:

- (a) memory impairment as shown in impairment of recent memory (learning of new material); disturbances of time sense (rearrangements of chronological sequence, telescoping of repeated events into one, etc.);
 - (b) absence of defect in immediate recall, impairment of consciousness, and of generalized cognitive impairment;
 - (c) history or objective evidence of chronic (and particularly high-dose) use of alcohol or drugs.
- Personality changes, often with apparent apathy and loss of initiative, and a tendency towards self-neglect may also be present, but should not be regarded as necessary conditions for diagnosis. Although confabulation may be marked it should not be regarded as a necessary prerequisite for diagnosis.

Includes:

Korsakov's psychosis or syndrome, alcohol- or other psychoactive substance-induced.

Differential diagnosis.

Consider: organic amnesic syndrome (nonalcoholic) (see F04); other organic syndromes involving marked impairment of memory (e.g. dementia or delirium) (F00-F03; F05. -); a depressive disorder (F31 – F33).

F1x.7 Residual and late-onset psychotic disorder

A disorder in which alcohol- or psychoactive substance-induced changes of cognition, affect, personality, or behaviour persist beyond the period during which a direct psychoactive substance-related effect might reasonably be assumed to be operating.

Diagnostic guidelines

Onset of the disorder should be directly related to the use of alcohol or a psychoactive substance. Cases in which initial onset occurs later than episode(s) of substance use should be coded here only where clear and strong evidence is available to attribute the state to the residual effect of the substance. The disorder should represent a change from or marked exaggeration of prior and normal state of functioning. The disorder should persist beyond any period of time during which direct effects of the psychoactive substance might be assumed to be operative (see F1x.0, acute intoxication). Alcohol- or psychoactive substance-induced dementia is not always irreversible; after an extended period of total abstinence, intellectual functions and memory may improve. The disorder should be carefully distinguished from withdrawal-related conditions (see F1x.3 and F1x.4). It should be remembered that, under certain conditions and for certain substances, withdrawal state phenomena may be present for a period of many days or weeks after discontinuation of the substance. Conditions induced by a psychoactive substance, persisting after its use, and meeting the criteria for diagnosis of psychotic disorder should not be diagnosed here (use F1x.5, psychotic disorder). Patients who show the chronic end-state of Korsakov's syndrome should be coded under F1x.6.

Differential diagnosis.

Consider: pre-existing mental disorder masked by substance use and re-emerging as psychoactive substance-related effects fade (for example, phobic anxiety, depressive disorders, schizophrenia, or schizotypal disorder). In the case of flashbacks, consider acute and transient psychotic disorders (F23. -). Consider also organic injury and mild or moderate mental retardation (F70 – F71), which may coexist with psychoactive substance misuse. This diagnostic rubric may be further subdivided by using the following five-character codes:

F1x.70 Flashbacks. May be distinguished from psychotic disorders partly by their episodic nature, frequently of very short duration (seconds or minutes) and by their duplication (sometimes exact) of previous drug-related experiences.

F1x.71 Personality or behaviour disorder. Meeting the criteria for organic personality disorder (F07.0).

F1x.72 Residual affective disorder. Meeting the criteria for organic mood [affective] disorders (F06.3).

F1x.73 Dementia. Meeting the general criteria for dementia as outlined in the introduction to F00-F09.

F1x.74 Other persisting cognitive impairment. A residual category for disorders with persisting cognitive impairment, which do not meet the criteria for psychoactive substance-induced amnesic syndrome (F1x.6) or dementia (F1x.73).

F1x.75 Late-onset psychotic disorder

F1x.8 Other mental and behavioural disorders

Code here any other disorder in which the use of a substance can be identified as contributing directly to the condition, but which does not meet the criteria for inclusion in any of the above disorders.

F1x.9 Unspecified mental and behavioural disorder

Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology and Humanistic Studies at Saybrook University. He is internationally known for his work on dreams, altered states of consciousness, hypnosis, shamanism, and parapsychology, and is one of the pioneers in transpersonal psychology. He was the president of the Division 32 of the American Psychological Association from 1980-1981 and among other multiple awards, in 2002 he received the American Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology. He has written numerous books, chapters and scientific articles. E-mail: skrippner@saybrook.edu

Dustin Dunbar, Ph.D., is a Visiting Faculty Member of the Institute for Medicine and Advanced Behavioral Technology, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, and has a private practice as a health and sports consultant in Capetown, South Africa. E-mail: doctordunbar@yahoo.com

La visión económica transpersonal de “El profeta” de Jalil Gibrán

The transpersonal economic approach of “The Prophet” by Khalil Gibran

Juan Agustín Franco Martínez

Departamento de Economía. Escuela de Ingenierías Agrarias.
Universidad de Extremadura
(Badajoz, España)

Resumen

La teoría económica del poeta Jalil Gibrán en su obra “El profeta” (1923) presenta una clara conexión con los valores éticos y transpersonales. La ética económica transpersonal gibraniense destaca por su visión trascendente de las relaciones humanas, incluidas las más materialistas, cotidianas y prosaicas, como pudieran ser las económicas. En el mundo desarrollado estamos tan acostumbrados a una lectura dual e hiper-racionalista de la realidad que nos hemos atrevido a normalizar la brecha entre ricos y pobres, las relaciones de explotación entre capitalistas y trabajadores, la corrupción fiscal y el aplauso social, el hambre y la opulencia, los booms especulativos y las crisis. Las ideas económicas que se desprenden como algo sin mayor importancia de las reflexiones de Gibrán en “El profeta” son de una frescura y una intemporalidad mayúsculas. En particular, en este artículo se analizan los valores transpersonales que fundamentan el enfoque económico de Gibrán sobre temas económicos esenciales, especialmente, la distribución, el trabajo y el mercado.

Palabras clave: economía, valores transpersonales, ética, distribución, trabajo, mercado

Abstract

The economic theory of the poet Khalil Gibran in his book "The Prophet" (1923) presents a clear connection with the ethical transpersonal values. Gibran's transpersonal economic ethics features a transcendent vision of human relationships, including the most materialistic and mundane as might be economic. In the developed world we are so used to reading hyper-rational and dual of the reality that we have normalized the gap between North and South, between capital and labour. Moreover, tax corruption and social acclaim, hunger and opulence, speculative booms and social crises. The economic ideas by Gibran in "The Prophet" are timeless and freshness. In particular, this article examines the transpersonal values of Gibran's economic thought, especially, distribution, employment and system of market.

Keywords: economy, transpersonal values, ethics, distribution, labour, market

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Introducción

“No hay ninguna razón para que [la ciencia] renuncie a problemas como amor, creatividad, valor, belleza, imaginación, moral y alegría, dejándolos del todo en manos de los ‘no-científicos’: poetas, profetas, clérigos, dramaturgos, artistas o diplomáticos. Todas estas personas pueden tener intuiciones maravillosas, plantear las cuestiones que deban plantearse, proponer hipótesis susceptibles de comprobación e incluso estar en lo cierto y poseer la verdad en muchas ocasiones. Pero, por más seguros que ellos se sientan, jamás conseguirán que la humanidad lo esté. Tan sólo pueden convencer a quienes ya están de acuerdo con ellos y quizás a algunos más. La ciencia es el único camino para introducir la verdad en quien se muestra remisa a ella. Sólo la ciencia puede vencer las diferencias caracteriológicas en los modos de percibir y las creencias. Sólo la ciencia puede progresar”. (Maslow, 2001: 14. Prólogo a la primera edición).

“El profeta” (1923) es la obra maestra del autor libanés Jalil Gibrán (6/12/1883-10/4/1931) nacido en Becharre y fallecido en Nueva York. El autor que con veinte años fuera excomulgado de la Iglesia Católica Maronita, por su obra “Espíritus rebeldes”.

“El profeta” es el fruto de más de dos décadas de trabajo, de borradores en árabe, hasta la última versión que escribió y publicó en inglés. “El profeta” es el primer libro de una trilogía inacabada. El segundo, “El jardín del profeta”, fue publicado póstumamente. Y el tercero, “La muerte del profeta”, no llegó a escribirse. “El profeta” es el primer libro de la serie que trata sobre las relaciones interpersonales, el segundo se centra en la relación entre el ser humano y la naturaleza, y el último iba a reflexionar sobre la relación humana con lo divino. En definitiva, “El profeta” constituye la expresión del genial pensamiento del poeta Jalil Gibrán, que fue capaz de armonizar lo mejor de las culturas occidental y oriental (Armiño, en Gibrán, 1989).

“El profeta” se estructura en 26 capítulos breves (más un capítulo de presentación y otro de despedida) con un estilo narrativo sencillo en el que el profeta Almustafá se dirige a sus discípulos hablándoles sobre multitud de temas básicos para la convivencia y la felicidad humana: amor, belleza, placer, religión, muerte, amistad, tiempo y también de cuestiones económicas. Trata de forma específica y directa lo económico sólo en tres capítulos, en los que habla de donaciones (dádivas), trabajo y comercio. Aunque en otros capítulos se diseminan párrafos y frases con claro contenido económico relacionado con cuestiones básicas: necesidades, propiedad, vivienda, explotación, racionalidad, instituciones y bienestar social.

Lo relevante de la teoría económica de Gibrán es su conexión con los valores éticos y transpersonales de la mejor cultura occidental y oriental. La moral y ética económica transpersonal gibraniense destaca poderosamente por su visión trascendente de las relaciones humanas, incluidas las más materialistas, cotidianas y prosaicas, como pudieran ser las económicas. Anticipándose lúcidamente a investigaciones económicas de décadas posteriores, como por ejemplo, el concepto de “racionalidad limitada”¹ de Simon (1955), según el cual se reconoce “que los seres humanos presentan unas capacidades de razonamiento limitadas para procesar y computar toda la información disponible” (Fernández-Huerga, 2008), en contraposición a la racionalidad plena que postula el enfoque económico convencional, cuestionado por autores como Maslow (2001), Cortina (2011) y Martínez Lozano (2009) en los ámbitos de la psicología y la ética.

Partimos del planteamiento de Martínez Lozano (2009) que describe el paradigma posmoderno de la psicología transpersonal basado en la trayectoria evolutiva moral desde una conciencia dual a un nivel superior no-dual. La conciencia dual percibe la realidad de manera fragmentada, bajo el conflicto entre sujeto/objeto. Mientras que la conciencia no-dual (transpersonal) percibe la realidad de forma unitaria e integrada. Así los dos rasgos más característicos del nivel de conciencia transpersonal son la sabiduría y

la solidaridad compasiva. Esta evolución moral de carácter transpersonal se representa esquemáticamente en la Tabla 1 y Tabla 2, estableciendo además su correspondencia con la jerarquía de las necesidades de Maslow y con las fases del desarrollo moral masculino (ética de la justicia) y femenino (ética del cuidado) según Kohlberg (1981) y Gilligan (1982), respectivamente. Este esquema evolutivo es ampliado, con las adaptaciones pertinentes, añadiendo las aportaciones de otros autores sobre modelos de solidaridad (Aranguren, 1998: 26) y sobre el desarrollo de la conciencia atea (Dawkins, 2007: 60).

Tabla 1
*Niveles evolutivos hacia la conciencia transpersonal
(integración de las dimensiones racional y emocional)*

Niveles	Descripción	Dimensión racional	Dimensión emocional
5	Transpersonal, no-dual	Sabiduría	Compasión
4	Centralidad de DD.HH.	Democracia	Bienestar
3	Ética técnico-profesional	Tecnología	Beneficencia
2	Moralismos religiosos	Legalista	Caridad
1	Dual, mental, egoica	Ignorancia	Egoísmo

Tabla 2
*Niveles evolutivos hacia la conciencia transpersonal
(necesidades, desarrollo moral, modelos solidarios y conciencia religiosa)*

Nivel	Maslow <i>Jerarquía de necesidades</i>	Kohlberg <i>Moral masculina</i>	Gilligan <i>Moral femenina</i>	Aranguren <i>Modelos de solidaridad</i>	Dawkins <i>Niveles de religiosidad</i>
5	Autorrealización	Autonomía	Responsabilidad del cuidado	Encuentro	Ateísmo <i>de facto</i>
4	Estima	Postconvencional	Transición	Cooperación	Agnosticismo ateísta
3	Sociales	Convencional	Responsabilidad hacia el otro	Voluntariado estacional	Agnosticismo teísta
2	Seguridad	Heteronomía	Transición	Campañas	Teísmo <i>de facto</i>
1	Fisiológicas	Preconvencional	Supervivencia del Yo	Espectáculo	Fuertemente teísta

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Aplicando el modelo transpersonal al sistema capitalista, podemos afirmar que en el nivel dual la realidad se percibe de manera distorsionada, lo que promueve un proceso gradual de interiorización colectiva de una conciencia moral insolidaria e individualista. La conciencia dual (egoica) desemboca en el triunfo del individualismo, con consecuencias en todas las dimensiones humanas (relacional, afectiva, económica, social, política, educativa, religiosa). Sin embargo, la moral (la opción ética por el egoísmo) no es la causa del individualismo, más bien se trata de una falta de comprensión (o ignorancia) de la verdadera naturaleza de lo real, lo que implica tomar como absoluto lo que es sólo relativo. Así, dentro de esta lógica, cuando lo económico se absolutiza, y se considera a sí mismo como definitivo, buscará imponerse mediante dogmas, creencias y la negación de todo lo demás. Es decir, la ignorancia conduce a la competitividad, a la rivalidad, a la crispación y al enfrentamiento, que no son más que los pilares del modelo de conducta moral característico del neoliberalismo -elevado a la categoría de religión.

En la actualidad, principalmente en los países ricos de Occidente, las personas están tan acostumbradas a una lectura dual, racionalista y dicotómica de la realidad humana que se ha normalizado la brecha entre ricos y pobres, las relaciones de explotación entre capitalistas y trabajadores, el patriarcado y la violencia contra las mujeres, la corrupción fiscal y el aplauso social, el hambre y la opulencia, la desertización y el hacinamiento, los booms especulativos y las crisis. Todo ello al amparo

“científico” de la teoría neoclásica y de la ideología neoliberal, aún vigentes pese a las intuiciones geniales de poetas como Gibrán.

La filosofía económica que se desprende como algo sin mayor importancia de las reflexiones de Gibrán en “El profeta” son de una frescura y una intemporalidad mayúsculas, tanto que paradójicamente suenan imperceptibles, apenas un aldabonazo en las conciencias de algunos espíritus soñadores y utópicos, por norma, alejados de los centros de poder y decisión. A la vez, sus ideas e intuiciones son pioneras y conectan con enfoques económicos alternativos al enfoque dominante, como son las aportaciones de la economía institucional y postkeynesiana (Fernández-Huerga, 2008).

Para el análisis de la teoría económica transpersonal gibraniense vamos a basarnos en la traducción española de El Profeta de Mauro Armijo, edición de 1989, a la cual irán referidas las páginas de la misma obra que se citen a continuación. La Tabla 3 resume los principales contenidos económicos y transpersonales que se tratan en cada capítulo de “El profeta”, distinguiendo entre contenidos implícitos y explícitos y señalando al interlocutor que realiza la pregunta correspondiente a cada capítulo, excepto en los capítulos de presentación y despedida en los que Almustafá y el pueblo de Orfalís son en conjunto los protagonistas.

Tabla 3
Contenidos de índole económica y transpersonal de “El profeta” de Gibrán (1923)

Capítulo	Interlocutor	Contenidos de índole económica y transpersonal	
		Implícitos	Explícitos
0. Presentación	Almustafá y pueblo de Orfalís	- Respeto a la naturaleza. - Conciencia de género.	- Pluralidad de motivaciones y emociones. - Conciencia de fraternidad universal. - Conciencia de servicio a la comunidad.
1. Amor	Almitra	- Valores afectivos.	- Promoción de una vida de entrega y servicio. - Crítica a un estilo de vida burgués. - Educar los deseos en la solidaridad.
2. Matrimonio	Almitra	- Conciencia de género.	- Garantizar la libertad individual.
3. Hijos	Mujer	- Conciencia de progreso.	- Independencia de las generaciones futuras. - Cuidar la equidad intergeneracional.
4. Dádivas	Rico	- Teoría de la distribución	- Promoción de la generosidad y de la solidaridad. - Origen emocional de las necesidades. - Defensa de la soberanía alimentaria.
5. Comida y bebida	Anciano		- Finalidad solidaria del trabajo.
6. Trabajo	Labrador	- Respeto a la naturaleza. - Dignidad humana. - Teoría del trabajo.	
7. Alegría y tristeza	Mujer		- Unidad emocional.
8. Vivienda	Albañil	- Miedos irracionales.	- Defensa de la libertad. - Crítica a un estilo de vida burgués.
9. Vestimenta	Tejedor		- Defensa de la libertad. - Crítica a la superficialidad y al culto de la imagen.
10. Compraventa	Mercader	- Respeto a la naturaleza. - Rechazo de las clases sociales. - Teoría del mercado.	- Finalidad solidaria del comercio. - Rechazo de la especulación.
11. Crimen y castigo	Juez		- Defensa de la dignidad humana.
12. Leyes	Jurista		- Defensa de la libertad y de la dignidad humanas.
13. Libertad	Orador	- Pluralidad de motivaciones.	- Defensa de la libertad comprometida.
14. Razón y pasión	Almitra		- Pluralidad de motivaciones.
15. Dolor	Mujer		- Educarse en las dificultades.
16. Autoconocimiento	Hombre		- Educarse en la utopía.
17. Enseñanza	Maestro		- Vocación de compromiso y servicio al prójimo.
18. Amistad	Joven		- Motivación desinteresada.
19. Conversación	Humanista		- Importancia del lenguaje no verbal.
20. Tiempo	Astrónomo		- Conciencia de infinito.
21. Bien y mal	Anciano		- Defensa de la libertad y la dignidad humanas.
22. Oración	Sacerdotisa		- Conciencia de unidad.
23. Placer	Ermitaño		- Defensa de la libertad y la dignidad humanas.
24. Belleza	Poeta		- Visión trascendente de las necesidades.
25. Religión	Sacerdote		- Conciencia de unidad y solidaridad.
26. Muerte	Almitra		- Conciencia de unidad y utopía.
27. Despedida	Almustafá y pueblo de Orfalís	- Renuncia a estilo de vida burgués. - Respeto a la naturaleza. - Vocación de servicio al pueblo.	- Conciencia de unidad y fraternidad universal. - Defensa de la dignidad humana. - Visión trascendente del conocimiento. - Superación del trabajo asalariado. - Comprensión y ternura hacia la debilidad humana.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Conviene señalar que la mayoría de contenidos explícitos son valores éticos transpersonales, mientras que en los implícitos dominan los de carácter económico -ortodoxo y heterodoxo (como el feminismo)- y su conexión con el medioambiente. También destaca el protagonismo de las mujeres en esta obra, particularmente de la sacerdotisa Almitra, que interviene hasta en seis capítulos del total de la obra. Es relevante el perfil sociológico que retrata Gibrán del pueblo de Orfalís según podemos observar del análisis de las personas que van preguntándole al inicio de cada capítulo. Una sociedad rural, de artesanos y gente humilde, donde los que poseen una posición preeminente (como el hombre rico, el juez, el mercader o el jurista) son invitados a un estilo de vida más solidario, misericordioso y generoso, a la vez que son interrogados irónicamente sobre los sinsentidos e incongruencias de las funciones básicas tradicionalmente asignadas a su profesión. También destaca el estilo propositivo de Gibrán, exponiendo siempre en primer lugar una reflexión positiva y sólo en ocasiones, posteriormente, una reflexión crítica, la mayoría de éstas centradas en la insolidaridad de un estilo de vida acomodado y burgués.

Teoría de la distribución transpersonal gibraniense

Podemos extraer una lectura económica transpersonal sobre la distribución de la renta y la riqueza del capítulo 4 sobre “las dádivas” (Gibrán, 1989: 33-35). Una de sus ideas principales coincide con la parábola evangélica de la mujer anciana que da en ofrenda lo poco que tiene y que necesita para comer. El profeta Almustafá lo expresa así: “Algunos dan un poco de lo mucho que tienen (...) Algunos tienen poco, y lo dan todo. Estos son los que creen en la vida y en la generosidad de la vida: su cofre nunca está vacío”. También se tratan las siguientes seis cuestiones relativas a la esfera de la distribución desde una visión ética transpersonal:

- El valor real de lo que se distribuye.
- La inutilidad de acumular.
- La generación artificial de necesidades.
- La distribución como fuente de riqueza personal.
- La solidaridad como principio de actividad económica.
- Incongruencia económica del préstamo y la deuda.

- El valor real de lo que se distribuye: “Dais muy poco cuando lo que dais es de vuestro patrimonio. Sólo dais realmente cuando dais algo de vosotros mismos”. Es interesante esta reflexión ya que concibe el acto de la donación como algo cuyo sentido se pierde cuando la persona no está internamente unificada. En otras palabras, dar limosna para acallar la propia conciencia es un acto de autoconsolación, pero no de autodonación. La redistribución económica no es un mero cálculo técnico desligado de cierto sistema de valores. Así, en una sociedad con predominio de valores individualistas es lógico que se incentiven preferentemente sistemas fiscales regresivos, que se privaticen servicios básicos como la sanidad o la educación, y que se hagan recortes sociales en el bienestar de la mayoría de la población, con especial perjuicio para los colectivos más vulnerables. Aunque tales políticas se presenten bajo el refrendo de la tecnocracia, no dejan de ser profundamente insolidarias. Gráficamente puede expresarse esta idea, siguiendo una metodología *fuzzy* –véase, por ejemplo, Fedrizzi et al. (1993)- mediante la Figura 1. Esto es, el verdadero acto solidario no busca en absoluto la propia autoconsolación, lo que significa que quedan fuera de la definición todos aquellos actos orientados hacia la caridad y la beneficencia, en sintonía con Maslow (1968). También quedan excluidos los modelos pseudosolidarios que describe Aranguren (1998): espectáculo, campañas, voluntariado estacional y cooperación.

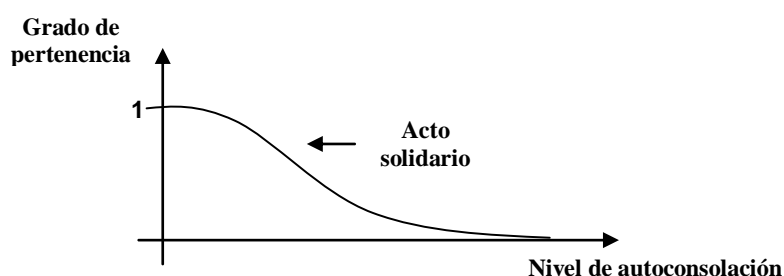
- La inutilidad de acumular: “¿Qué traerá el mañana al perro previsor que entierra huesos en la arena no tocada mientras sigue a los peregrinos hacia la ciudad santa?” Esta pregunta plantea la necesidad de establecer límites a la capacidad de acumular renta y riqueza. La necesidad de hablar, por ejemplo, no

sólo de salarios mínimos, sino también de salarios máximos. Entiende la acumulación como un despilfarro, un derroche, un enterramiento inútil y perjudicial de recursos.

- La generación artificial de necesidades: “¿Qué son vuestras posesiones sino cosas que atesoráis por temor a necesitarlas mañana? (...) Y ¿qué es el temor a la necesidad sino la necesidad misma? Cuando el pozo está lleno, ¿no es realmente el miedo a la sed una sed insaciable?” De esta reflexión y de la anterior se deduce un principio de actuación económica evidente que impide la acumulación de unos para asegurarse el consumo futuro cuando otros pasan escasez y no tienen asegurado el consumo presente. Además, en este “miedo a necesitar algo” radica el fundamento del marketing. El ser humano no toma todas sus decisiones basándose en una pura y técnica racionalidad, hecho constatado por diversas disciplinas científicas: económica (Fernández-Huerta, 2008), psicológica (Maslow, 1968) o ética (Cortina, 2011).

Figura 1

Grado de pertenencia de un fenómeno distributivo a un sistema ético transpersonal según el nivel de autoconsolidación del acto ejecutado



Fuente: Elaboración propia

- La distribución como fuente de riqueza personal: “Algunos dan y no conocen el dolor de dar, ni buscan el placer de dar, ni lo dan conscientes de la virtud de dar. Dan como el mirto en el valle que ofrece su fragancia al aire”. “Dan para poder vivir, porque guardar es morir”. Otra variación más de las dos cuestiones anteriormente señaladas, que apunta con claridad hacia las necesidades superiores de autorrealización del ser humano según Maslow (1968).

- La solidaridad como principio de actividad económica: “Bueno es dar cuando os piden, pero mejor es dar antes, movidos del propio corazón”. La solidaridad compasiva como principio económico está claramente alejada del omnipresente comportamiento egoísta del irreal *homo economicus* (Franco y Almeida, 1999) que a lo sumo entiende la solidaridad como espectáculo o como campañas puntuales (Aranguren, 1998). No existe el hombre maximizador dotado de una racionalidad calculadora pura, sino una persona con sentido de la equidad y de la reciprocidad (Cortina 2011: 113). Es preciso recuperar una concepción solidaria de las relaciones económicas completamente antagónica al manido y tóxico concepto de la “Responsabilidad Social Corporativa”, que pretende cosificar y mercantilizar la “solidaridad” para asegurar y aumentar aún más los beneficios privados de la empresa (ver Anexo). Olvidando la advertencia de Almustafá (Gibrán, 1989: 86): “En verdad, la bondad que se mira a sí misma en el espejo se convierte en piedra. Y una buena acción que se otorga a sí misma epítetos amables se convierte en fuente de maldición”.

- La incongruencia económica del préstamo y la deuda: “¿Hay merecimiento mayor que el de quien da el valor y la confianza –no la caridad- de recibir?” “Porque en verdad, es la vida la que da a la vida, mientras que vosotros que os creéis dadores no sois más que testigos. Y vosotros los que recibís –todos sois

receptores- no asumáis sobre vosotros el peso de la gratitud, para no uncir con un mismo yugo a vosotros y a quien os da”.

El tema de la usura y la deuda es central en la reflexión ética religiosa, en general. Pese a ello, hoy en día, la sociedad admite apenas sin cuestionamiento los instrumentos financieros crediticios y de endeudamiento promovidos por una minoría de sectores dominantes y socialmente más poderosos. Es relevante comentar que incluso la oración cristiana del “Padre nuestro” sufrió una reinterpretación en este sentido, desvirtuando el sentido original. Así, donde se decía que se “nos perdonasen las deudas como nosotros perdonamos a nuestros deudores” se sustituyó el concepto de deudas por el de ofensas, trasladando la denuncia económica al terreno de lo espiritual (Lafargue, 1998; Franco, 2010: 94).

En esta línea, incluso la filosofía de los micro-créditos y de las finanzas éticas asume la aceptación de la usura y de la deuda con el pretendido discurso bienhechor de invertir en proyectos sociales. Tales discursos aún siguen vinculados a una conciencia mítica de la economía, como muy bien expone, quizá sin quererlo y en otro contexto, el diseñador de alimentos Werner Mlodzianowski en el documental de TVE (2010) sobre el conflicto entre el mito y el logos: “El mito de la salud. El mito de la belleza. El mito de lo natural. El mito de que le pago un precio justo al productor. El mito de contribuir a la sostenibilidad... Hay mitos para todos los gustos... Lo contrario del mito es el logos, la razón. Y aunque pueda sonar algo incómodo, nadie desea realmente eliminar estos componentes” relacionados con el mito.

Teoría del trabajo transpersonal gibraniense

El capítulo 6 “del trabajo” concibe la actividad laboral de manera amplia y en sintonía con la naturaleza. En particular destacan los siguientes cinco aspectos esenciales (Gibrán, 1989: 38-40):

- Armonía entre trabajo y naturaleza.
- Concepción amplia del trabajo.
- Ligazón con las necesidades básicas del prójimo.
- Rechazo de las clases sociales.
- Rechazo de la explotación laboral.

- Armonía entre trabajo y naturaleza: “Trabajáis para ir al ritmo de la tierra y del alma de la tierra”. Expresa de manera sucinta uno de los temas centrales de estudio de la economía ecológica, disciplina tradicionalmente relegada del marco de análisis convencional. Estableciendo correctamente las relaciones económicas en un sistema cerrado, contrariamente a la errónea concepción de sistema abierto de la economía clásica.

- Una concepción amplia del trabajo más allá del trabajo asalariado, con una delimitación negativa y otra positiva: “Porque permanecer ocioso es ser un extraño para las estaciones y desertar del cortejo de la vida”. “Cuando trabajáis cumplís una parte del más remoto sueño de la tierra, una parte que os fue asignada a vosotros cuando el sueño nació. Y trabajando estáis en verdad amando a la vida”. Esta reflexión pone de relieve la dimensión de participación del trabajo, al igual que la siguiente, ambas alejadas del concepto de empleo asalariado, y por tanto de la dimensión de explotación. Circunstancia bien descrita por el Comité Invisible (2010), que pone de manifiesto la auténtica problemática actual con respecto al trabajo: la tragedia “reside en todo aquello que ha sido necesario destruir, en todos aquellos a los que ha habido que desarraigar para que el trabajo termine por aparecer como *la única manera de existir*. El horror del trabajo no está tanto en el propio trabajo como en el asolamiento metódico, desde hace siglos, de todo aquello que no es él: familiaridades de barrio, de oficio, de pueblo, de lucha, de parentesco; apego a lugares, seres, estaciones, modos de hacer y de hablar”. Tragedia ya advertida irónicamente por Lafargue (1880) en su crítica al trabajo asalariado.

- Una vinculación del trabajo a las necesidades básicas y a una teoría distributiva del valor: “Que todo trabajo es vacío cuando no hay amor”. “Es tejer la tela con hilos extraídos de vuestro corazón, como si el ser amado por vosotros fuera a usar esa tela”. Este pensamiento conecta con la psicología de la autorrealización de Maslow (1968), con el sentido de responsabilidad en el desarrollo moral según Gilligan (1982) y con la explicación evolucionista desde la psicología y la biología sobre el enamoramiento (Dawkins, 2007: 202). A partir de aquí podemos preguntarnos, parafraseando a Dawkins (2007: 203), si la propensión de la economía capitalista a religiosizarse no será un subproducto de los mecanismos irracionales que originalmente fueron construidos en el cerebro por la selección natural para el enamoramiento.

- La negación de una jerarquía social basada en el estatus y prestigio de la profesión (rechazo de las clases sociales): Se admite mayoritariamente que el escultor es más noble que el agricultor o que el pintor es más que el zapatero o el artesano. “Mas yo os digo que el viento habla con igual dulzura a los gigantescos robles que a las hierbas más insignificantes”. Esta idea es idéntica a la sentencia evangélica que afirma que “dios hace salir el sol sobre justos y pecadores”. La consecuencia económica es clara: la dignidad nos iguala a todos y no hay motivos, ni siquiera laborales, para honrar más a uno que a otros.

- La llamada a trabajar en aquello que más nos plenifica y, por tanto, la renuncia a un régimen de explotación laboral que obliga a trabajar sin ninguna referencia a esta plenitud personal: “Y aunque cantéis como los ángeles, si no amáis el canto estáis impidiendo que los oídos del hombre escuchen las voces del día y las voces de la noche”. Lo que se encuentra estrechamente ligado al proceso psicológico de autorrealización humana según Maslow (1968).

En resumen, estas reflexiones reflejan unos principios muy sencillos, muy básicos, que tratan de orientar la actividad humana desde lo más profundo de cada persona, en equilibrio con la naturaleza. Reflejando que las cosas que producimos valen por la necesidad del prójimo que satisface. No hay, por tanto, una concepción del valor asociada al número de horas dedicadas por el trabajador para producir un bien ni a la utilidad subjetiva que le asigna el consumidor final. Más bien se trata de una concepción del valor ligada a una distribución equitativa de los bienes y servicios que satisfacen necesidades básicas del prójimo. Todo lo cual se encuentra en consonancia con la idea de necesidades superiores y metanecesidades de Maslow (1968) y la ética del cuidado característica del desarrollo moral femenino según Gilligan (1982).

Teoría del mercado transpersonal gibraniense

El breve capítulo 10 “de la compra y de la venta” reflexiona sobre las relaciones comerciales (Gibrán, 1989: 47-48). De nuevo incide en la necesaria conexión y armonía entre actividad humana y conservación del medioambiente. Rechaza a los especuladores. Y anima a comerciar con los artistas porque producen alimento espiritual.

Lo realmente llamativo de este capítulo es la sencilla y elegante comprensión del mercado. Y lo hace como si fuera algo ajeno a la actividad propia del mismo, un requisito indispensable sólo citado al final del capítulo (Gibrán, 1989: 48): “Y antes de abandonar el mercado, comprobad que nadie se vuelve con las manos vacías. Porque el espíritu de la tierra no dormirá en paz sobre el viento hasta no ver satisfechas las necesidades del más pequeño de vosotros”.

El mismo requisito que se desprende de la parábola evangélica del “propietario bueno de la viña” que pagó a todos los trabajadores lo mismo, aunque unos habían trabajado más horas que otros (Pagola, 2011)². Este requisito para definir el mercado ha sido claramente erradicado de los manuales e investigaciones sobre marketing y organización de empresas, pese al vano y falaz intento de pseudoincluirlo a través del discurso neoliberal de la RSC (ver anexo para una exposición breve de los

argumentos que analizan transpersonalmente este concepto). A la vez que se excluye toda mención a la Renta Básica como un instrumento económico más idóneo y más en sintonía con el propósito que supuestamente se persigue (véase por ejemplo la web de José Iglesias).

Desde el análisis económico transpersonal la división del mercado entre oferentes y demandantes es un error conceptual grave, incluso aunque se asuma general e implícitamente que la oferta es una posición dominante y la demanda una posición dominada, lo que *per se* es la afirmación de la lucha de clases y la negación de relaciones económicas solidarias y cooperativas.

Las funciones clásicas del productor pueden detectarse en el comportamiento del consumidor, y al revés también. Así, la oferta del cliente es de singular importancia y previa a la oferta del productor. El consumidor ofrece información. Información útil para el diseño del producto final, para su fabricación y estrategia de comercialización. También ofrece garantías de su propia capacidad de pago.

El papel de la demanda como oferente primigenio es innegable, aunque la teoría convencional y la historia le hayan usurpado esta función, relegándolo en el mejor de los casos a un teórico y cuestionable principio de soberanía del consumidor. Sin olvidarnos, claro está, del papel como productor que ejercen los propios consumidores en su tarea de gestores de residuos.

Los roles generalmente atribuidos a los consumidores también pueden encontrarse en los productores. Especialmente cuando éstos se asocian en una estrategia comercial común para dar salida a la enorme producción excedentaria (necesidad del productor). Es decir, demandan consumidores que compren sus productos (núcleo central de la justificación moderna del marketing).

Son las instituciones económicas que desarrolla la sociedad las que conceden y distribuyen las posiciones dominantes y dominadas. Son las que determinan la legitimidad y prioridad de la satisfacción de necesidades. Así, las necesidades de las posiciones dominadas quedarán siempre subordinadas a las necesidades de las posiciones dominantes, siempre y cuando nos hallemos en una sociedad con valores no transpersonales, sin conciencia de unidad trascendental.

Hasta el momento no ha habido un acuerdo social universal para garantizar la satisfacción de las necesidades básicas sea cual sea la posición económica de los agentes participantes. En este subdesarrollo económico juegan un papel básico las posturas de economistas que dudan maliciosamente sobre la identificación y jerarquización de necesidades básicas. Desviando el debate hacia rincones matemáticos que privilegian funciones continuas y derivables de utilidades esperadas y máximos beneficios monetarios.

Sólo en el caso del mercado laboral la demanda adopta la postura dominante y la oferta la dominada. ¿Por qué esto es así? Basta caer en la cuenta del motivo principal de esta relación de dominio: la demanda de trabajo realiza un papel crucial como oferente de puestos de trabajo. Por otro lado, la posición de la oferta laboral se debilita hasta el punto en que no hay elección real, creándose las condiciones que obligan a vender la fuerza de trabajo según los intereses de los empleadores. De lo anterior se deduce con facilidad la presión de los empresarios para que la conducta de los trabajadores sea anómala (Giffen) en el tramo de salarios bajos, es decir, que deseen trabajar más por menos. Limitando así el número de oferentes de trabajo que estarían dispuestos a trabajar menos horas por más sueldo (lo que es más propio de salarios altos). De tal manera que se profundiza la brecha social entre capital y trabajo, como Marx (1867) había estudiado.

Razonamiento similar puede aplicarse al caso tradicional en el que los demandantes compran más a precios mayores de productos básicos. Entendiendo por “productos básicos” aquellos bienes y servicios que son necesarios para alcanzar un determinado nivel de supervivencia o bienestar.

En definitiva, las conductas anómalas o Giffen, que suelen ser ignoradas e invisibilizadas, están sugiriendo un tipo de relaciones económicas solidarias sólo viables entre posiciones dominadas. Es decir, sólo viables en una sociedad con valores transpersonales. Así, puede demostrarse que el óptimo social sólo es alcanzable cuando entre los agentes económicos no hay ningún dominante, en el sentido de ser capaz de imponer la propia voluntad a la fuerza (para más detalle véase Bowles, 2010).

La teoría económica convencional con su terminología aséptica elude las relaciones de poder y los conflictos de intereses, presentando proposiciones tremendamente ideológicas como auténtica y rigurosa ciencia. Parafraseando a Maslow (2001: 31), podemos decir, muy a nuestro pesar, que la mayoría de los economistas no protesta contra el trato inhumano de la teoría del libre mercado. Lo que tampoco hace Maslow, pero no podemos reprochárselo, ya que para su particular propósito le es suficiente *a priori* con asumir el sistema económico como una variable dada y no como una variable de análisis. Y ya sabemos que tomarse la economía en serio lleva tiempo y esfuerzo, y si no que le pregunten a Marx (Guerrero, 2008).

El mercado como unidad de análisis económico es incorrecto. No existe como tal, salvo en la teoría. El mercado es una idealización de las relaciones económicas que las presenta como un lugar o red de transacciones libres, armoniosas, eficientes y justas. Un mercado existe cuando hay corresponsabilidad (es decir, responsabilidad compartida, por tanto, no voluntaria) en las decisiones y actuaciones de los agentes, de manera que los riesgos comerciales son compartidos entre oferente y demandante. Un ejemplo evidente de esta falta estructural de corresponsabilidad lo observamos en la crisis global desatada por las entidades financieras. “En un mercado, la responsabilidad de un préstamo fallido es compartida. Es un fallo de la persona o institución que pidió el préstamo, pero lo es también de la persona o institución que ofreció el préstamo. Y esto no está ocurriendo. En esta situación se está penalizando al primero a fin de salvar los intereses del segundo” (Navarro, 2012).

Pareciera que la ciencia económica neoliberal está al servicio de la esclavitud humana. Cantidad de mentes brillantes que vuelcan su ingenio y capacidad en la justificación y construcción de un sistema opresor y explotador. Quizá porque la “naturaleza interna” del ser humano “es débil, delicada, sutil y fácilmente derrotada por los hábitos, presiones sociales y las actitudes erróneas respecto a sí misma” (Maslow, 2001: 26).

La Historia no se ha cansado de repetir que dentro de un sistema esclavo no hay escapatoria o pacto posible, no hay lugar más que para reformas, maquillajes y edulcorantes que suavicen las líneas duras y amargas y contenten a los perrillos que ladran hambrientos a los pies del amo. Sólo queda la huida, el éxodo, el viaje hacia una tierra en la que cimentar un nuevo futuro. No caben las rendiciones frente al sistema (Iglesias, 2010 y 2011a). El éxodo, un viaje en ocasiones más duro que las penalidades que había que sufrir en régimen de esclavitud, pero más pleno porque es un indicio de transformación social irrenunciable, trascendente, de búsqueda del bien común, profundamente solidario (Gibrán, 1989: 28). Viaje de autorrealización en sintonía con los análisis de la psicología humanista de Maslow (1968).

Entonces, cabe preguntarse, ¿quién genera la riqueza, el crecimiento económico?, ¿los empresarios, los trabajadores, los consumidores?, ¿dónde reside el valor de los bienes producidos? Su valor principal reside en su reparto entre quienes más lo necesitan. Desembocamos al fin en el germen de una teoría distributiva del valor con fundamentos transmaterialistas, según veíamos más arriba. Es decir, las cosas valen según estén en las manos de quienes más las necesitan, y no de quién más pueda pagar por ellas ni de quién más haya trabajado para producirlas. Una teoría del valor que trasciende tanto la teoría del valor-trabajo de Marx como la teoría convencional de la utilidad subjetiva del consumidor. Una teoría del valor que se posiciona antes de llegar a la producción (teoría marxista) y antes de llegar al consumo (teoría convencional). Una teoría previa a los merecimientos personales, en sintonía con las intuiciones económicas transpersonales de Gibrán (1989: 34): “Quien mereció beber el océano de la vida, merece llenar su copa en vuestro arroyuelo”.

Otros temas transversales

Al igual que en los tres temas anteriores (distribución, trabajo y comercio), también existen otros temas económicos en los que Gibrán detiene su fina y profunda observación. El hilo conductor de todos ellos es la concepción de la persona como un ser solidario, cuya actividad económica adquiere sentido en función del bien común y no en una búsqueda egoísta del máximo beneficio privado. En suma, Gibrán hace una llamada a elegir entre ser más como el fruto (que da) y menos como la raíz (que recibe), aunque respetando ambas decisiones.

En concreto, Almustafá hace referencia de un modo más o menos implícito a los siguientes cinco temas: concepto de necesidades, fundamento social de la propiedad, concepto de racionalidad, peligros de una vida burguesa y rechazo de la explotación laboral.

Por último destacar la conciencia de progreso que subyace en el capítulo sobre “los hijos”. Conciencia transpersonal elemental que ha sido violada en nuestra cultura capitalista occidental, donde por primera vez, al socaire de la actual crisis, van a vivir peor los hijos que sus progenitores: sin acceso a la vivienda, sin empleo –aunque sobrecualificados-, sin pensión pública asegurada –aunque coticen más años- y con menos derechos básicos.

Consideraciones finales

Para algunos podría ser aventurado hablar de teorías económicas y recomendaciones políticas a partir de la lectura de un texto poético. Sin embargo, este análisis representa no sólo una línea de investigación, sino incluso un área de conocimiento con enorme potencial de crecimiento, ya abierta por la psicología, siendo Maslow uno de sus precursores destacados. Particularmente en un mundo con un rostro cada vez más deshumanizado, donde cada año los informes del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) nos cuentan catástrofes a las que ya estamos inmunizados y donde la indignación no parece contener el avance homicida del capitalismo.

Parece más necesario que nunca beber de las fuentes humanizadoras de la poesía y de la literatura mística, que es donde brotan a borbotones los valores éticos transpersonales que calmarán la sed de sentido y de justicia de la humanidad. Es más, “la teoría económica clásica, al estar basada en una teoría inadecuada de la motivación humana, podría ser también susceptible de una revolución mediante la aceptación de la realidad biológica de las necesidades humanas superiores, incluyendo en ella el impulso hacia la auto-realización y el amor hacia los valores superiores” (Maslow, 2001: 271). En cambio, la economía convencional ha ido avanzando hacia un estatus cuasirreligioso, permitiéndole adoptar un “método performativo” (Onfray, 2006: 137) por el que crea la realidad simplemente con enunciarla, igual que la religión. Baste citar como ejemplo, en España, a Vicenç Navarro y Juan Torres López, quienes en sus libros y respectivas webs (www.vnavarro.es y www.juantorreslopez.com) deconstruyen los dogmas y creencias económicas neoliberales más difundidas.

En concreto, la obra “El profeta” desprende una sensibilidad ética con valiosas recomendaciones para guiar la convivencia y las relaciones interpersonales, incluidas las económicas (Tabla 4). No sólo es preciso descentrar los mercados como objeto de estudio de la economía, en línea con las aportaciones de la economía feminista -por ejemplo, Pérez (2002)-, sino que se sugiere una transformación de la concepción tradicional de la economía, dando por finiquitado el episodio de la economía de mercado, cuyos límites son los propios del nivel de conciencia mítica al que está sometido.

El enfoque económico gibraniense nos sirve para abordar transpersonalmente las clásicas preguntas de la economía: qué producir, cómo y para quién. O en otras palabras, nos permite plantear los valores éticos que trascienden la comprensión convencional sobre la distribución, la producción y el consumo. Tales valores se asientan sobre una realidad antropológica y psicológica contrastada: la conducta solidaria trasciende los moldes estrechos y competitivos de la economía de mercado (Cortina, 2011), como han mostrado, por ejemplo, los estudios de Amartya Sen, Nobel de Economía en 1998.

Y lo más relevante desde la óptica de la crítica económica es que la teoría gibraniense se asienta en valores transpersonales que nos permiten identificar la teoría neoclásica como un esquema de pensamiento no sólo sustentado en una conciencia religiosa-mítica, sino anti-social (sociópata) y anti-transpersonal, ya que cultiva y promueve anti-valores en el sentido que explican Franco (2010) –con respecto a la espiritualidad del *predator neoliberalensis*– e Iglesias (2010 y 2011a) –con respecto a lo que él denomina “rendiciones” frente al capitalismo³–.

Investigaciones futuras analizarán los aspectos económicos y ambientales que contiene “El jardín del profeta”, la segunda obra de la trilogía inacabada de Gibrán. Dicho análisis nos permitirá cuestionar la insuficiencia de ciertas teorías económicas como la del decrecimiento, en línea con los estudios de Iglesias (2010 y 2011a) que ponen de manifiesto cómo supuestos enfoques alternativos no renuncian explícitamente a los pilares básicos del capitalismo (propiedad privada, acumulación capitalista y lucha de clases) y tan sólo los suavizan (más información en www.rentabasica.net). Al igual que se ha hecho aquí con respecto al discurso de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC) y en el que se profundiza en el Anexo. Ambos, decrecimiento y RSC, dominados por una subconciencia de la ética transpersonal, mucho más peligrosa y tóxica que la apología ciega y fanático-religiosa del neoliberalismo.

Tabla 4
Síntesis de valores transpersonales de “El profeta”

CAPÍTULOS	VALORES IMPLÍCITOS	VALORES EXPLÍCITOS
Presentación y Capítulos 1 a 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respeto a la naturaleza - Conciencia de género - Cuidar necesidades afectivas - Conciencia de progreso 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respeto a diversidad y libertad - Conciencia de fraternidad - Conciencia bien público - Crítica estilo vida burgués
Capítulo 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teoría de la distribución 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoción de la solidaridad - Origen emocional necesidad
Capítulos 5 a 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teoría del trabajo - Respeto a la naturaleza - Dignidad humana - Miedos irracionales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defensa soberanía alimentaria - Finalidad solidaria del trabajo - Unidad emocional - Defensa de la libertad - Crítica estilo vida burgués
Capítulo 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teoría del mercado - Respeto a la naturaleza - Rechazo de las clases sociales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalidad solidaria comercio - Rechazo de la especulación
Capítulos 11 a 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respeto a diversidad y libertad - Renuncia estilo vida burgués - Vocación de servicio al pueblo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defensa dignidad y libertad - Educación emocional - Visión trascendente necesidad - Superación trabajo asalariado - Comprensión debilidad

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

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Notas

1. Simon (1955), y otros autores después de él, estudian el concepto de “racionalidad limitada” frente al concepto neoclásico de “racionalidad perfecta”, lo que supuso la sustitución del problema de la maximización por el de la satisfacción de necesidades.
2. Pagola (2011) nos señala que esta parábola suele llamarse “los obreros de la viña”, aunque, en realidad, el protagonista es el dueño de la viña, un hombre bueno, que quiere trabajo y pan para todos. Sale a la plaza a buscar viñadores a distintas horas del día y sorprendentemente a todos les paga un denario, que era precisamente lo que necesitaba una familia para vivir cada día en Galilea. El dueño de la viña no se fija en los méritos de cada uno, lo que le preocupa es que, esa noche, todos tengan para comer.
3. Iglesias (2010 y 2011a) considera que muchas de las propuestas que se presentan como alternativas al capitalismo son en realidad legitimadoras del mismo. Entre tales propuestas incluye el decrecimiento, el

consumo responsable, la RSC, banca ética, comercio justo, renta básica, tasa Tobin, etc. Todas ellas necesitan de una reestructuración para convertirse en auténticos instrumentos de superación del capitalismo. En particular señala cinco criterios básicos que ha de satisfacer cualquier propuesta que pretenda situarse como alternativa al capitalismo (Iglesias, 2011b: 23): propiedad comunal de los recursos productivos, sistema distributivo equitativo, gestión horizontal del poder, sistema de valores y afectos basados en el bien común, y autonomía entre la dimensión pública y privada de las personas.

Anexo

El antivalor de la Irresponsabilidad Sociópata del Capital (ISC)

Había una vez un capitalista orgulloso de su función social, así que ordenó a su séquito de profesores universitarios que le diseñaran un traje a medida. Cada año lucía su hermoso atuendo subido en una caravana y sosteniendo entre sus manos la memoria anual de RSC de su empresa, el símbolo de su magna bondad, el complemento indispensable de su nueva imagen ante el pueblo. Un día, mientras todo el mundo vitoreaba al capitalista, un niño gritó riéndose: “¡Si está desnudo!, ¡lleva al aire toda la irresponsabilidad sociópata del capital!”

El mito de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC)

A continuación se sugiere que la RSC ni es “responsable” ni “social” ni “corporativa”, antes bien, es sólo un vano intento de camuflar o disimular su verdadera vocación de ISC. Entendiendo la ISC como antivalor o contravalor, en el sentido de Maslow (2001: 243) y aplicado a este contexto económico, es decir, el menosprecio de la democracia económica, la progresividad fiscal, la sociedad sin clases y otros valores de justicia económica por miedo a perder su (falsa) identidad de libertad y su sentido autocomplaciente. Así el empresario se siente amenazado por el trabajador, el trabajador por el desempleado, el desempleado por el inmigrante, el evasor fiscal por el inspector de hacienda, el prestamista por el deudor, el productor por el consumidor y el enriquecido por el empobrecido. O dicho en otras palabras: “El mismo sistema de poder que fabrica la pobreza es el que declara la guerra sin cuartel a los desesperados que genera” (Galeano, 1998: 95).

En términos del análisis transpersonal, el discurso de la RSC es una falsa y errónea promesa de incorporar ciertos valores éticos a la actividad empresarial, intentando conciliar rentabilidad económica, social y medioambiental. Olvidando lo que muy bien advertía el profeta Almustafá (Gibrán, 1989: 86): “En verdad la bondad que se mira a sí misma en el espejo se convierte en piedra”.

El discurso de la RSC sólo comenzaría a ser creíble si al menos se dieran dos condiciones indispensables: carácter obligatorio por ley y auditoría externa imparcial. Ambos requisitos de improbable cumplimiento dada la conciencia mítica sobre la que se sustenta y la verdadera naturaleza que se esconde tras el ropaje terminológico de la RSC, esto es, la ISC. El mito de la RSC para contrarrestar el antivalor de la ISC.

Los mismos defensores de la RSC niegan tozudamente el callejón sin salida al que se enfrentan cuando defienden la voluntariedad de las empresas para aplicar iniciativas socialmente responsables y la transparencia sin más auditoría que la “penalización del mercado por malas prácticas”. Cómo hablar de buenas prácticas más allá de lo legalmente establecido si la primera responsabilidad de toda empresa que es cumplir la ley, pagando sus impuestos y respetando los derechos humanos en materia laboral, se incumple sistemáticamente, por activa y por pasiva, por la propia naturaleza del proceso de acumulación

capitalista. O dicho en términos transpersonales, por la propia condición mística del *predator neoliberalensis* (Franco, 2010).

Así, oiremos el falaz dilema moral al que se enfrenta el asesor fiscal de una empresa cuando afirma que no estaría haciendo bien su trabajo si no consiguiera que su empresa pagase menos impuestos. O aquel otro encargado de deslocalizar y externalizar parte de la empresa para reducir costes. Así, la mayoría de las veces la RSC es sólo una estrategia de marketing para lavar la imagen de la empresa (Observatorio RSC, 2009).

Los propios activistas que denuncian las malas prácticas de las empresas reconocen que la mayoría de ellas no están interesadas en adoptar auténticas prácticas de RSC, sino más bien en adoptarlas superficialmente para mejorar, o al menos no comprometer, la imagen de la empresa. Es decir, se trata sólo de una estrategia de marketing para conseguir el objetivo insolidario y sociópata de siempre, maximizar los beneficios. En cambio, las organizaciones y empresas sin ánimo de lucro, propias del Tercer Sector, se vinculan más a un concepto de responsabilidad definido como “Economía del Bien Común” (Felber, 2012), que supedita la rentabilidad económica a la social, aunque sin cuestionar los pilares del capitalismo (propiedad privada y lucha de clases). La Tabla 5 resume los diversos enfoques desde los que puede entenderse la responsabilidad social de las organizaciones.

Tabla 5
Resumen de enfoques sobre la “responsabilidad social”

Rasgos	ENFOQUES		
	Neoliberal	Conciliador	Transpersonal
Concepto de responsabilidad	RSC	Economía del Bien Común	Solidaridad real
Objetivo	Status quo	Reformista	Revolucionario
Aplicación	Voluntaria y sin auditoría	Obligatoria e inspección	Deber y derecho
Centro	Mercado: empresas	Mercado: consumidor	Excluidos
Protagonismo	Empresa, sector privado	Ciudadanía, tercer sector	Sociedad sin clases
Enfoque	Marketing estético y estratégico	Marketing filantrópico	Equidad y justicia
Modelo social	Capitalismo neoliberal	Capitalismo keynesiano	Socialismo
Modelo psico-social	Sociópata, insolidario	Caritativo, asistencial	Libertario y solidario

Fuente: Elaboración propia

El mito de la R de “Responsabilidad”

El discurso de la RSC es profundamente irresponsable. Irresponsable intelectualmente hablando, pero también ética, social y económicamente. Es una irresponsabilidad científica, por su falta a la verdad, cualquier estudio que analice la RSC sin referirse a las dos cuestiones controvertidas que indicábamos anteriormente: obligatoriedad y auditoría. Es una irresponsabilidad ética ya que elude el principio de jerarquía en el cumplimiento de deberes y compromisos. Es una irresponsabilidad social por el engaño y manipulación que supone vender a la ciudadanía gato por liebre, por disfrazar con piel de cordero al lobo. Es una irresponsabilidad económica por la cantidad de recursos que se invierten en la defensa de lo indefendible, el proceso de acumulación capitalista.

El mito de la S de “Social”

El discurso de la RSC es profundamente antisocial, insolidario y sociópata. Es antisocial porque defiende la estructura de poder existente, niega la existencia de la desigualdad social y el rol de las

empresas en este conflicto de clases. Más aún, la propia definición de la demanda desde la óptica empresarial es aquella que cumple dos requisitos radicalmente antisociales: quien tenga la capacidad legal de comprar y la capacidad adquisitiva para pagar. El resto no forma parte del mercado, contrariamente a la definición gibraniense (Gibrán, 1989: 48).

Es insolidario porque promueve la privatización de todos los servicios públicos y, en suma, de todo el sistema público de bienestar social, como analizan, por ejemplo, Navarro et al. (2011). Es sociópata no por ser indiferente a las necesidades de los más vulnerables de la sociedad, sino por su interés lucrativo en ellas. Para ello monopoliza los mercados de productos básicos: alimentación, salud, educación, vivienda y empleo. Y precisamente, la explotación del trabajo es la principal marca indeleble de su carácter sociópata, como muy bien ha estudiado la teoría marxista y como se deriva del análisis comparativo con la teoría económica gibraniense.

El mito de la C de “Corporativa”

El discurso de la RSC nada tiene que ver con las corporaciones, sean éstas empresariales o no. El objeto, no ya desnudo sino descarnado, de su investigación es la defensa de los intereses de los propietarios privados del capital. Se pretende ocultar esto hablando de implicar a todos los agentes en la empresa, obviando que si la propiedad de los recursos productivos fuera comunal/colectiva/pública no habría necesidad de hablar de RSC. En suma, se intenta edulcorar la explotación y alienación del trabajo. Si el discurso de la RSC fuera coherente recomendaría como línea principal de actuación a cualquier empresa su transformación hacia modelos empresariales cooperativos y de “gestión ilustrada” (Maslow 2005). Más aún, inclusive la reivindicación de una sociedad sin clases mediante la abolición del trabajo asalariado.

Por último, digamos, simplemente, que tan sumamente importante es para la economía la explicación marxiana de la explotación laboral como para la biología la explicación darwiniana de la selección natural. Y así como de anticientífico sería no ser darwiniano, lo es también no ser marxiano. Ambas negaciones provienen de una misma raíz de fundamentalismo religioso. Tanto el creacionismo como el capitalismo rehúyen de la evidencia empírica, como así lo muestran Dawkins y Navarro, respectivamente en la biología y en la economía. Tales obcecadas negaciones de la realidad implican el odio a la inteligencia y, como consecuencia lógica, el odio a las mujeres, como han argumentado ampliamente Onfray y Torres, uno en el terreno filosófico y el otro en el económico.

En resumen sobre la RSC

El discurso académico mayoritario actual de la RSC es un mito, una injusticia contra los excluidos del sistema y un delito económico flagrante porque la proliferación de este argumentario revela las enormes carencias del modelo empresarial capitalista que se sustenta en el incumplimiento sistemático de la ley fiscal, la violación de los derechos humanos y la destrucción del medioambiente. Y desde una óptica económica transhistórica es un paso atrás, una involución en la comprensión de las relaciones económicas, en el sentido que describe Franco (2010) cuando habla de la experiencia mística del *predator neoliberalensis* (Tabla 6), es decir, el proceso de interiorización colectiva de la moral insolidaria en la sociedad capitalista, en sintonía con las predicciones de Marx (1867).

Tabla 6
El viaje místico de la sociedad predator neoliberalensis.
Escalas hacia la involución social

NIVELES	CARACTERÍSTICAS BÁSICAS
0. Instintivo	Adhesión a incipientes derechos de propiedad privada
1. Primario	Vinculación a la violencia y el patriarcado
2. Secundario	Generación de instituciones y sanciones contra la disidencia
3. Terciario	Racionalización, acumulación y extensión del poder
4. Avanzado	Absolutización y sacralización de la propiedad privada
5. Vanguardia	Exacerbación del individualismo y de la ética cínica
6. Éxtasis	Fanatismo y apología ciega del mercado, neoliberalismo

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Sin embargo, Maslow (1998) parece ignorar o no haber contrastado suficientemente este proceso involucionista, ya que su propuesta humanista para conseguir la plenitud personal en el puesto de trabajo (“gestión eupsíquica”, según la terminología del célebre autor, original de los 60, pronto olvidada y recuperada a finales de los 90) presupone, sin justificación económica o moral alguna, un escenario capitalista irreal para aplicar su modelo psicológico a la gestión empresarial. En particular, Maslow (2001: 270) señala que “dando por sentada la existencia de una sociedad suficientemente próspera y de personas relativamente normales y sanas, cuyas necesidades básicas –satisfacción por lo que respecta a alimentación, vivienda, vestidos, etc.- pueden darse por supuestas”, podemos entonces preguntarnos: “¿cómo pueden tales personas desear, en interés propio, fomentar los objetivos y valores de una organización?, ¿cómo puede tratárseles con más eficiencia?, ¿en qué condiciones trabajarán mejor?, ¿qué recompensas monetarias y no monetarias serán más efectivas?, ¿cuándo sentirán que se trata de su *propia* organización?”.

La creencia ciega y normalizada en la existencia del Dios Mercado parece obnubilar incluso los entendimientos más preclaros, relegando al cajón de los recuerdos el análisis económico de Marx (1867). Sin embargo, sin necesidad de razonamientos económicos tan sofisticados, basta con una mirada histórica para descubrir que en los orígenes de la injusticia se encuentra el hoy tan alabado libre mercado (Galeano, 1998: 35-38) y cuyos peligros el propio Gibrán tan certeramente señaló.

Juan Agustín Franco Martínez es doctor en economía por la Universidad de Córdoba. Ha trabajado durante tres años en la Universidad de Zaragoza. Desde el curso 2009/2010 trabaja en la Escuela de Ingenierías Agrarias de la Universidad de Extremadura en Badajoz y forma parte del Grupo de Innovación Didáctica “Ética del Profesorado Universitario”. Ha realizado estancias en Portugal y México. Dirige un curso de perfeccionamiento de Economía Crítica y colabora en la promoción científica y social de la Renta Básica.

Departamento de Economía. Escuela de Ingenierías Agrarias. Universidad de Extremadura. Carretera de Cáceres, s/n. 06007 Badajoz. Tlf.: + 34 924 28 93 00. Fax: + 34 924 28 62 01.

E-mail: franco@unex.es

Individualist-Collectivist Orientations and Achievement Value in College Students

Orientación de trabajo y valor del éxito en estudiantes universitarios

Anjali Ghosh

Psychology Research Unit
Indian Statistical Institute
Kolkata, India

Abstract

The present investigation examined individualist-collectivist orientations and achievement value in two groups of college students studying under different settings in the city of Kolkata (Calcutta), India. One group of students was from general stream while the other group was studying a specially designed value orientation course emphasizing Indian culture and values. Findings indicate significant differences between the two groups with respect to vertical individualism, and horizontal and vertical aspects of collectivism. However coexistence of both individualism and collectivism were observed among the students, particularly in general stream students. The students differed significantly with respect to their upward striving for achievement in two different settings. A significant positive relationship between achievement value and individualism for general stream students and a significant negative relationship with collectivism for both groups was observed. The study demonstrates the impact of value orientation educational courses on one's individualist-collectivist orientation and achievement value.

Keywords: value, orientation, individualism, collectivism, achievement value

Resumen

Esta investigación analiza la orientación individualista y colectivista, así como el valor del éxito, en dos grupos de estudiantes universitarios bajo dos diferentes marcos educativos en la ciudad de Calcuta, India. Un grupo de estudiantes pertenecía a un marco educativo estándar, mientras que el otro pertenecía a un marco educativo especial donde se enfatizaban los valores y cultura indios. Los resultados muestran una diferencia significativa entre los dos grupos respecto a los aspectos de individualismo vertical y horizontal, así como a los aspectos de colectivismo vertical. No obstante, también se observó una coexistencia de los valores individualistas y colectivistas en los estudiantes, sobre todo en los estudiantes correspondientes al marco educativo estándar. Los estudiantes se diferenciaron significativamente respecto a su esfuerzo por el éxito en los dos marcos educativos, mostrando los pertenecientes al marco estándar una relación significativamente positiva hacia el valor del éxito con respecto al individualismo mayor que los estudiantes del grupo especial, y una relación significativamente negativa hacia el colectivismo en ambos grupos de estudiantes. El estudio demuestra la influencia que una educación centrada en los valores tiene en el estudiante respecto a su orientación individualista o colectivista, así como en el valor del éxito.

Palabras clave: valor, orientación, individualismo, colectivismo, valor del éxito

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Introduction

Culture shapes one's personality. Culture is the mindset or mental framework resulting from shared values, beliefs, symbols and social ideals (Hofstede, 1980). Culture independently influences one's thought, belief system and action either directly through the socialization of the individual within a culture or indirectly as the individual learns the language of a culture.

Value is the hard core of culture; it is the motivating force of human beings. Values are defined as desirable, abstract goals that apply across situations (Schwartz, 1992). Values serve as guiding principles in people's lives. They function as the criteria that people use to select and justify the actions and to evaluate other people and events. In Indian culture different patterns are observed in different contexts. In Indian Society, Hinduism is meant not only in the usual sense of the word as religion, but as a tradition or duty. "Hinduism is an inheritance of thought and aspiration living and moving with the movement of life, an inheritance to which every race in India has made its contribution. Its culture has a unity though, on examination, it dissolves into a variety of shades and colours" (Radhakrishnan, 1947). This Hindu culture, intensely practical, taking in their totality the sum of human aspirations and needs has classified values as *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. This lower tier of values i.e. *artha* (wealth), *kama* (sensuous pleasure) and *dharma* (morality or duty) always go together but *dharma* governs *artha* and *kama*, and it is given prominence. The upper tier of value in Hindu culture is *moksha or mukti*, which is the final end of human aspiration. The lower tier of values may be regarded as instrumental values, although they do not necessarily lead to *moksha or mukti*.

Values motivate and regulate human action. Energy (*prakriti or sakti*) is the causal power which is manifested in all existence and in all forces of human action. It has three qualitative aspects or *gunas*, namely, *sattva* which is reflected in the sharpness of intellect, *rajas* is expressed in the intensity of desire, the restlessness for achievement, and *tamas* is expressed in indifference to feeling, to pleasure or to pain. It is also expressed in depression, lethargy and inertia (Yuktananda, 1989). These *gunas* are inseparable in any manifestation of energy. However, at any moment one of the qualities may be dominant while the other two remain less forceful or dormant.

The desire to accomplish interesting and challenging tasks and be recognized for this, is a desirable value found in individuals. This concept for the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961) is found mostly in individualist societies. Yu & Yang (1994) pointed out that the concept of achievement motivation as defined by McClelland strongly implies an orientation toward the individual or the self. They mentioned about social oriented achievement motivation which states that the society prescribes the content and form of achievement goals for the individuals. Singhal and Misra (1989) argue that Western and Non Western groups are not necessarily more or less motivated as a group, rather they are motivated to achieve different goals through different means. Niles (1998) observed that Australians reflect an individualist orientation in preferred achievement goals, whereas Sri Lankans, although predominantly more family and group oriented, still have important individual goals.

In the context of individualism collectivism also, the coexistence of both are observed in the individual's behavior (Ghosh, 2004; Mishra, 1994; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994) in Indian culture. The Indian form of collectivism contains strands of individualism as observed by Tripathi (1988), who remarks that the coexistence of mutually contradictory things either in an individual's mind or in reality does not show or give surprise to an Indian.

An individualist culture is described as one in which the goals and needs of the individual take precedence over in-groups such as extended family, community, work organizations etc., whereas individuals of collectivist cultures view personal goals and needs as subordinate to the goals and needs of these in-groups (Triandis, 1990; 1994). The incompatibility in value systems that distinguishes these two types of cultures, are found not only in the social conducts but also in different patterns of self understanding that are observed in individuals living within these cultures. Singelis et al (1995) and Triandis & Gelfand (1998) made further distinctions between individualism and collectivism. They argued that both individualism and collectivism may be either horizontal that is emphasizing equality or it may be vertical that is emphasizing hierarchy. Brief descriptions of the four patterns are given below:

(i) Horizontal individualism (HI) is a cultural pattern where an individual wants to be unique and distinct from groups and self-reliant but is more or less equal in status with others.

(ii) Vertical individualism (VI) is a cultural pattern in which an individual wants to become distinguished or in having high status.

(iii) Horizontal collectivism (HC) is a cultural pattern where an individual perceives the self as an aspect of an in-group and emphasizes common goals with others. In this pattern the self is interdependent and same as the self of others.

(iv) Vertical collectivism (VC) is a cultural pattern where an individual views the self as an aspect of an in-group, but the members of the in-group are different from each other, some having more status than others.

In the light of this coexistence of opposing things in Indian culture, the present study aims to find out the individualist-collectivist orientations of college students when they are placed to study under different settings. It also wants to find out the relationship of achievement value of college students in relation to their individualist-collectivist orientation. The study is designed to be done across groups of college students studying in two different settings in the city of Kolkata (Calcutta). One group of students was studying in general stream in two local colleges of Kolkata. The other group was studying a specially designed value-orientation course that is also in the city of Kolkata. In this course the emphasis is given on self-development based on Indian ethics, culture and heritage so that the values filtered through there are transferred into behavioral norms, and can be applied to improve quality of life, preferably collectively. Here in this study we are using the distinction of horizontal and vertical aspects of individualism and collectivism in relation to achievement value.

Method

Participants

A total of 90 undergraduate participants took part in this study, 40 students were from general stream, studying in two different colleges of Kolkata and there were 34 students who were studying a specially designed value orientation course emphasizing Indian culture and heritage, and this was also located in Kolkata. The age range of the subjects were from 20-24 years. The subjects were from middle socio-economic class and from an urban metropolitan city exposed to modern facilities of life.

Measures

The following measures were used in this study:

Individualism-Collectivism Scale: Individualism-collectivism scale developed by Triandis and Gelfand (1998), based on the original scale of Singelis et al (1995), was used in this study. The scale has a total of 16 items having four items in each of the following four areas: (i) Horizontal individualism (HI), (ii) Vertical individualism (VI), (iii) Horizontal collectivism (HC), and (iv) Vertical Collectivism (VC). The respondents were asked to indicate their responses on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Achievement Value Scale: This forced choice sentence completion scale for measuring Achievement value was developed by Mukherjee (1965). This scale is used to assess an individual's verbalized desire for upward striving and can be regarded as an inner personality factor capable of influencing cognitive behaviors in general and one's perception of self in particular. This is somewhat similar to the need for achievement as conceptualized by McClelland (1961). The high score in this scale indicates an individual's desire for objective accomplishment of the task with a standard of excellence. These two scales were administered on both the groups of students in group situation.

Results

The means, standard deviations and t-tests for horizontal and vertical aspects of individualism and collectivism were calculated for the two groups of students and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Mean, SD and t-value for Horizontal and Vertical aspects of Individualism and Collectivism in two groups of students

Dimension	General stream N = 40		Value oriented N = 34		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
HI	18.92	4.88	19.20	4.77	0.25
VI	19.02	5.58	16.70	3.87	2.11*
HC	18.00	3.74	23.06	3.03	6.43**
VC	18.38	4.86	22.29	4.37	3.65**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

HI = Horizontal Individualism VI = Vertical Individualism

HC = Horizontal Collectivism VC = Vertical Collectivism

Table 1 reveals significant differences between the two groups with respect to vertical individualism, and horizontal and vertical aspects of collectivism, which show that the students studying in general stream are more individualist, whereas students studying in value orientation course are more collectivist. It is observed that the highest mean score for general stream students was in the area of vertical individualism (VI), and the lowest for horizontal collectivism (HC). Though participants scored the highest in vertical individualism, their scores in the other three areas were more or less similar. This indicates that both individualist and collectivist orientations coexist among these students. They want to be self-reliant, but at the same time they perceive themselves as an aspect of the in-group, while the members of the in-group are different from each other. On the other hand, value-oriented students in the present study, though living in an urban metropolitan atmosphere, were more collectivist in their orientations than individualists. They scored the highest in horizontal collectivism and the lowest in vertical individualism. That is, they perceive themselves as being similar to other people and emphasize common goals with others, interdependence and sociability.

The means and standard deviations for the achievement value scores for the two groups of students were obtained and a t-test was calculated to find out if there is any significant difference between the two groups with respect to achievement value. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Mean, SD and t-value of Achievement value scale for two groups of students

	General Stream Students (N = 40)	Value-oriented group students (N = 34)
Mean	23.90	16.32
SD	9.58	5.30
t-value	4.28**	

Note: ** $p < .01$

The values reported in Table 2 depict that the students differ significantly with respect to their upward striving for achievement in two different settings. General stream students are more achievement oriented than value-oriented groups of students. We may explain this on the basis of Indian philosophy. That is the students who are more achievement oriented, *raja guna* are dominant among themselves. On the other hand, this *guna* was not as prevalent in the value orientated group of students. It may be that due to the impact of value orientation courses, students use the *sattva* aspect of *guna* dynamics for a value motivated action.

The relationship between individualist-collectivist orientation and achievement value was analysed for these two groups of students and the correlation values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Correlation of coefficients between Achievement value and different aspects of Individualism-Collectivism in two different groups

Dimensions ^a	General Students (N = 40)	Value-oriented Students (N = 34)
HI	.82**	.12
VI	.90**	.31
HC		-.53**
VC		-.51**

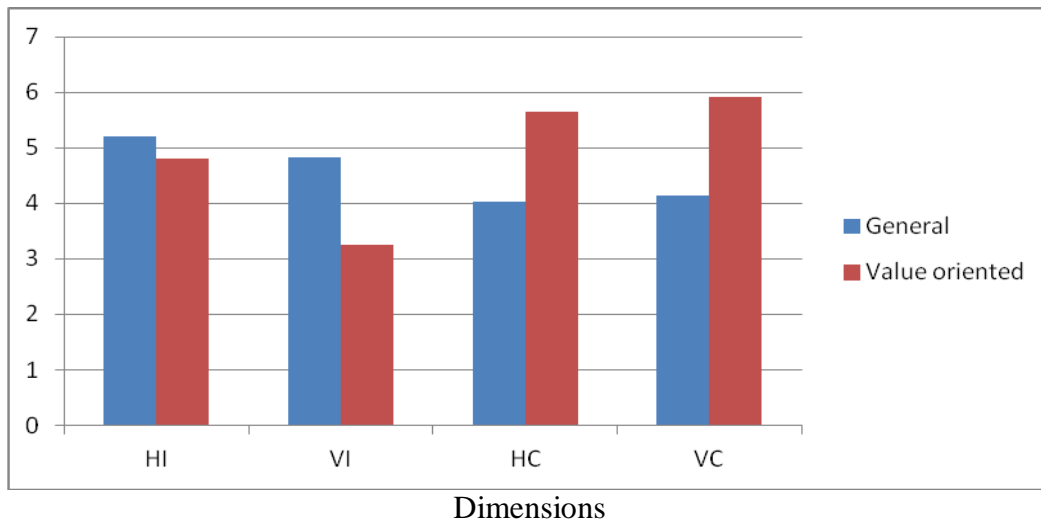
Note: ** $p < .01$

HI = Horizontal Individualism VI = Vertical Individualism
 HC = Horizontal Collectivism VC = Vertical Collectivism

The results reported in Table 3 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between achievement value and horizontal and vertical aspects of individualism for general groups of students. This shows individualism leads one to accomplish challenging tasks and to achieve higher goals that are related to one's further self-development or vice versa. On the contrary, for value-oriented group of students a significant negative relationship of horizontal and vertical aspects of collectivism was observed with achievement value. This indicates that in the value oriented group, the more the collectivist orientation, the less the achievement value for upward striving or vice versa. In case of general stream students also, a significant negative relationship was observed for horizontal and vertical aspects of collectivism with achievement value. This shows that in general stream students the existence of both trends are present.

Analysis of some of the items from four different aspects of individualism- collectivism shows that there is variation in the responses of the two different groups. This is evident from the Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Mean Response Pattern of four different items of HI, VI, HC, & VC



In one item of vertical individualism, for example, **“Winning is everything”**, the mean response of the general stream students was much higher than the value oriented group of students. For one HI item for example, **“I often do my own thing”** the difference between the two groups was not so much, which the content of the item itself explains. The value oriented group scored higher in HC item for example, **“If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud”**, and also in one VC item for example, **“It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want”**. These response patterns indicate that collectivism is much more prevalent in value oriented groups of students while individualism is more prevalent in general groups of students.

Discussion

Diverse individualist and collectivist orientations and achievement value are observed in the students studied in the present investigation. There is coexistence of both individualist and collectivist orientations among general stream students, but their dominant orientation is towards vertical individualism. This indicates that they try to acquire status and want to become distinguished from others but at the same time believe in family integrity and see themselves as an aspect of the in-group. The findings corroborate with the findings of Sinha & Tripathi (1994) and Ghosh (2004) who observed that although individualist and collectivist elements often conflict with each other, Indians try to incorporate both orientations in their preferred modes of behavior. Sinha & Verma (1994) have also observed in their study that master’s level students express more idiocentric than allocentric orientations, due to western influence, immediate life concerns and exposure to mass media. In Hindu philosophy and ethics also, similar juxtaposition of contradictory elements are to be found where *dharma* (morality or duty) and *moksha* (salvation) coexist with the pursuit of *artha* (wealth) and *kama* (sensuous pleasure). In general, the achievement orientation for upward striving is also high for these students. This could be explained as an impact of the urban metropolitan atmosphere where students are continuously exposed to Western modern influences and mass media.

On the contrary students who were studying a value orientation course, were found to be predominantly horizontal collectivist. That is they emphasize equality, interdependence and share common goals with others. This may be due to the impact of value orientation courses, whereby emphasis on self-development is based on Indian ethics, values and heritage. Apart from this, it may be that these

students have inherited certain collectivist values from their childhood due to the process of socialization. Furthermore, they were not so achievement oriented for upward striving. It may be that *sattva* aspect of *guna* is predominant among this group students. This may be one of the reasons for opting for this value orientation course even living in an urban atmosphere and exposed to Western education and modern amenities of life.

In summing up, it can be said that achievement value of students vary with respect to their individualistic-collectivist orientations. Values as defined in Hindu culture and their manifestations are expressed by students in different degrees in any action under different settings due to socialization practices and the impact of the course curriculum.

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Anjali Ghosh, PhD is currently Professor at the Psychology Research Unit of Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, India. She has received her Ph.D. degree in Psychology from the University of Calcutta, India and has taught at the University of Patna. She has published more than 60 research papers in various National and International journals and books. Her research interests include cognitive and moral development of children, identity development, self-efficacy, emotion and values.

Correspondence to this article should be addressed to: Anjali Ghosh, Professor & Head, Psychology Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, 203, B. T. Road, Kolkata 700108.India.

E-mail: gh.anjali@gmail.com

La evolución de la conciencia desde un análisis político, social y filosófico transpersonal

Consciousness evolution from a social,
political and philosophical transpersonal worldview

Amador Martos García

Asociación de Filosofía Práctica de Cataluña
Tarragona, España

Resumen

La conciencia histórica individual surgida del *primer renacimiento humanístico* de los siglos XV y XVI, ha devenido en este siglo XXI en un depredador *neoliberalismo*. Esta última versión del capitalismo, siguiendo las tesis de Marx, está socavando su propio final pues está acabando con el valor del trabajo humano y con los recursos naturales generando, consecuentemente, una profunda crisis humanitaria y ecológica. La filosofía tradicional¹ mediante Kant, produjo la diferenciación del “yo”, el “nosotros” y la naturaleza (“ello”) a través de sus *Tres Críticas*. La imperiosa integración que los postmodernos llevan buscando sin éxito, puede ser posible mediante la trascendencia de la *conciencia personal* (ego) hacia una *conciencia transpersonal* (trascendencia del ego). Esta emergencia holística y epistemológica propugnada por la *filosofía transpersonal* y la *psicología transpersonal*, al aunar la racionalidad con la espiritualidad, invoca hacia un *segundo renacimiento humanístico*, ahora como *conciencia colectiva*, socialmente reflejado en el *altermundismo*².

Palabras claves: psicología, filosofía, transpersonal, conciencia, felicidad

Abstract

Individual historical consciousness was born in early renaissance humanist of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It has become in this century in a predatory neoliberalism. This latest version of capitalism has followed Marx's thesis and it is undermining its own end because it is destroying the value of human labor and natural resources. Therefore, it is generating a deep humanitarian and ecological crisis. Traditional philosophy based on Kant, differentiate "me", "us" and nature ("it") through his three critiques. Integrational imperative that postmodernists have been looking without success could be possible through transcendence of personal conscience (ego). So that, we can move to a transpersonal consciousness (transcendence of the ego). This epistemological emergence has been defended by holistic and transpersonal philosophy and transpersonal psychology combining rationality with spirituality and by calling to a second renaissance humanist, now as a collective consciousness, reflected in the alterglobalism socially.

Key words: psychology, philosophy, transpersonal, consciousness, happiness

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El mapa sociológico

Vivimos en una época convulsa. El advenimiento del conocimiento tecnológico y la emergencia de la noosfera (Toffler, 1993) en una sociedad de la información, ha devenido también, como dice Otte (2010), en un virus de la desinformación propugnada por los intereses de poderosos lobby financieros y políticos. Las mentiras, mil veces repetidas, se han convertido en verdades para el común de los ciudadanos. Mediante este avasallamiento desde las esferas ideológica, económica, financiera y política al servicio de oscuros intereses, la percepción psicológica del ciudadano ha sufrido un reduccionismo, con lo cual, su pensamiento crítico ha sido amputado. Se ha construido así un conductismo al servicio del capitalismo o, dicho de otro modo, una moderna esclavitud al servicio del economicismo neoliberal erigido como pensamiento único. Para salir de esta esclavitud capitalista es imperativo un cambio de paradigma en nuestra civilización. Todo cambio de paradigma está precedido de una revolución en la cosmología, por una nueva percepción del universo o de la vida. La revolución copernicana generó una enorme crisis en las mentes y la Iglesia pero, lenta y progresivamente, se fue imponiendo la nueva cosmología, perdurando hoy en día en nuestras escuelas y en nuestra percepción de la realidad. Sin embargo, la paradoja de nuestro tiempo es que el ser humano sigue creyéndose el centro del universo y que el mundo está a su servicio para el disfrute material, cuando la realidad nos evidencia día a día que los recursos son cada vez más limitados: esta emergente visión y revolución todavía no ha penetrado suficientemente en las mentes de la mayor parte de la humanidad, mucho menos en las de los empresarios y los gobernantes, pero está presente en el pensamiento ecológico, sistémico, holístico y en muchos intelectuales que, como Carbonell (2007), abogan por *El nacimiento de una nueva conciencia*. Se está gestando el paradigma de lo transpersonal: la emergencia de la conciencia colectiva de que otro mundo no solo es posible sino necesario, a saber, el *altermundismo* como alternativa al depredador *neoliberalismo*. Veamos cómo, históricamente, se ha llegado a dicha situación;

Tras el *Renacimiento* surgió la *Edad de la razón* o *Filosofía moderna*, uno de cuyos máximos exponente fue Kant. Con sus tres críticas *La crítica de la razón pura* (Kant, 2005), *La crítica de la razón práctica* (Kant, 2008) y *La crítica del juicio* (Kant, 2006), se produce una diferenciación de tres esferas: la ciencia, la moralidad y el arte. Con esta diferenciación, ya no había vuelta atrás. En el sincretismo mítico, la ciencia, la moralidad y el arte, estaban todavía globalmente fusionados. Por ejemplo: una “verdad” científica era verdadera solamente si encajaba en el dogma religioso. Con Kant, cada una de estas tres esferas se diferencia y se libera para desarrollar su propio potencial (Wilber, 2005a):

- La esfera de la ciencia empírica trata con aquellos aspectos de la realidad que pueden ser investigados de forma relativamente “objetiva” y descritos en un lenguaje, es decir, verdades proposicionales y descriptivas.
- La esfera práctica o razón moral, se refiere a cómo tú y yo podemos interactuar pragmáticamente e interrelacionarnos en términos que tenemos algo en común, es decir, un entendimiento mutuo.
- La esfera del arte o juicio estético se refiere a cómo me expreso y qué es lo que expreso de mí, es decir, la profundidad del yo individual: sinceridad y expresividad.

La *Edad Moderna* supuso un triunfo de la razón frente al oscurantismo de la *Edad Media*, y propició la lenta gestación del capitalismo y el Estado. Históricamente, se suele situar el fin de la *Edad Moderna* con la Revolución francesa de 1789. A partir de esta revolución se inicia la *Edad contemporánea* hasta la actualidad. Son muchos los acontecimientos históricos que han contribuido a la construcción de nuestro mundo tal como lo conocemos: la revolución industrial, la revolución burguesa, la revolución liberal, el imperialismo capitalista, la abolición de la esclavitud, la emancipación de la mujer, la revolución científica y la actual globalización. Pero una característica principal de la *Edad contemporánea* ha sido un crecimiento económico más allá de los límites de la propia naturaleza, pues hay un crecimiento desmesurado que consume los recursos disponibles. El nivel de vida se ha elevado

para una gran mayoría de seres humanos, pero agudizando también las desigualdades sociales entre las personas, los países y los continentes. La consecuencia de ese desigual crecimiento económico ha acarreado graves problemas medioambientales en la actualidad. Pero las consecuencias más graves son de carácter ontológico para la humanidad: la vorágine ascendente de la riqueza (Jay, 2004) y de la libertad colectiva ha sido posible gracias a las transformaciones políticas que ampliaron las libertades de los individuos. La paradoja que se está dando en nuestra época contemporánea es que el binomio riqueza-libertad está en conflicto (Sen, 2000a), pues los pecados del capitalismo han permitido la creación de unos poderes fácticos económicos en manos de unos pocos individuos, en detrimento de la pobreza y la libertad de la gran mayoría de la población mundial. Es por ello que voces autorizadas como Amartya Sen, José Saramago, John Kenneth Galbraith y Joseph Stiglitz se han rebelado contra la excesiva riqueza creada en base al engaño y la falsedad endémica a través de un entramado de corporaciones financieras y económicas, provocando con ello una creciente divergencia con la pobreza mundial (Galbraith, 2004).

En la segunda mitad del siglo XX, aparecen diversas corrientes de pensamiento *posmodernistas* coincidiendo en que, el proyecto modernista, fracasó en su intento de renovación de las formas tradicionales del arte y de la cultura, el pensamiento y la vida social. La *posmodernidad* no ha logrado la integración del “ello”, el “yo” y el “nosotros” diferenciados por Kant (Wilber, 2005a). Sigue siendo una asignatura pendiente para la humanidad. El principal problema para la *postmodernidad* tiene su origen precisamente en la carencia esencial de que adolece: un sistema que describa la totalidad, es decir, una coherencia explicativa para la integración del “ello”, el “yo” y el “nosotros”. La *postmodernidad*, entendida como superación de la *Edad Moderna*, también ha fracasado en su intento de lograr la emancipación de la humanidad. Desde luego, como actitud filosófica, no ha logrado dicho objetivo al no haber logrado la integración del “ello”, el “yo” y el “nosotros” diferenciados por Kant.

La acepción más frecuente de *postmodernidad* se popularizó a partir de la publicación de *La condición postmoderna* de Jean-François Lyotard en 1979. Consideró que ya estaba pasada la época de los grandes relatos o “metarrelatos” que intentaban dar un sentido a la marcha de la historia: el cristiano, el iluminista, el marxista y el capitalista. Estos relatos son incapaces de conducir a la liberación. La sociedad actual postmoderna estaría definida por el realismo del dinero, que se acomoda a todas las tendencias y necesidades, siempre y cuando tengan poder de compra. El criterio actual de operatividad sería el tecnológico y no el juicio sobre lo verdadero y lo justo. El término *posmodernidad* ha dado paso a otros como “modernidad tardía”, “modernidad líquida”, “sociedad del riesgo”, “globalización”, “capitalismo tardío o cognitivo”, como categorías más eficientes de análisis. La *postmodernidad* es, en definitiva, una *sociedad líquida* (Bauman, 2003). En una entrevista en el diario italiano *Avvenire* sobre la primera encíclica de Benedicto XVI, *Dios es amor*, Bauman pone de relieve las tesis de su obra *La globalización. Consecuencias humanas*. Estas tesis son que vivimos al interior de una sociedad “líquida”, sin compromiso duradero entre sus miembros y, por tanto, un modelo de amor “confluyente”, que dura hasta que se acaba el interés de una de las dos partes. A la pregunta “¿Por qué los hombres de hoy parecen incapaces de amar para siempre?”, Bauman responde: “Porque vivimos en una sociedad que se ha modelado en torno al usar y tirar, al deseo de consumir, a la ausencia de responsabilidades. El consumo como medida de nuestras acciones no favorece la lealtad y la dedicación hacia el otro. Al contrario, apoya una visión de la vida en la que se pasa de un deseo a otro, en la que se abandona lo viejo por la novedad. La cláusula “si no queda satisfecho le devolvemos su dinero”, se ha convertido en el paradigma de toda relación. Esto acaba, también, con el amor”. Entonces el otro deja de ser un fin en sí mismo, como quería Kant, y se convierte en un medio para sí mismo. El postmodernismo es una claudicación de la cultura ante la presión del capitalismo organizado (Jameson, 2001). Ambos pensadores no hacen más que evidenciar la fragmentación del “yo”, sucumbido a un consumismo desmesurado y preso del capitalismo. Con ello, el “yo” pierde toda referencia del “nosotros”: ya no hay conciencia de clase y los idealismos quedan difuminados, dejando vía libre a los “yoes” plutocráticos del neoliberalismo (Sáez del Castillo, 2009). El capitalismo, antaño se apoderó de las fuerzas productivas. En la *postmodernidad*, el capitalismo se siente vencedor al apoderarse también de los mecanismos de poder

(políticos, económicos y mediáticos) que esclavizan al “nosotros” mediante la fragmentación en “yoes”. Ello no hace más que evidenciar la tesis marxista de que persiste una clase opresora y una clase oprimida.

Tras la histórica caída del muro de Berlín en 1989, se cristaliza un nuevo paradigma global cuyo máximo exponente social, político y económico es la *Globalización*. La *postmodernidad* valora y promueve el pluralismo y la diversidad. Asegura buscar los intereses de “los otros”. El mundo postmoderno puede, entonces, diferenciar y dividir dos grandes realidades: la realidad histórico-social (nosotros) y la realidad socio-psicológica (yo).

1.1- La realidad histórico-social: La deconstrucción del “nosotros” en “yoes”

La postmodernidad es la época del desencanto. Las utopías y la idea de progreso de la colectividad pierden interés. Ahora lo verdaderamente importante es el progreso individual. Las ciencias modernas se convierten en las abanderadas del conocimiento verdadero con validez universal. Ello da lugar a un cambio en la economía capitalista, pasando de una economía de producción hacia una economía del consumo. Paradójicamente, la naturaleza adquiere más relevancia, produciéndose una extraña mescolanza entre la defensa del medio ambiente y el compulsivo consumismo. Una consecuencia inmediata es que surge una industria del consumo masivo mediante potentes corporaciones con inmenso poder (Martos, 2012). Ese poder se manifiesta en un alto grado de convicción, pues lo importante ya no es el contenido del mensaje sino la forma en que se transmite, con tal de lograr los objetivos corporativos (Serrano, 2010). Así, se produce una ingente emisión de información a través de todos los medios de comunicación, convirtiéndose estos en transmisores de “verdad”. Los medios de comunicación se apoderan de la realidad, pues lo que no aparece en un medio, simplemente no existe. Es así como la sociedad del conocimiento se va transformando paulatinamente en la sociedad del ocio. Se va perdiendo poco a poco el pensamiento crítico, quedando la sociedad a merced de la casta política y económica (Chomsky y Ramonet, 2002). Se produce una brecha entre la casta política, subordinada a los intereses de las potentes corporaciones empresariales así como a las políticas neoliberales, respecto de los ciudadanos. El apoderamiento por la clase política y financiera del pensamiento crítico de los ciudadanos traería la inevitable consecuencia de la potenciación hacia *La sociedad de la ignorancia* (Mayos et al., 2011), muy conveniente a los citados poderes. Mientras occidente se daba un baño de consumismo, la otra mitad del mundo producía los bienes de consumo en regímenes de esclavitud, atentando contra los más elementales derechos humanos mediante la explotación y el control de sus materias primas, artificialmente obtenidas a través de guerras con fines económicos. Según Jalife-Rahme (2008), desde una perspectiva geoestratégica, la desastrosa intervención militar de Estados Unidos en Irak fue inicialmente planificada como vía de escape a una casi inevitable crisis financiera. Así, la dramática consecuencia de la globalización, ha sido el unipolar poder plutocrático de los Estados Unidos (“yo” imperialista) en detrimento del resto de la humanidad (“nosotros”). El neoliberalismo es un neologismo que hace referencia a un imperialismo económico en manos de una minoría de personas con poderes plutocráticos. Es decir, el “yo” se ha apoderado del “nosotros”.

Impedir a las mayorías oprimidas el acceso al conocimiento de los procesos sociales es el elemento determinante del mantenimiento de la estructura de dominación. El control de la información implica, no sólo impedir el acceso a datos objetivos, sino la producción selectiva de mensajes, modelos, y en definitiva, de ideología, tendente a conformar visiones del mundo y del individuo que favorezcan la reproducción del sistema de dominación. El control casi absoluto de los medios de comunicación por parte de la burguesía –como al que ahora asistimos– es clave en este proceso. Ocultar la información básica acerca del funcionamiento del sistema es necesario pero no suficiente para bloquear el complejo proceso de toma de conciencia. La conformación de la identidad no se realiza en un laboratorio, sino en el marco de la lucha de clases. Es un proceso genuinamente dialéctico de retroalimentación, en la medida en la que el ser consciente tiene capacidad para transformar su realidad, incluidas las fuentes de información, y él mismo es modificado en su desarrollo. La acumulación de datos de la realidad, entre los que ocupan un lugar central los provenientes del trabajo como fuente central de todas las objetividades humanas,

opera también sobre concepciones del mundo previas siempre incompletas, siempre en construcción y en contradicción, a las que nutre y da forma. La conciencia individual y colectiva es un proceso histórico, no solamente porque tiene lugar en un tiempo y un espacio concretos, sino porque se inserta y es el resultado de la continuidad de la lucha de las generaciones precedentes y el origen de las que vendrán. El proyecto histórico emancipador es la metabolización creadora de la memoria, de la experiencia reunida, del tesoro acumulado de ejemplos de lucha, de aciertos y errores, en definitiva, del sentimiento de pertenencia y de la responsabilidad individual y colectiva de ocupar, en cada momento, el lugar correspondiente en la trinchera³.

La conciencia colectiva, ahora diluida, se ha convertido en rehén de una minoría de “yoes” plutocráticos. El salvaje capitalismo libertino, se ha convertido en un depredador, no solamente de la biosfera, sino también de la noosfera. La disociación del “yo” respecto al “nosotros” ha llegado a tal extremo que está en peligro nuestra actual civilización por múltiples causas: centrales nucleares poco seguras (véase el desastre nuclear de Japón), riesgo de guerras atómicas (véase el temor respecto de Irán); guerras con fines exclusivamente económicos (véase la descarada invasión de Irak, por citar un ejemplo); la expoliación de recursos naturales de los países pobres; la utilización de la alimentación como un producto más de los mercados de futuro (ya no se juega con dinero sino con vidas humanas); y, cómo no, la continua destrucción de nuestro finito planeta tierra (el cambio climático es ya un viaje sin retorno con consecuencias dramáticas). Ante tal panorama, donde el “nosotros” ha caído preso de una minoría de “yoes”, es pertinente una profunda reflexión, no solamente psicológica, sociológica, económica y política, sino también eminentemente filosófica, pues requiere un análisis en profundidad de la naturaleza humana: no solamente desde la perspectiva de la subjetividad (conciencia personal) o intersubjetividad (conciencia colectiva), sino eminentemente, en una profunda reinterpretación epistemológica de la relación entre ambas. Esta es la tesis que motiva este artículo.

Tras la diferenciación del “ello”, el “yo” y el “nosotros” por Kant (Wilber, 2005a), la *Edad moderna*, la *Edad contemporánea* y la *Postmodernidad*, han completado la disociación entre el “yo” y el “nosotros”. Se ha tocado fondo. Los imperativos kantianos cobran más interés que nunca para la integración de los “yoes” en un “nosotros”. El imperativo categórico kantiano, nacido en la razón y con una finalidad eminentemente moral, tiene tres formulaciones:

1. *Obra solo de forma que puedas desear que la máxima de tu acción se convierta en una ley universal.*
2. *Obra de tal modo que uses la humanidad, tanto en tu persona como en la de cualquier otro, siempre como un fin, y nunca solo como un medio.*
3. *Obra como si por medio de tus máximas, fueras siempre un miembro legislador en un reino universal de los fines.*

Los “yoes” plutocráticos han vulnerado sistemáticamente estos tres preceptos kantianos, en detrimento de la humanidad. Es un imperativo existencial de supervivencia la necesaria integración del “yo” (conciencia personal), el “nosotros” (conciencia colectiva) y el “ello” (la naturaleza). Para dicha integración es necesario un tránsito desde el paradigma del *neoliberalismo* (máxima expresión del “yo” egoísta e individualista) al *altermundismo* (como expresión del “nosotros”, en sentido altruista y solidario). El paradigma altermundista surge de un modo holístico de la conciencia transpersonal, como será expuesto en el capítulo siguiente (Figura 1). Y dicho cambio de paradigma no será efectivo hasta lograr la *masa crítica*, un concepto socio-dinámico que puede durar años, varias generaciones o nunca en alcanzarse, si los “yoes” plutocráticos no son desbancados de sus estructuras de poder.

1.2- La realidad socio-psicológica: La fragmentación del “yo”

Se ha perdido la conciencia de que el nivel actual de vida es la herencia de nuestro pasado. Tampoco se tiene conciencia de las consecuencias futuras de los actos respecto de la biosfera y para las futuras generaciones (noosfera). La personalidad individual se diluye al perder la perspectiva temporal. Lo verdaderamente importante ahora es el culto al cuerpo y la libertad personal. Las personas son beneficiarias de la tecnología, pero se anula el verdadero valor de la razón y de las ciencias, como motivo del progreso humano. También crece el desinterés político (la abstención es una cruda realidad que va en aumento) y, consecuentemente, se pierde la hegemonía del poder público, idiosincrasia de la democracia. Con ello, hay una pérdida de los idealismos, de la cultura del esfuerzo, quedando el subjetivismo (yo) atrapado en las redes de internet y anulando la ambición personal de superación. El “yo” se ha convertido en un puro subjetivismo de la realidad. En la postmodernidad, nos dice el filósofo italiano Vattimo (2006), ya no hay un pensamiento fuerte y metafísico de las cosmovisiones filosóficas acerca de las creencias verdaderas. Ahora se impone *El pensamiento débil*, un nihilismo débil, un pasar despreocupado y, por consiguiente, alejado de la acritud existencial. Para Vattimo, las ideas de la postmodernidad y del pensamiento débil están estrechamente relacionadas con el desarrollo del escenario multimedia, posicionándose poderosamente en el nuevo esquema de valores y relaciones. Según Vattimo, nuestra sociedad influye en la construcción de la visión del mundo del sujeto desde sus inicios. Por un lado abre caminos a la libertad y a la pluralidad, pero por el otro se escapa de las visiones unitarias de la racional-modernidad y no hace posible integrar el yo como una estructura única. Los intentos del sujeto de crear una sola estructura yoica basada en una sola identidad cultural es un fracaso que cae en la anormalidad clínica. En este sentido, la psicología posmoderna incluye el análisis de cómo los medios de comunicación estructuran y complementan el “yo” fragmentado desde su formación en la infancia. Según Vattimo, la comunicación y los medios adquieren un carácter central en la postmodernidad. La abundancia de emisores continuos no aporta una visión unitaria que permita formar el “yo” con una sola visión del mundo exterior, ni siquiera una visión contextualizada e independiente. Por el contrario desde la psique postmoderna el mundo de los medios solo trae como consecuencia una mayor fragmentación yoica.

Las culturas posmodernas tecnológicamente avanzadas dan lugar a la incapacidad de la conciencia de distinguir la realidad de la fantasía: aparece el concepto de “hiperrealidad”. *Hiperrealidad* es un medio para describir la forma en que la conciencia define lo que es verdaderamente “real” en un mundo donde los medios de comunicación pueden modelar y filtrar de manera radical la manera en que percibimos un evento o experiencia. Con el desarrollo de Internet y las nuevas tecnologías se pueden crear, casi literalmente, nuevos mundos de los que, en cierto sentido, se puede decir que no necesitan de la materia prima del mundo real para existir e interactuar. Según Baudrillard (2005), uno de los expertos más famosos en hiperrealidad, los bienes de consumo adquieren *un valor de signo*, es decir, que indican algo sobre su poseedor en el contexto de un sistema social. Este consumismo, por su dependencia del valor de signo, es un factor que contribuye en la creación de la citada hiperrealidad. La conciencia es engañada, desprendiéndose de cualquier compromiso emocional verdadero al optar por una simulación artificial. La satisfacción y la felicidad se hallan, entonces, a través de la simulación e imitación de lo real más que a través de la realidad misma. Ese “yo”, fragmentado en miles de imágenes como reflejo del ser interno, es recogido por la *psicología postmoderna* en el intento de reconstrucción del “yo” egoísta e individualista mediante medicamentos psiquiátricos y técnicas de relajación. Pero, en esencia, se ha obviado que ese “yo” ha sido disociado del “nosotros”, siendo esta disociación la causa de los males de nuestra civilización actual. Más en profundidad, se puede afirmar que el “yo” egoísta e individualista tiene su máxima expresión en una minoría de “yoes” plutocráticos que anulan al “nosotros” colectivo mediante dicho proceso consciente de disociación ejercido por la clase opresora desde su atalaya del economicismo neoliberal.

Aunque no conste literalmente en sus escritos, se suele atribuir a Aristóteles (García, 1982), la frase “*el todo es más que la suma de sus partes*”, aunque sí escribió “*el todo tiene las partes*” (p.285).

Este principio general del holismo, nos invita imperativamente a reconstruir la relación entre el “yo” y el “nosotros”. Y para dicho objetivo, son necesarios dos mapas, a saber, el presente *mapa sociológico* y el *mapa psicológico* de la conciencia subjetiva (personal), que a continuación se verá, para poder vislumbrar los posibles mundos accesibles para el sujeto cognoscente. En este mapa sociológico se está evidenciando que el mundo objetivo está dominado por unas *estructuras de poder* (económicas, financieras, mass media, políticas y militares) que perpetúan la globalización neoliberal, imponiendo una dictadura económica con dramáticas consecuencias que causan dolor y sufrimiento al mundo entero: la crisis humanitaria y crisis ecológica que padece actualmente la humanidad (Martos, 2012). Todas esas nefastas consecuencias con origen en la avaricia, el individualismo y las ansias de poder económico y político de esos “yoes” plutocráticos, son ejercidas en detrimento de todos “nosotros” que, inevitablemente, acentúan las consecuencias del Antropoceno.

La crisis humanitaria y ecológica provocada por el neoliberalismo es una evidencia a todas luces. No solamente afecta a las regiones más pobres del mundo por falta de alimentación, sobreexplotación laboral y guerras por los recursos naturales. La crisis humanitaria es extensible también a los países más desarrollados, pues hay un paro estructural derivado de la crisis financiera globalizada, un desmantelamiento del estado del bienestar y, como consecuencia de todo ello, un abocamiento hacia la pobreza. La crisis humanitaria que padecemos es también una crisis de valores humanos pues, los Derechos Humanos no han sido suficientemente defendidos por nosotros los “ricos”, en detrimento de los “pobres” del resto del mundo. Ahora, en plena crisis financiera globalizada que afecta a nuestro modo de vida occidental basado en el consumismo y la satisfacción de placeres materiales, es pertinente una profunda reflexión acerca de si dicho modo de vida ha sido el correcto. Hemos vivido de un modo egoísta e individualista, fruto de la cultura capitalista, obviando que nuestro modo de vida lo ha sido a costa de los más desfavorecidos del planeta. Toda nuestra riqueza occidental es producto de la expoliación de los recursos naturales y pauperización de otras regiones del mundo. Lo que nos obliga moralmente a no mantenernos al margen. En este mundo, todos somos interdependientes, pero esta interdependencia se ha basado en desequilibrios entre ricos sanos y pobres enfermos, libres y esclavos, clase dominadora y clase oprimida, todo ello fomentado por un *imperialismo económico* (Petras, 2000) sustentado en la pretendida libertad económica que se auto-regula en los mercados. La “mano invisible” (Smith, 2011) que debería regular los mercados no existe. Lo que existe es una minoría de personas (“yoes” plutocráticos) que dirigen los designios de la humanidad. Son una minoría de personas al frente de las corporaciones bancarias, financieras y transnacionales, carentes de escrúpulos con tal de acumular más y más beneficios.

Es hora de despertar del sueño materialista en el que está subsumida nuestra conciencia sensible. Para ello, nada mejor que salir de la ignorancia y dirigir nuestra mirada hacia el conocimiento. Un conocimiento que evidencia que no podemos seguir una relación de interdependencia piramidal: una minoría de “yoes” plutocráticos dirigiendo el futuro de todos “nosotros”. Para revertir esta situación, no hay otro camino que aprender de los errores de la humanidad y hacer cada cual un acto de constricción en la parte de culpa que le corresponde por acción u omisión. La humanidad ha llegado a un punto de no retorno en su historia. Ya no se puede vivir ignorando la crisis humanitaria derivada del modo de vida capitalista, contemporáneamente conocida como *neoliberalismo*. Si la humanidad sigue por esa pendiente, no solamente será el fin de otra civilización como las habidas en la historia, sino el fin de la humanidad. Esta no es una apreciación gratuita sino que está avalada por una capacidad bélica para destruir varios planetas tierra. La paradoja es que solamente tenemos un planeta tierra y también estamos agotándolo a marcha forzada. La *biosfera* está siendo aniquilada por la *noosfera*, un contra-sentido holístico pues, al destruir nuestro medio natural, nos destruiremos a nosotros mismos. Jamás en la existencia de la humanidad ha habido tan clara conciencia en este sentido. Es por ello que cada cual es corresponsable de nuestro destino a través de su propia conciencia. La conciencia es objeto de investigación muy reciente en la historia del pensamiento y de la ciencia (Wilber, 2005b). Con el surgimiento de las ciencias psicológicas y la “cuarta fuerza” de la psicología transpersonal, se ha iniciado una camino esperanzador de trascendencia de la conciencia egóica hacia la espiritualidad o “transpersonalidad”.

El “yo” esclavo del *Mito de la caverna* (Platón), tras un largo periodo de oscurantismo, fue finalmente liberado y diferenciado en el “yo” racional (Kant) y, a su vez, evolucionó hasta convertirse en un “yo” fragmentado de la hiperrealidad (postmodernidad) cayendo nuevamente preso, física y mentalmente, de una minoría de “yoes” plutocráticos. Debemos salir de la moderna esclavitud generada por el capitalismo. La biosfera y la noosfera son holísticamente interdependientes y, consecuentemente, es un imperativo existencial, racional y moral intentar vivir en armonía con los demás seres y la naturaleza, es decir, vivir simbióticamente en un “nosotros” transpersonal: es el tan necesario cambio de paradigma desde el depredador *neoliberalismo* hacia el emergente *altermundismo*. Dicho cambio de paradigma es, ante todo, una nueva necesidad de organización social, económica y política que necesita la humanidad para evitar la decadencia de la civilización actual. Ese tránsito implica necesariamente una integración simbiótica de las *conciencias personales* (“yoes”) en una emergente, nueva y diferente *conciencia colectiva* (“nosotros transpersonal”). Y esa labor comienza, primero, con la toma de conciencia de cada uno de nosotros y, segundo, sumando voluntades hasta lograr una regenerada conciencia colectiva: hay que trabajar para lograr la necesaria *masa crítica*, punto de inflexión para que opere el cambio de paradigma desde el *neoliberalismo* hacia *altermundismo*. Dicho cambio debe iniciarse, eminentemente, en la conciencia de cada uno de nosotros, como bien queda expresado en un cita que se atribuye al dramaturgo inglés John Gay: “*Sin lugar a dudas, es importante desarrollar la mente de los hijos, no obstante el regalo más valioso que se le puede dar, es desarrollarles la conciencia*”.

Se puede constatar que ese cambio ya se está produciendo, sociológicamente, mediante los activistas, intelectuales y movimientos sociales, así como los medios alternativos de información, gracias al infatigable trabajo en la defensa del bien común. Son voces en la defensa de que otro mundo sí es posible. Unas voces que los medios de comunicación tradicionales, al servicio de las oligarquías plutocráticas, intentan silenciar. Un mundo donde sea posible revertir la actual crisis humanitaria y ecológica. Un mundo donde el “yo” fragmentado y disociado del “nosotros” no ejerza más su poder plutocrático. Un mundo donde la conciencia personal, egoísta e individualista, devenga en una conciencia colectiva con la mirada puesta en el bien común. Un mundo que está naciendo en las mentes y los corazones de los activistas sociales e intelectuales que ya están instalados en la *conciencia transpersonal*. Sin embargo, esta terminología no es todavía de dominio popular y menos aún su asunción académica para una futura educación generacional. La *conciencia transpersonal* está en la fase incipiente de emergencia social y cognitiva, fruto de la *filosofía transpersonal* y la *psicología transpersonal*. Por tanto es pertinente ahondar en cuál ha sido el proceso holístico de la aparición de estas nuevas disciplinas en la historia del pensamiento.

La filosofía es holística

En el mundo antiguo clásico surgió el eudemonismo, una doctrina que considera que el sentido de la vida es la felicidad, defendida principalmente por Aristóteles. El actual neoliberalismo es generador de nuevas enfermedades sociales y psicológicas, lo cual impide alcanzar la felicidad al perder la significación del sentido de la vida. El suicidio es la última tentativa del hombre de dar un sentido humano de una vida que ha resultado un sinsentido (Bonhoeffer, 2000). El sentido de la vida objetivamente plasmado en la sociedad como sistema de relaciones sociales constituye una objetivación de la conciencia social. Por otro lado, la subjetividad del ser humano constituye su propia conciencia individual o sentido subjetivo de la vida. La relación entre el sentido objetivo (conciencia social) y el sentido subjetivo (conciencia individual) se convierte en el problema fundamental por dilucidar en la compleja sociedad contemporánea. Dicho de otro modo, la cuestión estriba en saber si fuera del sentido individual y subjetivo de la vida existe un sentido de la vida objetivo. Hay motivos para pensar que la sociedad no ofrece objetivamente al hombre un sentido de la vida claro y definido. El hombre se pierde a sí mismo y, con ello, la sociedad también. La economía es la que nos da los recursos fundamentales, las

fuerzas y potencialidades efectivas para poder actuar en los límites del sentido de la vida de cada cual. Pero dicha economía ha caído presa del egoísmo y del individualismo o, dicho de otro modo, se ha transformado en un depredador neoliberalismo que oprime la libertad y la felicidad de la mayoría de la humanidad (Sen, 2000b).

Con Kant se produce una diferenciación del “yo”, del “nosotros” y del “ello”: ya no tengo que seguir automáticamente las reglas y normas sociales, es decir, puedo normalizar las normas; lo que la Iglesia y el Estado dicen no es necesariamente lo bueno ni lo verdadero. A partir de estas tres diferenciaciones de Kant, se produce un problema central en la postmodernidad: ahora que la ciencia, la moralidad y el arte han sido diferenciados irreversiblemente, ¿cómo los integramos? Le siguió una época emergente que hizo temblar al mundo y, también, contribuyó a su construcción. Kant era consciente de ello, en especial, en su ensayo *¿Qué es la ilustración?* (Kant, 2007). El peligro de la diferenciación era que podían desmembrarse completamente las tres esferas. Entonces surgieron los “doctores de la modernidad”: Schelling, Hegel, Marx, Schiller, Freud, Weber o Heidegger. Todos ellos intentaron desesperadamente, de diversas formas, recoger los fragmentos que comenzaban a caer a partir de la diferenciación de las tres esferas. Ahora había que tratar “terapéuticamente” con las tres diferenciaciones, convirtiéndose en una amenazadora disociación entre biosfera y noosfera. Con la diferenciación de la ciencia (ello), la moral (nosotros) y el arte (yo), cada uno pudo seguir su propio camino y establecer sus propias verdades sin ser dominados por los otros. La racionalidad produjo la diferenciación y, a la postmodernidad, le toca el papel de la integración. Así fue como Habermas (1987), con su *Teoría de la acción comunicativa* intentó la integración de las tres esferas. El *Ser-en-el-mundo* de Heidegger fue también otro intento. Foucault también trabajó en la misma línea de integración. Pensemos lo que pensemos de estos intelectuales, la cuestión es que todos han propuesto soluciones para la integración del “ello” (ciencia), el “yo” (el arte) y el “nosotros” (la moral). La post-racionalidad tiene la misión de ser una visión integradora, lo cual dista todavía de concretarse, aunque Wilber (2005a) apunta hacia ello con su concepto de Visión-lógica: “*la naturaleza dialéctica de la visión-lógica, es decir, la unidad de opuestos concebida mentalmente (como “interpenetración mutua”) es una de las señales de la estructura integral, es “intrínseca a la conciencia aperspectival emergente”*”(p.237).

La mayor parte de la gente de nuestros días usa la razón sin conocer realmente los estadios ontogénicos que la producen, a saber, los estadios cognitivos postulados por Piaget (Phillips, 1977). Simplemente no es inmediatamente evidente a la razón que la razón misma se desarrolló y evolucionó. Y sin embargo, la razón es la primera estructura que puede reflejar el mundo imparcialmente, como dice Lewis (2007): “*El corazón nunca ocupa el lugar de la cabeza, sino que puede, y debe, obedecerla*”. (p.24). Siguiendo a Platón y Aristóteles, Lewis sostiene que este orden natural que inspira a la Razón no es uno cualquiera de entre los sistemas de valores posibles, sino la fuente única de todo sistema. Así, la postura natural de la razón es simplemente la de asumir que está aparte del mundo y puede reflejarlo inocentemente. Esta parte del dualismo cartesiano es completamente comprensible, aunque está equivocada. Y la mayoría de los filósofos, desde Locke hasta Kant, hicieron esta suposición al no comprender los estadios evolutivos que conducen a la razón. Hegel (2006) fue el primero en romper el monologismo de la conciencia y en efectuar el tránsito “del yo al nosotros”. Los primeros capítulos de su *Fenomenología del espíritu* suponen un paso de la conciencia a la autoconciencia hasta esa gran parábola de la lucha entre las autoconciencias contrapuestas (Gómez, 2007). Los estados de conciencia sólo se han elucidado de manera rigurosa y apoyada por investigaciones empíricas en la segunda mitad del siglo XX con Maslow (1991) y Piaget (Phillips, 1977), entre otros. Hegel creyó que la filosofía política servía para justificar formas sociales y políticas de una sociedad o culturas. Según Hegel sería posible crear nuevas sociedades y nuevas formas sociopolíticas. Con Marx aparece una actitud diferente. Para Marx (Copleston, 1983), la tarea del filósofo radica en comprender el movimiento de la historia para así cambiar las instituciones y formas de organización social. Marx no niega el valor y la necesidad de comprensión, pero insiste en su función revolucionaria. En este sentido, puede decirse que Hegel mira hacia atrás y Marx hacia adelante. *La Dialéctica de Hegel* ha influido poderosamente en el advenimiento de una conciencia del progreso histórico. Su discípulo Karl Marx creó una teoría social, económica y

política indisolublemente unida al socialismo y al comunismo, más conocida como marxismo. Marx desentrañó las leyes inherentes al desarrollo del capitalismo, cuya máxima expresión depredadora ha llegado hasta nuestros días mediante el paradigma del neoliberalismo.

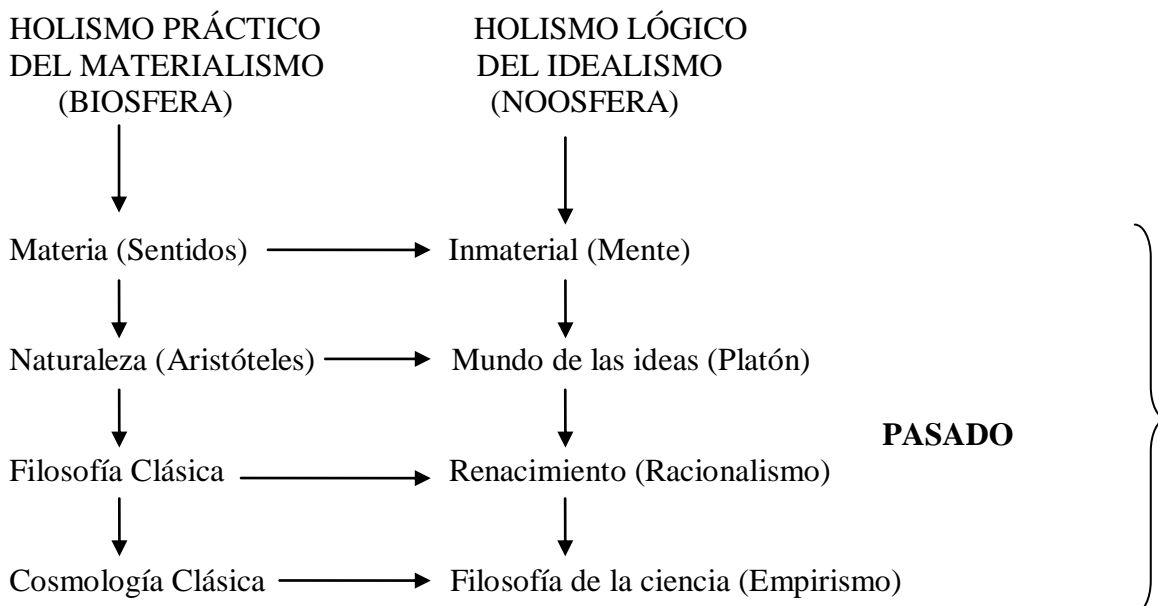
¿Existe una progresión holística en la historia del pensamiento que arroje comprensión acerca de la evolución de la conciencia colectiva, con la imperativa conexión en la historia social y moral de la humanidad? A mi parecer, Ken Wilber es el filósofo que mejor ha sabido aplicar la teoría holística, a los conocimientos filosóficos y científicos: sus “cuatro cuadrantes” son una magnífica erudición a este respecto (Wilber, 2005a). Sin embargo, se puede interpretar una visión diferente en el modo en el que la conciencia colectiva evoluciona con la imperativa historia social y cognitiva de la humanidad. Para ello se propone el siguiente sintagma con los correspondientes paradigmas opuestos, holísticamente subyacentes en estos dos holotipos: el *holismo práctico del materialismo* y el *holismo lógico del idealismo* (Figura 1). Lo importante de dicho sintagma es que la historia del pensamiento puede intuirse de una manera directa hasta los paradigmas de la *física clásica* y la *física cuántica*, como iniciadores de nuestra era contemporánea. Para una completa comprensión en el orden temporal, se hace la siguiente aclaración:

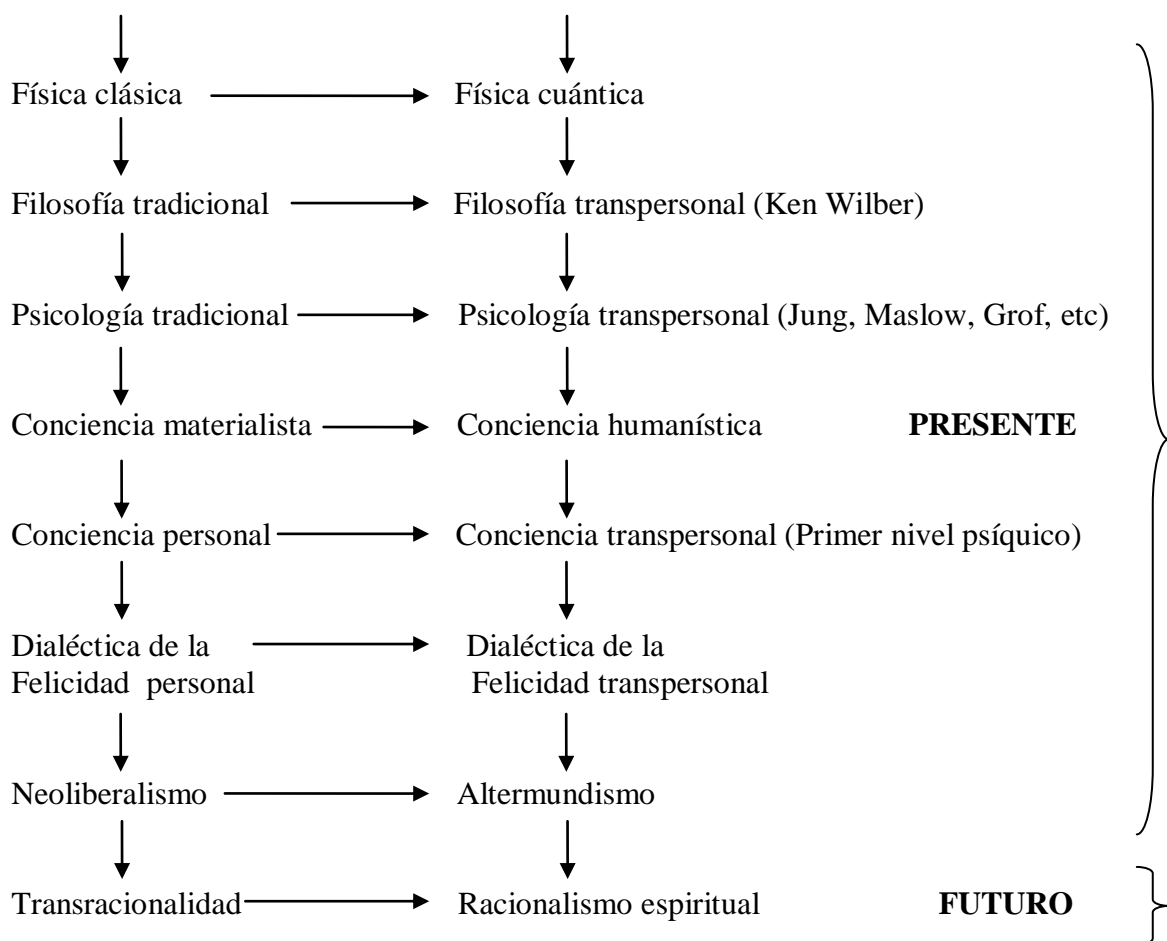
El pasado: incluye a todos los paradigmas hasta la *cosmología clásica* y la *filosofía de la ciencia*. Son todos los estadios de la historia del pensamiento, necesarios para llegar a comprender nuestro presente actual.

El presente: incluye desde la *física clásica* y la *física cuántica* hasta el *neoliberalismo* y el *altermundismo*. El cúmulo de todo el saber del pasado está inmerso social, tecnológica y sapiencialmente en nuestro modo de vida actual, produciendo desorientación cognitiva para muchos congéneres pues es necesaria una correcta “ascensión” racional, que más abajo quedará expuesto mediante un *mapa psicológico* para la conciencia personal. Ahora vivimos en la era de la información y del conocimiento, o surgimiento de la noosfera. Y en ese surgimiento cobra especial interés filosófico el desentrañamiento de la relación entre la conciencia subjetiva y la conciencia colectiva, objeto de estos pensamientos filosóficos.

El futuro: incluye los paradigmas de *transracionalidad* (lo que Wilber denomina *visión centaúrica-planetaria* en sus “cuatro cuadrantes”) y *racionalismo espiritual*.

Figura 1
Sintagma de la historia del pensamiento





Estas dos visiones holísticas son derivaciones conceptuales de la filosofía del lenguaje del “primero” y el “segundo” Wittgenstein (Reguera, 2009). La tesis fundamental de su *Tractatus* es la estrecha vinculación estructural (o formal) entre lenguaje y mundo, hasta tal punto que “*los límites de mi lenguaje son los límites de mi mundo*”. En efecto, aquello que comparten el mundo, el lenguaje y el pensamiento es la “forma lógica”, gracias a la cual podemos hacer figuras del mundo. Otra tesis fundamental del *Tractatus* es la “identidad” entre el lenguaje significativo y el pensamiento, dando a entender que nuestros pensamientos (las representaciones mentales que hacemos de la realidad) se rigen igualmente por la lógica de las proposiciones, pues “*la figura lógica de los hechos es el pensamiento*”. Este planteamiento basado en la filosofía del lenguaje de Wittgenstein, fundamenta el concepto propuesto por el autor de este trabajo: *El holismo lógico del idealismo*.

El segundo Wittgenstein llega al convencimiento de que el punto de vista adecuado es de carácter pragmatista: no se trata de buscar las estructuras lógicas del lenguaje, sino de estudiar cómo se comportan los usuarios de un lenguaje, cómo aprendemos a hablar y para qué nos sirve. Mientras que para el primer Wittgenstein había un solo lenguaje, a saber, el lenguaje ideal compuesto por la totalidad de las proposiciones significativas (lenguaje descriptivo), para el segundo Wittgenstein el lenguaje se expresa en una pluralidad de distintos “juegos de lenguaje” (del que el descriptivo es solo un caso). El primer Wittgenstein definía lo absurdo o insensato de una proposición en tanto que ésta rebasaba los límites del lenguaje significativo, mientras que el segundo Wittgenstein entiende que una proposición resulta absurda en la medida en que ésta intenta ser usada dentro de un juego de lenguaje al cual no pertenece. En síntesis: el criterio referencial del significado es reemplazado por el criterio pragmático del significado. Esto segundo fundamenta nuevamente el otro concepto defendido por el autor de este trabajo: *El holismo práctico del materialismo*.

El *holismo práctico del materialismo* corresponde al ámbito de los sentidos a través de las necesidades fisiológicas, necesidades de seguridad y de bienestar social, entre otras, recogidas en la “Pirámide de Maslow”. También se incluye en este holotipo todas las visiones segmentadas de la realidad, desligado de su complemento ideal y esencialmente superior: el *holismo lógico del idealismo*. De hecho, cada paradigma del *holismo práctico del materialismo* es histórica, social y holísticamente superado por el correspondiente paradigma del *holismo lógico del idealismo*. La desviación patológica a nivel psicológico, social y moral del *holismo práctico del materialismo*, es la avaricia, la codicia, el egoísmo y el egocentrismo y, cómo no, cognitivamente, la ignorancia de una idealidad superior de conocimiento. Esta enfermedad patológica es trascendida por el *holismo lógico del idealismo* correspondiente al mundo de las ideas, mediante el altruismo, la filantropía, la bondad y el amor al prójimo y, también, mediante la búsqueda inquisitiva del saber Universal.

Esta diferenciación conceptual no debe ser interpretada como una mera división intelectual, sino más bien como una dialéctica entre ambos holotipos, presente en la historia social, cognitiva y moral de la humanidad. Las ideas han sido el motor de la evolución humana: desde la filosofía griega, pasando por el primer renacimiento humanístico, la conciencia colectiva de la humanidad se ha *desvelado* a sí misma a través del racionalismo, el empirismo y las diversas ramas científicas hasta llegar a la actual física cuántica, por ejemplo. Del mismo modo, la moralidad humana presente en dicha conciencia colectiva a través de los Derechos Humanos, se ha hecho objetiva para todo ser cognoscente. Y todo ello ha sido posible mediante la aportación cognitiva de todos y cada uno de los filósofos y científicos que han contribuido al *desvelamiento* de la conciencia colectiva a través de la historia del pensamiento. No debe interpretarse el *holismo práctico del materialismo* y el *holismo lógico del idealismo* como simples opuestos sino que, en esencia, son la representación de todos los opuestos presentes en la evolución social y cognitiva en la historia de la humanidad (conciencia colectiva) así como en el discurrir vitalista de todo sujeto cognoscente (conciencia personal). Expresado de otro modo, la conciencia colectiva así como la conciencia personal participan ontológicamente del *holismo práctico del materialismo* así como del *holismo lógico del idealismo*, en cada una de las manifestaciones paradigmáticas en el orden temporal. Coexisten ambos holotipos dentro de cada paradigma presente en la historia del pensamiento. No podemos negar que la filosofía clásica, la cosmología clásica, la física clásica, la filosofía tradicional y la psicología tradicional estén desprovistas de “ideas propias”. Bien al contrario, el *holismo lógico del idealismo* está presente en cada uno de los paradigmas del *holismo práctico del materialismo*; pero ocurre que, con la perspectiva temporal de nuestro siglo XXI, la teoría holística nos permite ubicar cada paradigma en el contexto histórico que le es propio, ya sea en el *holismo práctico del materialismo* o en el *holismo lógico del idealismo*. Así, vamos adquiriendo conciencia cognitiva sobre el orden temporal en el que acontecen los eventos paradigmáticos; nuestra perspectiva, en este siglo XXI, es superior en el nivel propio de la holística cognitiva. Por eso mismo, cuando un paradigma es trascendido temporal y holísticamente, es posible catalogarlo en uno de estos dos holotipos: el *holismo práctico del materialismo* o el *holismo lógico del idealismo*. Estos dos holotipos, por explicarlo metafóricamente, serían como el ADN. Así como en los organismos vivos el ADN se presenta como una doble cadena de nucleótidos en la que las dos hebras están unidas entre sí por unas conexiones denominadas puentes de hidrógeno, en nuestros dos holotipos subyace una transcendencia holística de todo paradigma desde lo *material* a lo *ideal*. Serían entonces dos conceptos opuestos aunque cada cual ha adquirido vida propia según su propio contexto histórico, social, cultural y moral. La transcendencia de los opuestos ha sido perseguida perennemente, ya sea desde una perspectiva intelectual y conscientemente presente en la búsqueda inquisitiva de todo pensador o científico, o bien, a través de la propia dialéctica social, cultural e histórica de la humanidad. Así como el ADN sufre variaciones y modificaciones biológicas en la escala evolutiva de la vida, ocurre lo mismo con la concepción materialista e idealista, desde la perspectiva de estos dos holotipos: el *holismo práctico del materialismo* y el *holismo lógico del idealismo*.

En relación a nuestra contemporaneidad, los paradigmas de la *filosofía tradicional* y la *filosofía transpersonal* están presentes aunque no diferenciados desde la perspectiva académica, sociológica y cognitiva, pues lo “transpersonal” es como un simple bebé que, desde un contexto histórico, está

comenzando a caminar. Los siguientes paradigmas en el orden temporal, a saber, la *psicología tradicional* y la *psicología transpersonal*, son dos paradigmas con plena validez contemporánea aunque el segundo (“la cuarta fuerza”) le está ganando terreno poco a poco al primero. Los siguientes paradigmas, la *conciencia materialista* y la *conciencia humanística*, hacen referencia a la fenomenología en la conciencia de toda persona. La fenomenología de la conciencia denota que es factible para toda persona pasar de una *conciencia materialista* a una *conciencia humanística* (Martos, 2010a), aunque es evidente que nuestra sociedad actual vive pertinazmente en la primera. Prosiguiendo con nuestra secuencia holístico-temporal, ahora vienen los paradigmas de la *conciencia personal* (egoísta e individualista) y la *conciencia transpersonal* (altruista y solidaria). Los siguientes paradigmas en la línea holístico-temporal son la *dialéctica de la felicidad personal* y la *dialéctica de la felicidad transpersonal*, dos conceptos que representan el devenir existencial de las personas según actúen, respectivamente, con *conciencia personal* o *conciencia transpersonal*. Seguidamente están los paradigmas del *neoliberalismo* y el *altermundismo*, representantes objetivos del actual tránsito de conciencia en el que se halla la humanidad: las conciencias personales (egoístas e individualistas) se integrarán simbióticamente en la conciencia colectiva (hacia la solidaridad global). Un objetivo que puede tardar muchos años pues hay que tener presente que, la historia ella misma, evoluciona dialécticamente, no pudiendo precisarse la duración de un paradigma. Sirva como ejemplo para comprender esto: ¿Cuántos años ha durado el paradigma de la *filosofía clásica*? o ¿Qué época abarca su paradigma holísticamente superior, a saber, el *renacimiento*?—La resolución dialéctica, entendida desde la perspectiva de la historia de Hegel, nos provee la solución: la imaginación corriente capta la identidad, la diferencia y la contradicción, pero no la transición de lo uno a lo otro. Al abarcar un paradigma un amplio espectro temporal, los individuos subsumidos a dicho paradigma viven, piensan y actúan sin apenas apreciar bajo qué paradigma en la línea holístico temporal se hallan. Ello es un privilegio solamente al alcance de los más inquisitivos pensadores que se atreven a dilucidar la problemática contextual de la época que le ha tocado vivir. A ello se ha dedicado preferentemente cada filósofo o científico a través de la historia: desentrañar cognitivamente al Ser en sus diferentes manifestaciones material, racional y moral.

Este sintagma de la historia del pensamiento (Figura 1) tiene la virtud, precisamente, de hacer objetivos los paradigmas del pasado en una línea holístico-temporal, hasta conectar con los paradigmas correspondientes a nuestro presente. En dicho sintagma, se puede observar la progresión del *holismo práctico del materialismo* que opera actualmente en las personas desde la *filosofía tradicional* hasta el *neoliberalismo*. Del mismo modo, en el *holismo lógico del idealismo*, hay congéneres que piensan y actúan desde la *filosofía transpersonal* (visión-lógica que aúna en la conciencia cognitiva y moral a la biosfera y la noosfera, teniendo así una clara conciencia ecológica y humanista) hasta proyectarse en la posibilidad de que otro mundo es posible (*altermundismo*). La percepción de ese proceso de cambio en la sociedad solamente puede demostrarse objetivamente a partir del concepto socio-dinámico de *masa crítica*, un indicador social del paradigma predominante. Respecto a la percepción subjetiva en las personas, es necesario aludir a un *mapa psicológico* que nos proporcione una correcta cognición respecto de los estadios evolutivos de la conciencia en relación con la felicidad personal y, eminentemente, con la felicidad de la humanidad.

El mapa psicológico de la evolución de la conciencia

CAMINO ASCENDENTE: Camino ascendente de la *conciencia personal*, a saber, evolución de la conciencia como posibilidad de lograr más y más conocimientos hasta hallar la sabiduría. (Es lo equivalente a la salida del mundo de las sombras en el *Mito de la Caverna* de Platón).

CAMINO DESCENDENTE: Camino descendente de la *conciencia transpersonal*, es decir, todo el saber adquirido en el camino ascendente se revierte en la humanidad en tanto que la conciencia es

transmisora de conocimientos a la vez que conciencia solidaria (transpersonal). (Es lo equivalente al retorno al mundo de las sombras en el *Mito de la Caverna* de Platón).

Figura 2
Mapa psicológico de la evolución de la conciencia



Se hace especial hincapié en lo siguiente: las tres esferas que fueron diferenciadas por Kant, son perfectamente identificables como potencialidades en los sujetos cognoscentes. La *Dialéctica de la felicidad material* es donde imperativamente todo humano se proyecta para la satisfacción de sus necesidades materiales o *conciencia materialista* (ello), salvo que elijamos dedicarnos a una vida ascética. Asimismo, en la *Dialéctica de la felicidad intelectual* se asienta la *conciencia intelectual* como expresión del juicio estético, es decir, una profundidad holísticamente superior del individuo (yo). Y seguidamente le corresponde el turno a la *Dialéctica de la felicidad espiritual* donde se realiza la *conciencia espiritual*, es decir, la razón moral de la interacción pragmática o entendimiento mutuo (nosotros). Estas tres conciencias, *la conciencia materialista, la conciencia intelectual y la conciencia espiritual* aunque diferenciadas conceptualmente, en realidad son una única conciencia la cual es identificada como un “yo” con tres campos de actuación: el sensible, el cognitivo y el moral. Nuestra conciencia representa la asunción unitaria del Universo, el Conocimiento y el Amor, la tríada propiamente perteneciente al Ser. A través de nuestra conciencia nos relacionamos con el lado sensible, con el conocimiento y con el amor a nuestros semejantes, para intentar hallar nuestra felicidad personal. Por tanto, a través de nuestra conciencia, ya estamos participando de la parte divina que todo lo impregna y, es a través de ella, como debemos ascender hacia la sabiduría divina del Ser. Esa es la finalidad aludida en nuestro *mapa cognitivo*, descubierta en la “ascensión” racional de la conciencia en el sujeto cognoscente. Llegar a la *felicidad personal* a través de la vía del conocimiento es un objetivo digno de ser alcanzado. Pero no hay mayor felicidad que llegar al Ser mediante dicho conocimiento. Y para ello, solamente hay un camino: progresar en la evolución de la propia conciencia hasta convertirla en *conciencia transpersonal*, es decir, altruista y solidaria hasta lograr la *felicidad transpersonal* (la consideración de la libertad y felicidad de la humanidad, jerárquicamente superior a la *felicidad personal*). Como ya estableció Aristóteles, “el todo es superior a las partes”, una apreciación holística que científicamente puede observarse en la evolución de la naturaleza. ¿No estaría precisamente ahí en nuestra conciencia, la posibilidad de la necesaria integración que buscaba la postmodernidad?. Siguiendo un paralelismo conceptual de la evolución biológica, estaríamos en los albores de llegar a la *ontogénesis de la conciencia subjetiva* así como a la *filogénesis de la conciencia social*, por lo menos en lo que concierne su objetivación vital. Lo que pueda

ocurrir o no en el campo metafísico, es decir, después de nuestra muerte física, es harina de otro costal. Sin embargo, existen estudios científicos sobre experiencias cercanas a la muerte que demuestran la existencia de la conciencia más allá de la muerte.

Mientras tanto, el hombre contemporáneo es un mortal que juega a ser Dios. Algunos se creen *dioses plutocráticos*, esclavizando la población mundial a través de una dictadura económica: es la moderna esclavitud, impuesta por el economicismo neoliberal a modo de subterfugio de un pensamiento único. Pero es cuestión de tiempo que emerja holísticamente la *conciencia transpersonal* en la mayoría de personas hasta lograr la *masa crítica*. Siguiendo la alegoría del Mito de la Caverna de Platón, tras haber salido de ella, he retornado a sus profundidades para intentar liberar a mis semejantes de las cadenas que les tienen esclavizados al paradigma del *neoliberalismo*. Es imperativo provocar ese despertar eminentemente en la *conciencia cognitiva* para trascender al ego limitado e individualista, preso de la *conciencia sensible*, para proyectarse en la luminosidad de la *conciencia espiritual*. Solamente así podremos salir del callejón sin aparente salida en la que se encuentra la actual civilización.

La interrelación de la conciencia personal con la conciencia colectiva

La eventualidad de que otro mundo sea posible, como alternativa al capitalismo en su manifestación neoliberal, implica necesariamente el acotamiento de los posibles mundos. Los posibles mundos, tanto en su manifestación objetiva (conciencia social) así como subjetiva (conciencia individual), requieren una descripción lingüística conceptualmente aceptable y racionalmente objetiva a través de las dos citadas conciencias: la conciencia individual y la conciencia social. Además, habrá que establecer una relación entre ambas conciencias, con fundamentos debidamente justificados desde la filosofía, las ciencias y la moralidad, con la intención de que el *mapa psicológico* (fenomenología de la conciencia subjetiva o personal) entrelace epistemológicamente con el *mapa sociológico* (fenomenología de la conciencia social o colectiva).

4.1- Los posibles mundos


El sentido de la vida se manifiesta subjetivamente en la *conciencia personal*. Por otro lado, la vida plasmada como sistema de relaciones sociales, evidencia la existencia de una conciencia social que denominaré *conciencia colectiva*. Como se ha visto en el mapa psicológico (Figura 2), la *conciencia personal* de todo sujeto cognoscente se manifiesta a través de la *conciencia sensible* (o materialista, en el sentido corporal), la *conciencia intelectual* (cognitiva) y la *conciencia espiritual* (moral). Estas tres conciencias, aunque diferenciadas conceptualmente, en realidad son una única conciencia personal identificable en el “yo” con tres campos de actuación: el sensible, el cognitivo y el moral, respectivamente. Conceptualmente, la Real Academia Española de la Lengua (2012) define así a la **conciencia**:

- Propiedad del espíritu humano de reconocerse en sus atributos esenciales y en todas las modificaciones que en sí mismo experimenta (*conciencia y evolución*).
- Acto psíquico por el que un sujeto se percibe a sí mismo en el mundo (*conciencia sensible*).
- Conocimiento reflexivo de las cosas (*conciencia intelectual*).
- Conocimiento interior del bien y del mal (*conciencia moral*).
- Actividad mental a la que solo puede tener acceso el propio sujeto (es ese “lugar” donde la *conciencia personal* unifica las tres conciencias anteriores: *sensible, cognitiva y moral*).

Este “yo” así definido ya fue filosóficamente diferenciado por Kant respecto al “nosotros” y el “ello” a través de sus tres críticas: *La crítica de la razón pura* (ello), *La crítica de la razón práctica* (nosotros) y *La crítica del juicio* (yo), ya explicados anteriormente. Para cumplir con nuestro objetivo de

saber cuántos mundos son posibles desde la percepción subjetiva y social, conviene recapitular todo a ello a modo de esquema (Figura 3), de modo que sea mucho más fácil su comprensión. A partir de dicho esquema es mucho más fácil entrever cuales son los posibles mundos para el sujeto cognoscente así como para la conciencia colectiva:

Figura 3
Los posibles mundos respecto de la conciencia personal y la conciencia colectiva

	CONCIENCIA PERSONAL	Modo de intercambio	CONCIENCIA COLECTIVA
	“YO” (Subjetividad)		“NOSOTROS” (Intersubjetividad)
MUNDO SENSIBLE	Conciencia materialista = Yo corporal	Dinero	Historia social
MUNDO INTELECTUAL	Conciencia intelectual = Yo cognitivo	Razón	Historia del pensamiento
MUNDO ESPIRITUAL	Conciencia espiritual = Yo moral	Amor	Historia de la moralidad

Toda persona participa existencialmente, mediante sus *tres conciencias*, en los tres posibles mundos: el mundo sensible, el mundo intelectual y el mundo espiritual. La fenomenología objetiva de la existencia de toda persona es un fiel reflejo de su conciencia personal. La diferenciación de conciencia entre las personas viene determinada por las opciones de libertad mediante cada cual se enfrenta a sus tres mundos: el dinero en el mundo sensible, la razón en el mundo intelectual y el amor (o solidaridad social) en el mundo espiritual. Cuando una persona orienta su conciencia personal hacia el desenfreno materialista, sin atisbo de racionalidad ni espiritualidad, vivirá en la alegórica caverna platónica. Cuando una persona orienta su conciencia personal hacia la racionalidad, vivirá en un mundo intelectual, es decir, habrá salido de dicha caverna para ver el mundo inteligiblemente. Y, por último, cuando una persona orienta su vida hacia el altruismo, la solidaridad, la libertad y la felicidad de la humanidad en actos y pensamientos, entonces vivirá en un mundo espiritual. Tres mundos accesibles a cualquier persona desde la correcta gestión, o no, de su libertad. Desde un análisis antropológico de la libertad, Alonso-Fernández (2006) pretende “*aportar una ayuda informativa y vivida que permita desarrollarse como una persona libre; y además, estar presto a defenderse a sí mismo y preservar a los suyos contra el empuje cada vez más poderoso de los movimientos sociales exterminadores de la libertad*” (p. 16). En este sentido, es sumamente importante comprender que el dinero, símbolo fetichista del capitalismo, ayuda a ser feliz pero no representa la felicidad. En el libro *La felicidad*, el analista británico Layard (2005) afirma que las circunstancias familiares, el empleo y la salud son temas más importantes, hasta cierto punto, que el bienestar de un buen ingreso. Podría considerarse que los países ricos son más felices que los pobres pero, una vez alcanzado un determinado umbral, la conexión se hace más débil y una mayor cantidad de dinero no puede comprar una mayor cuota de felicidad. Sin lugar a dudas que, jerárquicamente, la razón y el amor proporcionan mayor felicidad (Ver figura 2: mapa psicológico de la evolución de la conciencia en relación a las jerárquicas felicidades potencialmente alcanzables para todo sujeto cognoscente).

Consecuentemente, podemos discernir entre la *conciencia personal* (egoísta e individualista) y la *conciencia transpersonal* (altruista y solidaria), en el sentido de trascendencia holística (Figura 2). Así,

cada persona desde su libertad “elige” su propio mundo subjetivo y, correlativamente, su campo de actuación preferente en la conciencia colectiva. Toda persona, ineludiblemente, participa del mundo sensible, del mundo intelectual y del mundo espiritual pero, lo importante aquí, es que es posible diferenciar a través de la fenomenología de su conciencia cuál es el mundo preferencial donde dota de sentido a su vida. Por tanto, tenemos un esquema diferenciador de tres mundos. Tres mundos plausibles tanto en la conciencia colectiva como en la conciencia subjetiva: el *mundo sensible*, el *mundo intelectual* y el *mundo espiritual*. El modo relacional de intercambio entre los tres mundos de la conciencia colectiva y los tres mundos de la conciencia personal, estará determinado por el grado de importancia dado por cada persona al *dinero*, la *razón* y al *amor*: constituirá su propia escala de valores para ubicarse existencial, racional y espiritualmente en el mundo. ¿Y cuál es la motivación suprema para dirigir nuestros pensamientos y acciones en estos tres mundos?; ni más ni menos que la felicidad. Es posible hallar *felicidad sensible* mediante los sentidos, también *felicidad intelectual* mediante el raciocinio y, por último y seguramente la más importante, obtener *felicidad espiritual* a través del Amor (Figuras 2 y 3).

4.2- La integración subjetiva de los mundos

En esa interrelación de la conciencia subjetiva con la conciencia colectiva es donde, cada cual, debe hallar el sentido de su vida. El mapa psicológico (Figura 2) evidencia una fenomenológica evolución de la conciencia personal: superar la *conciencia materialista* (salir de la cárcel de los sentidos) mediante nuestra *conciencia intelectual* (una correcta cosmovisión cognitiva), para vislumbrar una *conciencia espiritual* pues, como dijo Platón, “*buscando el bien de nuestros semejantes, encontramos el nuestro*”. Hay que recordar que, según las explicaciones ofrecidas a la Figura 2, es en la conciencia espiritual donde se realiza la razón moral de la interactuación pragmática o entendimiento mutuo (nosotros). Pero dicha conciencia espiritual es experimentada por la conciencia personal (pues forma parte de esta) y, ésta a su vez, puede evolucionar hacia la conciencia transpersonal donde se experimenta una vinculación fraternal con todo lo existente que va más allá de las establecidas reglas morales. Por tanto, es de extrema importancia no confundir la conciencia espiritual con la conciencia transpersonal. La conciencia espiritual implementa a la conciencia materialista y a la conciencia intelectual para lograr tener conciencia humanística (Figura 1), paso previo para lograr la conciencia transpersonal. Las personas que carecen de dicha conciencia espiritual, y por tanto del más amplio sentido de moralidad, simplemente se hallan instaladas en su conciencia personal (egoísta e individualista) en contraposición a las personas con conciencia transpersonal (compenetración profunda con la existencia que va más allá de la conciencia social).

Respecto a la conciencia subjetiva, es posible la integración de los tres mundos (sensible, intelectual y espiritual) mediante la *felicidad personal* y la *felicidad transpersonal*. La *felicidad personal* es una integración egocéntrica que se apropia del mundo sensible para un beneficio egoísta del propio sujeto cognoscente. La *felicidad personal* solamente es posible si las tres felicidades intrínsecas (felicidad material, felicidad intelectual y felicidad espiritual) se hallan en correcto equilibrio entre ellas. Cualquier desviación patológica hacia los extremos, psicológica o social, entraña el riesgo de la infelicidad. Siguiendo las tesis de Marinoff (2006), la felicidad consiste en combinar una mente comprensiva, un corazón compasivo y unas relaciones constructivas con los demás. Sus argumentos están edificados, respectivamente, sobre el desarrollo mental ejemplificado por Aristóteles, el cultivo del corazón predicado por Buda y la armonía en el orden social alentado por Confucio. Uno de los mayores retos con que se topa el ser humano en la época actual son los extremismos, auténticos usurpadores de la felicidad y fruto de los mayores males sociales. Para Marinoff, está claro, el “camino del medio” es la mejor forma de lograr la felicidad personal y a la vez hacer del mundo un lugar mejor.

Pero no hay mayor felicidad que supeditar la *felicidad personal* a la *felicidad transpersonal*, es decir, la búsqueda del propio bien ya no es el primordial objetivo sino que nuestros pensamientos, nuestras acciones y hasta nuestra propia vida hallan su razón de ser en el bien común, la libertad y la

felicidad de la humanidad, en sus respectivos tres mundos (sensible, intelectual y, eminentemente, espiritual). Por tanto, la integración es posible en todo sujeto cognoscente mediante el cuadro de ascensión de la *conciencia personal* hasta convertirse en *conciencia transpersonal*, lo cual lleva aparejado sus correspondientes estadios jerárquicos de felicidad sensible, intelectual y espiritual. Es un camino interior nada fácil, cuyo objetivo superior e integrador es alcanzar la *felicidad personal* (egóica) que, a su vez, puede ser trascendida hasta alcanzar la *felicidad transpersonal* (transcendencia del ego) al poner el punto de mira en el bien común, la libertad y la felicidad de la humanidad (Figura 2).

Marx es un pensador que, desde un contexto histórico, propugna la superación del capitalismo, precisamente, apuntando hacia la eliminación de las clases opresoras. En ese pensamiento marxista subyace un deseo de libertad y felicidad en igualdad de condiciones para toda la humanidad, es decir, Marx tenía *conciencia transpersonal*, pues el constructo de su discurso tenía como finalidad la felicidad de la humanidad y, para ello, era precisamente necesario superar el antagonismo entre las clases opresoras y dominadas: un loable pensamiento que, en hoy en día, sigue siendo una utopía a la vista del depredador *neoliberalismo* que subsume a la humanidad en miserias, hambrunas, guerras con fines económicos, en definitiva, una maquiavélica manipulación por una minoría de “yoes” plutocráticos sobre la mayoría de “nosotros”. La filosofía marxista está más viva que nunca, precisamente, porque su filosofía es una denuncia vigente respecto al actual *neoliberalismo*, en tanto que es la actual metamorfosis del capitalismo. Todavía no hemos logrado la integración de los tres mundos en uno: unificar desde la razón la convivencia sensible (donde no haya una clase opresora y una clase oprimida) y la convivencia espiritual (una convivencia humanitaria en igualdad de libertades y felicidad para todos). Es obvio que en nuestro mundo contemporáneo, la convivencia en paz y sin lucha de clases está lejos de conseguirse, y ello sólo será posible mediante una evolución paradigmática a través de la historia. Kant diferenció racional y certeramente los tres mundos posibles (ello, yo y nosotros). Hegel conceptuó la evolución dialéctica de la historia. Marx intentó la integración de dichos tres mundos y, aunque sus teorías son vigentes por cuanto es evidente que persiste una clase opresora (ahora bajo una dictadura económica), no hay visos de una resolución dialéctica a corto plazo en el sentido que Hegel propugnaba. El pensamiento marxista sigue vigente en cuanto que el capitalismo persiste en el tiempo, fruto de la *filosofía tradicional*. La propia filosofía no es concebible sin tener en cuenta la visión holística, una teoría general de los sistemas, que evidencia la emergencia de la *filosofía transpersonal*, cuyo iniciador contemporáneo ha sido Ken Wilber. Para hacer una filosofía auténtica, contundentemente racional, explicativa de todo el pasado y explicativa de los paradigmas contemporáneos, es necesario tener un punto de mira excelsamente superior, a riesgo de no ser compartida en los medios intelectuales tradicionales. Así ocurrió con Kant, que tardó diez años de su vida para elaborar su *Crítica de la razón pura* y seis años más para que fuera conocida. Así ocurrió también con Wilber (2005a), que se enclaustró durante tres años para la elaboración de su *Sexo, Ecología, Espiritualidad*. Este paradigmático pensador, iniciador de la *filosofía transpersonal*, es considerado como un importante erudito de la conciencia y de la *psicología transpersonal* en la actualidad.

4.3- La integración colectiva de los mundos

Una vez sabido que en cada persona existen potencialmente los tres mundos -sensible, intelectual y espiritual-, es imperativo interconectar dichos mundos subjetivos con sus correspondientes mundos en la conciencia colectiva (Figura 3).

Marx tiene una tremenda vigencia actual, por cuánto sus pensamientos han sido una denuncia filosófica, política y sociológica respecto al depredador capitalismo. El marxismo emerge del paradigma de la *filosofía tradicional*, teniendo plena validez hasta el paradigma del *neoliberalismo* de hoy en día (Figura 1). Es decir, el marxismo será un pensamiento presente mientras que el capitalismo no sea abolido. De momento, el neoliberalismo, como última metamorfosis del capitalismo, tiene un elevado coste: declive ecológico, guerras con fines económicos y pauperización de la humanidad. La superación del marxismo solamente será posible desde la emergencia holística de una racionalidad espiritual, iniciada

con la *filosofía transpersonal*. Ello solamente es viable si las *conciencias personales* devienen en *conciencias transpersonales*, es decir, una evolución desde el egoísmo y la individualidad hacia el altruismo y la solidaridad, cualidades humanas que surgen pro-activamente desde la natural compasión hacia todos los seres y la compenetración profunda con la existencia. El pensamiento marxista que preconiza la abolición de la clase opresora, solamente tendrá razón de ser si, desde el interior de la noosfera, emerge una concordancia humana de solidaridad colectiva. Una emergencia colectiva de la humanidad que proclame los más elementales derechos humanos: cubrir las necesidades básicas para toda la humanidad, abolir el poder de la dictadura económico-financiera de unos pocos sobre la mayoría, garantizar la educación y sanidad, etcétera. En definitiva, un mundo sin pobreza ni guerras, un mundo donde el conocimiento esté al servicio de la evolución de la raza humana, tanto cognitiva como espiritualmente. Para todo ello es más necesario que nunca la *racionalidad espiritual* que está emergiendo lenta pero seguramente en la mente y los corazones de muchos intelectuales, movimiento sociales, medios alternativos de información y, aunque pocos, algunos políticos. Dicha racionalidad espiritual, inexorablemente, está creciendo en muchas personas hasta que, en algún momento de la historia, se alcance la *masa crítica*. La masa crítica es el indicador social en el que las *conciencias transpersonales* serán mayoría dentro del paradigma del *altermundismo*, dándose por iniciado entonces el paradigma de la *transracionalidad*: un punto de inflexión que marcará el declive del *neoliberalismo* y, consiguientemente, del capitalismo. El pensamiento marxista podrá, entonces, descansar en paz. Será el turno de los pensadores espirituales: Jung, Maslow, Grof, Wilber, entre muchos otros, y su legión de seguidores.

Si otro mundo es posible, debe serlo gracias a la evolución de las conciencias personales ya no con la mirada puesta en la *conciencia materialista* sino en la *conciencia intelectual*. Una intelectualidad madura que abra paso a la *conciencia espiritual*. La integración de los tres mundos (sensible, intelectual y espiritual) en la conciencia colectiva (Figura 3), solamente sería posible si se lograra la felicidad para toda la humanidad: en el *mundo de los sentidos* mediante la satisfacción de todas las necesidades básicas y sociales para todos los humanos sin excepción (lo cual implica la desaparición de toda pobreza); en el *mundo intelectual* mediante un acuerdo consensuado del sentido de la vida para toda la humanidad (lo cual dista mucho de ser alcanzado); y en el *mundo espiritual* mediante un consenso en los postulados metafísicos y religiosos como fundamentos últimos que dan sentido a nuestra vida (lo cual está a años luz, a la vista de la diversidad de credos y disensos dogmáticos de la fe). Consecuentemente, la integración de las conciencias personales hacia la conciencia colectiva, más que hallarse cerca de su logro, está en un proceso evolutivo y dialéctico a través de estos tres mundos. Por eso ha sido necesario el *mapa sociológico* argumentado al principio: para tener una visión de la historia, del presente y el futuro más inmediato. La visión holística de la historia del pensamiento, a través del *holismo práctico del materialismo* y el *holismo lógico del idealismo* (Figura 1), es un sintagma con sus correspondientes paradigmas opuestos, lo cual nos da una visión esquemática, intuitiva y cognitivamente comprensible, no solamente para los eruditos, sino también para los neófitos en filosofía.

La actual civilización, está tocando fondo en su dialéctica material. Estamos inmersos en una crisis humanitaria sin precedentes en la historia. La salida se está forjando a través de un incipiente *racionalismo espiritual* que, socialmente, se hace objetivo a través del *altermundismo*: otro mundo es posible si la racionalidad humana deja el enfoque materialista y redirige su mirada desde la emergente noosfera hacia la propia espiritualidad. La Razón, en un primer estadio, se encarnó en una conciencia histórica individual después del *primer renacimiento humanístico* de los siglos XV y XVI (individualismo que tiene su máxima expresión en el *neoliberalismo*). Nuestra civilización actual está asistiendo al final de dicho estadio. Somos testigos directos del segundo estadio, a saber, la emergencia holística de la noosfera, lo cual está propiciando la futura consolidación de la conciencia colectiva sobre la base de un racionalismo espiritual: el tránsito desde la *filosofía tradicional* a la *filosofía transpersonal* (Martos, 2010b). La *filosofía tradicional*, sumada al incipiente *racionalismo espiritual*, está propiciando la futura consolidación de la *filosofía transpersonal*. Dicho de otro modo, este tránsito de la racionalidad corresponde a la integración de las conciencias personales (herencia del primer renacimiento) en una

conciencia colectiva consciente de su poderío racional y su potencial espiritual: es el **segundo renacimiento humanístico**.

Concluyendo, la conciencia histórica individual surgida del **primer renacimiento humanístico** de los siglos XV y XVI, ha devenido en este siglo XXI en el egoísmo e individualismo patente en el actual paradigma conocido como *neoliberalismo*. Esta última versión depredadora del capitalismo, siguiendo las tesis de Marx, está socavando su propio final, pues está acabando con el valor del trabajo humano y con los recursos naturales generando, consecuentemente, una profunda crisis humanitaria y ecológica. Este tránsito doloroso que está padeciendo actualmente la humanidad invoca hacia un **segundo renacimiento humanístico**: la racionalidad aunada a la espiritualidad, una integración del “yo” y el “nosotros” con la salvaguarda de la naturaleza (“ello”). Y ello, solamente es posible mediante la trascendencia de la *conciencia personal* (ego) hacia una *conciencia transpersonal* (trascendencia del ego). Esta emergencia holística propugnada por la *filosofía transpersonal* y la *psicología transpersonal*, al aunar la racionalidad con la espiritualidad, es la episteme del **segundo renacimiento humanístico**: la *conciencia individual*, históricamente surgida del primer renacimiento humanístico, debe ser ahora trascendida como *conciencia colectiva*, socialmente reflejado en el **altermundismo**. Por tanto, holística y epistemológicamente, la *filosofía transpersonal* y la *psicología transpersonal* están jugando un papel paradigmático en la trascendencia de la *racionalidad* hacia la *espiritualidad*, contribuyendo inherentemente a la incubación del futuro paradigma: el *racionalismo espiritual*.

Notas

1.- Por “filosofía tradicional” se entiende el cuerpo de conocimientos que se iniciaron con la *filosofía moderna* hasta llegar a la *postmodernidad* y concluyeron en la *filosofía contemporánea* como contraposición historicista a la reciente filosofía transpersonal iniciada por Ken Wilber. Esta “filosofía tradicional” ha desembocado en el pensamiento único neoliberal que ha secuestrado a la racionalidad colectiva expresada en las democracias occidentales, sometiendo a éstas a una plutocracia (Martos, 2012). Del mismo modo que la filosofía escolástica supeditó la razón a la fe, el economicismo neoliberal ha sometido la razón al servicio de la fe ciega en los mercados. La filosofía transpersonal es una renovada visión y una superación paradigmática de la filosofía tradicional al reincorporar la espiritualidad en la razón humana (Martos, 2010b).

2.- El *altermundismo* es un amplio conjunto de movimientos sociales formado por activistas provenientes de distintas corrientes políticas, que a finales del siglo XX convergieron en la crítica social al denominado pensamiento único neoliberal y a la globalización capitalista. Acusan a este proceso de beneficiar a las grandes multinacionales y países más ricos, acentuando la precarización del trabajo y consolidando un modelo de desarrollo económico injusto e insostenible, y socavando la capacidad democrática de los Estados, entre otros aspectos negativos. Generalmente, los activistas y simpatizantes mantienen una ideología izquierdista, contraria al liberalismo económico (economía de mercado y comercio libre). El nombre *altermundismo* viene precisamente del lema “Otro mundo es posible”, nacido en el Foro Social Mundial, que cada año reúne a movimientos sociales de izquierda política internacional.

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Amador Martos García, es licenciado en filosofía por la Universidad de Barcelona, y también obtuvo el Certificado de Aptitud Pedagógica (CAP). Es autor de varios libros: *Pensar en ser rico. De una conciencia materialista a una conciencia humanística*; *Pensar en ser libre. De la filosofía tradicional a la filosofía transpersonal*; *Neoliberalismo y altermundismo: los paradigmas del siglo XXI*; *Neoliberalismo asesino: el control mental hacia el Nuevo Orden Mundial*. Es socio de ATTAC (Asociación por la Tasación de las Transacciones Financieras y por la Acción Ciudadana) y miembro de la AFPC (Asociación de Filosofía Práctica de Cataluña). Colabora como articulista en el diario digital La Columnata.

E-mail: amador@pensarenserrico.es Web: www.pensarenserrico.es

The Splendid and the Savage: The Dance of the Opposites in Indigenous Andean Thought

Lo Espléndido y lo Salvaje: La Danza de los Contrarios
en el Pensamiento Indígena Andino

Hillary S. Webb

Goddard College
Plainfield, VT, USA

Abstract

One of the most well-known and defining characteristics of indigenous Andean thought is its adherence to a “complementary dualism” in which the “opposites” of existence are viewed as interdependent parts of a harmonious whole. This is in many ways in stark contrast to Western philosophical models, which have historically tended towards an “antagonistic dualism,” the view that the opposites are engaged in an eternal struggle for dominance. This paper considers how a culture’s relationship to the opposites—whether seen as a “war” or a “dance”—influences the way an individual creates psychological meaning. The results of this research into Andean complementary dualism are first presented. It is then considered how this cultural-philosophical worldview compares to other complementary models, specifically that of G.W. Hegel and C. G. Jung. The paper concludes with a consideration of how the similar ideals of these complementary worldviews might inform the work of transpersonal researchers and practitioners.

Key words: andean, dualism, polarity, shamanism, yanantin

Resumen

Una de las definitorias características y de las más conocidas del pensamiento indígena Andino es su fidelidad a un “dualismo complementario” en el cual los “opuestos” de la existencia son entendidos como partes interdependientes de un todo armonioso. Esto está en muchos sentidos en completa contradicción con los modelos filosóficos occidentales, los cuales han tendido históricamente hacia un “dualismo antagónico” donde los opuestos son entendidos como enfrentados en una eterna lucha por el dominio. Este trabajo analiza cómo la relación de los contrarios en una cultura (vista como una guerra o como un baile) influencia la forma en la que un individuo crea su significado psicológico. Además se compara cómo esta forma filosófica-cultural de entender la vida con otros modelos complementarios, específicamente con los de G.W. Hegel y C.G. Jung. Tras presentar los resultados de esta investigación sobre el dualismo complementario Andino, este trabajo concluye con una reflexión sobre cómo las parecidas ideas de estos modelos complementarios podrían ayudar al trabajo de investigadores transpersonales y demás profesionales.

Palabras clave: andino, dualismo, polaridad, chamanismo, yanantin

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Introduction

It has been argued (Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1989; Needham, 1973) that all cultures across time and space identify and make meaning of the world through binary oppositions—dyads of either *opposed* or *complementary* elements such as male-female, good-evil, spirit-flesh, sky-earth, and so on. It has also been suggested (Webb, 2012) that the way in which a given culture relates to the polarities—seeing them as engaging in either a “battle” or a “dance”—has a significant impact on the psychological life of the individual existing within that culture. In my work as a psychological anthropologist, I have developed a personal and professional interest in exploring the ways in which a culture’s relationship to the polarities affects an individual as cultural participant’s sense of self, as well as his or her overall relationship to the world. My particular approach to the exploration of the relationship between a culture’s basic ontological approach to the opposites and the effect that this has upon the psychology of the individual is informed by the concerns and research methodologies of transpersonal anthropology, a field that has been defined as “the investigation of the relationship between consciousness and culture, altered states of mind research, and the inquiry into the integration of mind, culture and personality” (Campbell & Staniford, p. 28). It is on this that the following article focuses.

Between 2007 and 2009, while conducting my doctoral research in psychology at Saybrook University, I had the experience of bouncing back and forth between two very different cultural models, each with a distinct relationship to the polarities. Over the course of these two years, I spent long periods of time doing autoethnographic fieldwork in Peru with the intent of shedding light on the concept of *yanantin* or “complementary opposites” as the philosophical basis of the indigenous Andean worldview. During this time, I had the opportunity to work with a group of indigenous Peruvians (primarily shamans and scholars) living in or near the city of Cusco. These research participants generously offered valuable time, perspective, and insight regarding their particular complementary worldview, resulting in a study that not only yielded fascinating intellectual-observational data through which I was able to come to understand the ways in which this complementary worldview is understood and psychologically integrated by the cultural participants, but which also gave me the opportunity to engage with this concept on a personal-experiential level. In doing so, I was able to achieve a deeper, more tacit sense of how the way in which an individual views the opposites of existence—whether as engaging in a “dance” or a “battle”—can significantly influence his or her inner experience of the world.

In this paper, I will present some of the results of this research as a means of exploring the connection between a culture’s basic ontological model—in particular, its relationship to the polarities—and how this model influences the way in which the individual as cultural participant creates psychological meaning. The paper begins with an overview of the two philosophical models I will be discussing, providing the general distinction between an “antagonistic dualism” and a “complementary dualism.” I will make the case that whichever a culture chooses as its primary metaphor—whether the view that existence is a “battle” or a “dance” of opposing energies—greatly influences the relationship that the individuals within that culture have to the world around them and, in particular, to the content of their own psyches. Having laid that foundation, I will turn to the results of my research, exploring the Andean concept of *yanantin* and its correlate term, *masintin*. Because it is believed that the opposites must be “pared” in order to move out of their initial power struggle and into a state of complementarity, I will focus on what I refer to as the “4Ts”—stages that, according to my research participants, reflect the steps of the dance that a *yanantin* pair must move through in order to establish themselves as interrelated and interdependent energies. Having done this, I will then offer a short recounting of my own personal experience with the concept of *yanantin*, offering the argument that making a shift between models, from antagonism to complementarity, can lead to a state of greater psychological ease and health. I then consider how this cultural-philosophical worldview and four-stage “dance” relates to other complementary models, specifically Idealist philosopher G.W. Hegel’s (1977b) dialectical model as the means by which individual and Absolute consciousness arise concurrently and Carl Jung’s (1989)

Individuation process in which the Self is revealed through the interaction of conscious and unconscious forces. The article concludes with a look at some of the similar precepts espoused by these three complementary worldviews, considering how these similarities might inform the work of transpersonally inspired researchers and practitioners.

Is Existence a “Battle” or a “Dance”?

As part of philosophical discourse, the term “dualism” (from the Latin *dualis*, meaning “containing two”) refers to an ontological system¹ or set of beliefs in which existence is understood to consist of two equally real and essential substances (such as mind and matter) and/or categories (such as “being” and “nonbeing,” “good” and “bad,” “subject” and “object”). When applied to the field of religious studies, “dualism” is most widely used in response to belief systems that conceive of two supreme and opposing principles (such as “God” and “Devil”). “Dualism” is also used as a means of distinguishing those things a given culture considers to be an aspect of the “profane” (the world of forms and day-to-day physical existence) and that which is attributable to the realm of the “sacred” (an intangible, transcendent, and—in some cases—more “true” or “essential” reality). Within the field of anthropology, the term “dualism” is often applied to cultures in which primary social structures and/or symbol systems are organized according to sets of twos, creating what has been called “dialectical societies” and/or “dual organizations” (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1989; Needham, 1973; Webb, 2009). While these oppositions may be viewed and mediated in different ways according to the varying dictates of the culture and/or domain in which they appear, the case has been made that every human society recognizes and attaches some importance to polarities, constituting a “universal tendency to think in twos” (Needham, 1987, p. 229).² Presuming this to be true, it can be argued that whether a culture’s underlying ontological model emphasizes the antagonistic relationship of the opposites or whether it looks beyond the initial tension towards their interrelationship within a complementary unity is one of its most significant and distinctive features and offers much insight into a culture’s—and, therefore, the individuals living within the culture—basic relationship to existence.

An “antithetical dualism” is one in which the opposites of existence are viewed as either being entirely independent of one another or as being eternal enemies that relate only through their desire to overthrow one another. For example, within ditheistic religious traditions, one side of the pair is often seen as being responsible for the creation and preservation of the cosmos and is therefore considered morally superior and entirely “good,” while its opposite aspect is attributed with destruction and human suffering is considered entirely “negative” or “evil.”³ Within the context of philosophical systems based on an antagonistic model, these dual energies tend to be two “substances”—i.e. the Cartesian split between mind and matter—with the ultimate goal being to determine which substance is the most true and real and which is either illusory or an epiphenomenon of the other in order to identify the *prima materia* of existence. Within models that exhibit an extreme form of antithetical dualism (as opposed to those that tend to be more moderate in their approach; (see footnote 3) the core drama becomes the continuing confrontation between separate and opposing principles. Any interaction between the two that appears to be logically contradictory is considered to be either a symptom of misinformation (in the case of philosophy’s “law of noncontradiction”) or a spiritual perversion (as in the infamous “Problem of Evil”). Occasions of paradox, here defined as “a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true” (“Paradox,” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2001, p. 612), thus are treated as crises, something to be solved and resolved until the contradiction no longer exists and existence is reduced to one identifiable and enduring feature.

But while an ontological model based on a dualism of antithetical terms accentuates the struggle and antagonism between the opposites and the ultimate desire for reduction, other systems of thought

perceive the polarities—and the paradoxes that result from their interactions—as being *complementary* in nature. Philosophical models in which a form of complementary dualism is present maintain that everything has a counterpart without which it cannot exist and that all things are dependent upon the tension and balanced interchange between them. Because they are interdependent and mutually supportive, resolutions or disturbances occurring in one evoke a sympathetic response in the other. Therefore, if one side is destroyed or denied, the other will suffer to an equal degree (Hertz, 1973; Maybury-Lewis, 1979, 1989; Needham, 1973; Tuzin, 1989). Instead of trying to uphold one side of the polarity and overthrow the other, cultures oriented towards a complementary perspective are marked by their dedication to maintaining an equilibrium and harmony between the opposites, both in spiritual and secular domains⁴.

Writes Maybury-Lewis (1989),

People in such societies are keenly aware that the conflicting principles that maintain the harmony of the universe in the long run can unbalance their individual and social lives in the short-run. They therefore see their binary systems as involving them in a constant effort to harmonize with these forces and to hold them in dynamic tension. (p. 11)

Andean Complementary Dualism

While a number of cultures throughout the world have been identified as upholding a philosophical worldview based in a complementary dualism, one of the most well-known is that of the indigenous people of the South American Andean region. Geographically speaking, “the Andes” constitutes a vast mountain region that extends through the greater part of South America through Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Although the Andes consists of a number of contrasting regions (dry, coastal desert and high, looming mountains) and of distinct culture-sharing peoples that inhabit it, there is nevertheless a general acceptance amongst scholars and others (Andrien, 2001; Astvaldsson, 2000; Isbell, 1978; Mannheim, 1991; Murra & Watchel; Silverblatt, 1987; Stone-Miller, 2002; Urton, 1981; Webb, 2012) that the people of this region share enough of a common history, linguistic lineage, and ideological outlook to constitute being categorized as a single ontology-sharing group⁵. Despite the Spanish conquest of the area in the 16th century, during which the Spanish priests worked to alter the native peoples conception of the cosmos (most significant of all being the attempt to implant an absolute dualism upon the ideological framework by introducing the concept of “sin” as a means of dividing the world into opposing forces of “good” and “evil”)⁶, it is widely agreed (Barnes, 1992; Harrison, 1989; Joralemon & Sharon, 1993; Silverblatt, 1987; Webb, 2012) that the Andean allegiance to complementary dualism as the underlying philosophical construct remains intact. Rather than representing a conversion to Western antithetical dualism, contemporary Andean models of consciousness reveal “an adaptation to—not an adoption of—the [Western] ethos” (Joralemon & Sharon, 1993).

Or, as Palomino (1971) wrote,

The Andean man ... continues to live within the structural model of his remote ancestors, but with a new symbolic and actual reality founded on historical events. It is possible that he may be on the brink of a radical change in his main characteristics, but *his dualism goes onto processed even under new conditions* [emphasis added].” (p. 86)

The Roots of the Research

The two most central terms underlying this philosophical legacy and enduring framework of Andean complementary dualism are *yanantin* and its correlate term, *masintin*. The first time I heard the term *yanantin* was back in 2000, when I accompanied a group of spiritual seekers to Peru to learn about the indigenous philosophies and practices of this land. We were sitting in the ruins of an ancient temple, watching an old *kuraq akulleq*⁷ (shaman) conduct a *despacho*—a ceremonial offering to the spirits of the earth. On a large, white piece of paper, he created a kind of mandala made from a variety of objects, each of which carried with it a specific intent for the health of individual, community, and planet. One of the first symbols to be included within the offering was a small figurine in the form of a human being. The figure was split down the middle, with one half of it colored yellow, the other half, pink.

“This is *yanantin*,” he told us. “Complementary opposites.”

The phrase *complementary opposites* struck me immediately. Perhaps this was because on some level I recognized that it reflected a worldview that was significantly different than that of the culture in which I was raised, one that has, historically and on both conscious and unconscious levels, consistently viewed the polarities as being incompatible with one another and therefore as engaged in an eternal antagonism and struggle for dominance. This antagonistic split shows up in much of Western religious dichotomies of sacred versus profane, spirit versus flesh, Absolute Good versus Absolute Evil, and so on. It also plays a major role in our philosophical systems, the most obvious of these being the debates over the primacy of mind/spirit versus the primacy of the physical body, resulting in the mind-body “problem.”

Psychologically speaking, this devotion to what Jung (1956) referred to as “neurotic one-sidedness” (p. 42) is evident in a certain intolerance of the complexity of the psyche, one that often results in a compulsion to eliminate all paradoxes and seeming contradictions of the human condition. A recent *Time* magazine article entitled, “What Makes Us Moral,” exemplifies this desire reduce the psyche to a singular characteristic and/or condition.

The article opens with the following sentiment:

If the entire human species were a single individual, that person would long ago have been declared mad. The insanity would not lie in the anger and darkness of the human mind—though it can be a black and raging place indeed. And certainly it wouldn’t lie in the transcendent goodness of that mind—one so sublime, we fold it into a larger Soul. The madness would lie instead in the fact that both of those qualities, the savage and the splendid, can exist in one creature, one person, often in one instant. (Kluger, 2007, p. 54)

According to this article, it does not matter which aspect of the psyche we choose—either the “splendid” or the “savage”—as long as we align ourselves thoroughly and completely with that one side without deviation. Only then can we be considered healthy and sane.

It was my dismay over my culture of origin’s “one-sidedness” and even outright fear of the complexity of lived experience that prompted me to devote my doctoral work to the study of how *yanantin* influences the psychological lives of indigenous Andeans. When I arrived for my first fieldwork trip in the spring of 2007, I began by walking the streets and through the markets, asking whomever I could to share with me their understanding of *yanantin*. My questions were met with stares and puzzled looks. Later, I would realize that going up to random individuals on the street and asking them about *yanantin* was not unlike how it would be for someone to enter a Western mall or urban center and start asking passersby what their relationship is to The Trinity. While some people may have a vague idea of what it means and what it stands for as a symbol, how many of us would be able to articulate how it relates to our daily life?

Having learned that first lesson, I changed my research strategy, working instead with indigenous shamans and scholars as my research participants⁸. These are individuals for whom this kind of philosophical understanding is part of their professional lives, and who are therefore able to articulate their influence on the daily life of the individual. Also, while the study began as a fairly straight-forward, traditional ethnography—full of facts and figures about how the philosophical ideal of *yanantin* influence the lives of indigenous Andeans—as I will discuss in more detail later in this paper, my research participants were insistent that I have my own experience of *yanantin*. As a result, I decided to incorporate the methods of “autoethnography” within my research methodology.

Autoethnography methodology

As the latter half of its name implies, autoethnography is similar to a traditional ethnography in that its aim is to describe and interpret the behaviors and customs of a culture-sharing group through the researcher’s immersion in their lives. But while within a traditional ethnography the inner experience of the researcher is alluded to but not focused on, in an autoethnography, throughout the research process the researcher makes continual comparisons between the “objective” characteristics of the phenomenon as lived by the cultural participants and the researcher’s own “bodily, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual experience” (Ellis, 2004, p. 30). What results from this inner-outer dialectic came a highly personalized, revealing text in which my own lived experiences of this cultural phenomenon were paired with that of my research participants, thus relating the personal to the cultural and the cultural to the personal.

Yanantin and Masintin

In describing the Andean worldview, Fernandez (1998) wrote,

Here nothing remains static. This is why a theory of the world or a methodology does not belong here. Here the only thing that belongs is an open and continuous conversation, with the active participation of all those of us who are the Andean world. . . . [H]ere there is no room for fundamentalism or essentialism. We are the world of love and nurturance, of exuberance, of voluptuousness, of exultation. There is here no manner of substratum that would sustain any intellectualism or dogmatism. This is no context for moralism or Puritanism. Here the one truth cannot live. (p. 141)

“*Here the one truth cannot live*”. As I would learn at the very beginning of my fieldwork, absolute definitions go against the fluid nature of the complementary worldview. When I first met with Amado, a young shaman who would become my primary research participant throughout the project, I asked him to define the word *yanantin* for me. To this he responded, “Out of respect I do not define *yanantin*. . . . May I suggest that you download the information from the cosmos instead?”

The story of this eventual “download” will be described later in this paper. What is pertinent to this current discussion is that while Amado did eventually provide me with some loose definitions of the term, he was careful to impress upon me that I should not get attached to any one explanation or perspective. Concrete, unchanging definitions are, to a degree at least, a very Western conception and was shown to me to be in opposition to the very fluid, circumstance-dependent perspective underlying the worldview of my research participants. Personal experience, rather than transmitted definitions is valued much more highly as a means of coming to understand the nuances of this concept.

That said, given the nature of this article and that some sort of common understanding must be built in order to properly discuss these ideas, I will give some loose definitions of “yanantin” and “masintin,” the central terms underlying this complementary framework.

Yanantin

The closest one-to-one translation that I was given for the Quechua word *yanantin* is the Spanish word *pareja* or “pair.” Etymologically, the prefix *yana-* means “help” while its suffix *-ntin* means “inclusive in nature, with implications of totality, spatial inclusion of one thing in another, or identification of two elements as members of the same category” (Platt, 1986, p. 245). Some scholars (Urton, 1981) break down the word slightly differently, translating *yana-* as “black” in the sense of “dark” or “obscure,” and contrast it to “light” (rather than in the sense of “black” as opposed to “white”). Generally speaking, the term *yanantin* is used to signify the relationship/alliance/meeting/unity between two entities; not necessarily absolute opposites (as in the case of dark-light, inner-outer, male-female, and so on) but refers to any collision and/or collusion of energies (for example, self-other or Buber’s I-Thou).

In some of the current literature surrounding the topic (Wilcox, 1999, p. 46), *yanantin* is translated as, “the complement of difference” However, Amado, my primary research participant, disagreed with this assessment, stating,

For us, *yanantin* doesn’t focus on the differences between two beings. That is what disconnects them. Instead, we focus on the qualities that brought them together. ... One on its own can’t hold everything, can’t take care of everything. Not only are they great together, but they *need* to be together. ... When there is another, it represents extra strength for both. (Webb, 2012, p. 24)

The word *yanantin* contrasts with *chhulla*, which refers to something that is unequal or odd—“one of things which should be twice” (Platt, 1986, p. 245). According to Vasquez (1998), the Quechua speakers of Cajamarca say that something that is incomplete is referred to as *chuya*, meaning “the one who is missing its other” (p. 100). He reflected that within this cultural group it is believed that, “In order to be whole, one has to pair up” (p. 100). Harrison (1989) noted that, “Quechua speakers persistently distinguish objects which are not well matched or ‘equal’” (p. 49). In fact, the survival of the community is therefore seen as dependent upon the balanced union of the conjugal pair (Harris, 1986).

Reflecting this, several of the Peruvians with whom I worked felt very strongly that, in order to be whole, one must establish a relationship with their *yanantin* (a connection that they say may be either in person or at an energetic level). When I told one of my research participants about the shocked response that a female anthropologist friend gets when she tells the Q’ero (a tribal group of Andean mountain dwellers) that she has no husband or partner, he laughed and said,

They must say, ‘How do you handle everything?’ It’s a big surprise, because, for them, without that partnership, life would not be possible. ... They say that when you don’t have a partner, you are only half of a being. Alone, you are precious, you are unique, but you are only *part*. You are not whole yet. This is because when you are by yourself, you are either accumulating so much that it is overwhelming or you are draining yourself so much that you become weak. Because of that, you will feel fear or confused or lost. ... That’s why they say in the communities that if you don’t have a partner, you can’t handle life. That’s why they get surprised. Because given the ways they live, one cannot handle life in the community without a partner. Only when a person is paired can they truly serve the community. That’s why the communities don’t see you as the whole until you are together. I was in Chincheros the other day and I was telling all the single boys, “You are only half men!” (Webb, 2012, pp. 139-140)

Masintin

Thus, whether something is paired or unpaired is an important distinction within the Andean cosmivision. But simply bringing together two entities or energies is not enough to constitute a *yanantin* pair. According to Platt (1986) *yanantin* includes the act of rendering equal two things that were once unequal—what he calls, “the correction of inequalities” (p. 251). In order for a *yanantin* relationship to be achieved, the two energies are brought into harmony. As Platt explains, “[t]he elements to be paired must first be ‘pared’ to achieve the ‘perfect fit.’ Here the crucial notion is that of the *sharing of boundaries* in order to create a harmonious co-existence [emphasis in original text]” (p. 251).

This “pareing” or “sharing of boundaries” is an essential concept within the *yanantin-masintin* framework. If *yanantin* is the “noun”—that is, the complementary pair in and of itself—then *masintin* is the “verb,” meaning that it is the active process by which the *yanantin* pair becomes “pared” and thus moves from a state of antagonism and separateness to one of complementarity and interdependence.

I was told,

This is where both of these beings come together in absolute service, in absolute mission together. *Masintin* is where the power of the two become the force that will allow whatever that these *yanantin* are dreaming to manifest. ... *Being* is *yanantin*. *Masintin* is the *experience*. *Yanantin* exists already. Only with *masintin* can you get through the process. (Webb, 2012, p. 37)

The four stages

According to several of my research participants, this movement towards complementarity and interdependence is a four-stage process of boundary exploration. The four stages are as follows:

- Tupay (The Meeting)
- Tinkuy (Testing of Boundaries)
- Taqe (The Union)
- Trujiy (The Separation)

I will go through each phase, giving a brief overview of how each one was explained to me and each one’s importance within the “pareing” process.

1.- Tupay

The first stage, *tupay*, is “the meeting”—the initial encounter between the *yanantin* pair. It was described to me like this,

Whenever you meet a person [or other entity/energy], *tupay* is that encounter. ... In partnership, in wife to husband relationship, *tupay* is very, very powerful. [In Peru] there are ceremonies each year that are specifically celebrated for having this encounter. Nowadays, a lot of people get married during this first level of meeting. A lot of people say, ‘Oh, wow, it is so powerful, it is so strong.’ And they go for that relationship right away.”(Webb, 2012, p. 70)

2.- *Tinkuy*

The second stage, *tinkuy*, is the phase of greatest tension between the pair. And by “tension” what is meant is not just tension in a negative, anxiety-producing sense (although that aspect is undeniably part of it), but also the tension occurring from passion and intimate connection. It is in this stage that a testing of boundaries occurs between the *yanantin* pair. It is here that we discover where I end and you begin. Points of similarity and difference reveal themselves.

It is within this stage that we come face-to-face with the reality and understanding that a complementary worldview does not imply a Utopian state of existence. Not at all. In fact, within a complementary perspective, this tension (both the ecstatic and the painful) is understood to be not only natural and unavoidable, but also *necessary* to upholding the cosmic dance. While challenging, this tension is not considered a negative thing, but rather an essential aspect of forging a relationship between the *yanantin* pair.

An extreme example of this can be seen in the yearly *tinkuy* battles held in certain mountain-dwelling communities the Andes. During this week-long ritual, opposing groups (often groups of men but sometimes groups of women) meet and engage in brutal combat with one another. These violent *tinkuy* battles have been described as the physical, ritualized enactment of the collision of opposing forces taking place within the cosmos. While bloody and even sometimes deadly, they are said to promote fertility, moral equilibrium, and are a means by which points of tension between individuals are released and harmony can be achieved (Allen, 1988, 2002; Bastien, 1992; Harrison, 1989).

As one of my research participants reflected,

This is the time in the year when all of them can solve their problems and their anger and all of it can come out in a fight. They don't just say, 'Okay, there is a way of resolving this that can be peaceful so don't worry, just swallow your anger.' They prepare a whole year ahead of time for the moment that they will be able to bring all this anger out. It's one way of moving the *hucha* out of the system, out of the community. (Webb, 2012, p. 66)

As Allen (2002) noted, “Rivals in battle, like lovers, are *yanantin* (a matched pair; helpmates). . . . Any release of energy—whether constructive or destructive—calls for collaboration” (p. 160).

Similarly, some Andean healers describe their work—the purpose of which is to harmonize the energies of an individual or communal system and, in doing so, return it to a state of health and wholeness—as engaging in a *tinkuy* battle between heavy and light energies. The mixing of ingredients in medicine or cooking is sometimes referred to as *tinkuy* (Allen, 2002, p. 177). In the highland Andes, *solteros* (single people) from each of the rural villages meet once a year in order to dance and flirt in order to establish partnerships. This, too, is referred to as *tinkuy*. All these examples—the battling, the flirting, the spices mixing—shows the various guises that the *tinkuy* phase takes.

3.- *Taqe*

The third stage is *taqe*, “the union.” While the *tinkuy* phase is noted as being the place of greatest tension, *taqe* is the phase in which the antagonism recedes in favor of an initial state of complementarity. In this phase, the power struggle has ceased. This is the stage in which, as Allen (1988) noted, “Cosmos, community, household and individual are felt to attain existence through the fusion of opposites like the *warmi* [woman] and *qhari* [man], each of which contains the other” (p. 208).

As one of my research participants described it, once you reach the *taqe* level, “you are no longer two people, but one. ... That other partner, that soul mate, not only is the complement, but she becomes the very foundation of my being. (Webb, 2012, p. 71)

He told me,

The *taqe* level represents absolute strength—for the family, for the community, and definitely for the planet. ... A lot of couples feel that they have arrived at the *taqe* level, but they really haven't because there is always one partner who wants to be in control. If there is a winner or a loser, then you are still in that *tinkuy* mentality, right? There is still that competition. Only when partners come into absolute cooperation, do they reach the *taqe* level.” (Webb, 2012, p. 142)

4.- *Trujiy*

The final phase, *trujiy*, is the most difficult to describe, as it tends to be the most esoteric and even “mystical” of the four stages. Here, total complementarity is achieved. *Trujiy* has been described (Webb, 2012) as “loving at the level of the soul.” It is also called “the separation.” While these two phrases may seem contradictory—for how can something be both a separation and an Ultimate Union?—they are not. One of my participants described it to me as *illawi*—“cosmic weaving.” (Webb, 2012, p. 155)

He said,

[You arrive at the *trujiy* stage] when you have completed everything and you and your *yanantin* have become a oneness. Because once you reach the *taqe* level, you are no longer two people, but one. *Trujiy* is then the point at which your *yanantin* departs or when you depart from your *yanantin*. ... That separation is only the start of another, much higher level of union...*Trujiy* represents the capacity to be yourself again once you have experienced that *yanantin* union. After that, you become one single person again. But in that singleness you are no longer just yourself. You are One—with the *yanantin*, with God, with the essence. No matter what happens, you are One with all of that. Always. (Webb, 2012, p. 152)

Earlier in this paper I mentioned that although I had begun this research with the intent of conducting a tradition ethnography in which I would investigate the influence of *yanantin* on the lives of my research participants, very early on in the process I was told that if I was to truly understand *yanantin*, at any level, I would have to have my own personal experience of it.

One of the “techniques of ecstasy” used by shamanic cultures across the world is psychedelic plant medicines. In the case of several of the research participants with whom I worked, the San Pedro cactus is a primary tool for healing and insight. San Pedro is typically prepared as a liquid, with the meat of the cactus boiled with water into a thick liquid so that the mescaline content—the vision-inducing ingredient—is highly concentrated.

Sharon (1972) wrote,

[The] San Pedro cactus is experienced as the catalyst that enables the curandero to transcend the limitations placed on ordinary mortals, to activate all his senses; project his spirit or soul; ascend and descend into the supernatural realms . . . [to] “jump over” barriers of time, space, and matter; divine the past, present, and future—in short, to attain vision, “to see.” (p. 130)

It was suggested to me at the beginning of my research that the best way for me to understand and integrate this concept of *yanantin* was for me to “download” it—that is, to go into ceremony with the San Pedro cactus. While a complete description of the more personal, experiential aspect of the research is available elsewhere (Webb, 2012), given its esoteric and intangible nature, it feels appropriate to here offer some description of my own experience of *trujiy*.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, my two primary participants, Amado and Juan Luis, brought me into a San Pedro ceremony; a ceremony that was specifically designed for me to have an experience of *trujiy*. As this would be my final fieldwork trip for this particular project, I hoped that this ceremony would result in some grand insight in which I would then understand *yanantin*, wholly and completely.

As I sat there, I could feel the effects of the Medicine deepening. My senses began to wake up all the way, and then it was as if the world around me had just had an exclamation point added onto it. Everything seemed to have taken another dimension onto itself, as if even the most infinitesimal qualia that make up creation had chosen to reveal their true character. The blue and green tones hidden in the rusty red of the stone masses leapt out, competing for attention with the bright pinks hidden within the yellow-green of the scrubby canyon grass—a grass that doubled its own sense of presence by rubbing its blades together, rustling in the wind like people softly whispering. Not to be outdone, the canyon walls vibrated against the wind with a long, low “huuuuuuusssshhh!”

But along with these calming sensations came unpleasant ones as well. The young man had moved his sheep closer, and, little by little, the sweet rustling of the grass and the low humming of the canyon walls was overtaken by the ugly cacophony of the high-pitched whining of the sheep, punctuated every now and then by the low, lunatic bleat of the ram. The sound bounced off the canyon walls and filled the air, amplifying it to a maddening pitch. I tried to block it out of my mind by focusing on the wind, on the *illawi* stone in front of me. When that did not work, I tried to embrace it as part of the landscape of which I was trying to be a part, rather than give in to the belief that this sound was getting in the way of whatever Revelation might be waiting for me. The sound was beyond irritating. I found myself growing physically nauseous.

And then, for whatever reason, just as I thought I might lose it all together, all the sounds—the shrieking of the sheep, the whispering of the grass, and the humming of the canyon walls—all began to merge together into one. And then, even that oneness disappeared and there was nothing but a frozen silence, a big emptiness, as if I had gone temporarily deaf.

Before I had time to be alarmed by this, some wheel within my consciousness began turning backwards. It started slowly and then picked up speed, as if time itself were moving in reverse. If this were a movie, it would be at this point that all the action on the screen would stop, frozen in motion for 2 or 3 seconds, and then begin moving backwards.

Flashes of memory from the last two years flooded my psyche.

Barack Obama . . . He is a Trujiy.

Men and women as time and space.

Ferns and fractals.

Trickster apus. Visions of life and death.

The Chavín faces. The Lanzón. (My god, The Lanzón!)

The stars moving and not moving. Schrödinger’s Cat.

Self and other. Tinkuy battles. I think, therefore, I think it over.

The prophecy stone. The Eagle and the Condor.

Meeting Juan Luis for the first time in the Plaza. Laughter. Followed by more laughter.

Amado. Laughter and tears.

Stepping off the plane. Out of the airport and into that fugue state.

Beginnings.

Suddenly, in my mind, I was back to the place where I had started. Back again to that point at which it all began. It was then that I had the utterly joyful and, at the same time, absolutely horrifying realization that none of it really mattered. None of it. The struggles, all the searching, everything that I had experienced over the last two years meant nothing because, in the end, all it did was lead back to this deep, glorious, heart-wrenching silence. And in that silence, meaning was irrelevant. Whether there were shapes in the rock or were not shapes in the rock did not matter a bit. It is all the same, one way or another. If the stars are moving or not moving . . . who cared, when trying to figure that out was a ridiculous attempt? In that silence, I was relieved of the obsessive urging to make meaning, for there was no meaning to anything. And that flash of insight was both blissful and painful. I had never before understood the strangely addictive power of the *tinkuy*, of the ecstatic friction that results from the antagonism of the polarities grappling with one another. While we might hate the struggle, or love the struggle, what does one do when the struggle stops? A loop is created in our minds that catches us and will not let go. Or, rather, we will not let go.

In that space nothingness, there was no choice but to cease trying to make meaning of anything. In that oiled-up condition of the psyche, the urge to struggle had nothing to grip onto, nothing to give it traction and impetus and *purpose*. In that space, everything just was *being*. If there was more to know, to learn, it did not matter because, for better and for worse, in the end there is just silence. And in that silence we can stop.

For the first time in years, I felt the mad urging for answers leave me. And while on the one hand that was a glorious release, a deep pain came with it as well. Was this what it all came to in the end? After all the years of research, of experience . . . was it really to end this way? Not with a glorious flash of Revelation that would make the world make sense but with just this dull silence? Some strange nothingness? A part of me tried to fight that nothingness, but in the end I had no choice but to give into it. It was all I could do. I was tired. It had been a long two years. I took a drunken step forward and felt my legs buckle underneath. I sat down, exhausted, onto the ground, my head falling into my hands. (Webb, 2012, pp.156-159)

A few days later, I described my experience to Amado. At the time I told him, I felt that my experience had not amounted too much, for I had not received the Grand Revelation or Great Insight that I had hoped for—something that would make *yanantin* understandable once and for all. Instead, I told him, the experience felt so quiet that it was almost disappointing.

“But that’s the Revelation!” Amado exclaimed throwing his arms open.

“What do you mean?”

“What you experienced. That silence . . . *that* is the essence of [trujiy]. . . . Absolute peace. Absolute harmony with everything that there is and everything that there isn’t. That’s very powerful. It puts your mind completely busy and at the same time completely blank. . . . [T]hat’s exactly what *trujiy* is about. At that point, you go to a whole other dimension of experience. That’s what so many people look for. And like you say, they find it in the very place that they began. It is at that point that the *Trujiy*, the pilgrim, arrives to inner peace, to inner absoluteness, and also to absolute nothingness. That’s it! That is it. That which is almost disappointing—maybe because it *is* so simple—is exactly the essence that we can find in *trujiy*. At that point, there is just that natural flow of not thinking before you do. It’s like thought can come still, but first there’s that peace, that silence, that natural instinct to act, to serve, to do. In the process of the *tupay* and *tinkuy* and *tage*, there’s so much happening all the time. There’s full actions; full dynamics. The level of *trujiy* is exactly what you experienced. It’s just that pure silence, when one aligns with that absolute everything and absolute nothing. That’s it. That’s *trujiy*. Those are the cosmic seeds. . . .” (Webb, 2012, pp. 159-160)

Other Complementary Systems

Having just outlined the distinction between antithetical and complementary ontological systems; having offered some tentative insight into *yanantin* and *masintin* and how these terms are experienced by my research participants (and, to a degree, how I myself experienced them), the remainder of this paper will consider how the Andean worldview intersects with other “complementary” philosophies and what the similarities between these systems have to offer us as transpersonal researchers and practitioners. In this next section, I will give an overview of two other complementary models: Idealist philosopher G.W. Hegel’s “dialectic” as a means by which humanity’s consciousness expands and, thus, the Absolute comes to know itself, and C.G. Jung’s Individuation process through which the collision of conscious and unconscious processes leads to the wholeness of the individual “Self.” These two complementary models—one representing the microcosm of the individual self and the other offering a “macrocosmic” perspective of the unfolding of existences as a whole—when brought together with the Andean perspective on self-other relationships offers us a multi-layered perceptual model through which we can view the basic understandings of the complementary perspective.

G.W. Hegel’s Dialectical Dance

G.W. Hegel is one of several 19th century German Idealist philosophers who set out to resolve the dilemma posed by Immanuel Kant, who stated that the world consists of irresolvable antinomies—statements that individually seem equally reasonable but which together are contradictory and which demonstrate the absolute impossibility of knowledge (Kant, 2008). Hegel disputed this idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself, accusing Kant of creating an epistemological crisis in which *knowing* (something’s appearance) and *being* (its true essence) are irreconcilably estranged. He rejected Kant’s (2008) assumption that contradictions⁹ are products of a “natural and unavoidable illusion” (p. 211), instead regarding the interplay of opposites as proof of an Infinite Truth—what he called the Absolute. Hegel believed that the opposites should thus be looked at from the context of their relationship within a higher unity, for, as he wrote, “Neither of these determinations taken alone, has truth. This belongs only to their unity” (in Priest, 1987, p. 92). He therefore sought to lead “natural consciousness” to a new way of thinking in which opposing forces found the “harmony in the heart of discord” (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 90) and through which one could chart the progressive unfolding of the Absolute within Creation and heal the epistemological schism that Kant described. Hegel (1977a) wrote, “[it is the] task of philosophy [and hence of reason]. . . To unite. . . Finitude and infinity. . . [and] to construct the absolute for consciousness” (pp. 93-94).

While traditional logic states that if one thesis is true, then its opposite is not true, Hegel’s “dialectic” outlined the way in which two apparently opposed ideas—because of their strife and not despite it—become first reconciled and then unified, leading to the evolution of human consciousness. This philosophical model became Hegel’s template through which one could chart humanity’s progressive unfolding from lower to higher levels of consciousness.

The unfolding of the dialectic has been explained (Berthold-Bond, 1989; Singer, 1983) by illustrating the relationship between a *thesis*, its *antithesis*, and their eventual *synthesis* in a higher unity.¹⁰

It goes something like this:

In the beginning, a consciousness emerges. This is the original *thesis*—a singular, undifferentiated consciousness or wholeness. It is a singularity, and as such it is alone, undifferentiated, unchallenged, unmet. But life has an impulse for self-identity and self-knowledge, something that it cannot attain by itself. In order to become *self-conscious*, consciousness needs a non-self “other”—an *antithesis*—to interact with and thus distinguish itself from.

Singer (1983) explained it this way:

“[T]o see oneself, one needs a mirror. To be aware of oneself as a self-conscious being, one needs to be able to observe another self-conscious being, to see what self-consciousness is like.” (p. 77)

The *thesis* yearns to know itself, and this desire for self-knowledge gives rise to another consciousness, an *antithesis*, whose very presence contradicts the *thesis*'s singularity. But while the appearance of the *antithesis* fulfills the *thesis*'s yearning for self-awareness, at the same time the *thesis* feels threatened by this opposing consciousness, which it now considers to be a threat to its self-identity. The *thesis* is thus left strung up between two opposing desires—on the one hand a desperate need for differentiation through the mirroring of another and, on the other, an equally intense loathing of the other's existence, which threatens its control over the world.

Singer (1983) wrote,

Although self-consciousness needs an object outside itself, this external object is also something foreign to it, and a form of opposition to it. There is therefore a peculiar kind of love-hate relationship between self-consciousness and the external object. This relationship, in the best tradition of love-hate relationships, comes to the surface in the form of desire. To desire something is to wish to possess it and thus not to destroy it all together—but also to transform it into something that is yours, and thus to strip it of its foreignness. ... [However] if the object of desire is done away with as an independent object, self-consciousness will have destroyed what it needed for its own existence. (p. 76)

Eventually the *thesis* and *antithesis* begin to see the other as an obstacle. Each demands recognition of its superiority from the other and neither is willing to relinquish control. A power-struggle results as each tries to overwhelm the other. A battle ensues. Eventually, one overcomes the other and forces it to bend to its will. The one that submits becomes the Slave; the victor, the Master.

As the Slave is put to work creating the world according to the Master's bidding, the Master goes about his life within a world that the Slave has made. While this seems at first to be an ideal situation for the Master, over time a shift begins to occur. Despite his subservience, the sweat that mixed with the mortar of the world is the Slave's own, making the world a reflection of him. As the Slave comes to realize this, he earns self-respect and identity. While the Slave is establishing self-identity, the Master—who is a passive consumer of the Slave's creation—starts to *lose* self-identity, for not only is the world no longer a reflection of himself, but because the Slave has been subjugated, the Slave is no longer a viable counterpart against which the Master can come to know himself. Because of this shift in identity, the two of them eventually trade positions: The Slave becomes the Master and the Master now the Slave. The dialectic thus begins anew, with the *thesis* and *antithesis* flip-flopping back and forth, continually switching roles. As the power struggle continues, however, an interesting thing occurs. A *synthesis* is revealed; a “third thing” that both contains and transcends the *thesis* and its *antithesis*, constituting a higher form of consciousness than either of the original two created separately. Hegel maintained that the *synthesis* does not just appear out of thin air, like some long-awaited messiah who has finally appeared upon the scene, but rather “shows itself only in the end, but in such a way that this end reveals that [it] has also been there from the beginning” (Hegel, 1956, p. 157). Hegel reminds us that for all their apparent antagonism, the *thesis* and *antithesis* are the parents of the *synthesis*, which as a child of this union both contains and supersedes the original two¹¹. But while the emergence of the *synthesis* resolves things for a time, eventually the *synthesis* becomes a new *thesis*—a crystallized truth which must then be confronted by an *antithesis*. The dialectic begins again, with confrontation after confrontation, each leading to a new *synthesis* and higher forms of knowledge. In this way, “spirit is eternally preparing for itself its funeral pyre and consuming itself upon it, but so that from its ashes is produced a new, revitalized, fresh life” (Hegel, 1956, p. 73).

Explained Berthold-Bond (1989),

[This] is the principle by which thought disrupts its instinctive or immediate certainty, or by which thought becomes 'split up' or 'divided' into an opposition of consciousness to a specific object. Dialectic is thus the very process of thinking, where thought 'loses itself in' and becomes 'entangled in the contradiction' of its nonidentity with its object, and yet where this very negativity urges thought to 'persevere,' to 'work out in itself the solution to its own contradiction.' It is ... 'a series of successive "*conversions*"' whereby the relation of consciousness to the world is progressively transformed. (p. 84-85)

Hegel (1977b) believed that the only way to stop this dialectic from repeating over and over again *ad infinitum* was for thesis and antithesis to recognize their interdependence and necessity to one another's existence. The recognition of their equal participation in the world would then lead to a final synthesis, in which the Absolute (Universal Mind/Spirit) would attain complete self-knowledge and wholeness. The Absolute, Hegel wrote, "is accomplished in the world, and not in a heavenly kingdom that is "beyond"" (p. 21). He believed that as the collective consciousness of humankind evolves through this dialectic process, so too does the Absolute attain self-consciousness and, thus, ultimate knowledge.

C.G. Jung's Dialectic of Individuation

In much the same way that Hegel asserted that the tension of opposites within the finite world was necessary to the evolution of human consciousness and the realization of the Absolute, C. G. Jung believed that the psychological life of the individual was in a constant process of unfolding into greater self-awareness through an interplay of opposing forces within the psyche. In the case of Jung, these opposing forces were the conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche.

The *conscious* aspects are those elements that are accessible to us on a day-to-day basis. Within this realm, Jung included the ego, which, amongst other things, is responsible for upholding an individual's self-image and individuality, distinguishing all that is "I" from everything that is "not-I."

"The essence of the conscious mind is discrimination," Jung (1995) wrote, "it must, if it is to be aware of things, separate the opposites" (pp. 31-32).

In contrast, the *unconscious* includes those aspects of the personality that are disavowed and/or denied by the ego, what Jung referred to as the "shadow." While those "heroic" qualities of which we are most proud tend to pass through the filter of the ego and into an individual's conscious self-construction, those characteristics that we consider "shameful" or in any way antithetical to the ego's vision of itself are denied; hidden away within the unconscious. However, as Jung (1989) wrote, "everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation" (p. 3) and all the repressed elements of the psyche eventually make their way to consciousness. As with Hegel's vision of the relationship between *thesis* and *antithesis*, Jung (1966) argued that neither conscious nor unconscious aspects of the psyche are, by themselves, complete. In fact, he believed that all psychological imbalances represent a "self-division" (Volume 7, paragraph 18) or state of disunity due to the antagonism and estrangement of consciousness and unconscious processes. Unlike his mentor, Freud (who saw this division as eternal and uncompromising), Jung insisted that not only it is *possible* to explore the depths of the unconscious, but that the neuroses resulting from this relationship of opposing forces was a positive thing, reflecting the psyche's attempt to come into balance by bringing to light the hidden elements of one's true (or whole) personality. Every neurosis, hallucination, or paranoid idea therefore "contain a germ of meaning" (Jung, 1989, p. 127) that, if followed through to its essence, could result in a greater harmony and—to use Hegelian terms—a *synthesis* or a "reconciling third" which unites the psychic forces of the individual—what Jung called the "Self."

The Self is the psyche in its full authenticity, in which all conscious and unconscious processes are first united and then transcended. It is both the regulating force and the sum totality of the psyche. The Self, Jung (1966) wrote, is the dialectical unity of “both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It is the uniting symbol which epitomizes the whole union of opposites”(Volume 16, paragraph 474). A healthy psyche, he asserted, depends on a tension and interplay between opposite poles in order to function properly. If one side of a pair of opposites becomes excessively predominant in the personality, it is likely to turn into its contrary.

[While] the tendency to separate the opposites as much as possible and to strive for singleness of meaning is absolutely necessary for clarity of consciousness ... when the separation is carried so far that the complementary opposite is lost sight of ... the result is one-sidedness ... which in consequence must become more and more fanatical until it brings about a catastrophic enantidromia. (pp. 333-334)

Jung (1966) argued that much of Western religious and scientific thought is aimed at repressing or dissociating from the opposites within the psyche, and that such dualistic ideologies were psychologically harmful to the individual and ultimately led to a sickness in society as a whole, stating, “Unfortunately, our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even name, for the *union of opposites through the middle path*, that most fundamental item of inward experience ...” (Volume 7, paragraph 327.)

Discussion

Brought together, these three models offer us a multi-dimensional view of how a complementary perspective appears through the lens of the “macro” (Hegel’s vision of the unfolding connection between individual consciousness and Absolute consciousness), the “micro” (Jung’s consideration of how opposing forces within the psyche lead the individual to the wholeness of the Self), and the way in which the dance between self, other, and world unfolds within the daily social and spiritual lives of my Andean research participants. While each focuses on a slightly different aspect of existence, several recurring patterns appear that offer us clues as to how an individual might initiate a shift from an antagonistic relationship to existence to one of complementarity.

Before getting to these similarities, an obvious question to ask at this point is: Why would one want to make this shift? What specifically are the results of engaging in such a psychological transformation? Elsewhere (Webb, 2012) I have described the details of how this complementary perspectives influences the psychological lives of my Andean research participants as well as my own psychological shift, one which lead to a sense of greater existential ease. In the time since my study was published, I have focused my attention on how these ideas influence the lives of Westerners who have read the book, who hear my talks, or who attend my workshops. While this research endeavor is, at the time of this writing, still fairly new, several comments and reflections that readers and audience members have shared with me give a hint as to the benefits of making a shift from a worldview based in antagonism to one of complementarity.

For example: “The concept of complementary dualism is helping my husband and I through some challenging times in our personal and professional lives,” one individual wrote to me. “I keep reminding myself of the idea that transition is good, tension is good.” A leadership trainer from the UK wrote to me, saying, “I’d like to talk with you at some point about your thoughts on lessons on leadership based on your experiences in the Andes. I work globally with executive level leaders and am working on projects that support these folks to access the numinous/sacred/transcendent in ways that can help them to connect

more deeply with their vocation, sense of interconnectedness and planetary purpose. My intuition is that there is a great deal that we could take from your experiences that could help foster this discussion—perhaps even exercises that we could use to help them to connect on a felt way to their transpersonal natures.” In another email a reader commented that, “If people realized that battle is part of the process, then perhaps more interpersonal relationships would work because people would go with the flow of it more. It’s awfully calming to know that “bad” things can be a normal part of a healing process. ... When I think about all the *yanantin* dances going on it makes the world seem so much more alive, in a way.”

While hardly a conclusive study, these informal comments indicate a certain hunger within the Western psychological appetite for a new model by which to view the interactions of daily life; one that offers an opportunity to engage with the world as a “dance” rather than a “battle.” In particular, having a “blueprint” of this dance in the form of the 4Ts (Tupay, Tinkuy, Taque, Trujiy) offers a reference point by which to give context to the tensions of daily living; a framework for how these tensions may be viewed as a necessary and creative process rather than pointing to the unfairness of life. As do my research participants, individuals can apply the 4Ts to all domains of life, both personal and professional practices.

With that in mind, looking at the three complementary traditions all together, several similarities or “lessons” arise that seem to be especially important in understanding the complementary perspective and initiating this kind of shift:

Lesson #1: *Do not start from a conclusion.*

Each of these traditions espouse a kind of “mindfulness” training, maintaining the necessity of moving past initial, knee-jerk reactions in order to free our minds from compulsive assumptions. Hegel (1954), for example, asserted that a *conditioned* mind is not a *free* mind; that a decision based on mental or social habits is a false reflection of reality, and the individual acting as such is not acting freely. Freedom of consciousness, he argued, is never arbitrary or habitual or in any way inauthentic. True freedom, he maintained, is “the activation of one’s own inner tendency; it is an unfolding of oneself; it is self-realization” (p. xliii). In a similar way, Jung (1995) maintained that while it may be necessary to make judgments, the individual should bear greater responsibility for the source of his or her judgments than is usually expected of us. He insisted that judgment should only come from a consciousness that has cleansed itself of projections and is therefore able to act purely from the authenticity of the Self.

Amado told me that one of the most essential aspects of his shamanic training was to become conscious of his initial reactions before acting upon them. When I asked him about this, he told me,

Usually we perceive the surface part of it—what one might think of as “evil”—and that is what we stick with. Often, a lot of people get lost in the reaction of it, and that reaction creates a blockage that keeps you from accessing it deeper. So, out of fear, out of irritation, you react to it. But the essence is much deeper. It is something that you have to journey into further. ... When we are facing that trickster energy, our first response is usually fear or pain or anger—all that heavy stuff. But once the first impression is done, what is your next action? ... You have to be a warrior. Every second, every minute of our lives we have to be warriors of light. It’s okay to have that first reaction and, yes, maybe even be afraid or angry. That’s natural. But then you must open up more and ask, ‘What is this all about?’ Go deeper. (Webb, 2012, pp. 106-107)

While from a Western perspective this approach might seem to be coming close to a kind of relativism, I was assured that this perspective does not imply apathy. When I asked my research participants if they would still stand up to something they considered “destructive” or “evil,” they were horrified that I would think otherwise. As one of my participants responded, “In this world, only the crazy people would say, ‘I am not against the bad.’ But you have to be against the bad in a very harmonious way” (Webb, 2012, p. 109).

Each of these philosophical viewpoints suggests that it is not so much *what* the individual chooses, but *how* the individual arrives at this choice. Each also recognizes the difficulty of dissolving the habits of mind that keep us trapped in our antagonistic divisions. In response, each has developed its own set of means by which the individual may disrupt habitual patterns of thought and step into a kind of “neutral zone” free from automatic concepts of right and wrong. Hegel described his own philosophy as a *via negativa*, or the “pathway of doubt,” offering a model for a kind of controlled scepticism that would lead the individual to a “loss of immediate certainty” (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 83) and, thus, a “loss of its own self.” (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 9) Jung had his patients use “Active Imagination”—an inner dialogue between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the Self—in order to reveal unconscious impulses and force a confrontation between the two and even a symbolic “death” of the ego’s absolute control over the psyche.

“Dissolution is a prerequisite for redemption,” Jung (1970) wrote. “The celebrant of the mysteries has to suffer a figurative death in order to attain transformation” (p. 283).

As noted, when I first arrived in Peru to conduct my fieldwork, my research participants were insistent that if I truly wanted to understand *yanantin*, I would have to have an experience of it by going into ceremony with the San Pedro cactus. “The Medicine will help you understand *yanantin*,” I was told. “But not only that. It will help you *be yanantin*” (Webb, 2012, p. 27). While the use of psychedelics is not the only means of initiating such a disruption of consciousness, it is one of the most dramatic. And while often in a Western context psychedelics are used for the purpose of escaping the “real world,” within the Andean shamanic context, the healer takes on a role similar to that of a therapist, creating an intentional space in which the revelations occurring within the journey are psycho-integrated and thus have application within the individual’s “non-stoned” life.

Lesson #2: Establishing a “perfect” relationship of complementarity does not remove the tension between them.

In other words, as mentioned earlier, a complementary worldview *does not mean a Utopia*. While reconciliation brings the once antagonistic opposites into interrelationship, it does not necessarily bring them into perfect peace.

The teleological goal of most Western religious and scientific pursuits tends to be the achievement of some form of Absolute Perfection, a state in which all complexity and tension is resolved through the triumph of the one more “real” or “superior” element. But while in Western thinking we are often chasing Utopias, hoping to get there through evolution, through linear progress, it has been pointed out (Cruz, 2007, Vasquez, 1998, Webb, 2012) that this kind of thinking is alien in Andean philosophical models. Cruz (2007) noted that in Andean thinking there is no concept of a messiah who brings with him an end to history. Likewise, Vasquez (1998) wrote: “It would not occur to anyone in the Andes to be considered civilized today and call their ancestors barbarians or savages, and thus discover a non-civilized type of human kinship” (p. 96). In contrast, while Hegel’s Dialectic did indeed present a teleological vision in which absolute freedom and absolute self-knowledge would eventually be achieved, he maintained that conflict is to be viewed as the inevitable *expression* of the Dialectic in action and that, “Eternal peace ... would produce a situation as foul as that of a sea never whipped by gales, and through war ‘the ethical health of nations is maintained’” (in Friedrich, 1954, p. xlviii).

In the West, our cultural tendency is to try to resolve or eradicate the tension of opposites by whatever means necessary. But while we may want the two energies to draw together in perfect love and harmony, it may turn out that their natural relationship is a pereptual *tinkuy* state, with all the blood, sweat, and tears that result from such an engagement. These complementary systems recommend that we drop all expectations or assumptions about what reconciliation “looks like.” The expectation for a certain

outcome is often what gets us in trouble, for if a relationship of energies does not live up to our desires, we are likely to reinforce the antagonism through an attempt at manipulating it to conform to our standards rather than allowing the relationship to be as it is.

Lesson #3: Recognition of “other” as equal participant in the world’s construction.

Complementarity does not require *harmony*, but it does require *recognition*. While antithetical dualism asks us to choose one side over the other and then try to bend the other to our will, the complementary perspective calls for an acknowledgement that each side of the equation plays an essential role in the unfolding and enfolding of the whole. This is exemplified by the need that *thesis* and *antithesis* have for a non-self “other” who is an equal participant in the world in order for each to achieve full consciousness. Jung urged that the shadow realm of the unconscious should not be seen as “evil” or “less than,” for in fact it is the source of greatest power for the individual. Amongst my Andean research participants, it was noted that only through the eyes of one’s *yanantin* could one “see” oneself.

We believe that partnership is very important because, as they say, you may know yourself, but you can never *see* yourself. For that you need [another]. You need other eyes, another perspective to see that. When you are a child, you have your parents, but when you become older you no longer have your parents to see you, to recognize you. As an adult, your *yanantin*, your partner, is the person who is there to see what you don’t see in yourself, just as you are there to see in that person what he doesn’t see in himself. That is why it is easier to take care of another person than of yourself—because you are not supposed to take care of yourself! For that, there is the other person. There is *ayni*. It’s a service of love. (Webb, 2012, p.139)

True recognition, each of these systems maintains, is not always easy. In fact, it almost never is. When confronted with an antithesis—that which is “not-I” and, in fact, is regarded as a threat to “I”—very often our reaction is to try to *resolve* contradictions through an act of will in which we either attempt to suppress the other and/or mold one (the opposing) side of the equation to become identical to our own. The former option is a form of suppression (in which one overwhelms the other) and the other an act of *conversion* (an attempt to render both sides identical). Neither involves true recognition. In reflecting on the continually shifting dynamic of *thesis* and *antithesis*, Hegel maintained that it is only when the two recognize their interdependence and their equal participation in the world that they will achieve a final synthesis leading to Absolute Knowledge. Jung (1970) used the word “compensation” to refer to the psyche’s natural regulating mechanism, stating “consciousness is just as arid as the unconscious if the two halves of our psychic life are separated” (p. 163).

Lesson #4: What we perceive as a “twoness” is and always was a “threeness.”

While the idea of dualism as “containing two” has been the theme of this paper, in fact, each of the complementary systems that have been discussed regard the opposites not as a twoness, but ultimately as a threeness. For Jung, in the moment in which conscious and unconscious forces within the psyche come together in mutual recognition and interdependence, a “third thing” is revealed—the Self. For Hegel, this “third thing” was the synthesis that is the outcome of the battle between *thesis* and *antithesis*.

An example of this can be found in Andean models as well. Amongst the shamans with whom I worked, most use the *mesa* as their primary tool of divination, diagnosis, and healing. The *mesa* is a cloth altar upon which the healer places a variety of sacred objects. Most *mesas* are split up into three major “fields.” The far left side is known as the “Field of the Magician”¹² and contains objects that are believed to have “negative” and/or aggressive characteristics that the healer must “tame” (Joralemon & Sharon, 1993, p. 169). The energy of this section of the *mesa* is vital to the healer’s spiritual success, for here he

or she gains the power to neutralize acts of manipulation that may be harming his or her client and return the negativity back to the sender. Too much emphasis on this side of the mesa, however, leads one to rely too heavily on personal will, leading to the temptation to exert one's power over other people, a practice known as "sorcery" (Wilcox, 1999). The far right side of the mesa is known as the "Field of the Divine."¹³ This section is said to be the place where things are brought into alignment according to the will of Spirit. Working in this field, the healer abandons personal agenda and allows the spirit world to take control of the situation. An individual who focuses too much on this side of the *mesa* may have trouble fulfilling his or her responsibilities of daily living. The center of the mesa is what is called "Field of the Middle," and is where the two energies—divine will and personal will—meet and where the most powerful transformations take place.

Amongst these complementary positions, it is emphasized that this "third thing" was there all along, "exist[ing] from the beginning, but latent, that is, unconscious" (Jung, 1966, Volume 12, paragraph 104n). Out of the tensions created by their *tinkuy* exchange comes, "a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation." This third thing is thus freed, revealing "the synthesis of a new unity" (Jung, 1966, Volume 8, paragraph 189). When discussing the dynamics of *yanantin*, my research participants likewise acknowledged that the union between the pair is not created so much as it is revealed.

One of them told me:

The other thing that we are taught is that your *yanantin*, your love, is not just suddenly going to be born. Somewhere he or she is alive right now. He already exists. It's not like he or she is going to exist one day. Your *yanantin* is already here. The soul is already here, in preparation for you as you are in preparation for him. That person is also on a journey, in a preparation to arrive to that level of absolute purity and essence. Just like you. So, you never live life as if he is yet to arrive. He is always here and will always be here. Maybe you cannot connect with him physically just yet, or maybe you are already connected physically, but what you should start connecting with is the soul. Start with a soul-level relationship ... From the moment you are born into this human body, you walk this path with your *yanantin* already. ... You already have a *yanantin*, right from the beginning. (Webb, 2012, p. 147)

When teaching workshops in which I incorporate these ideas, I focus specifically on creating a context in which this "third thing" might reveal itself within participants' work and relationships. This is challenging, for it is not easy to see how things that have no recognizable connection with one another could enter into mutual relationship in such a way. But exciting revelations do occur. For example, an environmental activist once commented that the insight that she had had during the workshop was that she would likely never be able to convince the other side to see things the way that her side saw them. There could be no conversion. Instead, she would now begin to consider what third option there might be to bring the goals of the two sides together in some way that supported them both.

Conclusion

Jung (1956) wrote that, "[the opposites] ought, in their harmonious alteration, to give life a rhythm, but it seems to require a high degree of art to achieve such a rhythm" (p. 59). In reflecting upon my work in Peru and the work of such minds as Jung and Hegel, it seems to me that these are systems that have, each on their own way, developed or revealed a kind of "art" for navigating the tension of opposites ... if not always with *ease* then at least with *elegance*. Whether this confrontation takes place in our work, within the context of our research, in our personal lives, between ourselves and those with whom we share space on the planet—an important question to ask ourselves is: What "high art" can we create in order to help us dance with the tension of opposites, leading us to the third possibility that has been with us all along?

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Footnotes

1.- For the purposes of this article, an "ontological system" refers to any highly developed, organized system of shared meanings (beliefs, philosophies, etc.) through which a culture comes to understand the nature of reality and, in particular, the role of the individual within that greater reality. Thus defined, an ontological system provides the basis for how members of a culture-sharing group relate to the world around them—for example, what moral codes inform their interactions with both human and non-human entities, what epistemological practices are considered valid forms of "knowing," the ways in which such knowledge should be acted upon, and so on.

2.- Within anthropological and philosophical circles there has been and continues to be much discussion over the nature of binary opposition—its forms and functions as well as its origins and development. Some anthropologists have argued that binary opposition is the most fundamental category through which the human mind organizes itself, and that the frequency with which this form of classification arises within and across cultures is evidence that “bipartization,” or the impulse to conceive of the world as split into “twos,” is hardwired into the human psyche. On the other side of this debate are those who dispute the belief that binary classification has its basis in the mind. They instead propose that the human tendency to think in “twos” is rooted in the environment. Others suggest that binary opposition is merely the simplest form of classification, which accounts for its widespread appearance in human thought processes. Still others have suggested that binary classifications do not arise naturally, but may be prefabricated by the anthropologist-as-observer in an attempt to create meaning and order out of disparate cultural traits. With this debate in mind, my research was based on the tentative assumptions that, (1) no matter what the ontogenesis of dualistic or “binary” thinking, no matter whether or not duality is truly the most “accurate” of all forms of categorization, human beings *do* have the tendency to organize their world into contrasting pairs of “twos,” making it our primary organizing tool, and that, (2) given this “preoccupation with polarity” much of human consciousness is devoted to trying to understand and mediate the relationship of the opposites, both on spiritual and social spheres.

3.- However, most religious systems are not as “black and white” as this implies. Stoyanov splits religious systems into categories based upon the extent to which (and the *ways* in which) this opposition manifests. For example, within systems that exemplify an *absolute dualism*, the antithetical relationship of the opposites is, as the term implies, absolute, in that the opposing forces representing good and evil are believed to have originated from two independent, co-eternal principles that always have been and always will be separate. In contrast, other systems subscribe to a kind of *moderate dualism* in which one of the two opposites—typically the “evil” side of the equation—is considered to be a secondary principle; one that has its origins in the primary and more supreme principle. Despite these ontological differences, philosophies of *absolute dualism* and *moderate dualism* both share the fundamental belief that the aspect considered to be “negative” or “evil” should be rejected and/or destroyed.

4.- As with the “antagonistic” models (see above footnote), complementary worldviews can also be separated in two various “categories” that reflect the degrees to which—and the ways in which—this particular ontological model is present within a culture.

5.- This categorization is considered particularly true of individuals living the traditional or pre-Conquest lifestyles of this region, who engage in what Dover describes as “a set of [philosophical] mechanisms which together engender a uniquely Andean perspective” (pp. 7-8).

6.- While a complete overview of the historical rhythms of complementary dualism in the Andean world is beyond the scope of this essay, the 1532 invasion of the Spanish was justified, in part as the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church’s “holy mission” to rescue the indigenous population from idolatrous beliefs and practices. As Harrison puts it, “words rivaled swords as an instrument of conquest in the Americas.” While the Inca empire had adjusted—but not radically altered—the earlier Andean philosophical models, the Spanish sought to remake the Andean worldview in accordance with vastly different European standards of judgment about how the universe worked.

“[T]he experiences of the conquered under Spanish rule were radically different from those under Inca rule. ... The Incas struggled to impose their vision of the world on those whom they vanquished. Yet, that vision was one that conquered peoples could make sense of. The Spanish invasion imposed alien economic, political, religious, and conceptual structures on Andean society.”

Three centuries later, despite independence from Spain, the continued infiltration of Western economic practices such as wage labor and market integration continued to cause unprecedented changes in basic social and economic relations in even the most remote regions of the country.

7.- Although the terms “shaman” and “shamanism” are useful when referring to indigenous healers and ritual specialists as a cross-cultural whole, within the context of this article, I have tried to use local terms—for example, *paqo* for the shamans of the highland Andes, *curandero(a)* when referring to practitioners of the north coastal region, and/or whatever terminology the participants use to describe themselves. Many of the participants with whom I worked, however, do refer to themselves as “shaman.” I therefore use this term to refer to them in the context of their social-spiritual work.

8.- My primary research participant in this study was Amado Quispe, a young indigenous man who at an early age had been initiated into the indigenous spiritual teachings by his grandfather, a renowned *paqo*. During my first fieldwork trip, Amado introduced me to Juan Luis, another young shaman who became my second primary participant. My research also included six other Andean participants—four men and two women, ages 50-65. Three of these six were also considered “shamans,” while the other three participants were university scholars who had an academic interest in complementary dualism as a cornerstone of Andean philosophy. Each of the research participants for this study were chosen as participants based on having demonstrated an ability to think both reflectively and critically about their experience of the phenomenon of *yanantin*, with the shamans speaking more experientially and the intellectuals regarding it in a way that was more broad and observational.

9.- By “contradiction,” Hegel does not mean that which is *logically* contradictory—for example, a statement such as “This object is a lamp and a crocodile.” Rather, a “contradiction” involves two things that are related, but that have been separated in order to create a seeming opposition.

10.- These are not the terms that Hegel himself used in explaining his system (although he did use them once in his preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, he did so somewhat disparagingly); nor did he demonstrate the dialectic in quite this simplified a manner. However, the model presented here gives a general, user-friendly way to understand Hegel’s philosophy.

11.- For Hegel, this “third thing” was the missing piece of Kant’s incomplete skepticism, for it was the synthesis of *becoming* it unites the estranged elements of *thought* and *being* and in doing so relieves the incongruence between them. Thus, one can achieve true knowledge.

12.- Other names for the left side include “Field of Personal Gain,” “Field of Domination” and “Field of the Sly Dealer”.

13.- The right side of the mesa is also called “Field of Divine Justice,” “Curing Bank,” and “Heavenly Bank”.

Hillary S. Webb, PhD., is an anthropologist, author, and the former Managing Editor of *Anthropology of Consciousness*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness. She is also former Research Director of The Monroe Institute, a non-profit institute dedicated to research and education into the enigma of human consciousness. Webb earned a PhD in Psychology from Saybrook University in 2009, during which time she conducted research into the psychological experience of *yanantin* or “complementary opposites” as the basis of the indigenous Peruvian worldview, and a master’s degree in Consciousness Studies (specializing in the philosophy of mind) from Goddard College in 2006. She is the author of *Yanantin and Masintin in the Andean World: Complementary Dualism in Modern Peru* (University of New Mexico Press, 2012), *Traveling between the Worlds: Conversations with Contemporary Shamans* (Hampton Roads, 2004), and *Exploring Shamanism* (New Page Books, 2003). Dr. Webb is a member of the Board of Trustees at Goddard College, where she is able to follow her passion for the promotion and expansion of progressive education models. She currently lives in Southern Maine. E-mail: hillary@hillaryswebb.com

The Mystery of Individuality: Grandeur and Delusion of the Human Condition

El Misterio de la Individualidad: Grandiosidades y
Engaños de la Condición Humana

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

Institute of Traditional Psychology
Chicago, USA

Abstract

This extensive review explores the nature of human individuality through a broad spectrum of themes which all relate in an unwavering manner back to the fundamental question of “Who Am I?” The paradox of being fully human is that it depends on transcending the human condition itself. Integral individuality exists at the intersection between the horizontal and the vertical or the human and the Divine. Modern psychology, especially humanistic and transpersonal psychology has, much to its credit, done a great deal to facilitate the rightful place of the human within the spiritual dimension; yet, to date, it has been unable to situate what human individuality is. In fact, modern psychology has grossly overlooked that each of the spiritual traditions of the world has its own corresponding and complete psychology or rather pneumatology (“science of the Spirit”). It is by turning to the integral psychology of the perennial philosophy that human identity can be recovered.

Key words: individuality, identity, psychology, heart-intellect, perennial philosophy

Resumen

Esta extensa revisión explora la naturaleza de la individualidad humana a través de un amplio espectro o análisis de temas donde todos se relacionan de manera inquebrantable con la cuestión fundamental de “¿Quién Soy Yo?” La paradoja de ser plenamente humano es dependiente de la transcendencia de la condición humana misma. La individualidad integral existe en la intersección entre lo horizontal y lo vertical o lo humano y lo Divino. La psicología moderna, especialmente la humanista y transpersonal tiene mucho crédito al haber contribuido mucho para facilitar el lugar legítimo que le corresponde al ser humano dentro de la dimensión espiritual; sin embargo, hasta la fecha, no ha sido capaz de situar qué es la individualidad humana. De hecho, la psicología moderna fue gravemente negligente en no reconocer que cada una de las tradiciones espirituales del mundo, tiene su propia psicología correspondiente y completa, o más bien su pneumatología (“ciencia del Espíritu”). Es cuando nos referimos a la psicología integral de la filosofía perenne, que podemos recuperar la identidad humana.

Palabras clave: individualidad, identidad, psicología, corazón-intelecto, filosofía perenne

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Introduction

“You see yourself as the drop in the ocean, but you are also the ocean in the drop.” – Rumi

Seldom does one come across a book that so completely plumbs the depths and heights of the human condition as does this recent volume by Mark Perry (born in 1951), the son of American Perennialist author Whittall N. Perry (1920-2005).¹ In articulating what human individuality is in light of the universal spiritual heritage of all times and places—Perry uncompromisingly exposes the contemporary wasteland in its various nuances and fearlessly enters into divisive and taboo topics.

This book reminds us that we are living in a time where the human microcosm is not only under attack from within modern science known as *scientism* (the reduction of Reality to what can be exclusively verified through the five senses) and its derivative modern psychology or *psychologism* (the reduction of Reality to psychological criterion), but also from the movements within contemporary spirituality that zealously seek to undermine the way that the plenary traditions were interpreted by the saints and sages of those traditions. What comes to mind are not only the common New Age parodies, but their less simplistic and more sophisticated forms that appear to be anything but New Age and are for this reason more dangerous. The following are examples of this more refined presentation of New Age thought: the alleged “integralization” the World’s Religions and the call for the “democratization” of enlightenment.

If we were not living in an inverted era known as the *Kali-Yuga* or “dark age” where everything is turned on its head, these fundamental errors would be clear as day and would not require further reflection, for they would be seen in their transparency as a promethean attempt to relativize the Absolute, in order to not only make *gnosis* or transcendent knowledge available for mass consumption, which by its very nature it cannot be, but attempts once and for all to lower Spirit to the dictates of the terrestrial masses. The assumption that the plenary revelations need updating or that they can even be updated by the conjectural whims is a negation of their supra-individual origin; this is to say that neither religion nor its inner corollary spirituality is man-made. On the contrary, it is the human individual that needs to adapt him or her to the terms of the timeless truths of the sapiential traditions and not the other way around. To assume that the world’s religions are not integral is a fundamental oversight as to what religion is and is a betrayal of the Spirit as religion and spirituality are integral *in divinis*, if they were not so they would be incapable of not only saving but liberating souls throughout the ages. At the core of this outlook is none-other-than the old bugbear of *evolutionism* (the notion that the greater can derive from the lesser) coupled with *syncretism* (the indiscriminant mixing of heterogeneous ideas in an attempt to fashion a synthesis).

Readers may be interested to know what others have said of this work. Doyen of the World’s Religions, Professor Huston Smith (born in 1919), who is no stranger to those within psychology—especially transpersonal psychology and humanistic psychology—wrote a powerful and memorable endorsement for Perry’s work:

“Few writings in recent years have done as much to further—in ways that make life feel different—my understanding of the ultimate nature of things. Perry’s thoughts are as advanced as one will find anywhere—this is clearly the higher mathematics of the human spirit.” (Smith, 2000, pp. 11-12) A lesser known figure to those within transpersonal psychology, yet widely known as a representative of the perennial philosophy, William Stoddart (born in 1925) writes: *“I know of no other author who*

expounds and reflects the specifically spiritual teachings of Frithjof Schuon [1907-1998] as intimately and authentically as does Mark Perry, who, all his life, had the advantage being a close associate of Schuon.” (p. x)

This book is an in-depth inquiry into the paradoxical nature of human individuality, consisting of twelve chapters. While the term “individuality” is commonly used in our day-to-day lexicon its deeper significance is not properly understood in its metaphysical, philosophical and spiritual context. On one extreme, the human individual is an autonomous entity possessing its own existence separate from others and on the other hand the human individual is mysteriously connected to all humans, including the natural world which is rooted in the supra-individual or Divine. Our apparent separateness as individuals is the quintessence of what is destined by the manifest world, yet it is the unmanifest that underscores and presupposes the manifest order—as everything originates in the One, so It returns to the One. The traditional or perennial method that Perry expounds takes into consideration the environmental factors that shape the human being and the temporal cycles that in turn shape the atmosphere in which the individual lives. To not do so creates a detrimental disconnect between the human individual and the social milieu which skews all one’s ability to understand these subtle and complex matters. Human individuality and all of its nuances becomes intelligible when viewed through the lens of spiritual anthropology and the guiding image of archetypal man and woman, created in the image of God. “Although the subject matter of this book deals with man created in the image of God, we are not speaking in the name of a single religion, or of a single spiritual credo, but in that of the *philosophia spiritualis* which is timeless gnosis.” (p. 13)

Although modern psychology has painstakingly attempted to establish what human individuality is, it has been unable to do so because of its own theoretical underpinnings which have cut itself off from the Sacred. While behaviorism has precariously cast-off both the Spirit and the soul from modern psychology, psychoanalysis has discarded Spirit and salvaged in its place the human psyche, humanistic psychology has endeavored to reclaim what is human after its disfigurement, while transpersonal psychology likewise acknowledged the key role of the human being, it emphasized the primacy of Spirit. Yet as long as transpersonal and humanistic psychology accepts the principal errors of behaviorism and psychoanalysis, which they are a logical derivative of, they are enabling theoretical positions that fundamentally contradict and undermine their *theoria* and *praxis*. For this reason contemporary psychology in all of its forms cannot afford to ignore or hastily gloss over the critique presented by the perennialists or traditionalists, nor can it not take seriously its prognosis: the impasse of modern psychology.

To explain man through [modern] psychology when what is really needed is a pneumatology or a “science of the Spirit”, without which psychology—or the study of the soul—can only amount to the blind leading the blind because no matter how erudite or subtle our analysis will be we cannot escape the conundrum of the mortal attempting to define the Immortal; we cannot escape by our own means the narrow labyrinth of human observations and speculations unless we can appeal to a higher principle. (Perry, 2012, p. 2)

Chapter One: The Wound of Duality

Inseparable from the question of human identity is the essential longing for what resembles us most, although we are rarely aware of this process. This core impulse underscoring human identity is what the author indicates can lead us back to the Absolute and is what makes the human state the grandeur that it is:

The whole basis of spiritual realization is the doctrine of identity, of like being attracted to Like, or of the Divine One and All repossessing Itself of that which It really never lost. This is the vertical and essential perspective, that of pure ontology, or that of our supra-individual core. However, seen from the perspective of the individual, it is also true—though not equally so—that we are attracted to what is opposite to us because the individual is a fragment and therefore seeks completion in his missing portion... (p. 19)

With this said, the search for wholeness in the world of multiplicity has its many trappings: “However what is much less obvious is that, owing to the Fall, far from being attracted we can also be repelled by what most corresponds to us archetypally, as the medieval motif of the “loathsome bride” illustrates, or the drama of the soul, unwilling to give up its illusory freedom, fleeing the Spirit.” (p. 19) Additionally, it is the obscuring of the heart-intellect or intellect (Sanskrit: *buddhi*; Latin: *intellectus*; Greek: *nous*; Arabic: *'Aql*), the noetic faculty within the human individual which defines the human condition itself, it is this obscuring that gives rise to the wound of duality itself. “In primordial man or man of the Golden Age [*Krita-Yuga* or *Satya-Yuga*], the heart as a divine faculty was one before becoming polarized into heart and mind” (p. 25). This is why the traditional understanding throughout the ages, has designated that the seat of consciousness is in the heart and not the head, but as a result of the eclipsing of the intellect these faculties became fragmented. Modern psychology not taking into consideration traditional cosmology and temporal cycles and its effects on the human psyche is limited to the: “accidental predicament of man in the modern world” (p. 31). Although contemporaries attempt to innovate anything and everything under the sun to expand consciousness, to escape the wound of duality, the author points out: “Just as man cannot create life, he cannot produce enlightenment, for the source of both life and enlightenment belong to a transcendent order of reality; no man can approach the Real purely by his own means or purely on his own initiative.” (p. 36)

Chapter Two: Who Am I?

Perhaps no question has been asked more continuously in the passing of time than “Who Am I?” “One of the greatest truths, and yet most fatal of illusions, is the notion that man is created in God’s image or, in Buddhist terms, that every man has a Buddha nature, or in Vedantic metaphysics, *tat tvam asi*, “thou art That”—the “That” being the unnamable essence of Reality.” (p. 39) And yet the inverse relationship is also true—you are *not* That, at least, as long as the identification with the empirical ego has not been curbed or integrated into what is higher than itself. While contemporary forms of spirituality make every appeal to suggest that everything is within you and while this is true in essence, it neglects the paramount recognition that: “There can be no immanence without prior transcendence” (p. 50).

A major stumbling block for modern psychology in all of its schools and forces—behaviorism, psychoanalysis, humanistic or transpersonal—is its apparent incomprehension of the existence of the noetic faculty within the human individual, which cannot but profoundly obstruct, if not derail altogether the inquiry of “Who Am I?” “Even though this doctrine of the ‘Eye of the Heart’ is the key of keys for understanding what man is, modern psychology finally knows nothing of it.” (pp. 57-58) The author summarizes the interrelatedness of the Divine and the human: “In essence, the mystery of individuality touches upon a triple mystery: we in God, God in us, and God in Himself.” (p. 59)

Chapter Three: The Iconic Figure

In order for the human individual to contextualize him or herself within the Sacred, requires the representation of the Sacred to be included into all facets of the human collectivity. A striking and yet no less morbid feature of the modern and postmodern era is the virtual absence of the Sacred. While traditional societies in the premodern world were diverse and often spread out over large bodies of water

and land they nevertheless had a unanimous sense of the Sacred. Perry writes: “The sacred imprint of this prototype is projected onto society and assimilated by the masses in the measure that a collectivity can still do so post the Golden Age.” (p. 61) While the iconographic figure takes on a human form and thus becomes a model for the true man or true woman, this model is also reflected in the theomorphic essence of each human being. To have a sacred symbolism reflected in the collectivity instills an integral psychology, which in a traditional society is rooted in principial knowledge that has very different implications on the idea of mental health than are currently represented: “Man’s earthly wellbeing was always premised on, if not subordinated to, his everlasting wellbeing” (p. 66).

The author informs us: “To remove the sacred is to abolish at one fell stroke all true scale of perfection.” (p. 80) This is why each civilization had its own archetypal symbolism that established a supra-individual ambiance so that religion and spirituality could be made palpable in every activity done throughout one’s day. Perry asserts: “Yes, indeed, ‘The Spirit bloweth where it listeth’, but this does not mean ‘It bloweth just anywhere’, and certainly not at our beck and call.” (p. 81)

Chapter Four: Kingdoms and Nations

Due to the large disgruntlement of the masses with both—the Republican and Democratic parties in America, which have been termed by some as the “Two Party Dictatorship”—resulting in the choosing a lesser of two evils, calls into question the very principles underlying democracy. Some propose that what is needed is to go beyond the bipartisan political paradigm and insert a third party option. In Europe, the social unrest is a very severe issue, as the masses are swayed to-and-fro in the attempt to back whichever political party that promises to improve the current crisis, if not only to halt the current infrastructures from total collapse. And while there are many interesting discussions to be had in the various forums of the public domain, Perry is concerned with a much more urgent query given the corrosive political milieu, the very idea of government or temporal power and what its implications are for integral individuality.

Perry makes an interesting observation which will likely perplex contemporary minds when taken at face value: “God cannot be likened to a president or a prime minister, assuredly, but He can be likened to a king or an emperor.” (p. 83) The author raises an imperative question, which many today are also asking: “In what social setting can a human being best fulfill his integral vocation?” (p. 83). Perry presents an interesting quandary regarding the notion of civil liberties that is seldom pondered: “Freedom cannot be unconditional otherwise it is self-cancelling.” And likewise: “Indiscriminate freedom benefits counter-forces that exploit its generosity against it.” (p. 83) In the traditional or premodern world spiritual authority did not function in a vacuum, it also played a an essential role in the directives of government as saints, wise priests, monks and/or hermits provided guidance to those in power. “The prevalence of such spiritual men deeply influenced the run of society in all epochs and, of this, right up to the threshold of our modern world.” (p. 90)

The author clarifies why it is so challenging for the modern and postmodern mind to comprehend the pervading sense of the sacred that existed in the traditional or premodern world and how the role of integral government assisted in these efforts: “The Divine imbued the air, so to speak, and all the social customs were laced with sacred formulas; buildings and homes were adorned with icons, possibly sacred statuettes or effigies, not forgetting sacred inscriptions, and people might wear amulets that had been consecrated or blessed at sanctuaries, or they might own talismans.” (p. 91)

Some might suggest that the above is an exaggeration or a nostalgic position that seeks to make a utopia of the past and therefore regress to any era other than this one, but this is not the case, as Perry points out: “Traditional civilizations—all questions of their very real problems notwithstanding—were premised on the reality of the ‘next world’” (p. 95). The author makes a key observation:

Issues considered to be “social problems” today and that modern man believes have to be solved imperatively and on a massive scale—such as food, wealth, education, health, and the like—were never viewed traditionally as intractable problems to be permanently overcome, but rather as unavoidable imperfections, the wound and scar of life on earth; such problems were cosmologically “necessary,” hence irresolvable in their root, because, quite simply, earth can never be Heaven. (p. 96)

Paradoxically it is the notion of unrestrained progress and immeasurable material comfort that in turn feed the endless torrent of consumption, not to mention underscores exuberant deficiencies as there is always more to be acquired. In the traditional world one found solace in the remembrance of one’s transcendent origin, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), coupled with the remembrance of its analogous immanence “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). The author offers a valuable insight: “Modern solutions rarely do more than displace ancient problems, or modify modalities, without solving the fundamental issue of the world not being Heaven.” (p. 98)

Chapter Five: Individuality is not Individualism

A predominant error in contemporary spiritual circles is that traditional methods of integration or self-realization obliterate individuality; now it does so if we are viewing individuality through the lens of the empirical ego because it itself is accidental and is not individuality in its truest sense. Integral individuality as Perry informs us is to participate in the transcendent itself, yet it does not conflate separateness with uniqueness as is often misunderstood. The notion of separateness becomes transparent when qualified by an integral spiritual vision which at the same time asserts that the human individual is unique *in divinis*; this is the unanimous understanding of transcendence and immanence and what this means for human fulfillment in light of the perennial philosophy.

The author informs the reader that the word “individuality” in the fullest sense rests on principle of indivisibility. Perry writes: “The mystery of existence is that each individual self can be ‘one-self’ in the virtually supreme sense in that each creature is insuperably absolute: unique, non-duplicable, occurring only once in eons of history, never to be repeated again, because that is why an individual exists.” (p. 104) While individuality is an imperative aspect of the human condition it is also its greatest obstacle:

The uniqueness is really due to the principal uniqueness of the Absolute projecting Itself in a fragmented manner into the relative, rather than through any individual merit; that uniqueness also happens to be the biggest stumbling block to understanding the meaning of our cosmic paternity in the Absolute, so much so that man, engrossed with his individual uniqueness, ends up competing with the Absolute Itself. (pp. 104-105)

“This principle of non-duplication of individual selves illustrates the inexhaustibility of the Divine Principle expressed through creation. Clearly, however, the illusion of uniqueness—making each one of us feel that he or she is an autonomous self in his or her own right—has to be an illusion.” (p. 105) The diversity of human appearances are reconciled within the inner unity encapsulating all forms: “He it is Who did create all of you from a single soul” (Koran, “The Heights,” 7:189). One of the most predominant misconceptions in present-day spiritual circles has to do with the Theravada Buddhist notion of “no-self,” which does *not* conflate separateness with uniqueness, but is rather an inverse correlation of the notion of the Self that was meant to correct the errors of its time:

A key concept in Buddhism and Hinduism, namely that of anatta (or anatma), that is “no-self”—a refreshing perspective after the fever of individualism. Taken in its most literal

sense, this doctrine suggests that the personality we have is nothing more than an aggregate of impressions, feelings, and thoughts that are temporarily (or accidentally) held together by our physical body in an unstable alliance for the duration of an earthly existence, no sooner than to be completely and utterly dispersed upon death and dissolution of the flesh, with therefore no post mortem individual subsistence. This doctrine is really a reverse variant of the doctrine of the One or sole-subsisting Self, the main difference being that instead of emphasizing the absoluteness of the Self (Atma), it takes the opposite point of departure by emphasizing the nothingness of individual experience. (p. 122)

With this said, the author also emphasizes that there is an intermediary reality between the doctrine of *anatta* and the doctrine of the Self alone is real, as he writes:

This definition [that of the complete disappearance of the individual] strikes us as being too synthetic in the sense that it excludes intermediary notions, not least the idea of the sanctified ego which persists in some individual fashion in paradise.... In other words, one would want to specify that an individual, upon attaining spiritual realization, certainly subsists as a recognizably distinct individual (p. 123).

Chapter Six: Beyond Good and Evil

The author wastes no time in getting to the kernel of what this chapter presents—“to speak of individuation is to speak of choice, and to speak of choice is—vertically—to speak of good and evil.” (p. 127). And the greatest of all paradoxes is that: “The Sovereign Good (the *Summum Bonum*) cannot have any real opposite since it coincides with Reality and hence with Totality; thus there is nothing, within the metacosmic realm, that is situated ‘outside’ of It.” (p. 128) On the relative plane good and evil are opposites and necessarily so as the very premise of manifestation requires it, but on the Absolute plane all dualities dissipate for nothing can exist outside of the Absolute. With this said there are many abuses of the mystical understanding of the religions by New Age interpretations, which suggest that one can stand beyond morality. Although distinctions can be made in some essential respects between the exoteric and esoteric understanding of morality, the author states: “No human being can legitimately place himself outside the notion of morality as such.” (p. 129)

Perry presents some noteworthy challenges to atheistic critiques of morality. “Even if atheists believe morality can be defined by man, they are still forced to borrow, wittingly or unwittingly, from a heritage of religious morality in order to put this morality into practice; one cannot, after all, reinvent the wheel: religion = morality.” (p. 131) The very notion of a standard that in and of itself can degenerate is, as the author informs us, proof of the transcendent: “Corruption can only occur if there is something that is not corrupt at the origin. The very notion of morality, in fact, is proof of man’s divine origin.” (p. 131)

The idea that “man is fundamentally good” also requires one to see that it is not this individual man or woman that is good, but the theomorphic essence of the human individual that is “created in the image of God.” While some might misinterpret Saint Augustine’s (354-430) formulation, “Love God and do what thou wilt” and think that one is free of moral responsibility, it must not be unheeded that: “The pure cannot act impurely no matter what he does.” (p. 142)²

Chapter Seven: Satan Is Not an Atheist

What would a world void of transcendence look like? The author provides a glimpse into this bleak reality: “The truth is that a godless world could not long be sustained, for without at least some reference to the Divine, all values would turn to dust or become a matter of pragmatic, if not tyrannical, self-interest; and self-interest heedless of anything but personal needs would lead to the cutthroat disintegration of society.” (p. 149) Perry magnificently illuminates the human conundrum when it comes to the affirming or negating of the divine Reality: “Strange to say it takes a measure of intelligence to deny God; that is, were it not for our God-given intelligence we would not know how to deny Him.” (p. 149)

Perry perpetually affirms the transpersonal identity of the human individual as understood by the world’s sapiential traditions: “Whether man understands this or not, or whether he likes it or not, man is forever *homo religiosus* and the day this is no longer so is the day the world ends.” (p. 155)

Chapter Eight: Capital Punishment

Very few will argue against the sheer volume of statistics that document the disproportionality of people of color incarcerated today in America, in what has been termed, the prison industrial complex and this especially goes for those sentenced to death row and those who are finally executed by the death penalty. What has baffled the populace in recent years are the numerous instances where there is insufficient evidence proving that the crime was committed by the alleged perpetrator or the contrary, there was plentiful evidence indicating the person’s innocence and yet this did nothing to overturn the ruling. When innocent individuals can be executed by the same criminal justice system that is in place to protect them—what then is justice?

The author provides much food for thought regarding this heated and debated subject, but does so in a very contemplative manner by way of emphasizing the existential facets of the human condition that challenge the status quo. To begin with: “Justice cannot be properly defined without a proper definition of what constitutes the nature of man.” (p. 180) Perry speaks to the materialistic psychology of modern and postmodern individuals, which refuses to understand the spiritual foundations of the human condition itself:

“The fundamental trend of modern man to overrate the body with respect to the soul, or to overrate the physical with respect to the spiritual.... If one truly believes in the soul then man’s whole scale of values will shift from the material to the spiritual, and in that case virtue and character—not the unrealistic survival of the physical body at all costs—becomes the decisive element in assessing an individual’s welfare, indeed that of a civilization. (pp. 184-185)³

At the crossroads of life and death there is a fascinating paradox: “if on the one hand there is something absolute about a human life...at the very same time there is something relative in a human death” (p. 188) Perry continues to highlight this ever so important dialectic: “How to do justice to these two dimensions without prejudicing either pole of this scale is the crux of the matter; in other words: how does one value human life without idolatry and how does one relativize human life without dehumanization?” (p. 188)

Chapter Nine: On Authority

Another impassioned theme of today is how to manage the increasing abuse of power and at the same time deter the increasing social entropy?⁴ The traditional cosmologies of the world's religions correlate these corrosive facets with the final temporal cycle, known as the *Kali-Yuga*. Due to the current unrest that is very much a globalizing phenomenon, one then wonders what authentic government is and what is its role in the day-to-day lives of human individuals? Perry refers to the transitions of the different types of government detailed by Plato (429-347), providing an interesting overview of where we currently are on this trajectory:

Moving from theocracy, to aristocracy, then to timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and finally to tyranny—this axis describing the declining transition of authority going from a truly enlightened rulership, then being appropriated by the noble classes, then by heroes, and later passing through the popular will, before ending in the hands of a tyrant, or a despotic regime. (pp. 197-198)

The author reminds us that we are living in a world where the catchphrase “in my opinion” decides everything when it acquires sufficient critical mass. This speaks directly to Plato's unfavorable assessment of democracy, which is also reflected in the position of some American founding fathers such as George Washington (1732-1799), John Adams (1735-1826) and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), and includes Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) and Winston Churchill (1874-1965).⁵

Granted the term “elite” has many unfavorable associations attributed to it today, such as that of class privilege and exploitation, Perry reminds readers that the true elite should not be confused with the economic elite or the ruling class because the term entails a spiritual prerogative. “For an elite to be an elite, it has to be anchored in spirituality.” (p. 212) It is this intellectual elite that can reverse the engulfing confusion that marks this age, as the adage goes: “corruption of the best is the worst” (*corruptio optimi pessima*).

Chapter Ten: The Primacy of Character

Perry emphasizes that while the foundation of character is determined by a “few simple things” such as—“truthfulness, compassion, courage, loyalty, and patience”—these are not easily realized. Another interesting point that is mentioned in the book is the role of polarities in establishing sound character: “Character depends also on a polarity of virtues, a balance of positive and negative attributes, or energies if one will.” (p. 219) By the terms “positive” and “negative”, Perry is referring to the polarities in nature such as “hot” and “cold”, “soft” and “hard”, etc. and not to “defects”.

We are told that in order to delve deeper into the meaning of character, free of biases, we need to return to: “pneumatology—or the reflection of the Spirit in man—which has been our guiding principle from the beginning.” (p. 226) The author upholds that without the Divine character as such could not exist: “[T]he loss of the sense of the Absolute cannot but undermine the whole notion of character” (pp. 242-243).

Chapter Eleven: The Forbidden Door

Amidst the barrage of practices offered in the spiritual marketplace to experience non-ordinary states of consciousness or expand consciousness through entheogens⁶ or otherwise, many contemporaries may resent the idea that certain forms of knowledge are made available only for those who have made themselves eligible, that is for those with suitable preparation, as is definitely the case with esoteric or

mystical knowledge. “[T]he Divine requires both a ritual and moral preparation whereby the aspirant learns to ‘die’ spiritually” (p. 248). The author continues: “[S]elf-naughting constitutes the preliminary basis for any sincere spiritual quest.” (p. 248) While this flies in the face of New Age spirituality and will appear to be elitist, this is the way that principal knowledge has been transmitted or acquired since time immemorial.

Perhaps the entirety of this chapter can be summarized within the reflective words of the *sanatana dharma*: “Fostered by sacrifice, the god will grant the enjoyments thou desirest. He who enjoys these gifts without giving to them in return verily is a thief.” (*Bhagavad Gita*, 3:12) (p. 245) An analogous point is made in the Islamic tradition: “Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?” (Koran, “Al-Baqarah,” 2:214) Perry informs readers that no amount of consciousness expansion, whether it be “*chakra-kindling*”⁷ or “*kosha-breaching*”⁸ will bring the human soul one iota closer to the Divine. “Spirituality...is all about moral character and not about experiencing states.” (p. 262) As it is all too easy for the human soul to mistake the psychic reality for the spiritual, the following heed of caution is necessary: “Indeed, it is much easier to open the ‘forbidden door’ than to close it once opened.” (p. 269)⁹

Perry emphasizes that integral spirituality is the rediscovery of simplicity: “If man could take pleasure in life’s beauties, as God intended him to, no restless urge would goad him to pierce the veil of the five senses to seek out extra-sensorial states. He would find contentment in the plenitude of his spiritual possibility here on earth.” (p. 270)

Chapter Twelve: *Hieros Gamos* or the Sacred Marriage

No book on the mystery of individuality would be complete if it did not address the theme of sacred marriage and its profound symbolism for traveling the spiritual path. In the manifest world of form, polarities are necessary for they provide equilibrium on the plane of manifestation, in fact without them the cosmos would collapse. And while polarities are necessary on the plane of manifestation they are reabsorbed into a principal unity that reconciles the coincidence of opposites. It is through traditional metaphysics that we can understand what is integral femininity and likewise integral masculinity. The common ground between man and woman, the author informs us, is their being *anthropos* or human beings, which takes precedence over their particular distinctions of male or female.

The mystery of individuality must include an image of it seen through the prism of the masculine and female duality which divides the individual into two incomplete halves, as it were. The universe is ruled by polarities, the essential one being the masculine and feminine polarity—positive and negative, man and woman, themselves personifications of the metacosmic polarity Absolute-Infinite found at the heart of Reality. Though divided, these polarities presuppose an underlying unity without which they could not oppose each other; without this unifying factor, they would be complete strangers instead of completing each other. (p. 273)

Conclusion

The Mystery of Individuality is a relentless no holds barred exploration of the paradoxical nature of the human condition. Amidst the thrashing current of the modern and postmodern wasteland that has lost its vision in all regards, but more explicitly with what it means to be fully human. This work requires slowing down and centering oneself and may likely also entail suspending one’s normative thought process that has been conditioned by a hyper-cerebral outlook which fervently opposes anything that evades empirical verification. This does not however suggest suspending one’s “critical thinking,” but

aligning reason with the transcendent source that fosters an awakening of intelligence. This book pushes us to go beyond the idols of relativism in order to enter another reality, an ancient reality, but nonetheless timeless and accessible—*here and now*. Those who make the effort to travel through its pages will certainly be rewarded.

References

Smith, H. (2000). Preface. In Mark Perry, *On awakening and remembering: To know is to be* (pp. 11-14). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.

Endnotes

1.- We do not mention Mark Perry's father arbitrarily as many within the "forth force" of modern psychology or transpersonal psychology are familiar with Whitall N. Perry's encyclopedic anthology *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), recently reissued as: *The Spiritual Ascent: A Compendium of the World's Wisdom* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2008), consisting of more than a thousand pages and praised as the "Summa of the Philosophia Perennis". It was Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), one of the great art historians of the twentieth century who suggested that it was time for someone well-versed in the world's religions to compile in a single volume the spiritual wisdom of the ages, which bore its fruit after a seventeen-year labor.

2.- "If a man is Self-realized he cannot tell a lie or commit a sin or do anything wrong." (Ramana Maharshi, "Self-Enquiry," in *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*, ed. Arthur Osborne [New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978], p. 135).

3.- "You attach too much importance to the body." (Ramana Maharshi, "The Guru," in *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*, ed. Arthur Osborne [New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978], p. 109).

4.- See René Guénon, "The Social Chaos," in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. Arthur Osborne, Marco Pallis and Richard C. Nicholson (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis et Universalis, 1996), pp. 100-116; José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993).

5.- See William Stoddart (ed.), "Democracy," in *Invincible Wisdom: Quotations from the Scriptures, Saints, and Sages of All Times and Places* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2008), pp. 71-73; See also Tage Lindbom, *The Myth of Democracy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996); René Guénon, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001); Titus Burckhardt, "What is Conservatism?" in *The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations*, ed. William Stoddart (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003), pp. 181-186.

6.- See Whitall N. Perry, "Drug-Induced Mysticism: The Mescaline Hypothesis," in *Challenges to a Secular Society* (Oakton, VA: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1996), pp. 7-16.

7.- Hindu *chakras* are subtle centers in the human individual that relate to the many phases of spiritual development. It is important to also note that an analogous concept of the subtle centers or *chakras* can be found within the diverse spiritual traditions.

8.- "*Purusha* or *Ātmā*, manifesting itself as *jivātmā* in the living form of the individual being, is regarded, according to the *Vedānta*, as clothing itself in a series of 'envelopes' (*koshas*) or successive vehicles, representing so many phases of its manifestation; it would be altogether wrong, however, to compare these envelopes to 'bodies,' since it is the last phase only that belongs to the corporeal order. It is important to note, moreover, that *Ātmā* cannot, strictly speaking, be said to be actually contained within such envelopes, since, by its very nature, it is not susceptible of any limitation and is in no way conditioned by any state of manifestation whatsoever." (René Guénon, "Envelopes of the 'Self': The Five *Vāyus* or Vital Functions," in *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta*, trans. Richard C. Nicholson [Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004], p. 67).

9.- "It is impossible to be too mistrustful of every appeal to the 'subconscious'...in a sort of 'cosmic consciousness' that shuts out all 'transcendence' and so also shuts out all effective spirituality...but what is to be said of someone who flings himself into the ocean and has no aspiration but to drown himself in it? This is very precisely the significance of a so-called 'fusion'

with a 'cosmic consciousness' that is really nothing but the confused and indistinct assemblage of all the psychic influences...these influences have absolutely nothing in common with spiritual influences....

Those who make this fatal mistake either forget about or are unaware of the distinction between the 'upper waters' and the 'lower waters'; instead of raising themselves toward the 'ocean above', they plunge into the abyss of the 'ocean below'; instead of concentrating all their powers so as to direct them toward the formless world, which alone can be called 'spiritual', they disperse them in the endlessly changeable and fugitive diversity of the forms of subtle manifestation...with no suspicion that they are mistaking for a fullness of 'life' something that is in truth the realm of death and of a dissolution without hope of return." (René Guénon, "The Confusion of the Psychic and the Spiritual," in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne [Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001], pp. 239-240).

***Samuel Bendeck Sotillos** is a Board Affiliate of the Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP), an Advisor to the Institute of Traditional Psychology and has published in numerous journals including *Sacred Web*, *Sophia*, *Parabola*, *Resurgence* and *Temenos Academy Review*. He is the editor of *Psychology and the Perennial Philosophy: Studies in Comparative Religion*. He lives on the Central Coast of California.

E-mail: samuelbendeck@yahoo.com

The renewal of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology

La renovación del Instituto de Psicología Transpersonal

James Fadiman
Sofia University
Palo Alto, CA, USA

Roman Gonzalvo
Autonomous University of Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The pioneering academic institution has offered postgraduate studies on transpersonal psychology since 1975. After 37 years the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) has recently changed its name to Sofia University, offering the same programs plus some new degrees. Why this name change? Is the name change reflecting what is happening in the field of transpersonal psychology? How is transpersonal psychology nowadays in comparison with its beginnings? What are the lights and shadows we now face? This article explores these questions and many others, offering a review and an update of transpersonal psychology by one of the founders of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and a pioneer in the field.

Keywords: James Fadiman, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Sofia University, transpersonal

Resumen

La pionera institución académica ha ofrecido estudios de postgrado en psicología transpersonal desde 1975. Después de 37 años, el Instituto de Psicología Transpersonal (ITP) ha cambiado su nombre por el de Universidad Sofia, ofreciendo los mismos estudios además de algunos nuevos. ¿A qué se debe este cambio?, ¿está este cambio de nombre reflejando lo que está pasando en el campo de la psicología transpersonal?, ¿cómo está la psicología transpersonal hoy en día en comparación con sus inicios?, ¿cuáles son las luces y sombras a las que nos enfrentamos hoy?. Este artículo analiza estas cuestiones y muchas otras, ofreciendo una revisión y actualización de la psicología transpersonal por uno de los fundadores del Instituto de Psicología Transpersonal y pionero de la disciplina.

Palabras clave: James Fadiman, Instituto de Psicología Transpersonal, Universidad Sofía, transpersonal

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Since 1975, the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) has been a pioneering and legendary institution offering academic degrees worldwide. Recently ITP has changed its name to Sofia University and expanded its programs. Now we have the honour to talk about these changes with James Fadiman, the co-founder of the ITP (together with Robert Frager) and one of the pioneers of Transpersonal Psychology.

1. Hello Jim, could you explain the reason for this change?

The simplest explanation for the name change is that the institution has outgrown its prior label. Bob Frager and I have been seeking a name change for the past several years, so this is very much the direction we have wanted it to go. Sophia University is adding a number of new areas of study, including for the first time a completion bachelors degree in 3 different areas, as well as expanding some of its graduate offerings. The Name change, although it got the most attention is the least of the actual changes.

2. Was it easy in 1975 to create an institution like ITP? How are the things nowadays in Transpersonal Psychology, in comparison with the seventies?

In the 1970s, there was much more experimentation going on in higher education. In the Bay Area alone, several other new graduate schools in alternative psychology formed within a year or two of ITP. Fortunately, neither Bob nor I understood how difficult it was supposed to be to set up an entire institution. What we did was offer one semester of classes. During that semester, we worked with the students to determine what classes or other kinds of educational experiences they wanted for a second semester. In this way, over a period of a few years we built up a full curriculum. As the number of students increased, we added faculty and eventually staff. As we were not worrying about meeting any criteria except to offer a superior education, we could and did ignore all the official rules from the state, the federal government, and the American Psychological Association. I don't know if it could be done today. To my knowledge, no one seems to be trying to do so.

3. ITP/Sofia University is now 37 years old and still growing. How do you feel when you think about that?

That ITP/Sofia University is 37 years old and still growing seems to us an indication that, like a good tree in a good location, whose roots get deeper and whose trunk gets thicker, and as new branches extend from the trunk, there are more fruit each year. What we know about most organizations is that they are either growing or they are dying. From time to time, we are amazed that the institution has done so well. As it moves into this new phase, we remain optimistic that we are continuing to meet real needs.

4. How has ITP/Sofia University been seen by traditional universities during this time?

As we began as a clearly alternative institution, mainstream institutions basically ignored us. It seemed to them and to us that we were attracting entirely different students. As we have become more and more visible, and as more and more of our graduates are teaching in institutions, holding down clinical positions in hospitals and clinics, and setting up independent practices, we are getting more attention. However, we still hear very little from the mainstream but work with the growing number of institutions like ourselves.

5. What are the benefits for the ITP taking the new name - Sofia University?

The simple single benefit from becoming a university, and having a name to match, is that there are more opportunities to develop new programs and especially to cooperate with other universities. We are already working with a university in China, for example, to help them to develop their own psychology department. They are very excited at the idea of Sofia sending some of our graduate students to work with their students and are sending some of their faculty over to learn from us. Other possibilities are emerging as Sofia becomes more established and better known.

6. As you may know, some transpersonalists do not like this name change. What would you say to them?

A great number of our alumni were initially upset at the name change and let us know about it in every way possible. Most felt that they should have been consulted about the change. The institution didn't realize how deeply attached some of our older alumnae were to the name of the school they graduated from. Education about the expanded opportunities and giving them lots of personal attention seems to have cooled off much of the upset. However there are still a few highly vocal students who feel that the process was flawed, and that the name is terrible. Remarkably, there seem to have been little upset at the idea of expanding our degree programs beyond transpersonal psychology, but lots of upset about a name change. Personally, I don't fully understand how an institution changing its name in 2012 changes someone's degree given in 1995 or 2000, so I'm a little less sympathetic than I probably should be. Curiously, a number of other alternative graduate schools in the San Francisco Bay Area changed their names as well within the last eighteen months, so there may be other forces at work.

7. I guess you know that some people think that ITP has changed its name because of the lack of respect and acceptance that Transpersonal Psychology experiences in mainstream Psychology. How would you respond to these people?

It's an interesting speculation, but one that never occurred to any of us involved in the expansion of the institution or the name change. You can't run an educational institution based on the opinions of people who don't know what you're doing or who dislike what they think you're doing on principle.

8. Although Transpersonal Psychology began officially in the sixties and has drawn a great deal of interest, it is quite unknown in academic Psychology worldwide in contrast to Humanistic Psychology which is more widely known. Perhaps that is why some people say "Transpersonal Psychology has died". Why do you think Transpersonal Psychology finds itself in this position?

It feels a bit like the famous person writing to the newspaper that the report of his death was premature. I've yet to meet any of these people, but if I did, I would probably point to the ever increasing number of countries with thriving transpersonal psychology associations, far more than there are humanistic psychology associations. Any rumors as to the death of transpersonal psychology are total nonsense. That's fact, not opinion.

9. Many psychologists feel attracted by Transpersonal Psychology initially but after time when they know the discipline better, move away from it because they feel ashamed of calling themselves "transpersonal psychologists". Why do you think that is?

As long as we're talking about people disapproving or disavowing transpersonal psychology, my

own feeling is that leaving is probably good for those people whose interests change and who need to describe themselves differently. On the other hand, I've been impressed with some of our graduates who have become intensely interested in psychoanalytic psychotherapy on the one hand, and Tarot reading and channeling on the other who still consider themselves and call themselves transpersonal psychologists. My hope is that the people who no longer are comfortable labeling themselves as transpersonal have found another label that makes them feel safer. It may take a little more courage to publicly espouse a worldview that is wider than the scientific-only paradigm.

10. Since the foundation of Transpersonal Psychology, many new disciplines have been created studying more or less the same subjects studied by Transpersonal Psychology but most of the new researchers do not refer their investigations under the transpersonal framework, for example the fields of mindfulness, family constellations, meditation, consciousness studies, hypnosis, human development, altered states of consciousness, regression therapy, near-death studies, spiritual growth, search of the self, psychedelic therapy, parapsychology, inter-religious dialogue, etc. Why do you think these disciplines differentiate themselves from the transpersonal field?

One of the goals of the original core of transpersonal psychologists who founded the Association and the Journal was that there needed to be a full psychology which included the spiritual, as well as the humanistic, the cognitive and the psychoanalytic. Such a psychology, we reasoned, would open up whole new fields of study. It is gratifying to see that this has been true. If many of these subfields of transpersonal psychology no longer use the label, it is probably because they see themselves as more specialized and are trying to obtain recognition for their specialization. Psychedelic psychotherapy, for example, an area of my own expertise, sees no particular advantage in adding the word transpersonal to its name since the fundamental ideas of transpersonal psychology are subsumed in the word "psychedelic." They are actively expanding public awareness about the specialization of using psychedelic substances for both transpersonal and non-transpersonal applications. It may be true that some people inside the transpersonal psychology movement have a desire for greater numbers of members or some other kind of recognition. Personally, I'm much happier seeing the general culture absorbing idea after idea that we have pioneered and developed, that urging people to come into any given organization. It must be kept in mind that the founders never imagined that the transpersonal point of view should be limited to psychology. Almost from the onset, there were transpersonal sociologists, transpersonal anthropologists, etc. For me at least, transpersonal is a stance, a point of view, a way to look at experience, not merely a psychology.

11. What do you think transpersonal psychologists should do in order to integrate Transpersonal Psychology in the core education of future Psychologists?

It's a challenging idea to consider how one might integrate transpersonal psychology into mainstream psychology. The central obstacle I've found is that traditional psychology has such a desperate emotional craving to be seen as and accepted as a science like biology, chemistry or physics, that adding in the recognition of the spiritual experiences of most of humankind would be for them a backwards step. Once mainstream psychology acknowledges that it will never be seen by those hard sciences as a possible companion, they may be able to integrate the transpersonal more easily.

The general decline in how society values mainstream psychology is matched by society's increased interest in so many aspects of transpersonal psychology, whether they are called that or not. I'm not optimistic about being invited into a declining academic discipline, and as you can tell from what I've just said, I'm not all that eager for transpersonal being saddled with all the defects of mainstream psychology. Roger Walsh said, in a wonderful speech some years ago, that the major problems facing humanity were

transpersonal problems: war, excessive population, destruction of natural resources, and so forth. What he meant is that at the heart of all the great spiritual traditions and transpersonal psychology is a recognition of the fundamental unity of all human beings, and all other living systems. Operating from that premise makes war almost impossible, and leads to remedies for eco-destruction and injustice. It is a form of lunacy to see someone else as so separate from yourself, that you could shoot them, or to destroy an ecosystem for short-term profit as if you were not linked to it. Rather than standing out in the cold in front of the closed door of academic psychology, we would do better and are doing better joining the ecologists, the climate change scientists, and the indigenous people in forging realistic alliances of mutual aid and respect.

12. In autumn of 2013 Sofia University will launch a Bachelor of Arts program offering a BA in Psychology and a BA in Liberal Arts. Why has it been decided to offer a BA in Psychology now and not before?

We have not done this before partly because we always considered ourselves a graduate institute, and partly because we did not yet have a visionary leader who could see that in the current economic and social environment, that we could perform a unique service by offering this degree.

13. The BA in Liberal Arts includes the possibility of concentrating in one of three areas, one of which is Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Studies. It looks as if while the ITP was a real pioneer creating academic degrees in Transpersonal Psychology worldwide, Sofia University will be a pioneer in creating an academic degree on LGBTQ Studies. Congratulations for taking up such a challenge - this subject is becoming more and more relevant worldwide and an academic degree may help foster increased understanding. Can you explain a bit about the connection between LGBTQ studies and the transpersonal orientation of Sofia University?

Why us and why now? While I was not part of that decision-making, my guess is that it is about time that somebody offered a serious curriculum in these areas. Since the very word transpersonal includes the meaning of going beyond the personality, it looks like we are extremely comfortable in seeing that these diverse groups of people are no different from any other people in terms of their inner spiritual core. I'm fascinated by how this particular program will take form as we develop the curriculum, and as the first few years of students work with the faculty to determine what should be taught.

14. As you know, Transpersonal Psychology is difficult to define and has had many definitions in its time. Why do you think it is so difficult to achieve a universal agreement for it? What would be your own definition of it?

It is a kind of insiders joke that it is very hard to define transpersonal psychology. That's partly because it is more than a psychology, and partly because over the years, it has tended to include more and more areas of clinical practice and research. My own definition is simply that it is a full psychology that includes all of human experience, and its particular emphasis is on the higher ranges of human nature because those are less studied in mainstream psychology.

15. Many people understand that Transpersonal Psychology is fundamentally the study of the altered states of consciousness. Would you agree?

That feels like, as least to me, to be a much more limited definition of transpersonal psychology. A more realistic definition is that it is about all states of consciousness, and that individuals

become interested in unusual states more often than everyday consciousness. But what is acceptable in everyday consciousness turns out to be extremely culturally specific. It's always a good idea to be wary of any definition that tends to exclude much of what people in the field are actually doing.

16. Many criticize transpersonalists, saying they claim go beyond their ego but what they are really doing is feeding their own “transpersonal ego.” Do you agree?

Every field of study attracts some people who are incapable of understanding it. I can speak from personal experience. As an eager physics major, at some point, it became clear to me that I had no idea what was being talking about, but it took a while longer before I changed majors. That did not reflect poorly on physics, only on me. There was a period, for example, when Ken Wilber indicated that he was disassociating himself from transpersonal psychology because so many people in it were New Age kooks and there was a vast amount of literature that Ken thought was worthless. This was a little awkward for some of us since we were using Ken's books as foundation stones for teaching transpersonal theory. Our response to him was that we couldn't police the popular press nor stop people from advertising that they read auras or were reincarnations of priests from Atlantis. In fact, that so many unusual ideas tried to include themselves under the general rubric of transpersonal psychology suggested that we were getting more respectable. There's a Sufi saying attributed to Jesus, who says, “I can raise the dead, but I cannot help the stupid.” The question should not be, “What do people claim?” but, “What is the quality of their work?” and what is the quality of their own lives.

17. If Transpersonal Psychology is a field in constant evolution, where is it going?

If the transpersonal is a field in constant evolution, on the hard science side, it is moving towards the neuroscience laboratory as it is being accepted more widely as a necessary part of clinical education and on the philosophy side, adding indigenous experience and wisdom into the curriculum. The fascinating revelations about how the brain works, and how much we can learn from shamans are much a part of the transpersonal of tomorrow, as differing forms of meditation are part of the transpersonal of today.

18. Some people believe that humanity is entering in a new transpersonal paradigm. If you also believe this, how can we prove it?

I think that the idea behind the question is one that is found in spiritual texts, political tracts, sociological treatises, and even in myths still valued by many indigenous people, i.e. that a better version of human beings is coming into existence. There is lots of evidence that we treat each other better than we did some centuries ago. No one defends slavery, and most people feel that women are not inferior to men, and that economic and social justice are sensible and realistic goals. There is also lots of evidence of humanity's decline as well. I can't say that the word “proof” comes into my observations. Instead, I will continue to work to support and accelerate the positive trends and hope that they will become so prevalent, that they will become self-evident proofs.

19. Transpersonal Psychology has mainly been present in USA and Europe, but we are seeing a growing number of important Transpersonal Psychologists emerging in Latin America. What advice would you offer them for the immediate future?

Fortunately, one of the basic tenets of transpersonal psychology is that there are many ways to tap into one's individual wisdom and the collective wisdom of humanity and the spirit world. Therefore, my advice would be to pay close attention to your own cultural traditions to see what doors can be most

easily opened for individual transpersonal development. As to should you form this or that institutional structure, I'm not about to pretend that the structures we have designed to date are necessarily best for the next evolutionary round.

20. Your last words for the transpersonal community Jim... Thank you.

If this were a talk and I were asked to conclude it, I might say that Transpersonal psychology has come this far by remaining aware of the innate goodness in every human being and by treating even incredibly horrible behaviors as forms of ignorance or forgetting. What we know is that lighting a single candle can illuminate a vast sphere of darkness. So my own goal, and I would suggest considering it for yourself is when anyone else asks for your help in lighting their own candle, do so. We know that lighting someone else's candle does not diminish our own. Thank you for this opportunity to reflect on such interesting questions.

Jim Fadiman, PhD is a psychologist involved in Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology with degrees from Harvard and Stanford Universities. His major research has been on the beneficial aspects of psychedelic experience. He was a Research Associate with the International Foundation for Advanced Study in the late 1960s and later the president of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and The Association for Transpersonal Psychology. He has taught at San Francisco State University, Brandeis, and Stanford and been on the board of directors of academic institutions, profit and non-profit companies and associations. In 1975, with Robert Frager, he co-founded the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University). He has written numerous books, scientific papers and book chapters and has served on the editorial boards of several scientific journals. He has recently written *The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide: Safe, Therapeutic, and Sacred Journeys*.

E-mail: jfadiman@gmail.com Website: www.jamesfadiman.com

Roman Gonzalvo is a Spanish psychologist and researcher from the Autonomous University of Madrid. He is finishing his doctoral thesis in psychology on the “*Needs and Learning at the End of Life in Dying Patients*,” a cross-cultural investigation of 200 patients from Mexico, Spain, India, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe and Kenya. In 2009, he founded the *Journal of Transpersonal Research* trying to increase the publication of transpersonal empirical research as well as to open an international space for Spanish speakers. He has clinical experience as well as teaching experience in the field of transpersonal psychology (Universidad Vizcaya de las Américas, Colima, Mexico). Since 2003, he has been working on national and international cooperation with different NGOs and practicing compassion and altruism as a way to develop transpersonal consciousness' evolution.

E-mail: romangonzalvo@transpersonaljournal.com