

# **PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

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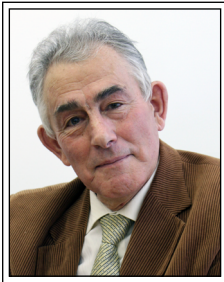
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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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### **THE ADVENTURES OF HUMAN PROTOPLASM (About the philosophical works of V. A. Kutyrev)**

**T**he article is devoted to the analysis of the works written by a professor of the University of Nizhny Novgorod Vladimir Aleksandrovich Kutyrev, including his new book «The last kissing. Man as a tradition» (SPb., 2015). His studies are directed against the movement of humanity to degeneration as rejection of real life and culture in favor of technology and virtualization. The review gives critical scrutiny of the philosophical tradition which at the present ended in contempt for the being, the ruining of life and humanism. Concurrently, the limited nature of this viewpoint can be observed. The author reflects on the tremendous changes of the outside world, assuming they require the extreme mobilization of philosophical reflection. The belief that IT in the course of development can eliminate human difficulties and vices is subjected to criticism. V. A. Kutyrev insists on the fact that the mechanism of identity is a basis of any human-related reasoning. Self-identity cannot be pieced together with innovations only, as had argued in due time P. Ricoeur. It is tradition that preserves «humane». However, if we set aside the past, the basic, there is no point in discoursing upon hereafter. Tradition can be treated in different ways. Some people propose to alleviate from the ship of present a burden of tenacious ethnicity, traditions, isolation and narrow-mindedness. Yet others think differently. Others, as noted in the article, presume that critique of archaistic society as the one suffering from narrow-mindedness and patriarchal character is unjustified. The French philosopher G. Bataille

proclaimed sacredness the major achievement of traditional society. He noted that the real world complies with the innermost order only exteriorly. Innermost means intimate, secret. Bataille spoke in support of a revival of sacredness. He saw in it the salvation of mankind. For many years he was in search of sacred knowledge, which would change the face of sociology or political economy. V. A. Kutyrev proved the philosophy of tradition to be a historical form of an identity, bearing the tension of existence and changes. And while it bears this tension, it exists.

The author pays attention to the transformation of identity nowadays. Hybridism is a new motto. Girls often want to be boys, boys to be girls. White wish to be black, black dream of becoming white. Elderly want to get back their youth. Aborigines try on the roles of the European. The European voluntarily rush for the shacks. The most important thing is not to be frozen in the past life, the past role, the past self-identity. Parents are labeled oddly with «the first» and «the second» parent. The main thing is to escape a clear sex identity. Blurring the gender identity aimed at the elimination of gender certainty. Cultural and domestic signals are added to the armory. Woman shave her head, man puts on her dresses along with army boots. That indicates a mockery of the traditional assumptions about identity. The whole process of identity construction is transformed.

We live in an era of constructivism mania. Transformations, modifications touch everything. We have not yet managed to understand the mysteries of protein life form, as we hasten to hatch out. We are ready to set our minds to a cosmic mood. We wonder why nature was so tolerant towards the evident mistakes of evolution. It won't be like that anymore. We endured puberty and now sank into an abyss of constructivism.

V. A. Kutyrev thinks the main fault lies with the philosophers. Enthusiasts of the incredible changes in the historical destiny of mankind make philosophy seem like a useless expendable material in this situation.

Every philosophical idea echoes differently in the philosophical space. But there is no sense in examining different concepts as the reason for the exposure. The «New philosophers» of France not so long ago accused classical philosophy followers to play the mischief with modern history. Even before Karl Popper traced the cradle of totalitarian ideas in the social thoughts of Plato. The topic of «Übermensch» in Nietzsche's reflection was interpreted as the precursor of fascism. Ideological demarcation in philosophy certainly requires establishing responsibility of thinkers for revelations they give to people. Nevertheless, is it fair to blame Kant for the discovery of transcendental thinking, which led philosophy astray from the verified root of seeking thought? Would modern philosophy be that rich, if it were not for Kant? How did it come in domestic literature to impute almost criminal intentions to classical scholars?

Let us take for instance E. Husserl. He created the concept of lifeworld, some kind of a correlate of human experience in everyday reality. This idea enabled us to return to analyze the primary forms of everyday reliability.

V. A. Kutyrev elaborates the concept of co-evolution of the natural and the artificial worlds, stresses the need of resisting to the discredit of existence and the tendencies of substituting ontology with «nihilology», propose the idea of uniting philosophy and religion in order to protect humanism from scientific mind. He states that the intensification of antagonism between natural and artificial and the creation of «post-human» reality have caused the global crisis. Only our ability to restrain the expansion of technology and preserve the niche of natural existence will help us to avert the catastrophe.

Emphasizing the major accomplishments of V. A. Kutyrev in criticizing the destructive tendencies of modern civilization, author draws attention to the philosopher's polemical costs and the specific weaknesses of his philosophical standpoint.

**Keywords:** man, tradition, progress, human nature, evolution, life, death, mind, personality, philosophy

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## ESSENCE OF MAN



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## AESTHETIC-ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASPECT OF SENSEMAKING IN THE GENESIS OF HUMAN ESSENCE

**T**he article follows the aesthetic-anthropological line of anthropogenesis. The author combines both ontological and gnoseological aspects of analysis. On one hand, the subject of the research is itself the course of anthropogenesis which has fixed the development-becoming of the human phenomenon and the human essence under the influence of aesthetic factors in history. On the other hand, the term aesthetic anthropology defines the development-becoming of human and humankind's capability to know oneself through different forms of aesthetic experience. The author draws on the assumption that unlike the entire range of natural, biological and species diversity of the animal world that finds its temporary completeness in each case of certain species, the process of anthropogenesis is still taking place. Rather than by the natural factors, its infinity and its openness to the future are mainly provided by social and intellectual activity, which is embodied and depicted in creative achievements. The human phenomenon and the human essence still remain in the situation of highly dynamic and controversial development-becoming, wherein the factor of an inevitable final limit and its recognition is absent. The author establishes historic and philosophic grounds, philosophic scale and cognitive role of aesthetic anthropology. He suggests, studies and proves the defining impact and orientation which the

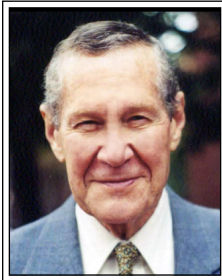
aesthetic factors, mainly art, have on the shaping and development-becoming of the essential characteristics of human way of being. In history, as in the modern world, art is considered to be an irremovable element of the self-knowledge process; it is art that demonstrates the principle of “mirroring self-consciousness” and acts exactly as that mirror in which one recognizes and cognizes oneself, one’s Self. It is by the means of art that we model, colour, sound, delineate, depicture, construct, embody, figurate, think up, contrive and invent the sought harmony of human existence, the spatial and temporal organization of human form of harmony as a whole. The article shows how art helps one to progress on the way of self-improvement without interruption and more or less successfully, using the means of self-creation.

**Keywords:** generalization, rationalization, mirroring self-consciousness, architecture, sculpture, painting, theater, poetry, literature, screen culture

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# FACETS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE



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## PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE: A PARTIAL SUMMING-UP

**T**his book is a partial summing-up in several ways. It is partial because I have written it as an expression of my own preferential involvement with the philosophy of love. Here, as in my other writings on this topic, the philosophers I discuss reflect my personal sense of their importance as well as my individual estimation of what to be accurate in my assessments, as in my descriptions, I make no pretensions about definitive objectivity. Though at times I may seem to think of the history of the subject as leading to myself, I do not believe that I or anyone else can be its ultimate destination. I offer my writing only as the embodiment of what I have learned as a contemporary philosopher studying other authors in this field and trying to go a little further.

The present work is a summing-up twice over: first, in being a selective condensation of the ideational panorama that I draw upon and to which I have already devoted many published pages. Readers who may be plausibly deterred by the unpoetical character of this book might be comforted by the realization that more probing and more enlarged treatment of the issues occurs elsewhere in my writings. In places I mention their titles and some of their contents, but I refrain from duplicating what I have put into the original presentations.

The second form of partial summing-up pertains to the fact that I do not consider philosophy to be a subject that can have a culminating outcome or comprehensive solution to the varied questions it poses. No summation

can therefore exclude ongoing and more fruitful addenda worth attaining. Reflecting on what I myself have done, I see only a string of approximations and reconsiderations without any reason to think that I am either closer to or more distant from an all-inclusive statement. I do not believe that love, or life for that matter, lends itself to either eventuality.

The text is intentionally more informal and less didactic than other books of mine that are related to it. I have wanted to offer a general perspective that readers without technical interest can readily digest and possibly enjoy. Toward that end I have avoided the use of footnotes, and references to remarks by other writers are normally reproduced in my own paraphrase rather than being quoted verbatim.

The material for this effort originated in a series of interviews I gave to a radio producer that sometimes turned into more of a monologue than a conversation. The casual setting of these discussions accounts for the colloquial character of what I have now put into words on a page. The unstructured format often elicited ideas that I could not previously bring to the surface. As a result, the book contains, within its occasionally amorphous framework, both new and old ideas of mine whose presentation here may be pleasing to some readers but unsatisfying to others. At the end of the manuscript, I recommend research that would involve cooperation between biological science and various humanistic approaches, yet I offer few intimations about the findings that might occur. This shortfall is particularly notable with respect to women's studies, in which very promising work is now beginning to emerge. I leave these areas to investigators who are more competent than I am, but also with a hope that my ruminations may somehow contribute to their empirical and likely impressive discoveries.

Finally and briefly, I want to place this book in the context of the decades of my personal cogitations that preceded it. As I say later on, I began my labors in the philosophy of love at a time when hardly any reputable philosophers in the Anglo-Saxon world considered that subject professional or even respectable. My working at it cut me loose from the mainstream of American philosophical analysis. Since I had nevertheless been trained as an analytical philosopher, I naturally (and naively) thought I would write a book that systematically examines in very precise detail the elements and the problematics that adhere to the ordinary use of the word love. As in almost everything I have undertaken intellectually, I was motivated by anxieties, confusions, unresolved ambivalences within myself as a human being and not merely as a thinker. Idle abstractions meant little to me then, or do so now, and I felt that I could overcome the dilemmas in my own affective life by a careful, albeit plodding, analysis of what matters to everyone.

In making the attempt, however, I found that the chapters I wrote were just dreary and unproductive. In my desperation, I thought that the history of ideas in philosophy and the arts might help me get restarted. What I unearthed was an immensity of speculation and aesthetic output that

reached wholly beyond the parameters I had been trained to consider truly philosophical. My resultant trilogy, *The Nature of Love*, tried to make sense of this historical progression of thought and inspiration within a framework of distinctions that I myself imposed and that reflected whatever analytical talent I might still have.

By the time I finished the trilogy, I began to feel that my conceptualization was too sketchy, too narrow and incomplete. I realized that understanding love or its related conditions required an investigation into problems about meaningfulness in life as a whole and the human creation of value in general. After another nine years, that perception led to my second trilogy, *Meaning in Life*. All of that deals obliquely with the nature of love, and the second volume in it, subtitled *The Pursuit of Love*, is structured as a more or less nonhistorical treatment of questions about love that I was unable to confront before.

Even so, there still lingered problems about the relation between love and imagination, idealization, consummation, and the aesthetic. In the last few years I have grappled with them in books, notably *Feeling and Imagination: The Vibrant Flux of Our Existence* and *Explorations in Love and Sex*, that are organically derivative from my earlier studies on the nature of love. In their own way, something similar is true of my recent adventures in the philosophy and phenomenology of film as well as my current writings on the nature of creativity

The summing-up that you are about to read scans that entire trajectory. It is an apologia *pro mente sua*, and an illustrated miniature of my life as a thinker or would-be philosopher.

I. S.

**Keywords:** love, romantic love, courtly love, eros, agape, “conciliation” merging, dualism, pluralism, creativity

## Is Romantic Love a Recent Idea?

When I started my trilogy *The Nature of Love*, many scholars believed that the concept of love as a romantic, sexual, or interpersonal phenomenon originated very recently—within the last two hundred years or so.<sup>1</sup> I felt that this view did not correctly elucidate the history of ideas about these or any other kinds of love. In some respects it is true that the notion of romantic love as we know it today can be considered fairly novel. Nevertheless the received conception about it is far too incomplete. What we call romantic love belongs to an intellectual development that starts with the beginning of romanticism in the modern world. To that extent, the relevant idea is rightly designated (and capitalized) as “Romantic” love. It arose toward the end of the eighteenth century and began to flourish at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But

even at the time, few people realized how traditional though also innovative this notion was: it stemmed from an evolutionary process in which theories about love had existed throughout two millennia.

To someone doing the kind of research I did, it was apparent that many elements of nineteenth-century Romantic love derived from sources in ancient Greek philosophy and literature, in Hellenistic fables, in the burgeoning of Christianity, in the reaction against Christianity during the Renaissance, and then in a diversity of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century modes of thought. You can't really separate this continuum into two periods, the first of which was prior to any ideas about Romantic love and the other consisting in the thinking of the last two hundred years with its great focus on it. The claim that Romantic love is an invention of the latter period is therefore of limited value, and, on the face of it, mistaken.

Yet there was clearly something important and very special that did happen in this modern movement, and we are still living with its ongoing development. It's passed through several phases, some of which I have spent hundreds of pages writing about. The second volume of *The Nature of Love*, for instance, is subtitled

Courtly and Romantic. When I get to Romantic love in the nineteenth century, I distinguish between a type of optimistic romanticism, what I call benign romanticism, and a totally different kind, very prominent about 1850, that I label Romantic pessimism. Earlier there had been foreshadowings of both forms of ideology in the plays of Shakespeare. In various ways he spoke as a critic of what we nowadays call "courtly love," which blossomed in the Middle Ages and for almost five hundred years. As against courtly love, Shakespeare articulated concepts that ultimately turned into nineteenth-century Romantic views about love, both the benign and the pessimistic. Shakespeare was an important contributor to their formulation.

While writing this second volume of my trilogy – a long book, over five hundred pages in length – I didn't calculate in advance where to put Shakespeare. But as it turned out, and as I discovered when the chapters were finished, he ended up right in the middle. In fact Shakespeare is a pivotal figure. Being a thinker whose mentality issues out of courtly love and against courtly love, he anticipates, but does not fully announce, what will later become Romantic attitudes toward medieval philosophy of love. As in many other ways, Shakespeare is a very rare type of genius, one whose artistic creativity became a primal force in Western intellectual history. Though Romantics in the nineteenth century often treated him like one of themselves, he is not a full-fledged adherent to romanticism. Without being a Romantic philosopher or theorist, he is nevertheless a precursor of those who were.

As illustration, take the play *Much Ado About Nothing*, which Kenneth Branagh made into a popular movie. It is structured in terms of two kinds of love. One is the relationship between Claudio and Hero, the young man and woman who have a courtly relationship based on very little understanding of

themselves or of each other, and not including much more than their awareness that they have both fallen in love. Though they strongly feel they love each other, Shakespeare demolishes the authenticity of their attachment. He shows how Claudio falsely accuses Hero of infidelity, while he himself isn't faithful since, instead of handling whatever problems he may have with this woman, he immediately condemns and humiliates her. Their bond therefore comes out as emotionally suspect. The other relation is the bellicose but ultimately loving tie between Benedick and Beatrice. They have a natural attunement that shows itself in ways that are typically Romantic. Romanticism frequently presupposes a basic hostility between male and female. It takes this to be a deeply innate tendency resulting from the fact that, being differently programmed, the sexes do not see the world in the same manner. As a consequence, each is natively suspicious of the opposite gender, and in a state of constant warfare with it.

There's support for that view in work that recent biologists have done, for instance, with herring gulls in the mating season when the female arrives on an isolated island by herself. She maps out her terrain and waits for the males to come. But as soon as one of them enters her property, she attacks him. Only after a period of what scientists call "equilibration" do they work out some mutual understanding, and she realizes that he is what she has been wanting for reproductive purposes. She then lets him onto her terrain, and they become a romantic couple. Well, the same kind of thing happens to human beings within the Romantic frame of thought, and it's what happens to Beatrice and Benedick. They are born enemies, ridiculing each other at first, but then, because of a quirk in the plot that Shakespeare artificially but deftly arranges, they overcome their initial belligerence.

Having done that, the two who are now one are able to help their friends – the courtly lovers who can't make things work out by themselves – and in helping them, their own bond becomes stronger. Beatrice and Benedick act together in a companionate and fully satisfying alliance. Even though they joke about their mutual animosity, they experience a consummate love. Both pairs get married, but we surmise that Beatrice and Benedick are much more likely to succeed in marriage than the other couple. Only the embattled ones understand each other, and, having survived their initial animosity, they are capable of attaining wholesome unification. For them the inherent disdain among people of different genders has been successfully overcome.

Despite the bumps and quarrels and all the tribulations that occur in the marital state, we feel that Beatrice and Benedick may really live happily ever after. We can't be sure what it will be like for Hero and her young man – the other pair. That confrontation between courtly and Romantic is presented in the works of Shakespeare better perhaps than in almost anyone else's. And most of the elements in his thinking, processed over an expanse of three hundred years, enter into the residue of Romantic love that still exists today. The common belief that true love as conceived in the nineteenth century was all sweetness and light is a fallacy.

Even in the benign phase there was recognition of the difficulty in obtaining authentic oneness, apart from any outside interference from social expectations about marriage and courtship and, of course, from parental control. It was understood that males and females were significantly unlike each other, and even incompatible in many ways. But there remained the hope, the dream, that those difficulties could be surmounted. This typically Romantic view is what Shakespeare had portrayed. It is why I think of him as a great pivotal figure. All the same, he is only one among many others who constructed ideas about the human search for love that have been developing in the last two thousand years and more.

## Plato

As the beginning of my historical approach, I start with Plato. I have always felt that he is the greatest philosopher who ever lived. And he is the father of philosophy, if you don't count Socrates, who never wrote anything. Plato is certainly the beginning of the great exploration in the philosophy of love that occurred in the Western world. But Plato was very complex as a philosopher. For instance, consider the androgynous couples described in *The Symposium*, one of his middle-period dialogues. The person in that work who recites the relevant myth is not Plato himself, but Aristophanes. Moreover, *The Symposium* is just one of various works that Plato wrote at the time, some of which are very different from it.

The crucial thing about the hermaphroditic creatures in Aristophanes' fable, as reported by Plato, is there being three types after the gods split them. Originally only a single kind existed, but when the gods divided each of the hermaphrodites into two halves (because they were getting overly arrogant) there resulted three modes of reunification for which they strove. One was a bonding of males and females looking for each other. In addition, there was the attachment of two females, making a lesbian couple, and also the craving for oneness between two males. In other words, you already have implied in Plato the questioning about same-sex as distinct from opposite-sex affiliations that recurs in all the present controversy about marriage in America and elsewhere.

Aristophanes says that, among these three arrangements, the best combination is the one of two males. Athens was a male-dominated society, and the little cluster that Plato belonged to at that time was largely homosexual—a gay nucleus within the Athenian and Greek community. Not all Greek states were as tolerant of homosexuality as Athens was, and it was surely not universal in Athenian society either. So people who have thought that everyone in Athens was gay are not right at all. But Plato in his youth probably did belong to a homoerotic group of one sort or another. Though some members may only have been friends or mentors, many must have had overtly sexual relations.



Even so, the later Plato takes a very different stand. Once you come to *The Lazos*, which is an important book that Plato wrote toward the end of his life, when he was almost eighty, you find that he attacks homosexuality. He says that the only kind of family that the state should encourage is a biological unit in which there is a marriage between “one man and one woman.” He can even be cited in support of the constitutional amendment about the nature of marriage that some people in the United States are trying to enact. Consequently, Plato’s final ideas were quite unlike anything he had said in *The Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and other dialogues. Also, in *The Republic*, which is perhaps the greatest book ever written in Western philosophy – certainly one of the few greatest books – Plato talks about sex and love in a manner that goes beyond his remarks in *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, and even in *The Lazos*. In *The Republic*, he asserts that we are all designed to search for the Good. And when we are in love, the body is used in that endeavor as an agency of instinctual, reproductive forces. These are what Freud would call libidinal urges toward heterosexual lovemaking, coital sex. That is fine and natural, according to Plato, but not the ultimate goal of humanity. The point is to get beyond bodily imperatives in order to pursue the Good, as the only means through which people can fulfill their spiritual being and find what is of value and truly beautiful in life.

How do you make that transition from sex-driven impulses as a young person to having other, more elevated, interests? By throwing yourself into meritorious endeavors, Plato claims – into art and the appreciation of the aesthetic, into the formation of a desirable society, into the quest for scientific truths, and into other cognitive means of revealing an ultimate reality that is not reducible simply to sex. The proper response to sexual instinct itself, Plato argues, is promiscuity. Have as much sex as you want, he says, as early as you want with anybody you choose, regardless of who it is and whatever the gender of that other person may be. You will discover that the particular objects of sexual activity are all alike. Having fully sampled sex, he predicts, you will have then outgrown it.

My older brother, when he was young, hated the idea that he loved hamburgers. He cured himself by gorging on them once, and the appetite disappeared.

He never wanted to eat hamburgers in later life to the extent that he did before, because he had made himself sick on them. That was Plato’s advice about sex—that you gorge yourself, at an early age, as much as society allows. The situation is very much like South Sea Island attitudes that the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski encountered at the beginning of the twentieth century. He observed that the young could do whatever they wished, and the parents didn’t care. It was only sex. It was of no great significance. Plato’s idea is that once you have cleansed yourself of the fanatical drive caused by those hormonal instincts that are surging during adolescence to prepare you for

reproductive necessities of the species—once you have had all that you can stand of that, you won't be driven by sexual need, and, in any event, it won't be a prime motivation for you.

Instead you might start thinking about love, and even fall in love with some individual. But there too, Plato asserts, you may eventually get beyond personal attachment – interpersonal romantic love – and this liberation will initiate the course of education that can enable you to perceive the Good, which is fundamental in the universe and which is what in Christianity becomes the principal attribute of God. The “Good” is the highest form of being in Christianity: by his very nature as divinity, God is perfectly good, perfectly beautiful, and the supremely perfect origin of reality. That whole part of Christianity comes directly or indirectly out of Platonism.

But see how this implicates a kind of love that differs vastly from what arises in primordial nature. You might end up with spiritual love, religious love, the love of God, however you interpret these words, and that will be far from where you started biologically. In between there might be the love of the truth that the philosopher has, the love of factual and theoretical investigation that scientists have, the love of one's people, one's country, one's nation, such that you devote yourself to making laws that are fair and equitable for everyone in the state. Likewise there may be the love that a warrior has, showing his devotion to his homeland by fighting and possibly dying for it. All of that takes you beyond sex, while also remaining part of the same continuum since sex too has to be understood as a product of our search for the Good and Beautiful as the basis for any love a human being can attain.

This Platonic doctrine is, I believe, the most fertile and powerful single body of thought about love that anyone has ever created throughout Western civilization. Out of it came not only Christianity but also the reaction against Christianity, together with all sorts of Neoplatonic as well as anti-Platonic views introduced by philosophers like Aristotle, who approached these ideas as a pupil of Plato but dealt with them differently. Platonism is a momentous stage in the mind of man that every educated person should be schooled in. It is worth studying endlessly.

## **Beyond Idealism**

Whether or not I am right in this opinion, we still have to recognize that history – the history of ideas in this case – doesn't march in a linear fashion. Ideational changes are like the fluctuations in the stock market. They go in one direction and then there is a reaction against them. The greatness of Hegel consisted in his sensitivity to this dialectic among ideas. In fact he used it as a mode of understanding all of reality. I don't agree with him on that, any more than I agree with Plato, but I do think that the notion of a fluctuating dialectic helps us comprehend how, in the passage of time,

you get schools of thought among the anti-Platonists that delineate love in alternate ways while also being responsive to what Plato and the platonistic philosophers said.

It is in this context that one should see the work of David Hume. He did not believe in metaphysics of the type that Plato proffered. Nor was he a Romantic. He was a pre-Romantic empiricist. A modern-day existentialist, or pragmatistic humanist and pluralist, which I am, also approaches things from an empirical point of view that doesn't fit the Platonic mold and yet, particularly in my case, can appreciate the seductiveness in that kind of thought. For Hume and his successors, the lowest rung in the ladder of Plato's vision, the one that focuses on the world of experience and materiality that everyone inhabits, is quite sufficient for its own philosophical comprehension. Instead of having to think about the Platonic trajectory, which is a vertical concept about ascending to transcendental heights above and beyond what is natural, we prefer more horizontal perspectives. They in turn enable us to understand love in terms of diversities within nature itself.

I feel very strongly about this, because I think that humans, and their fundamental types of relations – such as love – are ineluctably plural. I am convinced that studying different features of our being at an empirical level close to the facticity of nature is probably the best we can hope for. I'm not a Platonist because Plato assumes that there is one answer to the universe, that he knows what it must be, and that it involves the idealistic analysis he advocates. In my derivation from thinkers like Hume and John Stuart Mill and John Dewey, and modern empiricism in general, I believe that instead of looking for one answer, especially of the transcendental type that Plato seeks, we should ask questions about reality and what is valuable in it as persons who recognize the variegated character of their involvement in nature.

My work as a whole is of that sort. Someone asked Ludwig Wittgenstein, the great twentieth-century philosopher, what he did for a living, and he replied, "I'm a maker of analogies". It is actually true to what he did do; he showed a good deal of insight into his own talent. In the same vein, I would say that I'm a maker of distinctions. And the more distinctions I make, the more varied are the aspects in which I am able to think about the nature of love. I don't promote any a prioristic or overarching theory. I'm very suspicious of that. I don't think that large-scale terms like love, happiness, meaning of life, meaning in life, sex, beauty, and such, are able to have any one definition. These phenomena are so enormous within our human nature – and the same is true of what we even mean by human nature – that we cannot justifiably constrict them within a single, fixed and all-embracing, definition of the kind that Plato sought. The most we can do is to clarify them with ever-finer analysis or dissection, and to engage in further explorations through new though possibly sequential distinctions. Only then can we correlate and combine our ideas by means of the creative speculations that will issue forth without there being any one and only principle that draws everything into itself. There will always be realities of feeling and experience that do not fit.

## Concepts of Transcendence and Merging

Though Plato had the greatest cumulative effect of all Western philosophers, his mode of philosophizing was rejected by Nietzsche at the end of the nineteenth century in a fashion that seems to me very telling. Repudiating the Platonic kind of thought, Nietzsche also reviles Socrates for being what he calls the “archetype of the intellectual man.” He attacks him in *The Birth of Tragedy Out of Music*. Nietzsche thought that Greek tragedy deteriorated once the intellectual man, represented by Socrates, dominated the culture. I feel that’s mistaken, and I have criticized Nietzsche accordingly in my book *Feeling and Imagination*. But I think that his rejection of Plato is inspiring. He didn’t adequately understand the importance of Socrates’ work, while I myself am happy to think that I am basically a Socratic philosopher.

Socrates argued that we all know what reality is. We all know concretely what such deep concepts mean, though we are confused in our thoughts. The job of a philosopher is therefore to help us make our ideas clear. That’s what I also try to do. But in the process we have to give up the notion that there can be a conclusive answer to “the human problem.” Something along those lines may exist in mathematics – if you don’t give the right answer, you don’t get the correct sum for 2 plus 2 equals – but life is not a mathematical problem. And, consequently, one should not look for a unitary solution to the nature of love or expect to find, for example, that the modern age is or is not out of touch with the great realm of being that Plato and medieval Christianity claimed to discern. Instead of asserting anything like that, we need to see and appreciate what has been happening in the world of human searching for one or another solution. Only as we pinpoint the contents of this pursuit can we have viable ideas about some particular facet of our reality – which is to say, our nature as ever-questing beings.

In that attempt, I examine two major themes in Plato’s philosophy that were to have a large effect upon all later thinking: the notions of transcendence and of merging. I am an opponent of both. I don’t believe that human love can be explained in terms of a transcendence into a higher reality. We are products of the manifold forces that operate on this planet. Love is limited to that, and it cannot be explained by reference to a metaphysical domain beyond our earthly condition. Neither do I agree with the idea that merging of any kind is what we are really interested in when we talk about love. In general, I am an enemy of the common belief in merging. It is not true about human capacity, and in fact it is a very dangerous idea.

This is not to say that merging is impossible. It occurs in salt every day – in the conjunction of sodium and chloride. And it happens when rivulets come together and make a stream. In each case, once the interpenetration has taken place, you can’t tell the elements apart. They’ve merged. We often use that word, and in those circumstances it’s a perfectly normal mode of speaking. Also there is a musical occurrence in which the notes merge and make a new

and interesting combination. If you strike a chord on the piano, you cause a merging in the sound. My argument is that this is not true to what it is to be a person, to be a living creature like us. We, as human beings, and in our attempt to love others, do not exist as rivulets, but rather as different individuals. In our personhood we do not merge; we cannot merge. The most that can happen is that because you think you're merging, you end up falsifying ingredients in the reality of your relationship.

As a result of their desire to merge – and it's a feeling that some people find very attractive – men and women distort themselves in one respect or another. This alone justifies the doubt that love can ever be an actual merging. There is a kind of romanticism that predicates a basic hunger in everyone for some such fusion. Without denying the frequency of this aspiration, I see little reason to think that it is characteristic of all forms of romantic attachment, and I'm sure that it is not fulfilled in any actual instances of love. In the history of philosophy one can find more plausible descriptions. They refer to other forms of relationships, usually Aristotelian and not Platonic. They rely upon concepts of people who interpenetrate; who have a bond that is interpersonal; who may be interdependent upon each other's personality; who are companionate; who share their separate selves; who each discover someone who is significantly different and with whom one neither submits nor blindly subjects oneself to whatever the other is and wants.

In those circumstances, both persons recognize that they are indefeasibly not the same. But out of this recognition of diversity, and in the mutual acceptance of it, can come a sense of oneness. Something similar applies to concepts like "the United States" or "the United Nations". Those were great ideas that arose at the end of the eighteenth century and along the lines I am describing. It isn't that everybody in every state and every nation becomes identical because they have all fused together in accordance with some ideal pattern of merging. But rather there is an acknowledgment of real disparity, depending on the region, the history, and the individual type of governance to which human beings revert while also being united in crucial ways. That seems to me to be what love is like most definitively. In those countries in which everyone is forced into a single mold, totalitarian countries in particular, the nation tries to live up to an icon of conformity that is comparable to treating love as merging. I consider those totalitarian nations inferior, and the congruent affective philosophies erroneous about the nature of love.

The notion of merging was especially prominent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. When people speak of romantic love being a recent occurrence, they do so because merging took on greatest importance at that time. The Romantic theorists treated merging as central to the conception of love they had in mind. The doctrine also issues from other views in the history of ideas. Medieval Christianity was perennially divided by a controversy about merging. Some illustrious thinkers were burned at the stake because they thought that men or women could merge with God. In Islam, too, there

was a great philosopher who was executed because he said, "I am God". What he meant wasn't that he was part of the personhood of a supernatural being. He meant that he had merged with God in the sense of total unity, at oneness, with him. Taken literally, that idea was heretical for Islam as it was for Christianity. It might also have been troublesome in Judaism except that the relevant conception is very remote from the Jewish idea of loving God as a unique and separate being. In Catholicism, with its platonistic origins, the notion posed a pervasive puzzlement.

In Catholic theology, you find the assertion that God is in the world. Scholars and fathers of the church disagreed about how this could be the case. Some said that God is in the world because he is present throughout nature. But then that sounds like pantheism – as if God is the same as nature, inseparable from it. Christianity did not tolerate an approach of that sort, since it runs counter to the basic tenet that God has a different and more sublime being. God was inherently beyond nature, and nature itself was impure and imperfect – possibly evil. The body was to be contrasted with the soul, and therefore God couldn't be literally in the material world. He belonged to a spiritual realm toward which we mortals could only aspire. If we were lucky enough to have divine grace, or perfected ourselves through good works, we might nevertheless be admitted to the supernatural domain. That was all the ruling dogma in Christianity allowed. At the same time, many people did think that God was somehow also in us and in the world as a whole. This, however, created the massive problem for ecclesiastical authorities that centers around the question of merging. As against this notion, the more moderate concept of "wedding" was often invoked.

Throughout the Middle Ages there existed references to man wedding God – being wedded to God. The human soul was the bride, and God was the bridegroom. This theme recurs in a good deal of medieval religious poetry. The two beings were conjoined not in the sense that they merge but rather because they get wedded or even welded together. They communicate and ultimately interpenetrate without losing their individual substance. The finite human being could thus achieve a kind of oneness that saturates the soul with the goodness of God while he or she still remained separate from the deity. That was common parlance in the Middle Ages, and it is in this vein that I also talk about wedding. It is intelligible as opposed to merging.

If you look at the poetry of St. Teresa, you'll see that a lot of it sounds as if she may well have believed in merging, or at least was entertaining it as a possibility. But that was not the orthodox view, and even today it is not accepted at face value by the Catholic Church. It is normally taken as a form of idolatry akin to loving another human being with the kind of religious love that only God merits.

Nowadays the love between men and women, and men or women, is sometimes treated as if it alone were religious love. This attitude, which many Romantics in the nineteenth century openly defended, is a disposition that

the church always feared: if people had quasi-religious love of each other, they would be enacting a disservice to God and not living up to his commandment about being loved uniquely. Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, and with all thy soul. But you can't do that if you are going to love your girlfriend or your boyfriend that way. Consequently, the very suggestion was heresy in the Middle Ages. Out of that conflict between the orthodox view and the heretical attachment to another person, particularly if you think you are merging with this person and having the feelings the church said mortals should have toward God, there arose the kind of medieval and courtly myth that is present in the legend of Tristan and Iseult. Because of the love potion, the two people love each other with a total giving of themselves and with explicit belief in the goodness of merging with one another. That myth is especially evident to us in Wagner's opera, which was written in the Romantic period but was preceded by hundreds of related versions of the legend in earlier centuries.

The church was concerned that its mission would be impaired by any human love that mimicked the devotion you should have for the deity. The love potion could only be an evil that leads to a tragic ending. And, indeed, in many nations, the love of God may have become in our age less pervasive than the search for love of another man or woman. Statistics about how many people go to church indicate that in the United States a large number do, in Spain very few, and in France and other European countries hardly any. It is difficult to know what is happening among the young, and whether they are emancipating themselves from the dominance of the traditional faith by trying to find in another human being something equivalent to the love of God. But disillusionment about supernatural beliefs has surely increased. Moreover, those who exist in the modern world are aware of how imperfect any interpersonal arrangements must be under actual conditions, and therefore how hard it is to live up to the older ideals of love. And, even if you follow established mandates, it can all be a big mistake, since you may not get what you really want. You undergo anxiety and misery, individuals as well as institutional teachings delude you, and you run the risk of being betrayed by an idealistic ideology that mattered to you.

In relation to merging, Nietzsche states in one place: "If there are Gods, how is it possible that I'm not one of them?" As facetious and humorous as he was trying to be, Nietzsche touches a profound explanation of the search for merging. If you believe in God as perfection, you as a human being will not only snuggle up to him in the hope of getting his protection, Nietzsche suggests, you will also want to be what he is. Sartre develops this very far in *Being and Nothingness*. Man is a futility, he says, because man wants to be God, and there is no God. But what lurks beneath this conception is why someone would want to be God, to merge with God. It's because one has the image of a perfect being. There may conceivably be such a being, and the human imagination that goes into thinking about this possibility is itself a

very high achievement that I do not wish to demean in any way. The ideal entity is something you would want to merge with just as you would want to be perfect on your own. A man or woman might, in principle, acquire this perfection simply by merging with it.

That's one understanding of the origin of the quest for merging. Another is the fact that we all begin with a kind of merging. It happens when the sperm and the egg collide. They don't just shake hands and say, "Let's live together and survive however well we can," as in the ending of *Candide*, the musical by Leonard Bernstein: "We're neither pure nor wise nor good. / We'll do the best we know. / We'll build our house and chop our wood / and make our garden grow".

That may be the highest goal, the highest love that *Candide* can hope for after all the calamities that he and Cunegonde have been through. Even so, the advent of human love cannot occur by biological means alone. In the act of reproduction, the sperm throws itself into the egg, and the zygote is made in a flash of merging. It's a chemical event just like salt being made out of its components. But the reproductive occurrence is only a prelude to the human story. One reason that I believe in the morality of abortion is because those who attack it say, "Oh, you're killing a person." Well, the zygote isn't a person. And once personhood comes into the individual development of men and women, we've moved beyond the possibility of merging. It was once a part of us, just as the food we've eaten all our lives is a part of us. But, as persons, we become something more, and no longer capable of merging in the way that cells or molecular elements do.

A hope of this latter sort may underlie the reasoning of people who say or feel: If only I could return to some kind of primordial, biologically programmed state, my amatory problems would all disappear. It's like people wanting to return to the womb, which is a notion of Freud's—his belief that all men want to do so. I wonder why he didn't say the same about women. They also came out of a womb. In any event, these notions about merging are sports of the imagination that can be very intriguing, and the aesthetics of their formulation throughout the history of ideas has always fascinated me. So I am not suggesting that one shouldn't even think about merging. The thought of it is an integral feature of our mentality as creative beings, inasmuch as it issues from speculation that makes us inventive and imaginative. But the concept itself is not true to our reality, what we are as human beings. The nature of love must therefore be elucidated in other, less fanciful, ways.

## Courtly Love and Its Successors

Returning to ancient Greek philosophy, we should always remember that it issues from a society and culture that was very narrowly specified. It's not only that the ideas focused upon people who were upper-class, and not only because they were males, but also because they were members of an elitist state



in which women were subjugated. There were also 400,000 slaves in Athens, and they too had no voice. We have no means of knowing what their ideas of love were. Daily life was very remote from the democratic ideals that have emanated out of it indirectly, and that most Americans espouse. The Greek city-states were not only sexist and class-ridden but thoroughly autocratic as well. I think they were probably a very peculiar phenomenon in human existence. It just happens that there were many geniuses among those people, or at least many outstanding men among them, from whom we can learn a great deal. But as far as their thinking about love is concerned, it reflected an outlook that was alien to the views we have nowadays. I would put it into its historical place instead of using it as a model.

With the advent of courtly love in the Middle Ages, things began to change. But before that there was the emergence of Christianity out of Judaism and Greek thought. When I wrote my love trilogy, the chapter that I liked most of all at the time was the one on agape, the Christian idea of God's bestowal of his love. That is a momentous concept in world history. My own thinking about bestowal initially resulted from reading Bishop Nygren's book *Agape and Eros*. It seemed to me that his conception of agape was misguided inasmuch as it maintains both that love originates from God and that it originates only from God. I have always considered love a projection of what people do, or are trying to do all the time, and that only if we accept the reality of this kind of projection can we construct an adequate theory of human love. In other words, I wanted to stand the Christian notion on its head, or (if I'm right) on its feet. But while I don't agree with the way it was presented by Nygren, and is still affirmed by Christians, I see the conception of agape as a fertile occurrence in human-kind's ability to understand what love may be.

Courtly love has a role to play because it was an effort to humanize Christian thought in the Middle Ages. The attempt is very meaningful to me. It is based on a love of nature, not merely as God's product but as in itself worthy of love. There were Christian courtly thinkers and there were non-Christian courtly thinkers. Much of the difference between them depends on how the relationship between God and nature is interpreted.

But the idea of humanizing love – the belief that love is something that one can have not only in relation to God, but also and magnificently with another human being, particularly a person of the opposite sex—that belief about what is valuable in life is a development beyond the thinking that preceded it. It's not the case, as some writers have said (Denis de Rougemont, for instance), that the idea of romantic love was created in the Middle Ages. In the Hellenistic period, there were descriptions of heterosexual romantic love that were comparable. The point about courtly love is that it occurs after the growth and widespread dominance of Christian ideology. And so it's a mechanism for relating to another person with the same kind of attachment that the church ordained in the love of God. This alone was a major achievement, which went on for several hundred years, from about the end of the

twelfth century or beginning of the thirteenth to the time of Shakespeare in the sixteenth and seventeenth century – with all sorts of ups and downs and complex fluctuations.

Throughout this period, love between human beings was given ever greater social and political importance that reflected what was happening in the history of ideas. As a general rule, creative minds don't operate in a vacuum; they come out of living soil and then contribute to it willy-nilly, depending on what exactly has gone before and what is happening and fruitful in the present. You could have a prodigy who is alienated from his origins, but he probably won't be remembered; he won't have any effect. But the promoters of courtly love were very much in touch with their environment, and so the outlook was able to exist and to flourish for those several hundred years. It doesn't much remain in the modern world.

At the same time, courtly love contributed directly, and in its own fashion, to the democratization of love with which we are now familiar. It was, for the Middle Ages, democratization in a very narrow sense. While the Greeks thought of the elite, the philosophers, the philosopher-kings, as people who were able to love – and the only ones who were – the courtly period tended to include other human beings as well. Of course, they weren't just ordinary folk. They were the feudal lords and ladies, the aristocrats in the Middle Ages, and not participants in anything similar to the intellectual life of fourth-century BC Athens. This shift was, however, a move in the direction that eventually culminated in the idea that almost anyone could love, and do it well. It was part of the democratization that has happened in Western history in many aspects of life and over several centuries.

As I previously remarked, we do not know what was happening affectively at the lower levels of medieval society. Occasionally a woman of higher rank had a lover who was socially inferior – possibly a poet who celebrated her beauty and charm. But I wouldn't want to define courtly love in only those terms. The period in history lasted a long time and spread across Europe and the Near East. The men, the rulers, the princes, the warriors went off to conquer other countries. They were away on the crusades, while their wives remained at home with the job of running the state. Women like Eleanor of Aquitaine and some others became very powerful within their own little principality or kingdom. And certainly that gave them greater allure that could be extolled by the itinerant poets who wrote verses for the ruling female, whom they also claimed to love.

As a further complication, there were divergent kinds of courtly love. It was not the same in the north as in the south. In Southern France the poets were expected not to be adulterous with their queen or princess. One doesn't know what the truth was, but the facade maintained that they were merely entertainers writing love poetry for and about the monarch. Those were the troubadours. The concept relevant to them is called "fin' amors", which means pure love. In the north, among the trouveres, there was another tradition, in which love that was adulterous or carnal and fully sexual had its place as well.

Consequently, there were very different perceptions of what the nature of the “courtliness” was. There isn’t any single notion of courtly love. I always try to make distinctions in order to see the variability in all of these gross and simple-minded ideas that find their way into schoolbooks. The reality is usually much more complicated. Particularly in terms of love, all the different streams and rivulets intertwine at every moment, regardless of any preconceived definition.

In my chapters on courtly love in volume 2 of the trilogy, I analyze several respects in which it differed from what preceded it. There are things one can say about courtly love itself that equally pertain to its different varieties. One was its tendency to dignify human relations between a man and a woman to a degree that had not existed when marriage was just an institutional device to bring families together for political or financial purposes, or to live up to the church’s sanctified method of regulating reproduction. In courtly love, it is the ardent connecting of the right man and woman that ennobles them both and puts each in a superior condition. This could happen apart from wedlock, but married people were not necessarily excluded from having courtly love for each other. You didn’t have to be adulterous or unmarried – as de Rougemont and C. S. Lewis claim – in order for there to be this kind of love. You could have both courtly love and monogamous marriage. In principle they were separable but also capable of coexisting in one way or another.

Though the women were sometimes dominant, or more knowledgeable about what a lover should be, the medieval romances often tell another type of story. The fourteenth-century tale of Aucassin and Nicolette is a good example. In it, Aucassin is a young boy, an aristocrat, who falls in love with a slave girl named Nicolette whom his father owns. He shocks his parents when he says he wants to marry her. They retort, “What do you mean, marry? You can do anything you want with her, but you have to marry someone who belongs to your social class”. Aucassin can’t take that, and so he runs away with the girl and they cohabit. They live together like married people and have exploits that cement their relationship. They are separated when a band of Muslims captures them. Aucassin doesn’t see Nicolette for a long time, during which he has many adventures on his own. Eventually he is taken prisoner by a Muslim prince, whose wife turns out to be Nicolette. She recognizes Aucassin and still loves him. They cooperate and finally contrive to get free of the man with whom she has been living. The couple go back to Burgundy, where it all began. Aucassin’s parents have died, and he becomes the ruler. He inherits the wealth and position that are rightly his, and he and Nicolette live happily ever after.

That is a typical medieval romance, and in many details it fits the pattern of courtly love. It is particularly interesting because the most heroic figure, or rather one of the two heroes, is a woman, and a slave girl! You don’t find an exact equivalent in ancient Greek writings. There are inklings of it in Hellenistic fables, but the medieval depiction is part of a different and much larger perspective that was spreading throughout Europe in the Middle Ages and eventually fed into Western romanticism.

Before this occurred, there were intervening movements within seventeenth-century Puritanism and Rationalism, both of which reevaluate what would count as romantic love (with a little “r”). They derive only partly from ideas that were characteristic of the courtly period. Though the Puritans were not what we call “puritanical”, they wanted to have a sensible approach to human sexuality and emotion within a religious framework that was coherent with their Protestant beliefs. These in turn showed the influence of Luther, whose views were inimical to the basic humanism of courtly love. In the case of the Rationalists, many of them questioned the goodness of love to begin with. They held that people should devote themselves to making their thoughts clearer and more cogent, instead of giving themselves to emotional excitement that inevitably undermines the power of reason.

Shakespeare comes on the scene as someone post-Luther who is aware of a good many of these countercurrents and who organizes them in terms of his splendidly dramatic dialectic on the stage. After Shakespeare there are theorists who carry further his kind of approach, though they don’t envisage him as a philosophical source. The prevailing progression moves away from courtliness while also allowing a remnant of it to emerge in a version that is more suitable to later European society. In the nineteenth century, and under the influence of the French Revolution, whose ideas of equality, fraternity, and liberty encouraged people to love whomever they wished without parental interference, romanticism came into being. It brought together varied strands of thought and tried to construct an ideology by which individuals, particularly young men and women, would be able to attain an affective state of being that might variably amalgamate the previous views in the history of ideas that we have been discussing.

In this context, the role of women greatly changed. Female egalitarianism that is so important nowadays is a realization of what many Romantics believed in at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the French Revolution, women were emancipated in some of the ways men were. Throughout the eighteenth century in Europe, there had been a great deal of freedom of sexual behavior, usually on the part of the men, though the women also could decide whom they wanted. They had access to greater sexual liberty than there had been for them when the church was all-powerful. In the nineteenth century, women strove for complete freedom. The Empress Josephine, and various prominent women, saw no reason why they couldn’t have lovers just as their menfolk did. In more recent history, women have asserted themselves as having other capacities for which they don’t need romantic love in order to achieve their personal goals, or at least not as much as was previously thought. And if they did experience romantic love, they would do so as free and autonomous agents rather than as persons who have to obtain their liberation by means of their love.

Yet that too is a fulfillment of the original conception of Romantic love. It was to happen through the equality that women are starting to have only now. In the current world women have shown that in most of the areas in which

men excel, women can do so equally, and often better. As a result, women don't have to submit to romantic love as a means of satisfying some dominant male. What results, at least in principle, is thus a greater ability to indulge in romantic love for women who so desire, together with a greater freedom from the necessity to love in order to demonstrate one's inherent value. Both patterns of romanticism are therefore accentuated. Women can freely have romantic love as much as men can, but women can also do without it if they choose since they don't have to justify their existence in that manner or yield at all to the male's craving to have female lovers whenever he wants. I think we are going through a very exciting era, the two hundred years since the Romantic revolution having shattered affective and interpersonal molds that prevailed throughout the world. I don't despair of the future, except perhaps in having to live through the creation of it!

## **Varieties of Romantic Love**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is an important figure in relation to one kind of Romantic love, what I call Romantic puritanism. Though Rousseau was largely puritanical, he promoted the glorification of feelings and a gamut of vaguely sentimental ideas about love. That approach typifies a major segment of romanticism. It maintains that you can be a true lover even if you never have sex with anybody, or if you never marry your beloved, just by living in a hazy dream of oneness that typifies an early stage of individual maturation. Many adolescents or prepubescent boys and girls have such experience, and then most of them get over it. In Rousseau's type of romanticism, the benign sentiments suffice to make your life meaningful. And if they are puristically puritanical, they might not lead to anything else. Rousseau was a great prophet for this attitude, while living differently himself, since his whole life was not given over to the mere expression of sentiment. But there were other variations of romanticism as well.

Here again we encounter the value of pluralism that alerts you to expect diversity, while also keeping your eye on some unique historical circumstances in which the diversity occurs. If you compare Rousseau with Stendhal, as I do in a couple of chapters, you find two distinct types of romanticism. Though love, as Stendhal realistically portrays it in his novels, is always deceptive, he also affirms that human happiness cannot occur unless one succumbs to the illusions it creates. And there are other writers in this period who say something similar but whose ideas I didn't go into as thoroughly as I would have liked. One of them is Alfred de Musset – the poet and playwright – who in the middle of the nineteenth century transitioned from benign romanticism to Romantic pessimism, combining both in his literary productions. Though being very sophisticated about the disasters that are latent in Romantic love, he was also aware of how powerful and exhilarating it can be. He tries to work out some form of harmonization between these alternatives, but he usually ends by giving up in despair.

In its totality, Musset's approach differs from either Rousseau's or Stendhal's. In the twentieth century it leads into the negativism of Proust – who is nonetheless sensitive to the aesthetic wonderment of Romantic love, emanating as it does from an extraordinarily fertile use of the imagination. All the same, Proust thinks that, since it is based on an illusion, Romantic love is always doomed. The only love he truly accepts or appreciates, and I think the only one he really understands, is the love of art. He has a kind of Romantic view of art. Despite this limitation, Proust is probably the greatest philosophical novelist who ever lived, mainly because he is so perceptive about the contrasting values in the human struggle for love and tries so persistently to be honest about them.

As I have said, the idea of merging with another person comes to the fore in romanticism. That is a primal component in it. Romantic theory also partakes of Platonism, Neoplatonism, sometimes Aristotelianism, and also pantheism – which many scholars have deemed uniquely Romantic: the idea being that passionate love is sacred in itself and therefore justifies one's intense experience; or else, that Romantic love is not just loving someone passionately but may also include a deified version of what Schopenhauer calls "loving-kindness". The latter is not the same as passion.

In Schopenhauer, who was a pessimist and who best represents Romantic pessimism, sexual passion is always an illusion-making device that nature employs to get people to engage in marriage, and therefore coitus, for the sake of reproducing the species. For the men and women who are in love and give themselves to it completely, passion is the greatest thing in life and they are sure it will lead to happiness. In reality, according to Schopenhauer, it is just a cunning self-deception created by nature to get people to procreate. This idea was picked up by Tolstoy and many other writers at the end of the nineteenth century, and also by Freud in the early twentieth century. They thought that passion enables our existence to be affirmative and vibrant, at least bearable, but always severely marred by emotional deception.

Nowadays when people treat Romantic love as the only kind of love, they tend to assume that passionate attachment alone makes life worth living. That is a wholly Romantic idea. It does not exist in the medieval conception of courtly love. In courtly love there may be sex, and even passionate sex – Tristan and Iseult is a story of adultery. The troubadours had to avoid that, or pretend to, but the trouveres and other adherents to courtly love didn't fudge the fact that their experience involved carnal indulgence. At the same time, the medieval writers rarely assert that the oceanic feeling of sexual passion justifiably frees one from the bonds of ordinary morality. In the Romantic period, that is exactly what was meant. Passion of this libidinal and erotic sort appears in the glorified abandon and complete yielding of oneself that is then defined as the nature of truly romantic unity between man and woman, and as the basis of all love in general, indeed the only thing that creates meaning and goodness in life.

Bernini's statue of St. Teresa shows her in a state of ecstasy, with her eyes rolling, while she is half-unconscious, or maybe wholly unconscious, but undergoing a passionate love of God. That is how the church was willing to represent religious love – the passionate and total surrender of oneself to the deity. If you take this work of art in isolation from its social setting, let's say if you're a Martian who comes in and looks at that statue, you might see it as something out of Playboy. (Well, actually, Playboy doesn't show passion. It shows seductiveness. The nude women are not usually in a state of passionate release, but rather experiencing delight and sensuous pleasure designed to arouse male passion.) The notion of Romantic love, extolling the supremely passionate, concentrates entirely upon the overwhelming and quasi-religious emotionality that men and women may get from love, particularly sexual love. This view of interpersonal possibilities predominates throughout the history of romanticism in the modern world.

That attitude may also account for the greatly varied acceptability of different objects of love, which is characteristic of our current predilections, above all in our very recent past. The so-called sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s was predicated upon the belief that whatever gives you the requisite kicks, whatever excites you very much, is equally good. The concept is an adaptation, or rather modification, of the Romantic belief that by itself and in itself only passion provides the most essential, the most desirable, goodness in life. If so, why should it matter where or how you get the needed stimulus? From this perspective you can also derive the liberation, the acceptability as never before, of homosexual behavior. Across the ages in the Western world, there has been a homophobia that condemns all such inclinations as evil, sick, degenerate, even criminal. Freud refers to homosexuality as an "arrested development." But if passion determines what is good and what makes life worth living, and if you get your passion with a person of the same sex, why should anyone care about his or her gender? It's the passion that matters most.

A significant tie thus exists between gay liberation and the growth of romanticism under the alternate parameters related to differing social conditions. These always come into play, of course. Our erotic and amatory beliefs are not simply ideational. They are also a function of societal, economic, and environmental circumstances. With all that in mind, one can see how the present turmoil about same-sex marriage has its roots in the Romantic upheaval that took place many years ago. Needless to say, its consequences had never been foreseen.

## **Identification of Love and Passion**

In addition to the ones I have mentioned, there are other versions of the Romantic approach to love. While it remained a dominant theme, the identification between love and passion altered from country to country. Whether it

may or may not have been typically American, it was very strong in the United States during the twentieth century. In England or Western Europe, and certainly in Eastern Europe or Asia, there existed a somewhat different climate of opinion. Nevertheless, the adoration of passion endures as a touchstone that pervades the varieties of romanticism.

Having said this, I want to emphasize that ideas alone never create feelings. And by themselves feelings never amount to ideas, because each of them must be processed cognitively as well as affectively. The two aspects of human nature always interact, but their intersection is so subtle that we often cannot say which is predominant. For some persons in some societies, passion may be a sign of mental illness. Psychotics can be very passionate about things that therapists and other rational people would consider unwholesome. From the point of view of individuals who are healthy but unfulfilled for whatever reason, and then undergo a moment of passion (this is a typical Hollywood script), life can suddenly start to glitter for them. One might occasionally want to say that the before and after ways of life are both sick: the individuals just hadn't been aroused to the degree that a passionate experience awakens, but satisfies only momentarily.

Human beings differ greatly in that respect. Some people don't need much passion. Some need a lot. Most of us have it only in a particular phase of our lives. It's noteworthy that in many marriages – including good marriages – the participants outgrow passion and yet are able to develop into a kind of love that results from having gone through the earlier period of passion. Remember that within a lifespan all sorts of physiological changes occur. There are variations in the level of hormones; differences in the strength and deterioration of the body, or if not actual deterioration then alteration in what the body can do; intellectual developments, mental advances or the opposite that one undergoes; and, of course, there is simply the course of daily events that belong to the marital relation itself.

As separate men and women, we all have highly diverse modes of access to life, and sometimes we learn from them. We may even learn how to improve in matters of love. People often fail at this and suffer miseries because they never know what they really want. That would affect the nature of their feelings, the character of their needs for one another, and the kinds of relationships they enter into, which may or may not be passionate. Everyone has a capacity for friendships that, for one reason or another, never issue into passion but can nevertheless be the most rewarding part of a person's life.

The same holds for an individual's art or profession, social involvement, mission as a political force or leader of one's people. Men and women do not have to have much emotionality, and surely not a great deal of romantic passion, in order for those avenues of our existence, those patterns of love, to flourish to some degree or other. To be an ardent teacher does not mean that you seduce your pupils. It means you love the activity of helping them in the ways a teacher can. It has a little, but not very much, to do with sexual ro-



mance. Freud would say it's sublimation, and that it always comes down to libidinal frustration or repression. But why? Human nature is extremely broad, and very intricate. There are many social and biological vectors at work within it. I don't think that Freud understood even the biological part, and I see no need to reduce all forms of love to either passionate love or some Romanticized inclination related to it.

In terms of the popular media, you do see massive evidence of a longing for the Romantic. I am not a sociologist, and I don't pretend to know what direction different societies will follow, or how the future in general will compare with what has happened in the past. I have no authoritative knowledge about that. But I can imagine the affective dimensions in the life that many people lead. I often think about the immediate experience of creative persons. An artist may fall in love with his art. He is driven by a kind of self-love that is wholly appropriate for what he does professionally. He loves himself so much that he learns how to express his being through his technique and through an attachment to, and affection for, the tools of his trade, the materials of his craft, the limiting parameters of his art.

This kind of love explains why a musician lives in terms of sounds. He or she hears them all the time. A painter lives with the emotionality of his pigments. I am a word artist, and much of my active life goes into writing. I am constantly attending to phrases and complete sentences that are meaningful to me. Some-times the ideas that come forth are not very interesting, yet they are attuned to other ideas, and what matters is the reforming and reshuffling of these concepts throughout the flood of language that flutters within my mind. I spend a lot of time walking by myself. While observing my surroundings, I hear and silently recite words, some of which end up in my prose. It is all a kind of love that cannot be reduced to passionate or romantic love of any kind. Whether or not an artist's experience is thought to be based on narcissism, repression, idealization, or sublimation – tough rarely is there a sublimation of anything – it aspires to an aesthetic fulfillment of the human being he or she has become.

At the same time, an artist's love life consists of other affective outlets, some of which involve romantic interests that any person might have, or would like to have, or may have once had. This truism manifests the plurality in our existence. There isn't any one thing that defines us exclusively, and so we inevitably experience different types of love. The job for the philosopher is to help us make our thinking clear about that disparity and to some extent organize it through reasoning, but not in a way that contravenes the reliance upon empirical and naturalistic factuality.

In the course of discussing the ideas of romanticism, my love trilogy includes a lengthy chapter about thinkers whom I call "anti-Romantic Romantics". The three that I deal with most are Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy. Their views arise from conceptual constructions that were native to nineteenth-century romanticism. They rebel against them and try to supplant the

commonplace notions of Romantic love. But in the process they create a new kind of romanticism without which we cannot understand the importance of love as we conceive of it at present. In the case of Nietzsche, the new version articulates his ideas of the superman and of “eternal return,” which frequently occur in Romantic theory. And also the notion of “amor fati” – the love of everything, love of all reality. As if human beings can have such a love! As if we know what all of reality might be!

In *Feeling and Imagination*, the more recent book to which I have already referred, I systematically attack the belief that we can even understand what it means to ask what reality is in its totality. In itself this question seems to me indicative of a quasi-religious perspective that some scientists have had (fewer and fewer nowadays) about the basic ability of science, and of properly regulated rational activity in general. It is a faith that seeks to put together all the pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of nature. The assurance it entails is accompanied by the further idea that at some point in the future we will find the solution.

For me what's more pertinent is the anecdote about the computer in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The computer says the meaning of life is 42, and when the investigators are astonished and infuriated by that after generations of waiting for it to provide them with its final answer, the computer replies, “Perhaps your problem is that you don't know what the question means”. I agree. We don't really know, and for that reason the Romantic extrapolating to the suggestion that one could have love for everything is grounded in a similar confusion. How could we ever know what the “everything” might be? And if we did, how could we possibly have a passionate love that would transcend the obvious limitations in our capacity to love anything?

Though this part of Nietzsche's thinking is typically Romantic, it stems from his rejection of the usual romanticism and a refusal to go back to a pre-Romantic stage, as represented by Kant's philosophy. Kant has a theory of married love in which he talks about joint submission to the personhood of the other individual. Nietzsche says of that: If the two people are always submissive to each other, what is there left between them? Possibly nothing? I think that is very shrewd as a critique of the pre-Romantic attitude about love that Kant exemplifies. But Nietzsche ends up with a type of postromanticism that is even more Romantic than what the Romantics believed, because it tries to extend itself to all there is and to do so in terms of a very mystical and obscure form of cosmic love, very hard for human beings to comprehend, let alone achieve. I will return to this in a later section.

## The Role of Creativity

There are other explorations that are related to these thoughts and that may take us a little further. I'll mention one that is very strong in my life at the moment. It results from my realization that in trying to make sense out of the

rather amorphous concept of bestowal, which has occasioned a great deal of struggle on my part, I continually find there is more that needs to be done. Each time I return to the issue, my thinking seems to have altered a bit. Perhaps this is what I should have anticipated, since I myself keep changing. Nevertheless, I sense a coherence in what I write, and I surmise that the successive explorations may occasionally be enrichments in the vital continuum that my reading of Dewey taught me to seek.

What I am now beginning to appreciate is the fact that bestowal must be treated as a pervasive and imaginative component of human creativity. I dealt with that slightly in *The Harmony of Nature and Spirit*, and then again in *Feeling and Imagination*. But I failed to portray the detailed manner, and extent, to which imagination is related to creativity. I did not establish how greatly the concept of creativity underlies the distinctions I have lumped together as helpful for understanding the nature of love, perhaps because I presented them as one perspective after another without any desire to achieve a grandly unified theory. A solution of that sort – comparable to the computer's answer in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* – would have been worthless. I didn't want it, and I'm still not interested in it.

Even so, there is an extensive view that I have been skirting, or dealing with obliquely, but now wish to articulate in a straightforward fashion. It addresses the role that creativity plays in all our experience. The issue is central to traditional thinking about love, whether it be God's love, agape in Christianity, or any form of love among human beings. The search for creativity manifests itself in the desire to love God – as understood by each of the major Western religions as well as others, such as Zen Buddhism and Hinduism – and likewise in most of our theories about the kind of interpersonal love that ordinary people have access to. I find the idea of creativity difficult to work with, but only by striving pluralistically with concepts like it can one truly elucidate what the nature and pursuit of love is. Sex, which is interrelated, of course, I approach in a comparable though still incomplete form in the expanded version of my book *Sex: Philosophical Primer* and also in *Explorations in Love and Sex*.

In these books I introduce analyses that eluded me in earlier stages of my writing. I try to show how pluralism provides new modes of dealing with both creativity and love. I specifically have in mind my distinction between compassion and sex, or you might say compassion and passionate sex. The distinction I made in *The Goals of Human Sexuality* between «the passionate» and «the sensuous» is relevant here. By sensuous I meant the way in which we enjoy our body, often through contact with some other person. We then gratify ourselves through our senses and for the sake of sensory consummation. The second dimension, the passionate, I described as a powerful need, a strong feeling of ardor or yearning, normally but not necessarily for another person. Sensuous is cool and passionate is not, but they're both aspects of sexuality, unlike one another, though often compatible with each other. When I

got to *The Pursuit of Love*, I tried to deploy similar insights about other kinds of love. And then in *Explorations in Love and Sex*, I returned to the original distinction and amplified it within the framework of a distinction between passion and compassion.

The latter of these two I depict as a type of love, since if you feel compassion for another person you bestow value upon him or her in a very special relation that requires its own place within the spectrum of loving attachments. In studying that niche, I distinguished between compassion and pity. This distinction goes back to Kant, but I conceived of it anew, and with an awareness of how faulty Rousseau was when he talked about the two as if they were the same. I treated compassion not only as different from pity but also as distinct from the passionate, whether sexual or otherwise, as well as from the sensuous, which is limited to enjoyment of one's sense organs.

Compassion interweaves with kindred types of love – the love of humanity, for example. In some traditions, Buddhism above all, the divine is envisaged specifically in terms of compassion. Christianity is more complex since God acts compassionately in sending down the personhood of himself that is called his Son. The Son forgives out of compassion, but it is sinfulness that elicits his bestowal. In Buddhism compassion results from the mere existence of suffering, and that means more to me than any concept of sin. My thoughts about compassion are therefore closer to those in Buddhism.

At the same time, my conception attempts to be inclusive, combining pluralistic views of love, compassion, and sex with the distinction between the passionate and the sensuous, which may be applicable as well to sexless interpersonal bonds that are either passionate or sensuous – or rather the two of them, since most people wish to experience both. In all these matters there is no one simple solution that one should be looking for, or even hoping to come across. Moreover, the issues are further complicated by the fact that, for me at least, all of the acceptable distinctions – for instance, between the sensuous and the passionate – serve to determine not only what love is but also the nature of creativity as a whole.

It was toward that end that I wrote my book *Mozart and Beethoven: The Concept of Love in Their Operas*. In it I examined Beethoven's inspired thinking about the nature of passion, with all the religious overtones in God's giving of himself through the passion of Christ, and likewise the carnal passion embodied in marriage and its preliminaries. Mozart had some insight into the varieties of passion but was generally more concerned about the ramifications of the sensuous.

There are thus different types of creativity, different affective modes that may be approachable through the basic distinction between the sensuous and the passionate. Notice, however, that we are now talking about a distinction between aesthetic elements operating in works of art, musical masterpieces in this case, rather than between a man and a woman or any other pair of living individuals. That alone makes the analysis more intricate, and thus more elusive.

## **Future Prospects for the Philosophy of Love: Science and Humanistic Studies United**

In turning to the nature of creativity itself, I had yet to find – and still continue to search for – some means of progressing along these intellectual branches, these ventures up the tree of the human spirit, and out on one limb or another. In a sense, that is what I have been doing in the present book, by providing these very limited descriptions. For me they all emanate from a vague totality that is my being as the person I am, expressing myself with whatever conceptual piety I can muster toward my life and its past. Still, as Renoir kept saying about his many films, whether any single product is in fact good or bad doesn't matter as much as the artist's ability to keep on doing his work.

I hope I'll be able to. If I can, I would like my further speculations about love to amalgamate some of the research now occurring in neuroscience and in cognitive studies. As in other great American universities, MIT has encouraged the idea of interdisciplinary research between scientists and humanists, philosophers in particular. But thus far little has been achieved in that direction.

At MIT there is quite a large faculty of people in the humanities who are treated with respect by the Institute as a whole. Nevertheless a relative lack of coordinated research exists between them and the scientists. The problem is compounded if we distinguish, as I do, between the humanities and what is humanistic. You can be a practitioner of the humanities and a superior scholar in some branch of them without being humanistic. Epigraphical work in Greek linguistics is part of the humanities, but it isn't especially humanistic, any more than geology is. They both have their rightful role in a university, but to effect the harmonization that is sorely needed at present, given the fact that biological and cognitive studies have advanced so well, one would have to integrate that type of knowledge more overtly, and more intimately, with concerted investigations of an affective sort. And those largely depend upon the humanistic aspects of the humanities.

Poetry, music, literature, theater, film, and other visual arts – all these are thoroughly concerned with human values, emotions, feelings, in short, affect in its entirety that lies beyond the explicit subject matter of the sciences. The humanities can benefit from science, but they suffer badly when reduced to its methodologies, regardless of where the money comes from. Nowadays it often comes from scientific endeavors. There isn't much money in our society at the moment for purely humanistic work. For thirty years brilliant minds have been charging ahead with great success in cognitive and related scientific efforts. But they may now be reaching an impasse that requires a different kind of tactic.

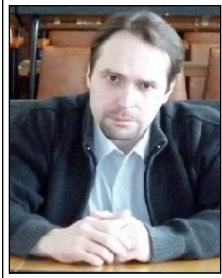
The importance of the humanistic dimension was taken for granted in earlier centuries. And it excelled in creating beautiful love poetry and great works of art based on love and humankind's inspired search for it. Mozart,

Stendhal, Verdi, Proust, and many other great artists were not scientific at all. Now we have many great scientists but we're falling behind by not sufficiently including the arts and the humanities, above all in those areas of humanistic thought that could benefit the sciences directly as well as indirectly.

When I first undertook what has become the core of my intellectual life, there wasn't an established profession that I could rely on, since so little was being done by either philosophers or scientists to study the nature of love and sex or the meaning of life, or even the aesthetics of film. The people who counseled me to avoid such flimsy subjects were often very cultivated, but they too were convinced that all investigation along those lines was suspect and surely fruitless. What I've learned is that, regardless of anything I or others have done since then, the need for such work is even greater now than it was before.

The idea is not to put us back into the mindset of the Middle Ages, or even the seventeenth century, or to better appreciate the achievement of St. John of the Cross, for example, a wonderfully imaginative and perceptive poet, or the nineteenth century, where there were brilliant playwrights like Musset and priceless novelists like Stendhal and Jane Austen. The problem is contemporary, so the output must be contemporary. But within the current actuality, there will have to arise new art forms and new branches of science that can deal with many of the unsolved issues that have been placed on the overloaded shoulders of cognitive science and brain or cell research. The latter have borne up under their burdens, but possibly in ways that are less applicable to the problems of ordinary life than if they had been sustained by prolonged cooperation with the humanistic approach in the humanities. That doesn't happen at MIT now, and I don't think it happens anywhere else. Yet the seeds are there.

## HERMENEUTICS



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### PHILOSOPHIC-POETIC EXPLICATION OF NIETZSCHE'S ÜBERMENSCH: APPROACHING THE PROBLEM OF COMPREHENSION RECONSTRUCTION

The idea of the overman becomes conceptually articulated only in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is him who creates the discourse of explicit speaking on the matter of the overman in the actual space of European culture, the discourse which initiated manifold receptions of formally “Nietzschean” overman and also had an impact on the general image of the overman established in the public consciousness in twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. However, trying to reconstruct and articulate Nietzsche’s take on the overman rationally and philosophically, we unavoidably face the problem of “semantic obscurity” of his works. It is caused by Nietzsche’s bent to the philosophic poetics embodied in his aphoristic, metaphoric intertextual word form, with which he aims to endow philosophy with a quality of permanently becoming creative thought, generated by each subject actively involved in it.

Nietzsche begins to speak of the overman explicitly only in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, where he introduces the special name “Übermensch” for the first time. Considering the genesis of Nietzsche’s philosophy, the stages of formation and forms of explication of the overman idea in it, there are some

general characteristics of the *Übermensch* to be distinguished which appear in the following key conceptual spheres of the whole continuum of Nietzsche's thought: *Dionysism*, *nihilism* and *will to power*. The former two had actually been articulated before the latter was conceptually defined. Each of them has a nomadic semantic and forms its own dimension attributing the *Übermensch*, and at the same time demonstrating his intertextual incorporation into Nietzsche's philosophic discourse.

Dionysism undergoes an anthropologically orientated transformation and deflects in the subjective personal dimension in the *Übermensch*. Accordingly, the *Übermensch*, a "Dionysian man" in Nietzsche's perspective, is endowed with "vitality", which actualizes some biological intentions and creates a space of one's "vital liberation". At the same time, Dionysism introduces creative energetics and a residual teleology of an aesthetic kind which transform into "anthropocultural fertility".

The "nihilism of strength" becomes for one an instrument to destroy the "old tables" – superficial values – and to clear space for reevaluation in the first place. It appears to be a way to objectify the intention of freedom, which is deeply characteristic of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

The concept of the "will to power" as the basis of the *Übermensch* brings together and deflects the Dionysian tendency and the "nihilism of strength" to some extent. The *Übermensch* actually explicates himself ontologically through the act of his powerful willing. Being in possession of *Macht*, a person is able to overstep the limits of Good and Evil as outward ethical absolutes and to create the world of values, thus being established in the rank of an overman, according to Nietzsche. Yet the conventional overman mode of being is aimed at permanently determining and reproducing the will to power. Everything that leads to its increase and amplification is good, while everything that brings to its decrease is evil. The will to power as a feature of the overman is in the first place an active postulation and explication of ego which allows the subject to affirm his/her self in its original authenticity.

As a result, we come to a conclusion that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a human being of vital spirituality who has made a radical reevaluation of values, who has denied all the transcendental metaphysical foundations of life, all external absolutes-regulators, and who has become the lawmaker of new values owing to the permanent-dynamic becoming of the will to power. However, this definition determines only the general outline but does not reveal the actual substantial foundations of the *Übermensch*. This is due to the fact that definitiveness as a form of completeness eliminates the state of actual permanent becoming through the augmentation of the will to power immanent to the *Übermensch*, and thus the *Übermensch* is basically inexpressible in the modality of universal and complete anthropological models.

The main contribution Nietzsche made to define the overman is that he showed vividly and determinately that overman *is*, as a point of a should-be and necessary anthropologic evolution; however, Nietzsche does not give



any clear articulation of the subject-matter of *what* the overman is. He leaves the idea to be an open form-metaphor of the horizon of the superb human changeability.

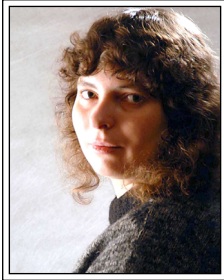
**Keywords:** overman, Nietzsche, human being, Übermensch, dionysism, nihilism of strength, will to power, free minds, nomadic perspective on man, reevaluation of values

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## HUMAN LIFE-WORLD



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## HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND POETIC MEANINGS

**T**here are different interpretations of the concept of meaning. For example, we speak of the meaning of the world and the meaning of life. We question the meaning of certain things and human deeds. For a human being, there is meaning both in the world around and in himself. In this article we focus on the phenomenon of the meaningfulness of poetic works for human consciousness. We show that poetic meanings are involved in creating the poetic world for human consciousness. Also, we study the relation between poetic image and consciousness. Our purpose is to analyse the work of poetry as a special phenomenon of consciousness and as a complex intentional object.

The subject of our research is poetic work. We consider it in the context of the poetic world and analyse such important conditions of its existence as narrator, protagonist and poetic image. We show that poetic image as a special phenomenon, which is constituted both by the author's and the reader's consciousness, has an important and often the main role to play in the being of a poetic work. Consciousness acts in the poetic world and its action with poetic meaning is actually the action of thought. Consciousness *exercises* its dwelling in the poetic world and develops certain skills of action in this world while staying in it.

We use phenomenological methods in the analysis of poetic work and view it as a complex system of meanings that shapes up in consciousness. Consciousness is considered as a stream, after the manner of Edmund

Husserl and William James. It is an autopoietic stream that builds itself and develops in time. According to this model of consciousness, the meanings are analysed as reflective units of this stream, whereas poetic meanings – as a type of meanings in general.

The reader acquaints himself with the work line by line and thus complex systems of the work's meanings build up while the flow of the reader's consciousness runs; separate meanings intertwine with the stream and exist in it for a certain period of time. There are meanings that exist in the stream only for a moment and those more constant, made relatively more stable and lasting by the attention paid to them. According to the developing subordination, some meanings get hold over others, while poetic images are also divided in subjected and subjecting. The whole idea of the work is revealed only after the reader has finished reading the work.

Social meanings, perceived by the reader, as well as personal meanings, intertwine closely in consciousness and make one integral whole, thus defining one's personality. The world of one's life, as well as the poetic, scientific, musical and art worlds – all the worlds which coexist in human society and for humans – become personality determinants. A person always has a unique "biographic situation" and disposes of its own unique set of meanings and images, and also makes complex systems of these meanings and images, conceptualising the world. The poetic world is partly intersubjective and partly socialised, though also partly unique and deeply intimate for every single person; however, in both these aspects of its existence the poetic world is personality-forming. While apprehending this world a person constitutes it anew in his/her consciousness. The constructivist point of view on the poetic world seems reasonable to hold to since such world would not exist without being recreated anew in the consciousness of each reader. That said, the reader's consciousness acts in this world as if it was already there and given, and the acts constituting this world themselves are usually not reflected in the reader's mind.

We demonstrate that to exist in the poetic world – or, for that matter, in the world of life – consciousness should be involved, engaged and finally grounded. To be in the poetic world is not a common situation for consciousness, and it demands a certain creative state of mind, relinquishment from other worlds and from the world of life as well. Being in the poetic world is a boundary situation characterized by a lack of stability as well as by instability of the reader's consciousness. In everyday life, dealing with ordinary things along with thoughts, meanings and images of the ordinary environment, consciousness moves along well-known paths which stabilize it; whereas poetic creativity, co-creativity with the author, on the other hand, brings consciousness to instability and unbalance. In everyday life people not only act but also think according to the patterns accumulated in their minds, and their thought moves along the well-trodden paths and is guided by common sense. To be in the poetic world it is necessary to relinquish from the world of everyday life, for the laws of the poetic world not only differ from those of the world of life, but often are at odds with them, and since common

sense becomes useless, some other way to find your way in the poetic world is required. Each empirical person can demonstrate a different extent of involvement in the poetic world through his/her biography.

We examine such concepts as narrator and protagonist from the phenomenological point of view. For the first time, we prove that the narrator is a unique author's model of a creative person. We also demonstrate such qualities of poetic image as constant becoming and a certain kind of veracity and facticity: the veracity of poetic image is the veracious depiction of the facts of the author's inner life. For the first time, we show that a shift of meaning, which points to its special facticity, is always peculiar to poetic image and is always perceptible to the reader.

**Keywords:** consciousness, meanings, phenomenology, author, interpreter, poetic work, world of life, system, poetic image, narrator

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# APOPHATIC PROJECT OF MAN



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## SUBJECT AND SUBJECTIVITY: THE HISTORY OF THE GAP

**T**his article deals with the gap between the subject and subjectivity and with the attempts of different philosophers to use different strategies in trying to understand, explain or overcome this gap.

In the Plato's philosophy, we can see the tendency to establish the subject as the basis of the world order. When Plato speaks of the knowledge of geometry, he has in mind the knowledge that links the opinions by the cause-effect relations, the knowledge that is drawn for the slave by his master and may be understood as an objective knowledge, which already exists in the mind of the slave, and besides that is universal. Plato does not speak about the subject, but it is the subject who estimates the objective world, delineates its boundaries and creates a basis for an order. However, subject's own existence eludes him. It may be granted to the subject only by the means of mystic revelation.

For Descartes the subject was the basis for the creation of knowledge, which would be obvious. In the attempt to build a system of knowledge as a reliable foundation of life, the world was increasingly objectified, leaving the subject just a role of an empty point of coordinate reference. However, the subject for Descartes has its own evidence, it is a thinking thing that becomes obvious after the rejection of any possible ideas about itself, it is obvious in the subtle and often invisible for the thought phenomenon – in the existence.

From Leibniz to Kant philosophers were trying to find the subject in the mind. Nevertheless, it was impossible to discover or recognize it there. Sartre argued that there is no *me* (or something like *me*) in the experience of consciousness, reflection, *me* that would be inherent to the acts of consciousness, so the subject is gradually virtualized. Now in search of a subject, philosophers increasingly turn to the idea of transgression, the idea of the Other and the idea of transcendent beginning. The existence of the Other becomes a condition of my existence.

The subject transforms into sign, symbol of the unity of subjectivity. The very subjectivity could be presented in different ways: as the Monad, which has vague and clear presentations in itself (in the philosophy of Leibniz), as productive capacity of imagination (in Kant's philosophy) and as the will to power (in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche).

Today, the crisis of the subject and the gap between the subject and subjectivity reached the extreme limits. Fight with the subject is a fight with the limiting structures, which objectify the Self. At the same time, the permissiveness of the Self is also considered ambiguously by the modern philosophers, and causes many social problems of modern society. On one hand the subject virtualizes, on the other hand subjectivity virtualizes too.

Modern problems of loss of evidence of the existence, the problem of loneliness and isolation in the human inner world, depletion of external reality are directly related to the crisis of the subject, to the fading of its kenotic evidence, evidence that was acquired in the kenotic doubt.

**Keywords:** subject, subjectivity, gap, thinking thing, evidence, human, integrity, Leibniz, Kant, virtuality

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# DIVIDUUM AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTER



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## THE PROBLEM OF FALSE IDENTITY

**T**he author draws attention to the false identity phenomenon of which the modern public consciousness has recently become aware. The significance of this subject is attributed to the fact that in the age of globalization, multiculturalism and free access to the entire knowledge of the world selfsameness loses its clear and distinct configuration, becomes more complex and suffers constant changes and transformations. The author makes an assumption that this problem is marked by fear of realizing one self's internal freedom which is the ground of any identity.

Along with the anthropological need of individual to penetrate one's nucleus of personality, the article also shows how important the mechanism of such penetration is. This is not merely a discovery of inner integrity, a search for oneself and solidarity with other individuals; this is the relations with reality, an attempt to define not only oneself in this reality but the reality itself through oneself. The problem of identity is closely bound with such subjects as personality, freedom, individual essence and also the purposes and meanings of human existence. There is no doubt that not knowing one's I reflects on the quality of the entire life. Of course, one can be satisfied with mere external aspects of existence, but the search for oneself is not limited by external similitude. Penetration into one's inner selfsameness is of great importance for an individual.

Relying on the ideas of classical and postclassical psychoanalysis, the article demonstrates the structural properties of this mechanism along with the role the unconsciousness plays in self-discovery of an individual. An assump-

tion can be made that the choice of any selfsameness is based on the inner orientation on "I must" or "I want". This does not mean that the individual is aware of his / her motives. Usually, this orientation occurs unconsciously. Such mindset is rooted deep in childhood. According to classical psychoanalysis, it is super-ego that acts as such censor, as conscience, as an authority that determines the motives. Therefore, one may assume that one of the important factors in forming the inner identity is family relationships. We find the basis that influences the development of the positive or negative content of super-ego in the Erikson's concept. Unlike Freud, who emphasized the Oedipus complex, Erikson pays attention to the first stage in which the basal trust or mistrust is established. The course of relationships in the child-mother dyad forms, according to Erikson, the initial sense of identity.

Furthermore, while considering the ideas of existential philosophy, the author regards another dimension of this mechanism. There is always somebody who makes the choice: either to establish the similitude or to get rid of the identity imposed by the society or something else. From this point of view, self-identity could be understood as an existential identity, as the selfsameness of the subject in a situation of choice, in effort and struggle, in the space of freedom. There occurs a self-dependent constituting of oneself.

The following paradox is especially emphasized in this article: each stage of human development, characterized by another level of individualization, has rather put a greater distance between one and one's self. The article analyzes the causes of this contradiction. It is fair to say that the internet changes our notion of time and space. There are too much information and everyday events. Self-identity becomes public. It is formed in social networks under the influence of public consciousness. Thus, a human being becomes a part of the information flow. Some problems arise in the perception of the Other. As postmodernists notice, it is the openness to the Other that becomes a trap. There is no true Other, there is only the emptiness, a social role, a pattern, a hyphen-man. The impersonal is reproduced and even cloned. One's innermost essence loses its significance. The modern man avoids responsibility, transferring the decision-making on mass culture and technological progress. On these grounds the entertainment market grows, offering the individual a possibility to hide in the fireworks of emotions and momentary delights.

Therefore, the author brings up another problem, articulated by postmodernists: an assumption can be made that the I vanishes once it becomes fragmented. But this brings us back to the question "Who makes the choice?" The cultural development does not lead to the blurring of individuality, but rather to its revealing. Human I does not disappear, but becomes more complex and diversified; new angles of self-perception are discovered, new ways of self-identification appear. Then what is one running from? One runs from the recognition of one's limitless inner freedom that creates a false notion of the I being absent. But this is too hard to realize and accept.

Basing on the given analysis, the author demonstrates 3 levels of this problem:

- 1) A human being has a relatively regular distinct selfsameness;
- 2) A divergence between the prototype and its image;
- 3) Identity that equals zero.

In conclusion, the author discusses the influence this phenomenon has on social processes. The human mind does not cope with such amounts of information. There appears a totally different pathology: intolerance to electromagnetic emanation. As another strategy of self-defense, our mind uses transhumanism – a desire to dissolve in technology. However, there is a positive aspect to it. Having exhausted all inner resources in this mad race the individual can develop an understanding or, at least, make the first step to understanding one's true needs and desires, realizing the absurdity and senselessness of the imposed images and values.

As the result, the phenomenon of false identity is partly a consequence of postindustrial society concerned with industrial progress and technological production, and partly – of the scientific progress. It may express the collapse of individual or group identity, a multitude of identities with an effect of emptiness and loss of the need of selfsameness itself. However, this is a new stage of realization of one's depth. This is a freedom which one has to face.

**Keywords:** selfsameness, identity, freedom, I, the other, identification, self-knowledge, self-awareness, integrity, self-identity, the choice

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# HUMAN EXISTENTIALS



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## **CORPOREALITY IN THE MODE OF PAIN, SUFFERING AND DEATH: BIOETHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**I**n the article, various modes of representation of a human body in a bioethical discourse (modes of norm, pain, suffering and death) are considered through the evolutionary prism of “a medical look”, philosophical conceptualization of the concept “body” and existing cultural and historical standards.

Each culture possesses the peculiar canon of corporality determining behavior of a subject of moral, its acts, its notions about the forbidden actions considered immoral. The feeling of own body is inseparable from the cultural and historical conventions which are carrying out moral canonization of a corporality.

There is a dualism in perception of a corporality, two-planned character of its understanding: as natural basis and as cultural object.

The fact that the moral is applicable only to the group of human beings, which possess certain corporal (biological) characteristics, is fundamental to modern bioethics. Therefore, the body of an embryo and a body of the capable person as two various types of a corporality-assume different moral criteria.

The bioethical knowledge fixes a certain degree of independence of a corporality from the manipulations made by means of medical knowledge by the rule of the informed consent. However, this rule belongs to the normalized “full-fledged” subjects of moral, those who is capable to express their will, to be autonomous due to the existence of consciousness.

The corporeality can be considered in two main aspects: feelings and possession. These two foreshortenings reveal two models of understanding of the human personality. The identification of a human way of life with feeling assumes full merging of the person with his own corporality. In this case, a human existence can be considered as standing on one level with an animal.

Such ontological status may no longer cause the same moral attitude that causes a person carrying out full or relative control over his body. Special moral attitude to the human person may not apply to what is estimated to be just a human body. This argument becomes apparent in concrete bioethical situations. For example, supporters of abortion emphasize in the fetus only the presence of some human qualities, but not the human himself. Moreover, it testifies that actually before the birth human being is considered as the body endowed only with the natural status.

At the same time in the modern world, it makes no sense to speak about steady canons of a corporality as well as about uniform homogeneous morals.

The subject can adhere to any bodily canon, but he will have to face the problem of legitimacy of this choice, a tough and sometimes brutal manifestation of local legal standards, often forcing the subject to pay for his choice.

**Keywords:** body, corporality, bioethics, body construction, ethics of corporality, improvement of man, body standardization

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# HORIZONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY



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## ANTHROPOLOGICAL FORM AS AN IMPLICATION OF HUMAN PHENOMENON

**T**his article attempts to answer the question *What is a man?* on the basis of the philosophical-anthropological discourse. Since science prefers the objectified style of thinking, it sees a man as a biosocial creature. Contemporary analytical philosophy, claiming to be scientific, tries to explain human consciousness in terms of neurons. According to the author, strong scientific character cannot be considered as a claim to philosophical anthropology so long as the essence of man cannot be objectified. It should be mentioned that something not exposed to objectification implies an assumption of human freedom. Accordingly, this assumption and a statement that the essence of human phenomenon lies within human consciousness are the initial conditions of anthropological discourse. Thus, author sets up a hypothesis: man is a creature that requires a form.

The author consecutively develops two main research hypotheses: 1) Man is a subjectivity in need of a form; 2) Anthropological form is the Absolute. For this purpose she divides concepts of consciousness and subjectivity, associating the first as an order and the second as a chaos. She also implements the idea of anthropological form, emphasizing its establishing function.

What is a form? If an initial anthropological element is a chaos of irreflective reactions, marks of subjectivity, finite infinity - because a man is immanent and at the same time transcendent towards the world, - a form is infinity assembled as something finite. A form gives an opportunity to

present infinity of conditions in a form of a single whole. It does not keep finiteness and ignorance for man, contrary to the opinion of Mamardashvili, but solves the problem of ignorance through infinite, absolute knowledge. A form is something that is capable of making a finite man to master infinity. It transforms anthropological element significantly. The result of this transformation is consciousness, which connects and structures primary and final states in terms of their potential, not actuality. It delivers the whole. Consciousness as a whole, world as a whole. And since a man has its limits, form can exist under a condition of multiplicity.

What makes this cohesion possible? The axial center, the primary prohibition, which creates hierarchy. It draws non-reflex reactions into a vortex of subjectivity, forming the profundity of consciousness. This primary center is fundamentally solitary, for only the absolute centre can give birth to a structure. At this point it is completely different from the structure as a whole. Like the «one» in Pythagorean theory, which stands out while being the condition of all other numbers. Absolute centre as a condition of structure is negative, has a sense of exclusion, introducing primary differentiation to the monotonicity of infinity. Foucault would say that it is the line of insuperable. This line of insuperable is something that causes man.

A form must not abolish chaos, but imbibe it like a drain box, saving its possibility and necessity, because without the chaos of freedom there is no human phenomenon. Here it is more appropriate to interpret it not in terms of «uncertainty» and «ignorance cells» (Mamardashvily), but by means of elasticity and maximum intimacy. The Christian tradition explains the connection between man and God using biblical images of manna from heaven and the robes of the Jews, who wandered in the desert for 40 years. Manna from heaven was singular, but could satisfy all the Jews and meet the unique needs of every single man. The Jews wandered in the desert for 40 years, yet their robes always fitted them. It is the same when it comes to connection with God. God is one, yet he is able to fulfill the intimate and unique movements of the human heart. This image delivers the understanding of maximum agility and universality of anthropological form, which does not imply the existence of idle anthropological space.

The universality of form means its application to everyone, as it is the outcome of multiplicity. The uniqueness of form means it provides anthropological multitude with general guidelines, thus creating the opportunity for understanding and co-existing.

Anthropological form doesn't adjust the content, it creates one. It does not deal with quiddity, but it gives one. Like the skill in dancing gives us a marvel of dancing. The burst of rhythm and sound is not enough to give birth to a dance. A dance is something that requires the knowledge of patterns and rules to control the body. Only with the rules a burst trans-formes in an image. Just like that, subjectivity without a form is paralyzed, it is the languish of incomplete conditions. There is a fundamental difference between

subjectivity and consciousness, much like the one between emotional impulse and artistic image, between heart trembling and poetry, between indignation and reflection, between a modern girl and a girl from Turgenev's novel, between capricious desire and love, between nothing and something, because subjectivity is initially an interminable chain of conditions closed on themselves. A form opens up these conditions uniting them into a cohesive whole. It continues every move of the heart, reveals maximum of its power, provides it with a meaning. Actualization of a form taken in its entirety creates subjectivity as consciousness. Subjectivity thirsts for a form like an observer of a dance thirsts for dancing himself. Without a form subjectivity is doomed to particularity.

If a man is a creature, which needs a form, a question arises: what can this form be? What meets the requirements of universality, plasticity, uniqueness, centering and human freedom? The Absolut does, as only the Absolute is capable of imbibing the non-quantitative infinity of subjectivity and disclose the transcendent horizon. In this vein we can say that God is consciousness.

Philosophical anthropological formula «God is consciousness» does not mean the identity of God and consciousness. It means that consciousness for the first time and at its maximum presented itself as God. God as a total form knows more than a man actually knows. Sees more than man sees. The form as a potentiality of man, as a man, considered through the perspective of infinity and its own possibility. It is a horizon, which enables man to create something potentially given to him. From the anthropological perspective, God is like straightened human heart taken in the absolute. God is potentiality, which remains tight in a man but can be released. It is the result of self-establishment of consciousness.

In this article the author also dwells upon an analysis of Foucault's and Deleuze's conception of a man as a temporary form. He also mentions the subject of a child's subjectivity and of attitude to the form in Russian culture.

**Keywords:** man, consciousness, subjectivity, freedom, chaos, anthropological form, religion, sacral, cult, philosophical anthropology

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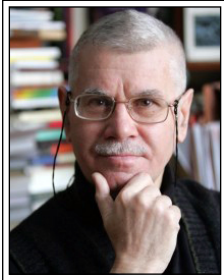
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## SCIENCES OF MAN



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## ZEN IN THE PRISM OF SYNERGIC ANTHROPOLOGY

**Z**en is famous for its specific style of spontaneous actions and illogical sayings, its hostility to everything systematic and predictable. Nevertheless, it possesses its own rigorous rules and methods, and we can find in it once more the principal elements of our paradigm of spiritual practice. In describing them, we shall base ourselves on the most general framework of Zen practice, avoiding all the intricate web of particular variations, local traditions, historical modifications, etc. (Only the division into the two main schools, *Soto* and *Rinzai*, cannot be avoided.) The central component of this framework is *zazen*: practice of meditation in the immobile sitting posture (the lotus posture) ascribed to Buddha himself. *Zazen* is not a pure intellectual meditation: it is a holistic practice that includes the regulation of breathing and the training of perceptions as well as some elements of the training of muscular system and physiological mechanisms. Moreover, it includes an important trans-individual or collective component called *sesshin* (union of a mind with another mind, in Japanese) and has multiple forms of the two principal kinds: 1) meetings of a disciple with a master, 2) collective meditations, often in walking, or special collective works of rhythmic and not too hard nature. Further main parts of the general framework are the most famous elements of Zen having well-known names *satori* and *dharma*. As for *dharma*, it is the basic reality of all the Buddhist (and Hinduist) worldview that cannot be expressed by any concept. Luckily, in our brief description of *Zen as anthropological practice* we can avoid speaking

about dharma or dharmas, except very few points. The main of them is that Zen practice should perform the “transmission of dharma” from Master to Disciple, and in this context one can imagine dharma as something having the nature of energy, but surely not material energy.

On the other hand, satori or enlightenment is also not a well-defined concept in the Zen discourse, but nevertheless it has many detailed descriptions presenting it rather clearly. It is the goal of zazen: the event or the state of consciousness, to which Zen practice is directed. However, it cannot be simply identified with the *telos* of Zen as spiritual practice since one cannot assert that it is *the last and highest* goal of all the Way of Zen. At closer look, satori is seen as a center of a certain complex or may be a web of notions characterizing the *telos* in its different aspects. To start with, one often distinguishes two gradations of it, “small” and “big” satori. Then the complex includes *kensho* or the state of “seeing into one’s true nature” that has many kinds and many degrees and is usually considered as a “prelude to the depths of satori”; *samadhi* or “purification of consciousness”, a state known in all Far-Eastern spiritual practices and going back to classical yoga; *nirvana*, another basic reality of all the Buddhism and Hinduism that is considered as the highest state of Buddhist consciousness and the highest goal of all Buddhist practices including Zen. Undoubtedly, it is nirvana that is the true *telos* of any Buddhist practice; however, Zen does not identify or merge nirvana and satori. What is more, in many discussions of Zen practice, certain stages of this practice are described as going *after* satori. Thus, satori is present in the general framework of Zen as a certain striven after and culminating event that does not coincide, however, with the *telos* of Zen. And we see the first questions that we should answer basing on the paradigm of spiritual practice: what is the place and role of satori in the structure of Zen practice? And what is exactly the *telos* of this practice?

First, let us point out the last necessary elements of general framework. Of course, we should mention *koans*, these famous enigmatic or absurd statements that have no logical sense and serve as objects of Zen meditation. To find an answer to koan (always by means of insight, not logical reflection) is the decisive advancement to satori. However, as said above, Zen includes the two main schools, Soto and Rinzai, and the art of koans has the central place only in the Rinzai Zen, the school named after its founder, the Chinese master Lin’ Zi (Rinzai, in Japanese, † 867). “The Rinzai school is more austere, rigorous and puts more emphasis on sudden enlightenment” [1, p. 5]; besides koans, it also cultivates many illogical, shocking or aggressive techniques. Hakuin (1685-1768) was the great teacher who has developed all this eccentric repertory to a new stage, inventing many new tricks, like the famous koan: *What is the clapping with one palm?* The Soto school has been brought from China too, but it has been thoroughly reformed and renewed by the Japanese master Dogen (1200-1253). It is more moderate, giving the pride of place to strict zazen and trying to incorporate into practice more elements of Buddhist teaching.



Now, let us look at this framework from the viewpoint of the paradigm of Spiritual Practice. Can we find here the basic elements of the latter: the holistic self-transformation directed to ontological transcension; the ladder paradigm, a method and organon; the telos belonging to a different horizon of being; the presence of the “outer energy” factor and the paradigm of synergy; the “ontological mover” and manifestations of starting changes of all the human being? It turns out that there is no simple *Yes* or *No* answer. It is an important specific feature of Zen: many questions relating to the higher stages of the practice remain open in Zen discourse or, better to say, have many ambivalent and mutually diverging answers.

Still the principal structural features can be singled out confidently. Sure, Zen is a practice of man’s holistic self-transformation that has an ordered and directed character. Special study is needed to decide whether it is directed to the telos of a different ontological horizon, but in any case, it is directed to the Anthropological Border: satori as enlightenment is evidently extreme experience and so the breakthrough to the Anthropological Border, although a priori it may be not the Ontological Border. Hence it is a practice of the Self realizing a certain kind of anthropological unlocking and containing a certain paradigm of human constitution. Next, in the problem of the presence and role of the ladder paradigm we discover a complicated situation. On one hand, descriptions of Zen practice include not one, but many ladder schemes for various aspects of the practice, chiefly, states of consciousness; the most popular of them is the set “10 pictures of the taming of a buffalo” claiming to embrace all the Way of Zen. On the other hand, these schemes use mostly figurative and metaphoric language and do not disclose neither methods of the practice nor principles that secure the step-by-step advancement. Moreover, they all are not complete enough, most of them leaves aside some important moments of Zen practice: e.g., the scheme of the “Ten Pictures” does not include the figure of the Master and leaves aside all the specific work of achieving satori, the culminating event of Zen (though one can say that the buffalo himself is, in a way, the metaphor of satori)! As a result, when it comes to the test, the schemes do not prove that Zen practice really follows the ladder paradigm.

It means that we cannot describe Zen in the same way as other spiritual practices, tracing the ladder of their experience from the bottom up. Instead of it, we turn directly to satori: it is the indisputable key point of Zen, and if we succeed in understanding satori, it gives us a good chance to reach the understanding of Zen as a whole.

On the phenomenal level, we can describe satori as a sudden breakthrough of man’s consciousness to some new Truth or Light or Being. It is characterized by a certain set of very specific properties. First, it is an instantaneous and radical change of the state of consciousness caused by some unexpected external factor (Master’s action or some sudden outer disturbance, like sound, etc.). This instantaneous event must be prepared by special strategies and techniques. An adept starts with zealous efforts to reach the breakthrough

by a frontal way, he intensifies these efforts up to the limit, but has no success; and he falls into the state of extreme psychological tension full of sharp negative affects, feelings of disorientation, anxiety, despair... which sum up and concentrate to the feeling of the deadlock. "You feel that all your inner force is completely exhausted... and this psychological deadlock is the necessary condition of satori" [11, p. 164, 288]. Man's consciousness reaches the "boiling point" (Hakuin) when it is ripe for a big discharge. This discharge is triggered by a sudden, sharp outer disturbance, and the deeper and more hopeless the feeling of the deadlock and despair was, the more explosive and powerful is the discharge, the more striking is the flash and the more radical is the change of consciousness.

This is the psychological plan of satori, but we need to disclose its ontological and spiritual plan and integrate this event into the overall context of Zen practice. The first important fact is that the presence of some ontological and spiritual aspect of satori is universally accepted by Zen teachers and almost all Zen literature. However, the contents of this aspect are always characterized in the most cautious and minimalist way; we find frequent warnings that satori is not the breakthrough to any "God". D. Suzuki characterizes this minimal presence of ontology as the expansion or conversion of man's individuality into some different modus of reality that is "indescribable": "My individuality begins in some way to go out from its borders and get absorbed in something indescribable and completely different from anything habitual to me" [11, p. 172]. D. Suzuki, big authority of a few decades ago, considered a bit obsolete today; J. Austin, the contemporary author, presents a more subtle characterization shifting the focus to cognitive or epistemological plan: "Insights in kensho and satori... realize the *timeless, immanent, interrelated nature of all things*" [1, p. 362]. Such shift or modulation of ontological discourse into epistemological one is typical of Western Cartesian thinking although Austin goes directly into polemic with Kant's thesis on unknowability of *Ding an sich* stating that Zen experience in satori is exactly the cognition of thing in itself.

In any case, the described psychological pattern of radical change or turn of consciousness together with the property of irreducible presence of ontological dimension in this turn makes it possible to see the proper spiritual context for the event of satori. As many authors (including D. Suzuki) noticed, there is a close parallel between satori and one of basic paradigms of religious experience, the *conversion* discussed briefly in our last lecture. It is one of universal elements of the paradigm of spiritual practice, the starting event of entering the path of such practice. The close resemblance of satori and conversion is evident, for instance, in such classical example of conversion as the sudden change of consciousness of the future apostle Paul on his way to Damascus; and the main term for conversion in Christianity is *metanoia*, the change of mind. Taking into account that conversion should be conceived as not a specifically Christian notion, but an universal concept of religious and intellectual life, *we can interpret satori as a particular*

*Zen representation of the conversion paradigm.* Basing on this conclusion, we start moving to our main goal, the structural comparison of Zen practice with our paradigm of spiritual practice.

Let us remind the general structure of the latter. As said above, conversion (Spiritual Gate) is the starting event of the ladder of the practice, and it is followed by the ascent by the steps of the ladder. However, it is a very special event that is always prepared by profound inner processes, chiefly, of ethical nature. This “ethical prehistory” is very personal, not regulated and not included into spiritual practice as such because it belongs still to usual practices of empiric existence and has no ontological dimension. It is clearly understood and accentuated (not only in Christian hesychasm, but, say, in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism) that the change of consciousness is only the foot of a long ladder leading to a certain telos that does not belong to empiric being. Contrary to it, in Zen the preparatory works like zazen, koans, etc. leading to the change of consciousness are not just included into the practice, but constitute all the main part of it. They have the same function of preparing the crucial intellectual and anthropological change, but they are not of ethical nature; in general, Zen minimizes or even ignores the role of ethics (cf. the statement of a recognized expert: “The doctrine of Zen did not distinguish between Good and Evil” [2, p. 285]). Instead, they represent a very rich and subtle world of highly original psychological techniques, and this contributes a lot to the great popularity of Zen in contemporary Western society that pushes aside its traditional ethical foundations and is much attracted and fascinated by all kinds of new psycho-techniques.

What about the ladder of spiritual practice that is supposed to lead from the conversion up to the telos? What is Zen practice after the achievement of satori? Sure, Zen does not deny the existence of this “upper part” of the practice. It is presented in many schemes and, in particular, the scheme of the “Ten Pictures” devotes to them 3 or 4 pictures out of 10. First of all, various degrees of satori, like “small” and “great” satori, are often distinguished. Great satori, as distinct from the small one, is a more stable state, in which the new vision of things is retained firmly. Like the higher states of other spiritual practices, great satori is characterized by properties that are related or directly belong to categories of the corresponding religious teaching, in our case, Buddhism. It is close to nirvana (though their exact relationship is complicated and not too clear), it implies the possession of *samadhi* and *prajna* (“the flashing insight-wisdom of Enlightenment”, by Austin). In general, Zen (and other Buddhist practices, in contrast to Christian ones) puts to the foreground and represents more clearly epistemological and not ontological dimensions of the higher states. It accentuates not the transformation or transcension of the human being, but a new epistemological perspective, new vision of and relationship with things that is reached in the practice. *Prajna* is one of the principal predicates of this perspective, and the others are *non-duality* (the overcoming of the separation of oneself and world, the unity of inner and outer reality conceived as one’s true nature) and *suchness* (*tathata*, Sanskrit, *sono-mama*, Japanese: “seeing all things as they

really are”, by Austin) that means the direct vision of things in themselves, thus representing the polar opposition to Kantian epistemology. It should be noted, however, that, notwithstanding this epistemological orientation, Zen conveys very clearly the general Buddhist message with the rejection of the principles of Ego, Self, individuality, personality, etc. “Zen Buddhist traditions emphasize a key point: one’s personal sense of self dissolves during kensho and satori” [1, p. 364]. J. Austin complements this thesis with the detailed experimental discussion concluding that in Zen practice a special modus of consciousness emerges that “is unattached, selfless, bodyless, completely *impersonal*” [1, p. 365 (*Author’s italics.*)]. Exclusively negative character of all the predicates listed tells us another evident, but important thing: Zen practice brings forth the dismantling of man’s personological structures (in particular, the elimination of emotions) and thus represents a typical *cool discourse* (in contrast to hot discourses of hesychasm and Sufism).

Finally, most of the schemes of Zen practice include the concluding stages of the return of man and his mind back to activity after the state of insight, contemplation and concentration when consciousness stands still. The 9<sup>th</sup> of the “Ten Pictures” is called “The Return to the Pure Source” and corresponds to the “activity of the purified mind ... when you discover the face of Buddha wherever you look” [5, p. 653]. This stage is favorable to artistic practices that are inseparable of Zen forming there a kind of a special section, “Zen arts”. The last picture is called “The Return to the Marketplace” and is characterized by a complete openness and compassion to other people. This stage is also called “The Cloud of Dharma” since it is the state of free pouring of Dharma to all around, in fact, to all living beings, not just humans, in order to help them to actualize their own original Buddha’s nature. As we said in the hesychast lectures, this stage of the Return or rather the paradigm of the “Flight followed by Return” is present in hesychasm too; in fact, it is natural for any spiritual tradition.

Turning to the conclusion of our brief discussion of Zen, it is equally important to point out what we do not find in it. Although Zen has no firm and unique scheme for the higher states of its practice, it is indisputable that it did not elaborate any “ontological mover” and does not include the spontaneous generation of new dynamic anthropological formations. It means that it did not develop to the full-fledged form the key mechanism of spiritual practice, synergy or the anthropological unlocking, the coherence and collaboration of inner and outer energy, although the outer energy factor in a certain preliminary and rudimentary form of synergy is present in satori (like in conversion-repentance in Christian practices). Having well-developed and highly original psychological and epistemological dimensions, it openly neglects ethical aspects and reduces to a bare minimum the presence of the ontological dimension. The post-satori part of the practice is not presented in a unique and well-defined way and is rather vague about its techniques, methods and the order of its actions. Thus, as compared to the paradigm of the spiritual practice, Zen has the under-articulated higher block of the ladder of the experience.

**Keywords:** philosophy, Zen, satori, samadhi, koan, hesychasm, synergic anthropology, spiritual practice, conversion, repentance

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## ECHOES OF THE EVENTS

### First Readings in memory of Y. V. Chesnov “Philosophical-anthropological approach to folk culture: problems and perspectives of development”

(reviewed by V. Akaev, M. Pronin, T. Selina)



**Yan V. Chesnov** (16 October 1937, Grozny – 28 December 2014, Krasnogorsk) was a prominent anthropologist and philosopher who founded the anthropology of anthropocenosis. He was admitted to the History Department of Moscow State University where he specialized in the department of Ethnology. He studied folk cultures of China, India, and Indochina. His first expeditions were to Turkmenistan,

Kazakhstan, and Belarus. After he graduated from the University in 1961, he was accepted to the postgraduate program in the USSR AS Institute of Ethnography. He presented his dissertation thesis on folk cultures of south-eastern Asia in 1965. His eastern studies are summarized in *Historical ethnography of countries of Indochina* (Moscow, 1976; in German – Berlin, 1985).

Since the 1980s, he undertook a thorough targeted research in Caucasus. He led a lot of long expeditions to Abkhazians, different groups of Georgians, especially highland – pshavi, khevsurians, Abazins, Circassians, Kabardians, Ossetes and others. However, he put his energies mostly into studying the civilizations of Chechens and Ingush.

Since the 1990s he started teaching, supervising postgraduates, giving lectures in MSU, RSUH, URAE, and Universities of USA (Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island). His course of lectures is published in *Lectures on historical ethnology* (Moscow, 1998).

In 2001, he began studying the anthropocenosis and the ethnocultural component of the Russian human potential during his personal field studies in different regions of the country: in the North Caucasus, Kostroma and Kaluga oblast, science cities and Moscow. His works give a new philosophical-anthropological picture of Russian ethnocultural space.

Since then his studies were mostly dedicated to the philosophical grounds of anthropological sciences (anthropology itself, ethnology, folklore studies). He presented the first philosophical-anthropological analysis of the *virtual-existential reality*, in which he revealed its agonical-binary qualities thus being able to prove the anthropological disciplines to have a *philosophical core*. (*Virtualistics: philosophical-anthropological analysis*. Saransk, 2008).

In 2006, the philosopher changed his scope of inquiry and became interested in the transitional zone between inner anthropological articulations and the outer phenomenological world. He gave a special attention to historical forms of mind and thinking, and also to corporeal problematics (corporeal anthropology of norm and pathology, corporeal-mental existences), including biomedicine, problems of bioethics, vitality and health, and also embryology, juvenology, gerontology, ecological environment (cultural landscapes) and aristocratism (*Human corporality: philosophical-anthropological approach*. Moscow, 2007).

A combination of extensive knowledge both of specific anthropological and ethnological kind (especially on the peoples of Caucasus) and a unique philosophical-anthropological method of understanding this knowledge is characteristic of Chesnov's interdisciplinary approach. The approach he discovered in anthropology was named the anthropology of antropocenosis (*Folk culture: philosophical-anthropological approach*. Moscow, 2014).

According to the Intelros rating "Sofia 2008-2013", Y. V. Chesnov is one of the 30 most estimated Russian intellectuals who work successfully in the human and social fields of knowledge and influence the intellectual landscape of Russia.

The first readings in memory of Y. V. Chesnov "Philosophic-anthropological approach to folk culture: problems and perspectives of development" took place in the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences on December, 8. The readings were organized by the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences, the State Institute for Art Studies at the Russian Federation Ministry of Culture, the Complex Research Institute named after Kh. I. Ibragimov at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Chechen republic, and Murmansk Arctic State University.

During his scientific researches, anthropologist and philosopher Y. V. Chesnov (1937–2014) studied different regions of the world, with folk culture remaining the main purpose of his scientific interest invariably. His researches covered the Southeast Asia and Siberia, the Central Russia and the Caucasus. He studied the ways of folk culture both in the country and in modern cities, in different age, social and gender groups; he studied the material, the visual and mental forms, everyday and ritualized practices of folk culture. All this he conceived with a philosophic-anthropological approach.

The first readings in memory of Y. V. Chesnov are aimed to problematise the scholar's philosophic and scientific achievements in order to develop a program to study his legacy, especially the line which permeates his entire works and is connected with the philosophical-anthropological approach.



The readings have covered a wide range of topics:

### **1) The archive of Y. V. Chesnov as a problem of the scholar's legacy**

Y. V. Chesnov has left a large scientific and philosophical legacy: over 300 published works and the archive of the scholar. This is of great interest: it includes 5 unpublished books, 182 diaries that Chesnov kept during his life, some preparatory materials for the monographs and papers, and materials of his field expeditions.

### **2) Research of folk culture as a philosophical heritage of a nation: Chesnov's approach**

According to Chesnov's legacy, folk culture is, first of all, an ethnic memory which holds original values of a nation, concealed in cultural tradition. Life changes but the principles of faith and the language of honour with which peoples provides us remain unchanged. Embracing the entire way of ancient development, folk culture has preserved for us the "philosophical heritage of a nation: its soaring mind, its mental set, and ethnic mentality". Without this, there is no self-identity for a modern man as related to the ethnic tradition.



### **3) The initial principles of Chesnov's "original methodology" in regard to anthropology and ethnology (ethnography).**

The case of thinking and knowledge being antinomic or paradox was fundamental for the scholar. It provided him with a ground to develop his methodological position: firstly, he problematised the foundations of ethnography, then – those of ethnology and anthropology; he reconstructed the suggested folk anthropologic mind, criticised the language development and creation of new terms. Y. V. Chesnov was a celebrated thinker and anthropologist who left us with a problem of folk culture thinking. This is why his works are so interesting and fascinating. His works are aimed at a mass thinking audience not without reason.

### **4) Problems of transdisciplinarity in regard to human anthropology**

The general line of Chesnov's research was to create a "Big, metaphysical anthropology" using the knowledge of various fields (ethnology, cultural and social anthropology, sociology, logics, ethics, aesthetics, mythology, psychoanalysis, folklore studies, regional ethnography, sacral geography, virtualistics, Heidegger's phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, quasi-historic studies of thinking etc.). In fact, Chesnov has worked in the field of transdisciplinarity and formed his own techniques, methods and ways to describe the thinking of folk culture; he has created a new language of transdisciplinarity that has a great heuristic potential for cultural anthropology, ethnology, folklore studies and the entire corpus of human sciences.

### **5) Philosophical and methodological core of Chesnov's anthropology**

We believe, postnonclassical anthropology stems from Chesnov's works. One cannot reflect on his legacy in terms of conventional paradigms of ethnology. One has to discover the foundation of so thorough a transformation in anthropology (ethnology) as a discipline; one has to find out what was the bifurcation point that changed the attractor of ethnology's development and allowed to create a philosophical-anthropological approach to folk culture. It is important to indicate the place which theory and approach take in the conflict of paradigms that occurs during the shift to the postnonclassical anthropologic rationality and science.

## **6) Mind technique and the object of folk culture in Chesnov's legacy**

Y. V. Chesnov had succeeded in reconstructing folk culture by means of philosophical-anthropological approach; this was never achieved by either of other scholars before. The ground for Chesnov's success lies in the fact that his mind technique was different from the entire phenomenological tradition of anthropology (D. E. Durkheim, L. Levy-Bruhl, M. Mauss, M. Mead). The distinction of Chesnov's anthropological thinking lies in a set of technical methods he uses, in the "exploring thinking-activity" he employs. To answer the question "What are the unique features of Chesnov's mind technique?" one should use not the technical terms, but the terms of the subject, that is, the complex reality of folk culture.

## **7) Human-anthropological thinking in the perspective of modern technologies and challenges of the time.**

It is necessary to create a general notion of anthropological thinking in perspective of technology basing either on the particular experience of Y. V. Chesnov or on the traces of his anthropological thinking. This would settle the following problem: how can one generalize and transfer those mind techniques, developed by the anthropologist Chesnov while dealing with the complex subject of folk culture, on other types of situation, i.e. on other objects and other tasks – philosophical, theoretical, methodological and practical tasks in the field of human sciences.

The problems of philosophical-anthropological approach in the legacy of Y. V. Chesnov were discussed by philosophers, cultural studies scholars, experts in virtualistics, methodologists, art historians, folklorists, managers of innovative educational practices, university professors, tutors, postgraduates, and young scholars interested in problems of human anthropology.

